THE DIVERSITY OF JOHN DONNE'S SONGS AND SONNETS

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A study of a coherent imaginative viewpoint in the Songs and Sonnets of John Donne by means of a detailed grouping of the lyrics related to the categories of the contemporary drama.

by

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ABSTRACT

of

THE DIVERSITY OF JOHN DONNE'S SONGS AND SONNETS

It is the purpose of this thesis, The Diversity of John Donne's Songs and Sonnets, to attempt to explain the diversity of these love-lyrics by means of a detailed grouping of the lyrics related to the categories of the contemporary drama in order to assess their coherent imaginative viewpoints. The fifty-four poems of Helen Gardner's classification are categorized by groups or genres, rather than by theme or form, or both, with the express purpose of showing the various ways in which Donne handles the same theme. In Donne's interpretation of the theme of death, for instance, the death of love can be a satiric comedy, but the mimic death for love's sake, or the fictional/actual death of a mistress is in the form of a tragedy. Also, a miracle of love can be a spiritual love between a man and a woman, or it can mean an ecstatic physical and spiritual union of lovers. Probably the best example of the diversity of Donne's lyrics, however, is to be found within his songs, for they can be ribald and insolent, quaintly humorous, or gentle and thoughtful depending on the mood of the poet. Most of the songs are heroic, but not all, and they do not, therefore, fall under the

same grouping in my scheme.

A study of the lyrics along the lines outlined above reveals that Donne'soriginality is most striking in his redefinition of 'true' love: no longer can the courtly affectation of lovers be termed love because of its impractical idealism in the face of the overt sexuality of men and women. Donne defines 'true' love as a love that no more denigrates the body than it exalts the soul, for it is simultaneously a physical reality and a metaphysical construct. This is not to say that Donne is an iconoclast: he does not tear down; he refashions new models out of old materials. The Songs and Sonnets are not brooding meditations on the folly of desire, or the way of the world. If the real world is relevant at all to these love-lyrics it is mostly in a metaphoric sense. The external world exists for Donne in these poems not only in such imagery as an interfering friend, a group of school boys and apprentices, or suppliants after love's "pattern", but also in the paraphernalia from the Petrarchists' store of emblems, as well as concrete images from the world of the court, commerce and science which are the bedrock of his conceits. It is true that Donne's penchant for personification gives apparent form and substance to abstract qualities, but Donne shows that the complete world of reality for lovers lies within the lovers themselves, and they alone possess each other and this world which is also visionary.

The dramatic element in Donne's Songs and Sonnets is pivotal

to an understanding of its demonstrable appeal to an unseen or implied audience. The drama inherent in this poetry, however, is to be found in more than the use of a direct style, or a striking imagery; it resides in the drama of love itself whose truth of experience is revealed through the transforming power of the poet's vivid imagination which makes poetry out of personal experience.

INTRODUCTION

The Songs and Sonnets of John Donne contain some of the finest, if not the finest love lyrics in English. Each poem is artfully written, and indicates the assurance and flamboyance of the man-of-the-world who as poet had the rare gift of translating what he saw of love into satiric, sometimes bitter, rarely gentle, but always realistic terms. In these poems the lover is at centre stage, for his consciousness is dramatically expressed in a series of outer and inner conflicts. In the early songs there are clashes in points of view which take the form of debates between protagonists, while in the poems of comedy and tragedy the lover himself is involved in personal crises in which he is torn by contrasting emotions. The poems of miracle are poems of reconciliation where transcendent love is not a philosophical abstraction, but a deeply-felt awareness that does not sentimentalize, but, nevertheless, can hold us spell-bound by the intensity of its passion. The manifold contradictions of the Songs and Sonnets are their strength and their life. There are no so-called inconsistencies, only truths of feeling dramatically conceived and lyrically realized. "When we praise Donne for his

dramatic imagination we are paying tribute to his truth of feeling. The bright light of drama, which heightens and exaggerates, is fatal to weakness or falsity of feeling."[1]

The motifs of Donne's lyrics are as varied as those of the drama and it seems reasonable to look for a proper understanding of these motifs from a dramatic stance since they form an integral part of a recurrent thought pattern that is discernible throughout the dramatic literature of this period, a literature which for high drama and the power of its characterizations has never been equalled before or since for its consciousness process, whereby moods are set, and emotions evoked. The human suffering of such a powerful dramatic character as King Lear is realized in an expressive poetry that plumbs the heights and depths of his intense passions. Against a natural backdrop of storm and calm, his agonizing spiritual rebirth evolves, as, also, does the lover's self-realization in Donne's lyrics.

In the lyrics which are my concern in this study, love is treated as a complex emotion. In the early poems the centre of the main action is the occasion, general, particular, or mythical. In the later poems, the dramatic motif is the speaker's posture, attitude or motive. In these mature poems, Donne shows a deft mastery of

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[1]Gardner, The Elegies, etc., Gen. Intro., xxii. This is also my text for quotations from the Songs and Sonnets. For direct quotations from Jacobean plays, Spencer's text is the source with two notable exceptions: references from The Revenger's Tragedy are from Foakes' edition (1966), and those from The Duchess of Malfi are from Brown's edition(1964).

experience through the interaction of characters who are not just personified qualities masquerading as people, but who represent real people feeling acutely the heights and the depths of their passions.

Both genres of lyric and drama, deal in dramatis personae in which the audience can believe and to whom they can relate. The characters in Donne's lyrics assume roles; they need not be assigned personalities, although the lover in the poems does become identified with Donne because of the grammatical use of the first person in the dialogue. Conversational speech occurs in both the drama of the period and in Donne's poems. The early lyrics tend to be dramatic monologues, while the later ones simulate dialogue in which the consciousness of the poetic characters is at work through either the circumstantial or the inevitable collision of the terrible opposing forces of love and hate that can propel human beings into certain acts often against their will. Where formerly court masques and early Elizabethan plays had actual metamorphoses to beguile the viewer, now in Jacobean drama, as in Donne's mature poems, the metamorphosis takes place inside the character, and we have, then, an inner not an outer drama. The drama of human relationships is the greatest drama of all. Poetry, the poetic vision made possible through the spoken and written word, is the common factor of both genres of lyric and drama of the early seventeenth century. This poetry was "an enlargement of

the daily world, an imaginative vision either communal, or subtle and more individual. It was also not an experience, but a performance!'. [2]

It is, therefore, surprising that Professor Bald does not find any trace of the drama in Donne's work other than the Marlovian allusions which are to be found throughout Donne's sermons, and the tangible link between Marlowe's melodious and sentimental poem, 'Come live with me and be my love' and Donne's poem 'The Baite'. [3] There are, however, less discernible but nonetheless definite links between Donne and the dramatists. These parallels are to be found in the use of similar stylistic techniques, in a complete freedom to adapt poetic conventions at will, and in corresponding imaginative points of view. The English drama of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century shows a development in a new expressive technique that is suggestive of Donne's style. Dr. Johnson saw that this style yoked violent ideas together with, as he thought, rather unpleasant results, whereas Eliot argued that there was justification for this heterogeneity of material in his essay, "The Metaphysical Poets",

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[2] Bradbrook, English Dramatic Form, 15.

[3] Bald, A Life, 73. This book is my biographical source.

for he says:

> This telescoping of images and multiplied associations is characteristic of the phrase of some of the dramatists of the period which Donne knew: not to mention Shakespeare, it is frequent in Middleton, Webster, and Tourneur, and is one of the sources of the vitality of their language.[4]

Thus, Eliot vindicated the imagery and the language of Donne and certain dramatists of this period as being appropriately apt and characteristic of their sensibility. Both genres, the lyric and the poetic drama, have beautiful symmetrical poetic forms, smooth colloquial speech rhythms, and metaphysical imagery that is decorous and therefore apt.[5] Equally important is a correspondence in content represented by an equivalence of tone, mood, and theme. In Donne's lyrics the themes are well-defined and sustained in the structures of expression that are as daring as they are original. Furthermore, these structures of sound and meaning are always well poised and attuned at all times to the vagaries of quick changes of mood that can be both subtle and abrupt. In Donne's love lyrics the integration of form and content is as harmonious as it is organic. "Structurally there is no firmer architect of lyric anywhere in English than Donne."[6]

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[4]In Selected Essays, 283.

[5]Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery, 192-247. The important question of decorum as understood by the Renaissance reader is discussed in these pages.

[6]Ransom, The World's Body, 289.

The characteristics of Donne's poetic structure and that of the poetic drama of the period were known by the designation 'strong lines'. In the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth century this term was generally one of disapprobation. Robert Burton, in apologizing for his style in his famous Anatomy, says that he tried to write without any affectation of style such as big words, fustian phrases, jingling terms, tropes and strong lines.[7] In 1656 Francis Osborn exhorts his son to "spend no time in reading, much less in writing strong-lines". But on the other hand, men like Anthony Bacon, in 1591, when he commended the first English Translation of Tacitus indirectly commended at the same time this style of writing for he said "that hee (Tacitus) hath written the most matter with the best concept in fewest words of anie Historiographer ancient or moderne. But he is hard. 'Difficilia quae pulchra' ". Similarly, in 1595 Chapman in his dedication of Ovid's Banquet of Sense suggested that such a strong-lined style was appropriate for poetry for clearness of expression and should belong to "high and hearty invention expressed in most significant and unaffected phrase". Most important, however, are the thoughts of Carew contained in his 'Elegie' of Donne. Here he

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[7]For this and the following information I am indebted to George Williamson's article on "Strong Lines" which appears in Discussions of John Donne, Frank Kermode, ed., 58-63. The above quotations are found on pages 58 and 59.

commends Donne for throwing away the "lazie seeds/ Of servile imitation", and for planting "fresh invention". Carew continues by saying that Donne "open'd Us a Mine/Of rich and pregnant phansie, drawne a line/ Of masculine expression".

Just what is this "masculine expression"? Besides a vitality in the language of some seventeenth century writers there is also a vitality of thought. Eliot saw that what Donne did, and the Jacobean dramatists as well, was "to get upon the stage a precise statement of life which is at the same time a point of view, a world - a world which the author's mind has subjected to a complete process of simplification."[8] Paradoxically, this simplified world is a divided world, a comedy of manners that contains the follies and foibles of individual men and women as well as their virtues. Tragic conflicts which originate in the minds of characters are resolved there. Also, miracles come to fulfilment there, for Donne and the dramatists are masters at blending the elusive and the real, at showing us that reality can lie in dreams, dreams born of earth, yet fulfilled in a heaven on earth, or in heaven itself for that matter. The conflicting ideas about love which the Tudor-Jacobean drama and Donne's love lyrics project are, just that, conflicting. Such is their paradox, and also their profundity.

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[8] The Sacred Wood, 62-3.

Thus, it would appear that The Songs and Sonnets as literary artefacts can be related to the verse drama of the period in which the object of imitation is not so much to reveal character as to analyse action through a yoking together of idiom and thematic imagery, in which case character will be revealed. The object of imitation, then, is not action for its own sake but apparent action whose resolution for good or ill will be imaginatively conceived as truth, but will be, nonetheless, morally true also. The moral order which informs a poem or a play and the truth of experience are one and the same. The lyrics in toto express a doctrine of Donne's love theory which is expressive of the diversified emotions of the lover.

Helen Gardner sees in the Songs and Sonnets an extreme diversity in theme, mood, form and style.[9] But she also sees some connection among poems in theme, form, or style although the effect of diversity still remains. She concludes that Donne is a tireless experimenter in the lyric which statement seems to suggest that here she is thinking mainly of a technical virtuosity. Her chief concern is with tone, however, in the two sets which she posits and which she presents in her edition: the first, poems which she believes to have been written before 1600 and which are light and flippant, the second, the more serious poems which were written after 1602, that is, after

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[9]The Elegies, etc., Intro., xxv.

the publication of The Progresse of the Soule, and after Donne's clandestine marriage to Ann More a few months later. She is careful to suggest in this connection that she does not mean to imply by this division that there is a radical distinction, metrically and otherwise, between so-called cynical and serious poems because there happens to be a discernible parallel development of a more complex metrical inventiveness along with a greater philosophical subtlety in the more mature poems.[10] It happens that there are some poems which cannot be classed 'philosophical' or 'platonic' but which have a versification usually reserved for these types of poems. Nevertheless, her implication seems to be clear that the Songs and Sonnets can be divided into two distinct groups, the grouping of which is attributive to a change in Donne's personal outlook after 1602, the year of his secret marriage.

Although Professor Gardner has made the dating of many poems more certain by reference to external and internal evidence, the dating of the majority of the lyrics remains speculative. Moreover, the tangible linking of some poems to special persons and specific occasions can only be tentative to say the least. The diversity of the Songs and Sonnets is the marvel of Donne's love lyrics, but it has led to a misunderstanding of the reason for their heterogeneity. The poems are diverse because love itself is variable, inconsistent, illogical,

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[10] Ibid., lvi-vii.

mystical, not because their temperamental author has shifted the emphasis of his moral values from indiscreet youthful activity to more mature philosophic contemplation. One is,therefore, led to the conclusion that a criterion based solely on craftsmanship and/or tone cannot explain satisfactorily or adequately the complex nature of Donne's lyrics since the lyrics do not reflect changes in Donne's philosophy of life, but, rather, variations in the nature of his emotional behaviour. Chiefly because Donne comprehends the differing attitudes of love that run all the way from a youthful folly to an enraptured fulfilment, the diversity which he displays throughout the entire body of the poems is defensible. The unity of his conception is incontrovertible in the truth of its revelation that lovers can, and do, act in these various ways.

The chief value of Helen Gardner's classification of the lyrics into two distinct sets is that this arrangement explains the fact that the creation of verse forms of great originality goes hand in hand with the emergence of new themes, such as the satire of the lover, or spirituality in love, while at the same time old themes masquerade in new expressions, for example, the lover's revenge, or the parting of lovers expressed in mind-expanding analogues. This hypothetical grouping allows the possibility that there is a unity of purpose in the poems, an ascending scale of poetic values that is revealed in an imaginative development that is as coherent and logical as it is artistic.

Professor Gardner is the first editor to attempt a classification based on a critical reorganization of the poems since no other editor of Donne's Songs and Sonnets from John Marriot (1633) to Professor Grierson (1912) has ever attempted such a schema for the purpose of publication. Expressly because of their heterogeneity, I should like to reclassify the poems generically, enlarging, in a more detailed arrangement, upon Professor Gardner's general divisions of rather light, and more serious. My categories would treat love as song, where Donne's fantastic wit parodies the popular songs and poetic conventions of his day; love as comedy, where love and the lover are satirized; love as tragedy, where betrayal, revenge, torture of conscience and a kind of poetic justice all point not to action but to a conflict of motives within the lover himself; then love as miracle, the most fantastical love of all which would prove the complete metamorphosis that can affect men and women in love. My purpose, then, is to project, according to their genre, hypothetical groups of poems which individually cohere in maintaining an occasion and in sustaining an attitude. It is my postulate that Donne wrote in the same convention, idiom, and style as the dramatists in order to achieve an immediacy, and thus a greater emotional impact to the many personal crises of the lover. There is either a dramatic self-assertiveness or a self-awareness in these lyrics depending on the posture of the speaker. The

poems which are not dramatic in this sense I have assigned to an Appendix, for they seem to be centred in love as an abstraction, not as a powerful emotion which the lover himself expresses.

At the outset, I should state that my ordering of the poems into a hypothetical progression based on a sliding scale of varied emotional responses to given dramatic situations, collateral with Donne's developing craftsmanship, does not imply that I have solved the order of composition of these lyrics. Helen Gardner states that there is no reason to believe that certain poems must have been physically connected in Donne's papers and that they must have been composed at the same time and addressed to the same person.[11] There is, however, always room for speculation. But for all intents and purposes any order in which some poems are arranged throughout various manuscripts does not have any significance other than an arbitrary one, where content only has dictated the reason for bringing certain lyrics together. The diversified nature of this content is striking. Simply because Donne apprehends the so-called contrarieties of love he can interpret so broadly and intuitively the chosen theme of his Songs and Sonnets, the lover in all his conflicts, and resolve the "little room" into an "everywhere". "It was only the force of Donne's personality that could achieve even an approximate harmony of elements so

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[11] Gardner, op. cit., App. C., 255.

divergent as are united in his love-verses . . . ."[12]

Helen Gardner has said that if we are able to recognize a poet's conscious intention we are able to appreciate all the more the poet's artistic achievement, and furthermore we are saved from a simplistic correlation between the experience of the poet and his translation of it into poetry.[13] I am not saying that Donne's conscious intention was to write poetry compartmentalized into certain genres, for, after all, in the Renaissance there was no single theory of the lyric as there was, historically, for tragedy, and even comedy. Donne's art is not born of a conscious striving to re-form a tradition, for there was more than one, but is the unconscious assimilation by the mind of a poet, of old literary fashions that were still current, within new evolving forms. For Donne and the dramatists do not repudiate tradition: they use it to their own advantage. "Tradition is always inescapable but it is as every artist knows, the innovator who refurnishes it with changes who makes it enduring."[14]

A progressive imaginative and artistic development, not unlike that of the contemporary drama from Marlowe to Shakespeare, is evident in Donne's lyrics. As Eliot remarks, Elizabethan drama

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[12]Grierson, The Poems, II, Intro., 14.

[13]Gardner, The Divine Poems, Intro. II, lv.

[14]Allen and Rowell, eds., The Poetic Tradition, Preface, v-vi.

shows "this progress in adaptation, a development from monotony to variety, a progressive refinement in the perception of the variations of feeling, and a progressive elaboration of the means of expressing these variations".[15] Equally, in Donne's early songs there is a one-dimensional effect in a consciousness of the self that is like the incipient drama of Marlowe. In most of these early songs the speaker is a man, the epitome of the heroic lover who is self-assertive. Donne's early songs do not celebrate promiscuity; their metaphysical subtlety is that they show that love, like an anagram, is often an esoteric puzzle and has no simple answers.

To conclude, a mere technical ordering of the poems into groups relative to their types is not enough for valid conclusions to be drawn about Donne's imaginative development unless it is accompanied by a critical evaluation . . . that will, hopefully, lend the grouping some significance. My proposed schematization, therefore, should not be regarded as an end in itself but only as the means of establishing a relationship between Donne's lyrics so ordered, and a fundamental view of love that will be logically and biographically feasible.

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[15]Eliot, " 'Rhetoric' and Poetic Drama" in Selected Essays, 38.

THE POWER OF SONG

The Prelude: The Art Songs and Musical Parodies

In line with Helen Gardner's ordering of the lyrics my schema begins with Donne's parodies and Art Songs.[1] Donne's interest in the popular songs of his own day can be corroborated by the simple expedient of noting the considerable interest which current critics are taking in the contemporary musical settings of Donne's poems. Helen Gardner mentions that Donne himself wrote his own words to old tunes, which fact establishes his interest in musical parody. The beautiful love-song 'Sweetest love, I do not goe' is an example of this genre, while 'Goe and catche a falling starre' is an 'art' song, being a poem set to music.

Donne's early songs are traditional in their subject matter, contemporary in theme, but revolutionary in style and technique. They are not generally songs of praise but of dispraise, although in some songs the Petrarchan icons around which they revolve and the pictorial

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[1]Gardner, The Elegies, etc. 238. All subsequent information about 'art' songs (lyrics set to music) and musical 'parodies' as they pertain to Donne's Songs and Sonnets are from Appendix B Musical Settings of Donne's Poems, 238-244.

imagery which they display give them an air of compliment and courtesy. Most of the songs are arrogant, bombastic and parodoxical though there is a bantering attitude in the musical and literary parody, 'The Baite', along with a whimsical use of disguise. I am, therefore, categorizing the lyrics in this group as either Ovidian or Petrarchan in convention, being concerned with general statements or particular situations which have been made dramatic, as I hope to bring out, in which the man is generally the dominant figure, although 'Breake of Day' and 'Confined Love' are monologues spoken by women. There is no reason to suppose that Donne's art songs should all have the same motifs just because they were put to music. Donne, like the contemporary song-writers, made use of the stock-in-trade of the extravagant Petrarchists, the list of impossibilities, the dialogue with his heart, the lover's curse, the sense of betrayal and irremediable loss. Donne's early songs display a shifting pattern of mood changes similar to those within the contemporary song convention of his own day. But this was only the beginning, not the end.

The English song convention did not generally describe an ideal dream-world of love although the atmosphere was pastoral and romantic. Like the mediaeval troubadours, the English song-writers sang of love and the narcissistic love-throes of the lover. But in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the archetypal lover in the

guise of a suppliant knight is not the only image of the mythical lover in the English lyric. The emphasis on dramatic self-expression and apparent realism which Donne introduced in his early songs was based on a treatment of love almost entirely realized from the standpoint of the male lover who is not a complaining, complaisant knight-errant but a bombastic epic hero in the Ovidian tradition. This type of heroic lover holds no woman unique; his interest in women is only casual and indifferent. "He is, therefore, able to maintain a manly independence through the variety of his amatory experiences."[2] This hero is the lover in Donne's 'Elegies'. "The 'Elegies' are untouched by the idealization of women that distinguishes the courtly and Petrarchan traditions from the tradition of classical love-poetry."[3] In many lyrics of this period, and especially in Donne's early art songs, love is a conquest, a victory not an art, and certainly not an ideal. When Donne's songs are put into the historical context where they belong, that is, with the songs of his friends who were also reputable poets in their own time, the traditional posture of their author is more readily understood and his craftsmanship more apparent. What makes Donne's early songs unique is not their subject-matter, which is a

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[2]Valency, In Praise of Love, 113; see also 296, ftn. 12, about the 'sincerity' of the troubadour's love which, it is agreed, is fictional in character.

[3]Gardner, op. cit., Intro., xxiv.

commonplace of the late Elizabethan miscellanies and song-books, but the mode of treatment of their motifs which parallels that of the drama in a consciousness of self, a parody of Petrarchan cliches and a comedy of paradox and irony. Their total impact is dramatic and derivative, and this power comes from a drama of motif, not of motive as it does in the more mature lyrics. What makes Donne's early songs original is their precocious prosody.

Donne's incredibly inventive prosody has often been commented on by the critics. It is not surprising that the song tradition should interest Donne for rhythm is at the root-system of all his craft as a poet, and is even discernible in his earlier Satires which Dryden characterized as having a rough cadence. It is interesting, however, that Dryden did use the word "cadence" which indicates that he recognized even in the 'harshness' of the Satires a certain rhythmical flow of language. Today, and in some nineteenth century criticism[4] it has been recognized that the poems of Donne far from being unrhythmical have a musical sense, a musical pattern all their own. W. F. Melton pointed out that the same sound in Donne's rhetoric can have different time-values: the duration of the sound of a word being the key to the

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[4] Coleridge, On the Seventeenth Century, 520. In his remarks on Donne, Coleridge says: "To read Dryden, Pope, etc., you need only count syllables; but to read Donne you must measure time and discover the time of each word by the sense of/and the passion".

puzzle of Donne's versification.[5] To corroborate his statement he then gave two famous lines (11. 369-370) from The First Anniversary: "Shee, shee is dead; shee's dead: when thou know'st this/ Thou know'st how wan a Ghost this our world is". The key words in this quotation are "she" and "know'st" where the time values placed on these words indicate the passion behind them and thus dictate the meaning of them. All of the Songs and Sonnets should be read with this time value-system in mind in order to appreciate the subtlety and the beauty of Donne's rhythmic sense.

Donne used the language of ordinary discourse ingeniously in combination with a variety of metrical forms throughout the Songs and Sonnets to transmute his ideas into moods, and to transform his keen observations into emotions by looking into a great deal more than the heart, thereby producing what Eliot once called a "massive" music[6] although he later came to believe that Milton was the supreme master of the ability to work in larger musical units than any other poet.[7] Pierre Legouis has shown the incredible variety of Donne's metrical schemes, especially the 'build' of his stanzas, in a series of charts.

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[5]Wightman Fletcher Melton in his article " The Rhetoric of John Donne's Verse" M.L.N. 24 (1909), 114, discusses pitch or rhythm doctrine which he calls the "arsis-thesis"variation.

[6]Eliot, Selected Essays, 291.

[7]Eliot, On Poetry and Poets, 179.

Even Professor Schipper, who mentions this same variety in his large German work, failed to tabulate all Donne's metrical schemes, according to Legouis, who concludes that, not counting the couplet pieces and non-descripts, there remain 49 distinctly stanzaic pieces distributed among 46 stanza-forms. This means that no stanza form is found in more than three pieces and forty-four of them are found only in one piece each.[8] Variety does not necessarily denote inventiveness or ingenuity. In Donne's case it does, because his originality is confirmed by the fact that "all the longer and more complex stanzas, it would seem, are of Donne's invention."[9] The stanza is definitely the musical unit in Donne.

Originally in troubadour love-song there was a freedom of form in the shape and the length of the stanzas, the length of each line, and the arrangement of the rhymes, but eventually the Chanson came to be a rigidly determined genre.[10] The increased interest in songs in the late Elizabethan age lent to the lyric a formal beauty, an equipoise, that was reflected in the symmetry of the artefact as a whole structure, since the English translations of Italian rhetorical treatises, which emphasized the proper forms of poetry and a classic style had

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[8] Legouis, Donne the Craftsman, 14-16.

[9] Ibid., 23.

[10] Valency, In Praise of Love, 108.

greatly affected all English lyrical poetry. The influence of song rhythms is obvious in a poet like Thomas Campion whose many lyrics were put to music, and it is even to be found in a classic poet such as Ben Jonson. In his love lyrics, Donne never uses a regular form such as the Petrarchan sonnet or blank verse, although his themes are the same as those of the song writers and fashionable sonneteers when they talk about their amatory experiences in "whining" poetry. Metrically speaking, the great difference between them and him lies in the fact that Donne was never afraid to experiment in the lyric form. Dramatically, there is all the difference. Their technique had crystallized in the early Seventeenth century. For example, Davison's Poetical Rhapsody (1602) which reached a final edition in 1621 was the last predominantly Petrarchan and pastoral collection of lyrics.[11] With his songs Donne begins his experiment in a metrical technique where his extravagant Petrarchism is neither a pose nor a manner but a means to a dramatic end, that of anatomizing the lover.

The affinity which some of the art songs of Donne have with the 'Elegies' is most striking and lends credence to Helen Gardner's postulate that at a time (before 1600) when Donne was writing the 'Elegies' he was also writing " a certain number of lyrics, 'songs

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[11] Bush, English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 105.

which were made to certain ayres which were made before', and love-epigrams inspired by one of his favourite poets, Martial".[12] Among the known art songs which are centered in an Ovidian convention which reveal a heroic bias are 'The Message', 'Communitie', 'Confined Love', and 'Breake of Day', and 'Goe, and catche a falling starre'. No music survives for these last two songs but there are settings for the first three. 'The Baite' is strictly speaking a literary not a musical parody. I am, however, including it in this first category of song along with other songs which are parodies since it is a burlesque imitation or caricature of a poem of Marlowe's and meant to be humorous. Because it does not denote a sophisticated type of comedy, and because it parodies 'The passionate Shepheard to his love', printed in Englands Helicon (1600),[13] it is safe to conjecture that it could have been one of the earliest examples of Donne's comic power. The fact that it has such a close relationship with a poem of Marlowe's proves that Donne was interested in the work of Marlowe as early as 1600. It seems entirely feasible in the light of this knowledge to look for and expect other evidences of his interest in the lyrics of his contemporaries when such a clue as 'The Baite.' is available.

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[12] Gardner, op. cit., Intro., lx.

[13] Englands Helicon, Hugh Macdonald, ed., 192.

There is no 'art' setting as such for 'The Baite', although Donne's lyrics are included with a lesson for the lyra-viol which William Corkine printed in the 1612 edition of his songbook. Perhaps 'Communitie' and 'Confined Love' were also art songs, but no music survives for them. 'The Baite' and 'The Message' are examples of the parody, the one being a parody of a poem in the Petrarchan manner, the other of a letter. 'The Baite' was not the only parody of Marlowe's poem which appeared in 'The Passionate Pilgrim' (1599), for Sir Walter Raleigh's 'The Nymph's Reply to the Shepheard' was printed in Englands Helicon (1600) although ascribed to 'Ignoto', as was also 'Come live with me and be my deere', which seems to be another parody of Marlowe's original poem. There is a song in 'The Faithful Shepherdess', (printed 1609-10; acted c. 1608-9) probably written by John Fletcher (1579-1625) which has more than a hint of Donne's parody in it, and I reproduce it here because it illustrates the fact that Donne's poem must have circulated among the playwrights.

> Do not fear to put thy feet
> Naked in the river sweet;
> Think not leech, or newt, or toad,
> Will bite thy foot, when thou hast trod:
> Nor let the water rising high,
> As thou wad'st in, make thee cry
> And sob; but ever live with me,
> And not a wave shall trouble thee![14]

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[14] Ault, Elizabethan Lyrics from the Original Texts, 404-5.

The obvious similarity between this song and 'The Baite'is easily seen at a glance. I shall not comment on the latter parody, since it is so well known, other than to point out Donne's use of the literary device of the disguise or deception. In this song the lady is disguised not only as the fisherman but as the actual bait, and the men with wandering eyes are the "poore fishes" who can be bewitched by "sleave-like flies". Others have need of "angling weeds", "strangling snares" and "windowie netting" but not she. She is herself and needs no deceit. The idyllic pastoral scene beside a smooth-flowing brook achieves its parody through contrasted descriptions of the imaginative world of the poet and the world as it really is. The "golden sands and christall brookes" of the poet's world are contrasted with the slimy, freezing water of a realistic brook that has hidden dangers such as sharp shells and weeds which cut the legs. Here Donne obliquely repudiates the current Petrarchism of the Elizabethan songs that were flooding the miscellanies. Herein lies the clue that Donne will use parody to show that more often than not there are no ethics in infatuation, only fantastic disguises. By the use of contrast, word-play, and puns, Donne creates a parody which clearly reveals his interest in a comedy of wit, characterized by an air of whimsical fantasy.

'The Message' is such a whimsical lyric for it parodies two

poetic conventions: the Petrarchan love-letter or complaint sent to a faithless mistress and the fictional revenge of the lover. Donne always uses the manners and devices of complimentary Petrarchism for his own poetic purposes. The petition of the courtly Petrarchan lover is one of the themes of the Elizabethan love-song in which the lover is willing to send his heart's sighs and patient tears to his cruel mistress in the hope that his pitiful tears will renew her thoughts of him whom she has refused, and his burning sighs will dissolve her icy heart. An example of this kind of lament is the following lyric set to music by John Dowland in 1597 in his First Booke of Songes:

> Go, crystal tears, like to the morning showers,
> And sweetly weep into thy lady's breast,
> And as the dews revive the drooping flowers,
> So let your drops of pity be addressed,
> To quicken up the thoughts of my desert,
> Which sleeps too sound whilst I from her depart.
>
> Haste, restless sighs, and let your burning breath,
> Dissolve the ice of her indurate heart,
> Whose frozen rigour, like forgetful death,
> Feels never any touch of my desert,
> Yet sighs and tears to her I sacrifice
> Both from a spotless heart and patient eyes.[15]

The typical fictional revenge of the Petrarchan lover is represented by the following Madrigal which was set to music first in 1597 by Thomas Weelkes and then again in 1604 by Michael East:

> Young Cupid hath proclaimed a bloody war,
> And vows revenge on all the maiden crew.

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[15]Fellowes, English Madrigal Verse, 458-9. (From now on referred to by proper name only.)

O yield, fair Cloris, lest in that foul jar
Thine after-penance makes thy folly rue.
And yet I fear her wondrous beauty's such,
A thousand Cupids dare not Cloris touch.[16]

For all its extravagant Petrarchism 'The Message' is not a gallant exaggerated poetic gesture of classic revenge. Nor does a love-sick swain importune his cold mistress in abject passivity as we find in the first song. In the surprise about-face of the "send home", "no keep still" of the first two stanzas of Donne's song there is more than a playful high-flown hyperbole. Here is a lover whose eyes have been made "fit for no good sight". At first glance the classic idea that the eyes are the mirror of the soul (or heart) seems just another example of a derivative classical conceit. "Yet send me back my heart and eyes,/That I may know, and see thy lyes". (The italics are mine.) The next lines, however, are more readily understood and appreciated if they are put into a dramatic context. The operative words are "know" and "see", "laugh" and "joy" and the phrase "when thou/Art in anguish/ And dost languish". The rejected lover will somehow be enabled to know and see his mistress's lies. Why not by means of this mirror of the soul, which, like Friar Bacon's magic glass, " a glass prospective wherein men might see/ What so their thoughts or heart's desire could wish". (The Honourable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, iv, iii, 28-29), will reveal her un-

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[16] Ibid., 281, and 83.

faithfulness to him when he gazes into it? The inherent irony of this particular situation is that it is the mistress herself who, having spurned her former lover when she returned his eyes, the mirror of his soul, gives into his keeping the means of his revenge on her which will prove a source of laughter and joy to him. This revenge foreshadows the revenge of 'The Apparition' when the neglected former mistress is spurned by a new lover. But the tone of this last mentioned poem is more vehement, and the conceits are more subtle than the conventional images in 'The Message'. Both 'The Message' and 'The Apparition' evolve from a Petrarchan cliché, the spurned lover's revenge, but the revenge of 'The Message' is more sweet and less bitter than that of 'The Apparition' which lyric was also set to music.

It is probable that Donne was interested in lute songs. In William Corkine's The Second Book of Ayres, Some to Sing and Play to the Base-Violl Alone: Others, to be sung to the Lute and Base-Violl (1612), Donne's song 'Breake of Day' appears.[17] Helen Gardner gives the musical version of this song, and the following one, another of Donne's lyrics, 'The Expiration', which was set to music by Alfonso Ferrabosco in Ayres (1609). This last lyric is of great interest to Donne scholars since it is the first of Donne's poems to appear in print. 'Breake of Day' is an aubade, but, as in any lyric of Donne,

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[17] Fellowes, 440-1.

there is more to this song than appears on the surface. Elizabethans had been accustomed to love-lyrics celebrating the dawn in such commonplace imagery as "Come away, Come, sweet Love/ The golden morning breaks", and "Pack clouds, away, and welcome day/ With night we banish sorrow", and the well-known song in Cymbeline, "Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings/ and Phoebus gins arise". Donne's song is a woman's complaint, but this is not the only point of difference. How Mrs. Andreasen can possibly think that 'Sweetest love, I do not goe' is the same bawdy type as 'Breake of Day' escapes me, even though she does concede that the first poem is more subtle.[18] There is simply no connection in tone, mood, rhythmic phrasing, or actual meaning between these two poems. Furthermore, 'Breake of Day' is not a bawdy poem; it is a carefully constructed lyric both dramatically and metrically speaking. This poem is a dramatic monologue, but one with a difference: the presence of an unseen querulous dramatic character intimately involved with the 'action' is dramatically realized by the technique called 'flyting', but in this case the dialogue is one-sided, the listener/reader surmising what the missing repartee consists of by literally reading between the lines. Revenge tragedy is especially adept in the use of this shuttle-action in dialogue. Indeed, the beautifully contrived dialogues between protagonists contain some

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[18]Andreasen, Conservative Revolutionary, 223.

of the best lines in the Jacobean dramas. The tense scenes seem almost laid in court, and one of them, the arraignment of Vittoria in The White Devil (III. ii. 155-162), takes place in a court-room. Here we see processes of mind being personified as truth or falsehood by means of process of law in the shuttle-like dialogue between the judge and the witness. Here is the dramatic use of wit for the sake of ironic argument that reveals character and develops plot. What is true and what is false, charity and lust, are juxtaposed with stirring impact.

Donne uses in 'Breake of Day' the same grammatical structures of speech as Webster. The natural rapidity with which the mistress delivers her series of jeering questions to her unseen protagonist is aided by the staccato of the rhyming couplets, a marvelous use of assonance, and balanced epithets and phrases; all this rhetorical 'wit-combat' is ingeniously exploited by Donne. The pace of the whole poem is skillfully increased, and as a result we are excitedly caught up in a direct involvement, one in which the poem becomes the little stage of the two lovers. The two principals are shown as 'type' characters who are antithetically opposed to each other, both in sex and in viewpoint. Their actions are made more dramatic by the variations of the level of the rhetoric, the woman's dialogue of the first stanza alternating with the epigrammatic tags of the second stanza, and the last

stanza containing both. The sententious couplet is common to tragedy of this period, and is especially apparent in speeches of such malcontents as Vendice, Flamineo, and Bosola. In 'Breake of Day', a stereotyped emotion is characterized as wit in a patterned speech of a female malcontent, where the speaker is not so much assertive as narcissistic, and where, therefore, there has been a reversal of the usual roles of the man and the woman in love. I have suggested that the woman is a type as is her male partner. Her role is an ambivalent one, since she is characterized as a 'chaste' harlot similar to Vittoria. But the stock idea of the dramatist, that to illustrate virtue you display vice, seems applicable here. The woman speaker tries determinedly throughout the poem to prove that she is on the side of right, the virtuous side. To clinch her case there is a veiled ironic barb of wit in the last two lines of her monologue which has the effect of a dénouement-

> He which has businesse, and makes
> love, doth doe
> Such wrong, as when a maryed man
> doth wooe.

In effect, she says two wrongs do not make a right. In the last line she reveals the marital status of her lover, and this revelation is not only supposed to be a parting shot at him for leaving her, but also is for our benefit. Donne is fond of throwing us off-guard by the use of the rhetorical figure, chiasmus. We are not immediately sure where

the true weight of his satire rests and of what it actually consists. Many examples can be found in his 'Satires' but I reproduce a short one for illustration from Satire II -

> And they who write to Lords, rewards to get,
> Are they not like singers at doores for meat? (ll. 21-2)

In 'Breake of Day', beneath the overt complaint of the mistress, there lies a taunting ridicule which is cunningly concealed by logical reasoning. Could there lie beneath both a hidden ethical judgment? Perhaps, but the point of this song and Donne's other art songs is their epigrammatic wit, whatever it conceals.

A song which seems to contain a more obvious ethical judgment as well as considerable wit is 'Confined Love', for in this lyric the woman speaker reveals the hypocrisy of the courtly love convention that promises promiscuity but seldom practises it. There is no spirit of drollery in this song; neither our sympathy nor our amusement is invited. There does appear, however, to be a spirit of revelry, of teasing lies that seem to bubble up to the surface.

The kind of poetry, then, which is revealed in Donne's early Songs and Sonnets is a bold poetry of confidence, that sweeps all argument before it. Donne maintains complete control of the situation. In 'Goe, and catche a falling starre' we are a 'captured' audience for the space of the song, and we are sent to the far corners of the visible and invisible worlds and beyond in order to find one constant woman. It is

obvious that Donne is using the Petrarchan device of the private curse in a social way to condemn all women, not only one reluctant mistress. The theme of this lyric is the inconstancy of women, not their immorality which are two different things, for morality in our sense of the term is not a matter of abstract standards in the seventeenth century; it is a way of life, a mean to be sought. In 'That Virginity is a Vertue'[19] Donne does not equate virginity (chastity) with morality for he does not consider virginity a virtue - it can be an inhumane vice if it is kept perpetually, as he so cleverly argues. Then again, in 'That it is Possible to Find Some Virtue in Some Women' he comes to the implicit conclusion that it is not, for he cannot find even one example of a virtuous woman. Obviously this is all done with tongue-in-cheek.

Assuming that 'Goe, and catche a falling starre' is a witty lyric, what does Donne say about a man of wit? We can find out if we turn to 'An Essay of Valour' which would seem to be a short manual on the art of love, English courtier style. The man of wit does not receive love, only the promise of it, Donne says in this essay. We are told that the use of mere wit to procure love will not suffice, for wit makes laughter and takes away all thought of love which in Donne's day

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[19] This prose selection (Paradox XII) and the following one (Paradox VI) is from The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose, Coffin, ed., 289-292; 284-5.

is still associated with melancholy after the courtly love convention. Donne, then, would seem to distinguish between at least two kinds of lovers. The man of valour in Donne's definition is an honest and brave man who is not a braggart; the man of wit is proud without just cause, and is a dissembler. In establishing the speaker as a man of wit, probably a university wit, I should like to suggest that this poem is a paradox, and that the poem's spontaneity is a dramatic illusion which seems real because of the logic of the argument whose conclusion is preconceived from the word "Goe ...".

The impact of this song lies in the immediate involvement which we have with the dramatic speaker who always stays in character and has a predilection for spirited dialogue which displays his erudition and poetic powers rather ostentatiously. The grammatical structure of direct speech either in expository form or a statement is a literary convention of the dramatists. Often the action of a play begins straightaway with an exclamatory remark of a principal character. In The Revenger's Tragedy, Vendice says, "Duke, royal lecher! Go, grey-haired adultery!" We do not await the entrance cue of Donne's dramatic characters either, for they are thrust into our view precipitously with such unforgettable ejactulations as "For God's sake, hold your tongue and let me love", or "Nature's lay Ideot, I taught thee to love", or "Goe, and catche a falling starre". A world of meaning is

compressed into these initial lines of a play or a poem, whichever the case may be. The attention of the audience or reader is immediately engaged on two levels by the dramatist and/or poet. "In the plays of the University wits the presenters stand in a special relation to the play; they are either the authors of it, or closely connected with it in some other way. They address themselves quite frankly to the audience."[20] Just as Mephistopheles made it possible for Faustus to possess the occult property of being invisible when he wished, so Donne allows the possibility that the reader or listener enjoys this magic state, "If thou beest borne to strange sights,/Things invisible to see...". There is an air of unreality as well as reality about this poem which gives it a peculiar charm in keeping with the paradoxical nature of its theme. This is accomplished by juxtaposing the unseen and the seen, the metaphysical and the mundane.

In this poem Donne breaks up the old rhetorical patterns of lyrical poetry by the use of a poetic language that declaims, not explains. We hear his voice and we pay attention. The Elizabethan playwrights learned this art of oratory from Seneca, as well as tricks and devices. They mingled "as no other school of dramatists has done, the oratorical,

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[20]Bradbrook, Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy, 113-4.

the conversational, the elaborate and the simple, the direct and the indirect; so that they were able to write plays which can still be viewed as plays, with any plays, and which can still be read as poetry, with any poetry".[21] Donne, by means of a combination of direct speech, personal statement and an uncanny sense of the metre appropriate to the speech rhythm, has also produced poems which can be viewed as dramatic poetry, with any poetry.

Perhaps we should not discount the possibility that in this song Donne's railing directed against women as a group, is only done in jest. Perhaps Donne assumes an exaggerated pose for a reason, that is, to display his wit. In his 'Satires and Elegies' he always took a definite position to which he consistently adhered. Donne's wit took many forms, from mere witticism in the 'Epigrams' to a satirical invective in the 'Satires' and which becomes in his more mature work an intellectual tour de force, whose hall-mark is the conceit. The seventeenth century dramatists and the poet Donne all had the mental faculty called wit. 'The Baite' is a mock-heroic song, but, beneath its surface it is more than a literary parody of Marlowe's poem, and its wit sets the mood of all the other songs.

In the early art songs there is a gaiety, but it is contrived .

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[21] Eliot, "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation" in Selected Essays, 91.

By its very nature, parody is a comic imitation, a mimicry of something else. Donne parodies the conventional postures and poetic forms that had been the norm of English lyric poetry up until his time. Marlowe uses the techniques of ironic inversion and hyperbole in The Jew of Malta where he reverses the direction of the Christian morality of anti-Semitism to reveal its destructive logic.[22] Donne employs the same conventions of ironic inversion, hyperbole, and dialectical reasoning as the dramatists. Donne differs from the classical Petrarchists in that he uses a subtle dialectical process not the rhetoric of mockery, to emphasize the irony of a situation. Unlike their songs of irony his lyrics do not reveal throughout their length tonal shifts in the lover's attitude by means of a mock-heroic imagery alone, with, at the end, a mood of reversal in a kind of palinode. The Petrarchan tradition demanded an extravagant devotion that might waver, but never could be completely renounced. True and false love were often juxtaposed in the Petrarchan songs, but there was never any attempt to probe the different psychological implications for the lover. The mistress was either true or false, and that was that. In Donne's art songs, the reader is forced to consider the underlying behavioral implications of the lover's bantering attitude. This is in keeping with Donne's

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[22]Sanders, The Dramatist and the Received Idea, 43.

admonition in The Progresse of the Soule (l. 520), "The only measure is, and judge, opinion". The reader is caught up in a drama of situation and mood where he is required to use his own wits to delve beneath the meaning of the rapid-fire dialogue. The outstanding feature of these art songs is the lilting wit of their argument deceptively simplified by the smoothness of their prosody. These early songs in their pomposity, credulity, and querulousness offer us a froth of paradox and irony. It remains for Donne to set before us a draught of direct satire in his poems of comedy.

THE COMEDY OF LOVE

Unmasking the Icons

Donne's comedy of love, as I postulate it, can be divided into two main groups, a novel comedy of irony that verges on caricature designated as Group A, and a more bitter comedy of satire known as Group B. Again, as in the art songs, two conventions are parodied, namely the Ovidian and the Petrarchan. Within Group A there are two sub-groups, a parody of types, and a parody of tokens or objects. In Group A, the icon of the licentious young amorist is featured in 'The Indifferent' and 'Womans Constancy' in the Ovidian manner; in 'The Paradox' and 'The Prohibition' in the Petrarchan manner. In the sub-group of Group A which relates to fictional tokens, old themes are handled in new ways where conventional imagery clusters around such tokens as impossibly clever fleas ('The Flea'), shiny jet rings ('A Jeat Ring Sent'), the curses of folk-lore ('The Curse'), the legacies of lovers ('The Legacie', 'The Will'), a new almanac of love's arithmetic ('The Computation'), a lover's sighs and tears in a parody of the temporary parting of lovers ('The Expiration') and a notice served like a summons on a mistress ('The Prohibition'). In Group B, the icon

is the mythical God of Love whose many shapes and disguises are revealed by the poet. This god is seen as a devil ('Loves Usury'), as a god of metamorphoses, a 'changeling' ('Loves Diet'), as a tyrant ('Loves Exchange'), and finally as a 'moderne' god ('Loves Deitie').

Unlike his 'Satires' and 'Elegies', Donne's comedy of love is founded in the intimacy of a close relationship between two protagonists. The comedy lies in revealing the dislocated nature of this relationship and its resolution. In Donne's 'Satires', the old-time vices of the morality plays had been transformed into witty epigrammatic observations touching on the vice of the London street scenes, and the court. Donne's lyrical comedies are concerned with the narrow world of the lover which is circumscribed around his consciousness, and derives its pattern from an extravagant Petrarchism, although the influence of the epigram is not lost. Sometimes the protagonists are the lover and his mistress or mistresses; at other times, the main action involves the lover and no less a personage than the God of Love himself. Whichever situation arises, there are within it obstacles to be overcome. In Donne's comedies of love, the world is slightly on the jar, but the attempt to set it right can be humorous. This effect of humour is created by the language of everyday speech in a teasing tautology, and a 'rocking-horse' motion of the balance of opposites.

For example, in 'The Indifferent' there is a suppressed gaiety reminiscent of a children's party game with the excited lover in the centre of a circle hesitatingly trying to select his next partner:

> I can love both faire and browne,
> Her whom abundance melts, and her who want betraies,
> Her who loves lonenesse best, and her who maskes
> and plaies,
> Her whom the country form'd and whom the town,
> Her who beleeves, and her who tries,
> Her who still weepes with spungie eyes,
> And her who is dry corke, and never cries;
> I can love her, and her, and you and you,
> I can love any, so she be not true.

Both 'The Indifferent' and 'Womans Constancy' are built around the heroic self-image of the braggart. The poems proceed in the manner of wit-combats with an unseen persona providing a sounding-board for the arguments proposed. The tone of 'The Indifferent' denotes a 'sweet' type of comedy, covering the irony in which there is no bitterness, only a delicious taste of honey, "Love's sweetest Part, variety". This poem is a monologue with a male speaker. It is one of Donne's most successful lyrics because its language has a bantering tone that is so well sustained throughout in a type of light comedy which contains taunts, bombast, and hyperbole. A dramatic effect is achieved by the ploy of legal interrogations where the defendant on the witness stand, in this case "two or three/Poore Heretiques", is bombarded by a series of rapid questions. The humor of the whole piece lies in the ridiculous proposition that love is a vice, inconstancy a virtue. The smug

assurance of the speaker that he "can love both faire and browne", and his emphasis of "her" which pronoun he repeats eleven times in the first stanza, is only countered by the "you and you" of the second last line. The dramatis persona, the indifferent lover, speaks from the lofty height of reasoned argument. His sexual rebellion finds expression in a rhetoric of jurisprudence in which broken compacts, false oaths, and high-handed judges prefigure the judgments handed down that frustrate and denigrate true love and the constant lover. The speaker of 'The Indifferent' is not necessarily Donne but the facts of his early life all point to this distinct possibility. Donne shows that love can be a mockery and an enigma: it can be a self-seeking, easily abandoned pastime, or a heartbreak with all its attendant grief. Venus, goddess of love, has so decreed -

> But I have told them, since you will be true
> You shall be true to them, who are false to you.

Ever since Chaucer in his Troilus and Criseyde had shown the range of love and its variety and proved that even a seemingly faithful woman can be fickle, the inconstancy of woman has been a familiar motif of English literature. It has always been easier to say what true love is not, and what an inconstant lover is than to discover of what love consists, because love is unfathomable in its complex nature. In 'Womans Constancy', because love is 'negative', Donne as poet can unmask love to reveal the reality that lies beneath it.

The lover as hero projects two voices, the voice of the reveller, and the voice of his conscience that is revealed beneath the speaker's words. This second voice I identify as Donne's own voice. In Satire III Donne seems 'sincere' in his role of satirist in the light of his own private quest for a religion that satisfies his intellectual yearnings. The questions in 'Womans Constancy' are not rhetorical for beneath their syntax lie hidden ethical judgments. Behind the mask of the reveller lies the plain unvarnished truth that new-made vows should not be antedated, that it is wrong for lovers to change their personalities overnight, that oaths made in fearful reverence should not be forsworn, that true marriages, like death itself, do not untie, and finally that lovers' contracts bind after sleep as well as before. Falsehood is not truth, even where lovers are concerned. The lover says that he could prove all these things about love that he has enumerated but he will not, because he is no better than she will be. In reality he wants to justify his own actions and leave himself an escape route at the end of the affair. In Womans Constancy', Donne shows us the disguises which the male speaker has artfully designed and which he will don when the occasion warrants his so doing. He seeks to cover up his own inadequacies under the guise of a ridicule of his mistress. It should be noted that the title is ironic, the mistress having not as yet been proved untrue. "Now thou hast lov'd me one whole day /Tomorrow

when thou leav'st, what wilt thou say?" The mistress is to be tried and judged before she has committed an offence. There is no justice in this fictional world of the lovers for lust has no justification. Every poetic line that indicts the mistress serves also to reveal the cynical and self-seeking dramatic character of the lover. At the end of the poem when the lover says, "Vain lunatique" the paradox has reached its peak. The parody has only to be completed in the irony of the epigrammatic ending: "For by to-morrow, I may think so too". The lover's attitude is ambivalent, but we sense that the taunts to the mistress contain ironic inversions of moral truths to which Donne actually subscribes and after which he is perpetually seeking.

Whereas 'Womans Constancy' deals with the heroic lover and the morality of 'free' love, 'The Paradox', as its name indicates, is concerned with the paradoxical nature of the Petrarchan cliché that love can kill. This lyric is a marvelous example of the contrary nature of love. Everyone knows that love cannot kill, and yet, paradoxically, it can not be proved that lovers do not die for love. After all, Isabella in The White Devil dies for love when she kisses the poisoned picture of her love, her husband, the faithless Brachiano. There is irony in the words spoken by the Conjuror to the remorseless Brachiano "whose art was poison":

'Twas her custom nightly
Before she went to bed, to go and visit
Your picture and to feed her eyes and lips
On the dead shadow.

(II. ii. 25-28)

"Dead shadow" in an uncanny way foreshadows the ghost that the dead Brachiano will eventually become.

The death for love of the star-crossed lovers in Romeo and Juliet is shored up with ironies, whose fatalistic nature is confirmed at the beginning of their love which is doomed from the start, as far as their respective families are concerned. Nothing is certain in love, yet nothing is more sure than love. Therein lies the paradox.

In Troilus and Cressida, Shakespeare ridicules the idea that love can kill in a lyric, 'Love, love, nothing but love'. I reproduce it here because its tone is similar to Donne's.

Love, love, nothing but love, still more!
For, O love's bow
Shoots buck and doe:
The shaft confounds,
Not that it wounds
But tickles still the sore.

These lovers cry, Oh! Oh! they die!
Yet that which seems the wound to kill,
Doth turn oh! oh! to ha! ha! ha!
So dying love lives still
Oh! oh! awhile, but ha! ha! ha!
Oh! oh! groans out for ha! ha! ha!

(III. i. 117 ff.)

Although Pandarus sings of the realism of a love that still lives despite the artificiality of a love convention which says that the lover is slain if he loves or has loved, later on in the play he learns that love can die, even love that has been sworn to be true. In the light of the dénouement of the play, this song of Pandarus is most ironic in the pun contained in a phrase such as "nothing for love" and the sexual punning implied in the first line of the second verse.

Donne's lyric, 'The Paradox' is in the same jesting mood that characterizes the above song. It, too, is a marvel of puns and paradoxes. The pun in the last line finishes the poem off with a flourish: "Love-slaine, loe, here I lye", but the fine equipoise of the poetic structure is not thrown off balance. Donne has proved his contention that no one "can judge a perfect Lover". The symmetry of the rhyming couplets, the equal weight given to opposites like "lov'd" and "kill'd", "love", and "death", "dye" and "lye", "Epitaph" and "Tomb", all serve to point up by means of contrast the confusion of the world of love. We think that we understand words and meanings, but when combinations of words are assembled, we are not so sure. Behind the jest there is an ethical world of meaning which we have to discover for ourselves.

Similarly, we find on investigation that the Petrarchan cliché of the complaint sent to a cold mistress in 'The Prohibition' is humo-

rously reversed when the lover, not the lady, is indifferent. Both hating and loving is what the self-assured male lover is requesting, and by so doing he reveals the hypocrisy of classical Petrarchan stereotypes. Thus, he is enabled to enjoy the best of all worlds, but he does not do so in the derisive manner of the lover in 'Communitie'. The speaker in 'The Prohibition' shows an irresolution in the last stanza in keeping with the narcissism of the courtly swain rather than the bravado of the heroic lover.

> Yet, love and hate mee too,
> So, these extreames shall neythers office doe;
> Love mee, that I may die the gentler way;
> Hate mee, because thy love's too great for mee;
> Or let these two, themselves, not me decay;
> So shall I live, thy Stage, not Triumph bee;
> Then, least thy love, hate and mee thou undoe,
> Oh let mee live, yet love and hate mee too.

In keeping with heroic songs which contain tirades against women is 'The Curse' where the vehemence and number of the lover's curses are far in excess of the crime of which the fictional character is to be accused. Helen Gardner says that this poem has affinities with the 'Satires' and 'Elegies'[1], and this fact should be the clue to look for a vein of irony underlining the stream of curses flowing so effortlessly from the speaker of the poem. If this mistress in question is unknown, then the affair which the speaker has with her is a clandestine one.

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[1]Gardner, The Elegies, etc., Commentary, 163.

The lover, like the player Queen in Hamlet, seems to protest too much. Seen in this light, the curses act like boomerangs with the speaker a target, and even the mistress, if she has any delusions about her true position," for if it be a shee/Nature before hand hath out-cursed mee". In this poem, the obstacles to the lover's happiness seem to reside in the tension of an unreasonable fear where the lovers only recourse is to retreat into a fantasy world of make-believe in which witches cast spells and curses have effect. This is the world of folklore that is as old as sin. This is the world of self-delusion and escape, that was also Jonson's world of Volpone which Donne admired. Thomas Campion in The Third . . . Book of Ayres (c. 1618) has a song that in its imagery hails from the ancient lore of magic, charms and conjuring:

> Thrice toss these oaken ashes in the air,
> Thrice sit thou mute in this enchanted chair.
> Then thrice three times tie up this true love's knot,
> And murmur soft: She will, or she will not.
>
> Go burn these pois'nous weeds in yon blue fire,
> These screech-owl's feathers and this prickling briar
> This cypress gathered at a dead man's grave,
> That all thy fears and cares an end may have.
>
> Then come, you fairies, dance with me a round;
> Melt her hard heart with your melodious sound.
> In vain are all the charms I can devise;
> She hath an art to break them with her eyes.[2]

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[2]Fellowes, 401.

The curses which Donne would invoke in his poem are all directed toward his supposed detractors, while the love in Campion's song casts a spell on his own fears and cares, and invokes the magic of music to charm his cold mistress, but to no avail. The new theme which Donne introduces into the repertoire of classical fable and folk-lore is the satire of the lover. 'The Curse' must have been read by Marston because Helen Gardner says that he copies one of the situations which Donne wishes for in his tenth 'Satire', which was added in the second edition of the Scourge of Villainy in 1599.[3] This fact obviously helps to date 'The Curse'. For my purpose, this information is another example of the interest the dramatists were taking in Donne's lyrics. They and Donne were interested in the fantastic tricks that lovers play under the threat of persecution, meticulous scruple, or superstition.

As I have mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Donne's novel ironic comedy verges on caricature. Eliot saw that this kind of grotesque exaggeration in Marlowe's poetry was worthy of praise, and gave Dido as an example of great poetry "which secures its emphasis by always hesitating on the edge of caricature at the right moment".[4] Donne shows the same deft control of language as Marlowe, where hyperbole is never allowed to overflow the bounds of a smooth conver-

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[3] Op. cit., Commentary, 164.

[4] 'Christopher Marlowe' in Selected Essays, 124.

sational tone in the dialogue, yet has a definite function to perform. Emblems are especially amenable to caricature. Probably the best known of the parodies built around an emblem is 'The Flea'. This poem is a splendid example of how Donne takes a traditional image for his theme and transforms it by means of a dramatic dialogue of specious arguments in order to reveal lovers in a new way. The Flea was placed first in the 1635 edition of the Songs and Sonnets[5] probably because Ovid's Carmen de Pulice had made such an impression throughout European literary circles in the sixteenth century and the subject-matter was still a popular one. Renaissance poets were quick to seize on the erotic possibilities of a flea taking liberties with a mistress' person, and poems on this subject appeared in French, Spanish, Italian, Latin and English. Probably Donne was the first English poet to imitate Ovid although Campion's Latin Elegies inaugurated the vogue of the Ovidian Elegy.[6] In his 'Satires' and 'Elegies' Donne's style rejuvenated the old Latin elegiac couplet and gave it new energy and dramatic verve. No one had written like this before in English. In the lyrics, 'The Flea' is obviously the closest to the Ovidianism of the Elegies.

One English version of Ovid as a literary antecedent is

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[5] Grierson, II, Commentary, 36.

[6] Gardner, op. cit., Gen. Intro., xxxiii.

merely droll. I reproduce it here in order to reveal how imaginatively conceived 'The Flea' is in a new way.

Unto a fly transformed from human kind,
Methought I ranged on a sunshine day;
When, for to ease my sad afflicted mind,
Upon my mistress' robe I 'gan to play.
At length I mounted up her dainty breast,
From whence I sought my solace and my rest.

Yet, not content with these aspiring toys,
Changing my seat into her curled hair,
By seeking to increase my new-found joys
I turned my sweet applause to sudden fear,
For, chancing on her eyes of flame and fire,
I burnt my wings whereby I did aspire.

Thus falling to the ground in my decay,
With mournful buzzings craving her relief,
Methought she mourned with rush my heavy lay
And crushed me with her foot to end my grief,
And said: Lo, where the silly wretch doth lie,
Whose end was such because he flew so high.

(From John Bartlet, A Book of Ayres, (1606)[7]

The difference in poetic technique between this poem and 'The Flea' needs no comment since it is self-evident. Donne's poem differs from a poem such as this because Donne does not indulge in a frank voluptuousness for its own sake: Donne is interested in developing a relationship, not in satisfying a lover's sexual passion. A little drama is enacted in the short space of 'The Flea'. In the balance and harmony of

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[7] Fellowes, 360.

the poem's structure the poetic craftsmanship is almost flawless. The dramatic high point of this lyric comes at lines 12 and 13 close to the middle of the twenty-seven lines. "This flea is you and I, and this/Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is." The wit of this poem which gathers force from here on has been the source of much critical analysis. Professor Grierson remarked in 1912 that Donne in reflecting Ovid's so-called depravity is revolting against an old unreal convention.[8] I suggest that Donne is not in revolt against anything but is parodying this Ovidian convention by means of an object that would be familiar to readers of Ovid. In 'The Flea' we see an imagination at work that isolates lovers in their own little world, not the poet engineering a seduction. The world of the lovers is nonetheless contracted within the 'living walls of jet' of this poem as it is contained in the little room of The Sunne Rising. Both poems are set in the perspective of imagination, and it is only our fastidiousness that prefers the one to the other.

In 'A Jeat Ring Sent', Donne handles an old Petrarchan cliché, the love-token sent to an unresponsive mistress, also in a new way. The poem begins in medias res; the ring already has been sent and

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[8] Grierson, II, Intro., xl.

subsequently returned to the sender. We know by the process of deduction that the ring is for a lady because we are told that it only circles the top of the speaker's finger, whereas the lady had worn it on her thumb. The jet ring is a symbol of the lady's infidelity, and the lover is a typical spurned Petrarchan lover. The ring, which is an emblem of the brittle love of his former mistress, serves a dramatic function just as the unsightly skull of Gloriana, an emblem of death's corruption, does in the opening scene of The Revenger's Tragedy. The lover in Donne's poem talks to the ring held up before his eyes saying "Thou art not so black, as my heart" and in so doing indicates the blackness of his thoughts which are blacker than jet. Vindice holding Gloriana's skull says, "Thou sallow picture of my poison'd love", and vows vengeance on the ravisher of his former mistress saying

> Vengeance, thou murders' quit-rent and whereby
> Thou show'st thyself tenant to Tragedy,
> O, keep thy day, hour, minute, I beseech,
> For those thou has determin'd! hum, who e'er knew
> Murder unpaid?
>
> (I. i. 39-41)

Donne's words "nothing more endlesse" in the last line of the first stanza suggest that his vengeance will be of long duration and, in my opinion, is mirrored in Vindice's words, "O, keep thy day, hour, minute, I beseech". I believe that in this particular context a comparison of the stylistic technique of Donne and Tourneur is not out of the

way. Tourneur uses the stock situation of the lover's revenge with imagery appropriate to this convention, while Donne builds his theme out of another Petrarchan cliché, the love-token. Both the skull and the ring are at the centre of the action in the play and the poem, respectively, and are symbols of betrayal, each in its own way. There is a certain artificiality in both cases in form and content. The couplet is a favourite rhyme scheme, and as a result an artificial formality and an air of sententiousness is projected. Characters are type-cast and manipulated something like puppets: accordingly there is no character development. The speaker, like Vendice, is no abject lover, but one whose resentment has sharpened his wit. In The Revenger's Tragedy characters are humorous and arranged in a Jonsonian mould.[9] The same can be said for 'A Jeat Ring Sent' where there is no attempt at characterization other than the projected thoughts and feelings of a character in such a flat generalization as this epigrammatic tag, "Be justly proud, and gladly safe, that thou dost dwell with me/ She that, Oh broke her faith, would soon breake thee". Donne's poetry does not yet show the bitterness of a poem like 'The Apparition,' only the disproportion of the spurned lover's world. A poem such as 'A Jeat Ring Sent', or any of the other poems in this group which I have mentioned

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[9] Bradbrook, Elizabethan Tragedy, 70.

earlier, is about a lack of harmony, a conflict between two opposed orders, an ideal one and the actual present one, a dislocation of an order that has been acceptable as emotionally desirable. In disordered experience the tragic is always near to the comic to create the tragi-comic.

It is natural that some of Donne's ebullient wit should overflow into a more derisive type of parody, a critical comedy of burlesque. T. S. Eliot, with his uncanny sense of the truth at the centre of appearances, saw that Jonson's and even Marlowe's farce was a terribly serious, at times even savage humour.[10] The comedy of Donne and of Jonson is bitter in the seriousness of its humour, but sweet in its sugar-coating which makes it pleasant to swallow. In Jonson, the rhetoric is dramatic and ostentatious, and varies with the tone of the character. Donne, like Jonson whom he admired so much, builds 'The Will' around the theme of the class practice of legacy-hunting that Jonson brilliantly portrays in Volpone. It is possible that Donne was influenced by this play because of internal evidence pertaining to the words "Roman Catholiques". Helen Gardner says that the earliest use of this term recorded in O.E.D. is 1605.[11] Volpone was played at the

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[10] From 'Christopher Marlowe' in Selected Essays, 123.

[11] Gardner, op. cit., Commentary, 176, l. 19.

Globe Theatre and at the two universities in 1606. It seems reasonable to suggest that Donne could have seen this play because he had returned to England in April, 1606, having terminated his trip to the continent with Sir Walter Chute. This means, then, that 'The Will' was one of the latest of his lyrics to be composed and probably was written at the same time as his Latin verses on Volpone were published, which Professor Bald assures us was in 1607.[12] What Donne tells us in 'The Will' has a special significance. It is interesting to speculate that this lyric may have been written at the same time as the more 'mature' poems like 'The Sunne Rising', the 'Canonization', and the great Valedictory poems. This fact would give the lie to a rigid distinction between 'light' and 'serious' poems.

What type of character is revealed by 'The Will'? First, the speaker says that he is sometimes blind: "if they be blinde" his eyes are to be bequeathed to the god of Love. But he can be moved to tears, therefore, he must be somewhat sentimental, at least sensitive, and rather pensive. He is a constant person, truthful, and is not a scandalmonger, for he can be silent when it is expedient. He is a modest man of faith and good works, but an ingenious one. He probably has not much of this world's goods because of the reference to the Capuchin whom we

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[12] Bald, 538.

are led to believe is a beggarly friar of a fairly new order in England.[13] The lover in the poem is a skeptic, and not sure of his reputation, so he is giving it to his friends, but he knows that he is industrious, therefore, his foes shall have that legacy. His sickness and any "excesse" have never quite been cured. He is a man who loves books and medals. He is interested in physics, and has written "rowles/Of Morall counsels" and he is proud of his English tongue. The speaker complains to the god of Love that the lady will only give him friendship, not love, and in his wrath demonstrates the irascibility of the frustrated lover.

In 'The Will' Donne has carefully drawn his own portrait in words, in my opinion. Whether or not we should read autobiography into this poem is a good question. If Donne wrote it in or about 1607 he would be around thirty-five years of age and would have been married for nearly six years. The speaker of the poem refers to a rival, a young lover by implication, " Who thinkes her friendship a fit portion/For yonger lovers, dost my gifts thus disproportion". Donne's close friendship with Mrs. Herbert began in 1607, when he was a married man of thirty-five and she was a woman of forty.[14] In February of 1609 Sir John Danvers married Magdalen Herbert who was twice his

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[13] Gardner, op. cit., Commentary, l.15.

[14] Ibid., Appendix C. 253.

age.[15] Helen Gardner does not think that poems physically connected in Donne's papers necessarily were addressed to the same person, as I have mentioned previously. She does mention that 'Loves Dietie', 'Loves Diet', and 'The Will' tend to occur together in manuscripts followed frequently by 'The Funerall'[16] Could these poems possibly all be connected with Mrs. Herbert? The revenge which the speaker of 'The Will' so jauntily proposes could be the prelude to the more cynical revenge of 'The Funeral' that shows more bitterness and which was probably prompted by more disappointment in love.

The prosody of these poems does not seem to me to indicate that they are early vintage poems. They all have a remarkable correspondence to colloquial speech, and if read with due attention to the length of syllables, not to the stress of accents, they are melodious enough. Moreover, 'The Will' has two sophisticated conceits, gold in mines and a sundial in a grave. 'Loves Usury' and 'Loves Exchange' are more stilted in their rhythms, according to my ear. I suggest that it is possible that the aforementioned poems could have been all prompted by Donne's deep admiration, even love for the mother of his friend, Sir Edward Herbert. Dare we speculate that some others were too?

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[15] Bald, 183, ftn. 3.

[16] Gardner, ibid., 255.

I have belaboured the biographical nature of 'The Will' for a reason, mainly because I believe that this lyric helps to point up the fact that Donne's versatility is based on manifold contradictions in his own personality, where moods and feelings based in immediate experience vary in direct proportion to the emotions of the lover at a specific time. Behind the exhibitionism of 'The Will' lies the bitterness of a spurned lover, and in the last stanza there is a trace of savage humor when the lover proposes in a grand gesture to die for love, and thereby annihilate not only himself but also love and the mistress.

Nowhere is the variability of love more obvious than in the quartet of poems on the God of Love. Here the theme is handled in the manner of low comedy with satiric overtones and underlying irony. Donne depicts this "moderne god", the formerly exalted deity, in a most derisive way in 'Loves Diet'. Here Love is cumbersome, unwieldy, burdensome, corpulent, a glutton, a madman whose "sweaty" eyes roll in his head. Up until this point the poet has only loathing and revulsion for this god. But in the last analysis of the poem, the poet's proximity to evil has affected him. When Love assumes the shape of a "buzard" the poet is not averse to "springe a mistresse" and to await either the kill or the game lost. Here is not only metamorphosis of principal characters but of poet-presenter too. Do we not also see the

shades of Beatrice - Joanna and De Flores lurking in the background?

In 'Loves Diet', Donne sees love as a monster of fantasy; everything is disgusting about him. He is personified as a glutton. In Tourneur the figure of a glutton is seen in a flash of stark wit that matches Donne in its imaginativeness. For example, the theme of gluttony prompts these daring conceits:

> I was begot
> After some gluttonous dinner, some
> stirring dish
> Was my first father.
>
> (The Revenger's Tragedy l. i. 180-182)

> The sins of feasts, drunken adultery
> I feel it swell me.
>
> (Ibid, l. iii. 190-191)

Whereas Tourneur uses this type of imagery to heighten the central exemplum horrendum,[17] Donne uses it ironically. He will put love on a diet of discretion. But love is deceptive: He will try to steal a sigh from the lover's mistress. But mistresses are also deceitful; they are counterfeits; their sighs are not 'sound'. Flamineo says this of Camillo and Vittoria in The White Devil who also was not sound: "You are a goodly foil, I confess, well set out, [aside] but cover'd with a false stone, you counterfeit diamond!" (l. ii. 165-168) The Jacobean

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[17] Ekeblad, MLR, 54, 1959, 312.

dramatists all use images that shock, but they are decorous because they are apt for their context.

Both the dramatists and Donne use imagery to elucidate situations. In The Revenger's Tragedy, the imagery associated with the skull is "concrete, exact and dramatically useful; Tourneur builds up a system of relationships between images and situations which gain in cumulative effect".[16] Also, the action of a play or a poem advances by means of a central group of metaphors - the action repeats the details of these metaphors in the disguises and deceptions which compose the plot. This method is derived from the Moralities.[19] Furthermore, these disguisings are related symbols of the change that was taking place in the social and moral order of the early seventeenth century.[20] In Donne's poem 'Loves Usury', the reference to usurious practices would not be lost on the reader in an economy which was anything but stable and where patrimonies could be lost overnight. Donne's bargaining with the 'Usurious God of Love' is a new poetic device,however, since in the Petrarchan tradition the god had always been a just but enigmatic god. Francis Davison, a typical Petrarchist

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[18] Salingar, Scrutiny, 6 (1938), 405.

[19] Ibid., 409.

[20] Ibid., 410.

lyricist,writes in Robert Jones' The First Set of Madrigals (1607):

> Love, if a god thou art,
> Then evermore thou must
> Be merciful and just.
> If thou be just O wherefore doth thy dart
> Wound me alone, and not my lady's heart? [21]

In 'Loves Exchange', the bargain has already been made with the God of Love. The lover in Donne's poem recognises the power that Love wields, and he does not "article for grace" since he has made the bargain and realizes that eventually he must pay for it. Similarly, in Marlowe's play just before the clock strikes twelve Faustus cries out:

> Curs'd be the parents that engend'red me!
> No, Faustus curse thyself, curse Lucifer
> That hath depriv'd thee of the joys of heaven.
>
> (V. ii. 125-127)

The lover in 'Loves Exchange' knows that he is being tortured by Love because he has penetrated one of the disguises of Love to reveal the face of a beautiful woman. For this rebellion the lover is condemned to the rack, and to escape further torture, and to be an example to "future Rebells", he asks to be killed outright, and then dissected. In importuning Love to kill him, to release him from bondage, he is in effect, only asking to be released from a love that he knows is childish and a servitude that is shaming him in the eyes of others. But the grotesquerie makes us pause and think, for the outrageousness of the images illustrating the feelings of the lover are in ludicrous contrast

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[21] Fellowes, 120.

to the conventionality of the Petrarchan nucleus.

In unmasking the icon of the God of Love, Donne is in reality rebelling against the artificiality of the Petrarchan love convention and the poet that up until then only has been able to fit "actives to passives: Correspondence/ Only his subject was". From now on, Donne's subject will be not correspondences, but contrarieties, conflicts between man and woman, that miraculously at times can be resolved into ecstasy. Donne will come to the realization that "it cannot bee/ Love, till I love her, that loves me" as he suggests in 'Loves Deitie'. But first, the battle will be joined on earth with the protagonists standing facing each other, not yet side by side.

THE TRAGEDY OF LOVE

The Consciousness of the Lover

The parting of lovers is by nature a theme for tragedy and Donne's lyric poems of parting are no exception, since they are set in a tragic perspective. Although their subject is the same, the tone, mood and style of each of these poems vary considerably, and this variation accounts, therefore, for their effect of diversity.

Donne's poems on the tragedy of love can be divided into two main groups, the first involving the relationship that exists between a man and a woman on parting, and the second denoting a condition of the mind of a male lover after parting, or when a parting is a possibility. The first group is particularized by love's and the lover's revenge, the second, by the lover's frustration which takes the form of a "spider love", of a dialogue with a flower and a heart, of a burning all-consuming fever, and of the anguish of the final parting by death. The first group is composed of the five poems based on the theme of the lover's revenge, - 'Witchcraft by a Picture' where the lover has not yet been "endamaged" by the wicked skill of the mistress, and four other poems where, in each case, the lover has been already murdered by the mistress.

These are 'The Dampe', 'The Dreame', 'The Apparition', and 'The Funerall'.

In the second grouping, the lover's remorse, I have placed 'The Broken Heart', Twicknam Garden', and 'The Blossome', all three poems decidedly built on Petrarchan cliches. The Petrarchan icon of the cold, unfeeling mistress is an unseen presence in each poem and affects the outcome. Three poems of despair that begin in the actual sickness of the mistress, 'The Feaver', and end in her death, 'A Nocturnall', and 'The Dissolution', complete this second arrangement.

As I have previously mentioned, revenge is the theme of the first group of poems. In Petrarchism, the lover's revenge is only a stock-theme where revenge is a gallant gesture after the rejection, separation or betrayal of the lover. Petrarch's basic conceit, his request for revenge, is merely a gallant exaggeration: the lady has done no ill, and her lover is not indignant.[1] The Elizabethans firmly believed that the law of God forbade private vengeance.[2] Nevertheless, early Elizabethan revengers were heroes, not villains.[3] In

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[1]Guss, op. cit., 36.

[2]Bowers, Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 40.

[3]Ibid., 267.

Chapman's play, Bussy D'Ambois, Bussy says

> When I am wrong'd, and that law fails to right me,
> Let me be king myself (as man was made),
> And do a justice that exceeds the law.
>
> (II. i. 197-9)

In actuality, revenge was practised in court circles where intrigues were the order of the day. The murder of Sir Thomas Overbury in 1613 is the most outstanding example of a private revenge that became a public scandal. Donne's father-in-law, Sir George More, was the new Lieutenant of the Tower and as such was in command of the prisoners, the Somersets. It is inconceivable that Donne was not fully aware of this unhappy occurrence and deeply shocked by it.[4] In the early seventeenth century intrigue and revenge were part and parcel of court life, and Donne, although never himself a courtier in the sense of having a civil preferment from the King, was nevertheless on the fringe of the court circle.

Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, as a convention that was employedby the Jacobean dramatists and Donne, was a genre that was a rhetorical device for the interplay of character and circumstance with actual revenge of only secondary interest. Thus Revenge Tragedy in English literature of the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean periods

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[4]Bald, 313-4.

supplied a needed dramatic motivation for a type of fictional moral revenge or poetic justice, while at the same time utilizing all the machinations and contrivances of the old Senecan tragedies that thrilled audiences. Donne, as well as Shakespeare, Middleton, Tourneur and Webster wrote in this tradition. This is a poetry of retribution which allowed Donne and the playwrights the greatest scope for their literary imaginativeness. The play of the finely-drawn conflicts of crossed purposes is contained in the imagery, especially the conceit. Donne's special genius, and that of the dramatists, was that they adapted this intricate figure of speech to their contemporary milieu. There was a world of order, design and meaning concentrated in the conceit. When Webster wishes to convey the revenge motif by means of a death-image, he can chill us to the bone. In The White Devil, Francesco speaks to the Cardinal in these words:

> There's small pity in't,
> Like mistletoe on sear elms spent by weather,
> Let him cleave to her, and both rot together.
>
> (II. 1. 398-400)

This is a magnificent image from nature's grim landscape and in its vividness points up the stark realism of illicit love in the play's context. Is there a similarity in the horror conveyed by this pictorial image and Donne's "bracelet of bright haireabout the bone"? After all, rotting and death are one and the same. Here in both these images, although their

contexts differ, the dilemma of the human condition is presented where death is always close to life. In Donne's poems about revenge a new dimension is introduced into poetry, a theme of retribution which is unequivocal in its conclusion "that since you would save none of mee, I bury some of you".

'The Funerall' is a poem of revenge, for there is no question about the lover taking his revenge on the mistress if she is not true. The fictional nature of the lover's revenge is emphasized by the fact that he only anticipates dying for love because he is love's martyr. 'The Funerall' is also a good example of a masterly handling of a conceit, of the most heterogeneous ideas yoked together by violence, to quote again Dr. Johnson's famous eighteenth-century definition. The lover's bracelet is either a metaphysical mystery, a sign of the lover's "outward" soul, or it is simply a handcuff. The lover does not know which it represents. How can we know? We do know that part of the mistress will be buried and that she probably will not be the same again. Certainly the lover will not be. Donne has dramatized a fictional love situation that has parallels in real life.

Vengeance, however, is not the sole prerogative of the male lover. In 'Witchcraft by a Picture', the mistress has "the wicked skill/ By pictures made and mard, to kill". Poisonings, one method of private revenge, along with the punishment of adultery, the machinations of

cruel accomplices in crime and all sorts of other horrors, were a contribution to English drama from the novelle which was introduced in England by Painter's Palace of Pleasure. In Elizabethan times it was believed that poison could be administered by taste, by inhalation, or by touching.[5] Donne uses the method of death by poisoning in 'Witchcraft by a Picture', a type of Petrarchan poem based on the Petrarchan cliché about the lover's eyes being mirrors. Two conventions of the drama meet here - Revenge Tragedy and Petrarchism. In Robert Jones' First Set of Madrigals ... (1607) there is a typical Petrarchan song:

> When I behold her eyes,
> Methinks I see where wanton Cupid lies
> But when I look more near,
> 'Tis but my shadow in her eyes so clear.
> Which with a wink she, like a peevish elf,
> Takes great delight to rob me of myself.
>
> But let her look in mine
> And she shall seem to see a nymph divine;
> Until she take more heed,
> When she would swear that she were there indeed,
> Where she may gaze her fill, and never doubt
> That any wink should rase her image out.[6]

Besides the obvious thematic and prosodic differences to be found between this poem and Donne's,the images are not so different

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[5] Bowers, Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 28.

[6] Fellowes, 120.

in themselves but are radically different in their function. The above poem talks about shadows and mythical forms like nymphs, while Donne's poem talks about pictures, the fictional images of the two lovers. Images always represented living human beings to Donne. In a letter to Buckingham, dated September 13, 1620, Donne thanks the King's favourite profusely for interceding on his behalf in procuring the Deanery of St. Paul's. Donne writes that the "ragg of paper" which he calls his letter paper, is a man, a picture of himself, his image.[7] In Jacobean drama, pictures of various characters in the plays came to represent those characters in a realistic way. In The White Devil a dumb show is presented to the audience in Act II, scene ii. The purpose of this stage-craft is to alert the audience about what is going to take place in the immediate future. In this particular 'show' Brachiano's picture is displayed, the two culprits Julio and Christopher put on special glasses which cover their eyes and noses, burn perfumes over a brazier before the picture, and wash the lips of the picture with some poison. That done, they put out the fire and leave. Isabella, Brachiano's wife, comes in dressed for bed, kisses the picture, as she has been accustomed to do, and of course dies. Her body is then carried out solemnly. Isabella's love for her husband, symbolized by her nightly kissing of his picture, was her undoing. Similarly, the lover in 'Witchcraft by a Picture' may be killed because of "pictures made and mard".

[7]Bald, 375.

Isabella is an innocent, unsuspecting victim of love and the lengths to which Isabella's husband will go to murder her are revealed to the audience in a dumb show spectacle. The lover in Donne's poem, however, unlike Isabella, realizes the peril that he is in and departs. He is also skilled in flattery, a sycophancy in keeping with his courtliness. In 'Witchcraft by a Picture' the lover leaves before he is bewitched and thereby saves himself. This, therefore, is a lyric with dramatic overtones although its focus is a conceit, a picture engraved on a heart.

'The Dampe' uses this same cliché, but in this lyric the lover develops a 'plot' dramatically. He anticipates his own death so vividly that he describes his own autopsy and the result that it will have on other men when they come upon the image of the mistress engraved on his lifeless heart. Again, like the lover who is not yet "endamag'd", he is not dead yet, and moreover, can solicit his mistress to kill him passively "as Woman", fairly and squarely. If anyone should be slain it should be Disdaine , and Honor who are pictured as magic opponents out of folk-lore, and therefore, unreal. The mistress is told that the tragedy can be averted; she can still be conqueror even if the lovers meet on equal terms. She need not be revengeful.

In 'The Apparition' the lover has been already murdered and he returns as a ghostly revenger. Donne's lyrics on haunting and dreams

have a striking affinity with the convention of the dumb show as seen in the drama of the period. Originally dumb shows were features of the academic court or Inns of Court plays like Gorboduc, that is a pantomime depicting symbolically the theme of the action to follow, hinting at the moral later exemplified in the play itself.[8] The most famous of these dumb shows is, of course, to be found in Hamlet where Claudius is the unwilling observer. Notice the similarity to this scene in Donne's poem 'The Apparition'. The lady who has scorned the lover is the audience. Donne directs the scene of the haunting which is melodramatic in its atmosphere. It is dead of night and only a "sicke taper" lightens the gloom. "Donne more than any Petrarchist, makes melodramatic the scene of the haunting and the feelings of the unprepared and unsupported lady as she suffers a terrible visitation. He realizes in the figure of the lover that play of jealousy and anguish which might lead him to hope for a post-mortem vengeance. Here and in general - Donne gives the Petrarchan image a dramatic rather than a rhetorical vitality."[9]

To return to this ghostly scene, the 'dumb show' reveals the unfaithful mistress in bed with the former lover's rival. He is asleep

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8 M. E. Prior, "The Play Scene in Hamlet", E.L.H. (1941), 191.

9 Guss, 58.

but she is awake, lying in a "cold quicksilver sweat", having known now (as the lover's ghost knows) the isolation and loneliness of a refusal after love has been offered. At this point, the ghost of the lover glides into view, and as ghosts sometimes do, says nothing. The lover will not reveal what the ghost will say because the lover will only be satisfied if the mistress endures a protracted suffering. In The Revenger's Tragedy (III. v. 205), Vindice says, "When the bad bleeds, then is the tragedy good".

In another of Donne's lyrics, the convention of the dumb show closely resembles that of the dream-motif, the literary device when the audience is verbally given an advance viewing of a future happening, for instance, in Vittoria's account of her dream that is a foreshadowing of an event (The White Devil, I. ii. 303-12). Similarly, in 'The Dreame' Donne uses the dream-motif as a means of entering an ideal world which is a dream-vision for lovers. Brachiano's interpretation of Vittoria's dream has all the ear-marks of a fantastic dream-world of love, and the lovers are at the centre of this idyllic world. In 'The Dreame' the lover is speaking with his beloved mistress just after she has awakened him from an erotic dream of her. He is happy that she has awakened him because he says, "Therefore, thou wakd'st me wisely". It seems that he is a conjuror, and there is magic in their love, for she has materialized before his eyes just by the simple expedient of his

dreaming of her. Since she has come to him, he invites her to enter his arms and continue the dream from which she has awakened him. That she is much surprised at finding herself by her lover's side is implied by the abrupt change from the first to the second stanza. The only logical connection which I can arrive at between, "let's act the rest", the last line of the first stanza, and "as lightning, or a Tapers light/Thine eyes, and not thy noise wak'd me", is to suppose that the mistress, either to be coy or play for time before she is expected to "act the rest", has asked her lover to describe (if he can) how she happened to get into his room in the first place. Why should this recounting of such a recent event be necessary unless she is unaware of the little drama which has been enacted recently? The only one who may know the answer is the dreamer who saw her enter after he was aroused from his sleep by the unusual light.

The lover then proceeds to relate to his mistress the events that have taken place. He uses the dramatic device of the dumb show to illustrate her supernatural entrance, her "comming" and "staying". It was not the voice of her coming to his room that awakened him but a light from her eyes. But notice that he is not sure whether it was an unearthly light from heaven or a more ordinary light, that of a flickering candle. In 'Aire and Angels' the speaker says that angels appear in a voice or a shapeless flame. The figure made no noise, in any event, but glided into his room like a ghost. That the apparition was unearthly

is suggested in the words "Yet I thought thee/(For thou lov'st truth) an Angell, at first sight". The comparison, at first sight of the mistress to an angel only points up the mystery of the apparition. In Donne's sermon 'Preached at the Spital', April 22, 1622, he quotes a Latin saying from his schooling, namely, Deus cognoscibilor Angelis, that is, it is easier to know the nature of God than of angels: God has manifested Himself in deeds; our knowledge of angels is limited since their deeds are few.[10] Donne is careful to state, however, in another sermon, that angels by the dignity of their nature know what we do not.[11] The fact that she knew what he was dreaming and came at that precise moment proves her angelic nature.

Here the dumb show ends; but the drama continues. The mistress rises to go and this act surprises the lover. She is out of character now. Has he not shown her how miraculous was her coming? Was she not convinced by the dumb show, which, I am assuming, was for her benefit, that their love is all spirit, pure and brave? If their love is a mixture of Fear, Shame, and Honor he doubts that she can be divine or his own true love, "Thou art not thou". She is fickle having given false promises and only comes to arouse him and then to leave him. We can imagine the interchange in conversation which takes

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[10] Coffin, 489.

[11] Ibid., XXVI. Sermons (25), 1660, 490.

place between the lovers, he petitioning and she putting him off. Since the reality does not live up to the dream or the appearance, the lover has an about-face, and goes back to his dream-world where there is delusion in fantasy but where he possesses his mistress. Did she really come to him as woman, or was she only a dream? In any event, the woman will have to leave him before he possesses her again. 'The Dreame' ends as it began, on a Petrarchan note of frustrated desire, but the means of expressing this desire has been wholly dramatic in technique.

Petrarchan frustration, but with no thought of revenge, is the mark of two poems in my second grouping, namely, 'Twicknam Garden' and 'The Blossome'. Although Donne utilizes Petrarchan devices in both poems, these lyrics differ mostly in mood, the former being an introspective monologue, while the latter is a lover's sprightly dialogue with his own heart. Since the setting of both of these poems is an English country garden, however, they are related by means of their realism as well as their conventionality. They are both seasonal poems: it is spring or summer in 'Twicknam Garden', but looks forward to autumn in 'The Blossome'. In the former the trees laugh and mock the speaker; in the second, the blossom laughs and triumphs on its bough but will "freeze anon". The beauty of the spring garden at Twicknam is in direct contrast to the miseries of the lover, for he is

"blasted with sighs", and blasts denote a wintry landscape. The idea of winter and death is carried over into the second verse in the reference to winter and "a grave frost". In both poems the remedy for love's anguish is not found in an emotional resolution, but in an impersonal solution in which emotions are taken out of their proper human rank and sublimated into conventional Petrarchan hyperboles. In 'The Blossome', however, the solution will be a relatively happy one, for in less than a month the lover will have a rendez-vous with his absent heart in London. On the other hand, the lover in 'Twicknam Garden' is not so fortunate: emotionally he can never leave the garden because the cruelty of his obdurate mistress has transformed him into stone, and he can only hope to be "some senslesse peece" of that beautiful garden, which, from now on, will always represent the unattainable to him, will always be a lost "True Paradise".

The effect of the fear of actual death upon the consciousness of the lover is seen in three poems of despair that begin in the sickness of the mistress, 'The Feaver', and end in her death, 'A Nocturnall', and 'The Dissolution'. Death is treated in these three poems as a possibility, as a death-like desolation, and as a fact of life. 'A Feaver' has within its lyrical lines a glimmer of the thought later encompassed in that famous elegy on Mistress Elizabeth Drury written in 1612 and which Donne aptly called, An Anatomy of the World. The idea that the whole

world is destroyed by the death of a loved mistress is a Petrarchan hyperbole. Thus 'A Feaver' is a sympathetic reassurance that all probably will be well with the lady, but if the worse should befall her, there will be no life worth living here on earth anyway. Her death would then reduce the world to nothing but a "carkasse", for the world's soul would have gone with her.

In 'A Nocturnall', it is not the world which is reduced to nothingness, but the bereft lover. This poem is the most intense lyric which Donne ever wrote, for in it love and grief are blended into a devastating despair that annihilates the lover completely. The nature of this non-existent state can be discerned if we turn to a sermon of Donne's 'Preached at the Spital' to which reference has been made earlier in this chapter.[12] In this sermon, Donne expresses wonderment at the Creation, a Creation of all out of nothing and says that the less anything is, the less we know it. "How invisible, how [un]intelligible a thing then, is this Nothing". He concludes, "It is a state (if a man may call it a state) that the Devil himself in the midst of his torments cannot wish". In the light of these theological remarks of Donne, the use of the image "the first nothing","a quintessence even from nothingness' has great significance and conveys the utter degree of his grief as

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[12] See ftn.10.

no other image could do. As 'nothing' can have no centre and no outer circumference, the horror of the lover lost in such a void can only be related in Donne's mind to the utter nothingness before Creation. This quintessence of nothingness is a life in death. "This is, indeed, a new alchemy, a new experience".[13] This is a reversal of the Christian ethic, though I die yet do I live. In 'A Nocturnall', when Donne says, "But I am by her death, (which word wrongs her)/Of the first nothing, the Elixer grown", he is ingeniously using the mythology of alchemy inversely to prove the existence of nothing out of something.

The context and the terms of alchemy which Donne uses in many of his poems form a matrix which was a commonplace in the seventeenth century. Some of Donne's friends were more than a little interested in alchemy, notably Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, who was a mediator between Donne and Sir George More, Ann's father, after the couple's clandestine wedding, for it is known that Lord Percy's chief interest was alchemy and other medicine.[14] A. H. Duncan says, "Donne's opinion of alchemy is the one which appeared in contemporary satires: that alchemy is imposture or self-deception, alchemists charlatans or self-gulling dupes and that all attempts to get the elixir

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[13] Murray, "Donne and Paracelsus: An Essay in Interpretation", R.E.S., 25 (1949), 21.

[14] Ibid., 117, ftn. 3.

or philosopher's stone have failed."[15] It would seem, then, that Donne used the Hermetic doctrine of transmutation, or alchemy, as he used the literary convention of Petrarchism, that is, for a source of stylistic devices and effects. Donne's poems which contain alchemical figures are not limited to one or two of the classifications into which editors have divided them but are to be found scattered equally among most of the classifications.[16]

It is not my concern, however, to pursue the uses to which Donne puts this new mythology of alchemy at this time, but to put in high relief the disparities which are apparent between the last two poems of this tragic category, 'A Nocturnall' and 'The Dissolution'. When these two lyrics are set side by side, their differences are striking, for in tone, mood, and style they are dissimilar. They are both linked, however, by manuscript tradition as well as theme.[17] This fact has led to the assumption that as works of art they can stand together. Poems have to have more than one point of congruence, or biographically, as well as artistically, wrong conclusions can be drawn.

How different is the lyricism of these poems: the lover's response to the reality of death in 'A Nocturnall' is a deep emotional trauma; in 'The Dissolution' it takes the form of a witty expression of

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[15] In "Donne's Alchemical Figures", E. L. H., IX (1942), 258.

[16] Ibid., 284.

[17] Gardner, The Elegies, etc., Commentary, 218.

sorrow. These poems are antithetically opposed, for the former lyric illustrates an emotionally-charged lethargy, while the latter displays a kind of mental gymnastics: the lover of 'A Nocturnall' has been reduced to a quintessence of nothingness; the lover of 'The Dissolution' is surprised at his unexpected energy. Thus, the first lyric denotes an abject passivity in the face of a personal grief, and the second, signifies determination and release into action. A mood of rejection is, therefore, juxtaposed with a mood of acceptance in a distinct antithesis when these two poems are compared.

In each poem these distinctions are obvious from the beginning. 'A Nocturnall' is a poem of fresh sorrow where the sustained images of darkness and death blanket the lover's total world in a gloom that is completely unrelieved throughout. Only the shock of new grief would seem to enwrap the lover in such sombre weeds. "The yeares midnight" of the opening lines of 'A Nocturnall' suggests a spiritual end , as well as a year's end. The lover is "every dead thing"; there is no hint of the cause of his condition until the fourth stanza of a total of six. On the other hand, 'The Dissolution' opens with a statement: "Shee'is dead: And all which die/ To their first Elements resolve". These lines suggest an acceptance of a fact; I dare not say a relief, but I am nearly tempted to do so. The following lines are ingeniously analytical in their blending of Neoplatonic, Hermetical, and Petrarchan

commonplaces to build a stately, formal tribute to grief by means of syllogistic reasoning that depends on the realism of "Active Kings" monetary policies, and scientific imagery to complete its resolution. 'A Nocturnall' uses extensively the mythology of alchemy throughout its length in a maze of intricate images whose multiplied associations add up to a philosophic reflection, an acceptance of death born of resigned desperation, not resolution. Since Donne was a Christian, I feel that this knowledge, along with the fact that "S. Lucie" was a Christian martyr, could indicate that the speaker's desire to "prepare towards" his mistress anticipates a meeting in heaven. But the mood of the poem is so inconsolable that this Christian hope is completely overshadowed. Not even while the mistress lived did the lovers enjoy a summer world (which the speaker wishes for other lovers), because we are told that they often wept, and grew to be 'two Chaosses' not one world, and often they were spiritually dead when they were separated.

Whose death so annihilated Donne's spirit that he wrote these poignant lines? Both Lady Danvers and Lady Bedford, with whom Donne was closely associated for many years, died within a few days of each other in the spring of 1627, according to Professor Bald (A Life, 495). In the light of this fact, it seems unlikely that Donne, then Dean of St. Paul's, wrote such a nihilistic poem just four years before his own death. If Donne is commemorating his wife's death in this

lyric, it seems highly improbable that he composed it after the Holy Sonnet, 'Since she whome I lovd, hath payd her last debt', which Helen Gardner dates just before May, 1619 (The Divine Poems, commentary, 78). Professor Bald reminds us (Ibid., 328) that commentators have recognized an increased intensity of religious feeling expressed by Donne after 1617. Perhaps 'A Nocturnall' marks not only a nadir in his emotional life, but also a turning-away from the active world of the senses to an inward world of religious contemplation. These considerations lead me to speculate that this moving lyric could be related to the death, in 1617, of Ann More.

The haunting quality of 'A Nocturnall' is born of a continuous spiritual desolation caused by the separation of lovers by death. There is no suggestion of the transfiguration of the earthly lovers in heaven to relieve the gloom, although the lover thinks of his beloved in terms of a saint. The lady by her death is outside nature, and the poet by identifying himself with a quintessence of nothingness is also, outside nature. Since he feels nothing, he is insensate, and therefore he does not exist, for he argues that even beasts have senses, and even plants and stones detest and love. Only in the esoteric myths of alchemy could Donne find the resources to attempt to convey such a waste of spirit in an expense of nothingness. Artistically, Donne has achieved the impossible by putting the essence of nothing into highly significant words and images. Metrically, there is a perfect balance of thought and feeling, for the lover's acute grief is sustained in a finely drawn-out precision that is exquisite in its timing. Donne's artistry is so unobtrusive that the lover's extravagant emotion and the extension of the basic conceit do not seem contrived, but entirely convincing in the surrealism of a midnight world. In 'A Nocturnall', Donne's expressiveness reveals this abysmal world in very sophisticated imagery which in the poems of miracle portrays still another dimension outside nature and time, where the physical ecstasy of the lovers and their spiritual oneness will be reconciled in a transcendent world.

THE MIRACLE

Love's Awakened Root

In 'Loves Growth' the lover confidently states that "Gentle love deeds, as blossomes on a bough/ From loves awaken'd root do bud out now ". Such a philosophy of love would have been unthinkable coming from the arrogant lover of the earlier songs whose only concern is his own self-interest and self-esteem. The miracle of love is the result of the vital relationship of a man and a woman who are lovers and deeply committed to each other in a special world of their own making. Pretense is unheard of in this world: neither one has the odds, for both body and soul are equally naked in the sight of the other. In 'The Dampe' it was the woman who had the advantage, "Naked you'have odds enough of any man"but this was only in relation to the flesh. In 'The Exstasie' the speaker says that when love "interinanimates" two souls a new soul is formed from a union which is a mystery of love. In the early poems of comedy, love is pictorially conceived in a caricature that is drawn with a flourish. Love in the poems of miracle is a mystery, but,paradoxically,a reality where lovers are united in a one-

ness that is a microcosm of two. Donne's interpretation of this union of lovers shows the versatility of his dramatic imagination that can infuse a Neoplatonic commonplace with new life, and new thought and feeling. Nowhere is the brilliance of his artistry more evident, nor the particularities of his style more pronounced than in these poems of miracle.

Miracle is a supernatural element of religious faith and practice. Similarly, miracle in terms of the love of man and woman is rooted in the mystical love and eternal devotion of lovers. Miracle in either religion or love is hard to explicate in mere words, for it is transcendent, being outside the reality of form. In literary criticism it has been called a realm on the other side of tragedy[1], which would seem to place it on the side of exultant joy and complete confidence. This is the realm, the "little room", which Donne's lovers inhabit. At best, the metaphysical subtlety of miracle in sacred or secular poetry can only be represented by allegory or analogy. All Donne's poems of miracle employ the logic of analogy developed by means of associative and/or extended concrete images that have attributive magical or spiritual properties as the case may be. These poems are grounded in the literal imagery of everyday, but are airborne in their imaginative suggestiveness.

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[1]Bradbrook, Elizabethan Comedy, 196. Miss Bradbrook uses this latter phrase in connection with Shakespeare's last four plays, Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale and The Tempest which can be dated between 1607 and 1611, the same years when it is possible that Donne was writing his later lyrics. Donne's travels on the continent with Sir Walter Chute in 1605/6 could have fostered in him an interest in cabbalistic writings and Neoplatonic doctrines.

Nowhere within the Songs and Sonnets is the effect of diversity more evident than in these poems of union in love. Donne sets the stage for this union in 'Loves Infiniteness' when he cautiously proposes to his mistress that rather than exchanging hearts they should join them, and then they will "be one, and one anothers All". This miraculous union of lovers is described in three poems which form a trilogy.[2] They are, first, 'The Sunne Rising', which celebrates the power of the sexuality of the lovers in the imagery of an actual dawn; second, 'The Good-morrow' which is a metaphoric dawn of the waking souls of the lovers; third, 'The Anniversarie' when the nobility of this newly-created love is affirmed. In the first lyric, the lovers eventually eclipse the sun itself, first personified as an interfering interloper, and a "sawcy pedantique wretch". These personifications were probably patterned from real life characters whom Donne knew. Love, although mysterious, always has a beginning, and the physical nature of this new passion is wonderfully conveyed in the imagery of the all-powerful sun at the centre of reality, the bed, also, and most importantly, the woman who is all states, and, therefore, conquered, and the man who is all princes, and, consequently, the conqueror. But it is the image of the sun infusing the whole poem which relates the sensuality of love to the creative force of all energy, all heat, and all light.

The second lyric, 'The Good-morrow' carries over the idea

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[2]This trilogy was discovered before the 'triptych' of Dr. Sanders (John Donne's Poetry, 68) came to this writer's attention.

of the little room of the former poem, but gives it a spatial connotation in the reference to an "everywhere". The integrity of the sensual love of the lovers is avowed in the reference to "our waking soules". The high point of the poem is the line, "Let us possess our world, each hath one, and is one". This line looks forward to 'The Exstasie' in the expression, "that abler soule", as does the next stanza in the description of the lovers gazing into each other's eyes: "Our eye-beames twisted, and did thread/Our eyes upon one double string". In the main, however, 'The Good-morrow' does not have the powerful impact of 'The Sunne Rising'. The recurrent imagery of the sun gives this latter poem its unity, a unity lacking in the former because of dissociative imagery which tends to be disruptive in its jumble of Elizabethan commonplaces.

'The Anniversarie', the last poem of this trilogy, establishes the incorruptibility of the "waking soules" of the lovers of 'The Good-morrow'. The great revelation, however, is that here on earth the lovers are kings, and, therefore, equal in status. As kings, they have inborn nobility, and rule by divine right, but because of this privilege they are obliged to live nobly. Accordingly, this lyric introduces a new theme: a spiritual partnership, the epitome of a vital sexual relationship between lovers.

The four Valedictory poems are well known examples of this new theme and a perfected style. The Valedictory poems which are

poems of farewell to a mistress on parting from her are dramatic monologues. There is evidence of a dramatic realism in these elegies that dominates their obvious debt to Petrarchism. Two of these poems intellectualize in a cool, analytical manner the parting of lovers which is one of Donne's themes: 'Valediction: of My Name in the Window' and 'A Valediction : of the Booke'. In the first poem the speaker tries to persuade himself and his mistress about the efficacy of charms or tokens such as a name etched on a windowpane. In stanza VII the engraved name is said to have an influence, and in stanza IX, since the name has materialized miraculously into the lover himself, we learn what that influence is "to step in, and hide his", a new lover's influence. Then, in the last stanza, the lover says in effect "What's in a name?" The superstitious pose is dropped in these lines - "But glasse, and lines must bee/ No meanes our firme substantiall love to keepe". In the cold light of reason he knows that fictions will not preserve love any more than jet rings sent to mistresses will bind lovers together in a firm allegiance. Scratching names on windowpanes is making public one's love, and in 'A Triple Foole' Donne had come to the conclusion "Who are a little wise, the best fools be" who do not publish their love in "whining Poëtry".

The same legalistic reasoning pertains in 'A Valediction: of the Booke' which begins in a hyperbole composed of a list of witty analogues. The lovers are all things: they themselves are ultimately love's records; they are also love's history. Their own love gives them grace

to make, preserve and use the archival treasures that are their manuscripts, and, therefore, their love is sovereign and divine. This divinity is the last disguise of Love who has been formerly called 'the tyrant Pike' in poems like 'The Broken Heart' and elsewhere in a comedy of the lovelessness of love. Previously, in poems like 'Loves Exchange' only the mistress was a divine personage who had miraculous powers. Now, for the moment at least, the lovers will reign together in a universe of love and wonder. There is no promise as yet that love is forever, for the lovers will have the tribulations of this world to face; maybe even such a well-proportioned love such as theirs will be eclipsed. Nevertheless, this valedictory poem about the magical paper world of love letters will contain "rule and example" for all to see and to interpret as each sees fit.

For all its hyperbole, this lyric, written "to anger destiny" before the lover goes abroad, rests on a conviction, a realization that up until now has been missing from Donne's earlier poems. This is the discovery hinted at in 'The Flea', that lovers do inhabit their own universe, whether it be one bounded by the walls of the jet body of an insect, or by the linear measurements of a room, or even by the edges of a letter.

The reflections in this elegy foreshadow the deeper feelings expressed by the two other elegies,'A Valediction: of Weeping' and 'A Valediction: forbidding Mourning'. The latter elegy has been justly

praised as one of the best examples of Donne's most impassioned yet controlled poetic craftsmanship. Its famous compasses image will probably always be identified as one of the most ingenious conceits ever devised, one which Donne artfully exploits in this unforgettable lyric of parted lovers yearning for each other. The regret or lover's lament is not common in Donne's lyrics in the sense of a sentimental nostalgia. In 'A Valediction: forbidding Mourning', a mood of confidence and trust is sustained in a love relationship that cannot be damaged by separation.[3] In 'A Valediction: of Weeping' the first four lines of the last stanza of this ingenious lyric about lovers' tears is filled with a sentiment that escapes sentimentality by the incomparable beauty of its rhythmic lines whose smoothness is the result of melodic phrasing, since every word which the poet uses is monosyllabic with the exception of "forbeare". The alliterative words are accented, but because they are liquid in tone, their time-values are lengthened. There could hardly be a better example of the thought wedded to the feeling in a harmony of interpretive sound than the following lines:

> O more then Moone,
> Draw not up seas to drowne me in thy spheare,
> Weepe me not dead, in thine armes, but forbeare
> To teach the sea, what it may doe too soone.

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[3] Andreasen, op. cit., 224.

Although the metamorphosis of a tear is well sustained throughout this lyric in imagery of coins, fruits, emblems, and globes, the most predominant visual image in these lines is the embrace of the lovers with the lover at the centre, and the arms of his mistress encircling him in a completion of their world. In 'A Valediction: forbidding Mourning', it is the woman who sits firmly at the centre, and the man who circles around her obliquely. In both poems, a mutual interdependence, which is a new element in the relationship of lovers, is introduced into English love poetry for the first time.

In 'A Valediction: forbidding Mourning', the microcosm of lovers is noteworthy for its ubiquity: absence, even death itself, does not alter the essence of its being. One of the characteristics of this lovers' world is its exclusiveness: the speaker feels that the unique joy which the lovers share will be profaned if the "layetie" is told of their love. By implication, then, the lovers are "clergie". Both these terms, real and implied, are used figuratively, not theologically, and, therefore, should not be taken literally. The very nature of this strange esoteric world is that it is secret; only the lovers themselves really know of its existence. The oneness of lovers has become a reality, and it only remains for Donne in this valedictory poem to describe this miracle by an inventive use of unforgettable figures of speech, such as beaten gold, and twin compasses.

If 'A Valediction: forbidding Mourning' is one of Donne's most famous poems of farewell to a beloved lady, it is probably owing to its unusual imagery. There is another less ingenious, but more overtly sentimental lyric, 'Sweetest love, I do not goe' whose occasion, also, was a farewell. The different quality of Donne's stylistic technique especially when his themes are similar is seen to advantage when these two lyrics are compared. The former is written in a tone of confidence, to affirm the completeness, and the invulnerability of the lover's world. The latter is a sad poem written to comfort both the lady and the lover who, as he prepares to go, can only wait to return, to make "speedier journeyes" than even the sun. This is not the lover who assures his mistress that though he must go, their two souls, being one soul, do not endure a breach, but an expansion, and then elaborates this thought in a famous image. The general sustained sadness of this lyric, the ubi sunt motif of the third stanza, as well as the resigned serenity of the close, all tend to point to the fact that here is one of Donne's poems which stands apart from all the others.

'Sweetest love, I do not goe' is Donne's most sentimental lyric. Helen Gardner includes it in Donne's earlier songs, and Donne's contemporaries considered it in the category of song, since two musical versions are extant, a plain one and a more embellished one. I do not include this poem in my song category for what I consider to be valid reasons. This is one of Donne's most beautiful lyrics. In this poem

we not only read the rhythmic lines, but also between them.[4] This one-sided dialogue of two people in love and its implication results in the expression of a depth of feeling unrivalled in any of Donne's other early songs or, indeed, of any other Elizabethan songs of the period. The concerned love which is communicated is a far cry from the casual or pointed cynicism of the other songs. But the most convincing proof that this beautiful song was written later in his career as a lyric poet, that is after 1602, lies, for me, in the fact that the poem is not stylized: there is no Petrarchan mistress to be lamented or extravagantly revenged; likewise, there is no heroic lover who commands the situation. Moreover, there is evidence, of a high order of craftsmanship. Here Donne controls his thought with a metre appropriate to the sense which he wishes to convey. There is a melodic arrangement of run-on and end-stopped lines, and an uncanny blending of the length of the line with the passion and the thought. This is accomplished without a loss of overall rhythm and with no manifestation of a straining for effect. Consequently, the sincerity of the passion is never in question. There is strength and harmony in "They who one another keepe/ Alive, ne'r parted bee." Thus within a highly dramatic situation Donne has combined, convincingly and movingly the vigour

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[4] See Legouis, Donne the Craftsman , 41-2 for reference to the unseen drama of this poem.

of speech with the music of song . Helen Gardner uses these words in italics when she attributes this same vigour and melody to those poems of mutual, not naturalistic or frustrated love which, in her edition of the poems, she has placed in Donne's mature period, that is, after 1602.

This poem, therefore, I place among the valedictory poems as being uniquely expressive of the personal sorrow of the parting of lovers. My inclusion of this beautiful lyric in this highest category is by virtue of its intense personal mood and its technical skill. It is not stylistically similar to such poems as 'The Canonization', The 'Valediction' poems, 'The Ecstasy' or 'The Sunne Rising' since it lacks a metaphysical viewpoint and esoteric imagery. I still feel, however, that the evidence is strong enough to allow the assumption that Donne wrote this poem possibly for his wife just before he went to Europe with the Drurys, that is, in 1611. Walton implies that this is the case. Helen Gardner feels that Walton puts words from this poem in Ann Donne's mouth, and has no authority for this conviction.[5] I feel that Donne's learned modern editor puts too much stress on the fact that since the song under discussion makes use of an old classical conceit (souls breathed out in kisses), a simple metrical form, and has no

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[5] Gardner, op. cit., Commentary, 155.

"mystical mathematics" or "philosophic-speculations" it should be categorized as an earlier poem. But 'The Exstasie', that so-called philosophic poem, has extravagant Petrarchan images like pictures that propagate on eyes, a deceptively simple metrical scheme, and although it does make use of alchemical terms and habits of mind which I shall discuss later, nevertheless, it, as well as other poems such as 'The Canonization', are not commended for their philosophy or the comfort to be derived from their imagery, but for their tone of tenderness and absolute assurance, that purity of tone which makes a poem believable and hence imaginatively coherent.[6] Professor Gardner continues by saying that if we are to value one poem more highly than another it must be on the non-aesthetic ground that we value its mood and sentiments more highly. I cannot in all conscience value a poem like 'The Exstasie', although I admire it, more highly than the lyric 'Sweetest love, I do not goe', if I invoke this criterion which Professor Gardner so positively advocates. To my way of thinking, the supreme achievement of a fulfilled love is evident in both of these poems but realized in different ways.

There could not be two poems of Donne's which are at more distant poles of creativity than 'Sweetest love, I do not goe', and 'The

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[6] Ibid., Gen. Intro., xxi.

Exstasie'. This latter poem would seem to be the most erudite of Donne's love lyrics, since it is about the nature of the ecstasy that lovers experience, a difficult topic for any poet. Consequently, it is not surprising that this poem has been the one around which the most controversy has raged. It hardly seems profitable to begin to list the many earnest arguments which have been set forth by critics, but I should like to comment on the remarks of certain of them. In 1912 Professor Grierson said that this poem was one of the most important of the lyrics as a statement of Donne's metaphysics of love, of the inter-connection and mutual dependence of the body and soul.[7] Perhaps it is picayune to insist that the poem is not a statement, but simulates a drama since three dramatic characters are involved in the course of the 'action'. It is precisely because of the supposed action that so many critics have been less than enthusiastic about what they call the carnal aspects of the poem.[8]

In 1924, H. I' A. Fausset considered the carnal aspects of the poem of crucial importance. C. S. Lewis in 1938 makes a condemnatory remark about Donne's love poetry when he says that 'The

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[7] Grierson, The Works, II, 41-42.

[8] See René Graziani, "John Donne's The Extasie and Ecstasy, R. E. S. (NS) XIX, 1968, for a list of the varied opinions of many critics, some of whom I shall mention, which has been fully documented.

Exstasie' is a much nastier poem than the 19th Elegy, the inference being that this elegy 'To his Mistress Going to Bed' is at least nasty. This is surely a debatable point, since each poem stands alone as a work of art. Pierre Legouis in an Appendix to Donne the Craftsman (1962) created quite a stir when he explained 'The Exstasie' as a planned seduction. On the other hand, A. J. Smith does not attribute to the poem evidence of a personal involvement, nor does he believe that Donne is expressing a "metaphysic of love", nor does he agree with the poem being 'a sensuous apprehension of thought'. He does believe that 'The Exstasie' is a witty poem: that Donne has "dressed up" represented received positions by means of his wit.[9] In my opinion, the critics with the most positive approach seem to be Joan Bennett in 'A Reply to Mr. Lewis', since she believes that the poem acknowledges that the union of spirit with spirit must express itself in the flesh, and René Graziani who argues that Donne is altering a literary pattern by making ecstasy a conscious experience and giving value to this heightened awareness rather than just extolling a strictly amatory experience.[10] The English Petrarchan love convention exploited amatory sentiment to a remarkable degree as I have already indicated. In order to corroborate this last statement it will be profitable to compare a typical song

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[9] "The Metaphysic of Love", R. E. S. (NS) IX (1958), 375.

[10] Op. cit., 130-1.

of the period with 'The Exstasie'. The following song is from William Corkine's The Second Book of Ayres ... (1612):

Two lovers sat lamenting
Hard by a crystal brook
Each other's heart tormenting,
Exchanging look for look.
With sighs and tears bewraying
Their silent thoughts delaying
At last quoth one:
Shall we alone
Sit here our thoughts bewraying?
Fie, fie, O fie!
O fie, it may not be
Set looking by,
Let speaking set us free.

Then thus their silence breaking,
Their thought too long estranged
They do bewray by speaking,
And words with words exchanged
Then one of them replied:
Great pity we had died
Thus all alone
In silent moan
And not our thoughts descried.
Fie, fie, O fie!
O fie, that had been ill,
That inwardly
Silence the heart should kill.

From looks and words to kisses
They made their next proceeding
And as their only blisses
They therein were exceeding.
O what a joy is this,
To look to talk, to kiss!
But thus begun
Is all now done?
Ah! all then nothing is !
Fie, fie, O fie!
O fie, it is a hell;
And better die
Than kiss and not end well . [11]

[11] Fellowes, 439-40.

Both the similarity and dissimilarity between this song and 'The Exstasie' are at once striking. It is difficult to hazard a guess as to which came first. Either Donne's poem was written first and an unknown person imitated it, which supposition would mean that Donne's poem was written before 1612, or Donne gave a completely new twist to an already extant song. After all, he did parody Marlowe's"Come live with me ... ".

Helen Gardner identifies 'The Exstasie' as a poem outside the natural order of things illustrating the attainment of complete union of souls outside the body, and, therefore, a poem of mutual love.[12] In Appendix D of her text she says, "I believe that Donne's starting point was not the desire to write a philosophic poem but to explore imaginatively the notion of ecstasy as he had met it in his Neoplatonic reading."[13] With the first part of this last sentence I can agree, but not with the latter part, for I believe that Donne's interest in the Hermetic doctrine of alchemy which was probably fostered by his reading in Paracelsus, was as much an influence on this poem as Leone Ebreo's Dialoghi d'Amore which Professor Gardner feels Donne knew well. Let me explain my theory, realizing that it is,

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[12] Gardner, op. cit., Gen. Intro., liii.

[13] 260.

after all, only a theory.

I believe that 'The Exstasie' is an imaginative exploration into the nature of love, a poem of alchemy in a spiritual sense. Once again Donne employs the mythology of alchemy as a poetic device. This poem is about the transforming power of love, the discovery that love is as pure as gold, as rare as the philosopher's stone, and conjoins both body and soul into a unity. The phoenix image comes to mind wherever the phrase "two-in-one" occurs in poetry or is implied. Indeed in 'The Canonization', E. H. Duncan reads an alchemical meaning in the eagle and dove figure and the resultant phoenix image. "The mystical unity of the pair of lovers is emphasized by the common sex of the phoenix, and the point of the stanza is reiterated in the closing lines: "Wee dye and rise the same, and prove/Mysterious by this love'."[14]

Of the same poem Helen Gardner agrees that it is absurd to apply spatial notions to the soul and goes on to show that the reading of an alchemical metaphor in "Who did the whole worlds soule extract" (l. 40) is preferable to the sense of a Petrarchan metaphor, "who did the whole worlds soule contract", when the whole meaning of the stanza seems to support it.[15]

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[14] Duncan, op. cit., 271.

[15] Gardner, op. cit., Textual Intro., lxxxvi.

According to O.E.D. the etymology of 'ecstasy' in the late Greek went beyond the classic meaning of 'insanity' and 'bewilderment', viz., "withdrawal of the soul from the body, mystic or prophetic trance". It would seem that Donne was using this word in its late Greek sense of a mutual transcendence, not in its classical sense of a mutual aberration. It can also be shown that this word 'ecstasy' seems equated with alchemical process in Donne's mind. For Donne uses the word "extasie" in an alchemical context in a letter to Goodyer headed, however, 'To my honoured friend Sr. T. Lucey'. I quote this special section of it from Professor Bald's Life (169):

> I make account that this writing of letters, when it is with any seriousness, is a kind of extasie, and a departure and secession and suspension of the soul, which doth then communicate it self to two bodies ...

Donne says three things here, first, that letter writing is a kind of ecstasy, second, that the soul of the sender goes out into a suspension: ["Our soules (which to advance their state/Were gone out,) hung 'twixt her, and mee"], and third, that finally this soul communicates itself to (or inhabits) two bodies["Love these mixt soules, doth mixe againe/ and makes both one, each this and that"]. Within the square brackets it will be obvious that I have placed lines from 'The Exstasie' which are relevant to the thought in Donne's letter to his friend, Sir Henry Goodyer.

'The Exstasie' concerns itself with the perfectability of love, its ecstatic fulfilment, being in its transcendence the complete opposite of the quintessence of nothingness to which love reduced the grief-stricken lover of 'A Nocturnall'. In 'Loves Alchymie' the searcher after love feels that he will never find the hidden mystery. In 'Negative Love', the speaker readily admits that his love can only be described in negative terms. He cannot even hazard a guess about what love really is. He cannot believe that mind and body are both involved, for he says, "To All, which all love, I say no". 'The Exstasie' seems to resolve these doubts in these following verses. The last four stanzas of the poem are most important to an understanding of the poem, that the ecstasy of love involves a total response on the part of true lovers:

As our blood labours to beget
    Spirits, as like soules as it can,
Because such fingers need to knit
    That subtile knot, which makes us man;

So must pure lovers soules descend
    T'affections, and to faculties,
That sense may reach and apprehend,
    Else a great Prince in prison lies.

To'our bodies turne wee then, that so
    Weake men on love reveal'd may looke;
Loves mysteries in soules doe grow,
    But yet the body is his booke.

And if some lover, such as wee,
    Have heard this dialogue of one,
Let him still marke us, he shall see
    Small change, when we'are to bodies gone.

When love is a successful alchemist who transforms lovers, a new, "abler soule" is formed in which there is a perfect balance of sense and of mind, of body and of soul. This process is the quintessence of reconciliation, where the microcosm of lovers is confirmed in a harmonious union of opposites.

Donne seems to be using the Hermetic idea of transmutation metaphorically to explain what happens when two people enjoy a total love that controls their whole beings. This love may be likened to the mingling of the two principles known chemically as sulphur and mercury which, according to alchemy, produces a pure essence, the so-called philosopher's stone. In other words, the souls and bodies of the lovers now co-exist in a relationship in which the lovers support each other within a perfect union.

A further gloss of the poem reveals to what extent the philosophy of alchemy can explain its imagery. So far, we have learned of mixed souls, of that resultant new abler soul which can control imperfection or defects such as loneliness perhaps, or jealousy, but most of all we have found that the lovers themselves are, miraculously, this new soul. Their bodies are not dross but allay; in a sense they are like gold because they have been purified by love's alchemy, which , with its magic, has even affected others who are represented in the poem by the spectator.

The most difficult crux of the poem is that involving the spectator. Critics have puzzled over this one for years. Professor Robert Ellrodt[16] believes that the spectator's role is a hypothetical one, and so does Helen Gardner in her Appendix of which mention has already been made. René Graziani thinks that the use of the spectator is a convention and should not be thought of as evidence of Donne's coarseness. He thinks that Donne's version is laconic.[17] It seems that the spectator is a 'refined' spectator who only sees the two souls in ecstatic union, not the bodies. Here the implication seems to be that, anyway, the lovers are apparently so engrossed with each other that they are unaware of an observer. Also Graziani says that the spectator could be eliminated. I find this view unacceptable. The spectator is there, and, therefore, has a dramatic function and should be there. He is the only audience at this point. He is not a conventional figure. Furthermore, I should like to dispute another point. You cannot have a physical ecstasy without a coupling of bodies, but you cannot (at least during this period of history) have this happen literally on stage or in a poem. You could

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[16] Ellrodt, L'Inspiration personelle et l'esprit du temps chez les poètes métaphysiques anglais , (Paris, 1960), Pt. I, tome i, 176-181. In this discussion Professor Ellrodt cannot resolve the role of the spectator any other way.

[17] Op. cit., 129.

simulate an alchemical experiment representing this ecstasy of body and soul. The stage business of the times would permit such an action in a play, and a variety of bizarre stage properties was a common occurrence: a brazen head, poisoned pictures and crosses, witches' cauldrons, severed hands, skulls . . . . Before I leave the problem of the soul of the lovers hanging in the air, it should be pointed out that Donne has recorded that only one with "credulous pietie" would think "that a Soule one might discerne and see/Goe from a body".[18] We must not tax our own credulity in order to see the souls of the lovers, but only to imagine them.

To return to the spectator, the idea that he would become purer by association with the pure lovers can find a parallel in alchemy. According to the O. E. D. in the 17th century 'concoction' meant "bringing to a state of perfection: maturation of what is coarse, impure or crude". The idea that the spectator would become purer by association with the lovers, "might thence a new concoction take/ And part farre purer than he came", can be interpreted by reference to alchemical lore in which the restorative power of gold was a common belief. The lovers have become the golden elixir, and as such, have magical powers.

The versatility of Donne's literary genius is illustrated in the use to which he puts both magical and religious imagery in these

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[18] See Gardner, Divine Poems, 'Resurrection, imperfect', 28.

lyrics about the cult of love as a mystery, or a miracle. Just as the fumes of alchemy and magic can be detected in 'A Nocturnall' and 'The Exstasie', to name only two, the mysteries of religious custom and practice can be traced in 'The Relique' and 'The Canonization'. In 'The Relique', Donne deals in melodrama: in the background there is the anonymous figure of the grave-digger, the spectator, if you will, who only sees a love-token in the contrasted image of the bracelet of bright hair about the bone, while we feel horror because we are visually forced to see apparent life touching actual death. This poem, however, is not about the horror of death, not even about love-tokens or relics, but about the miracle of love, and the stupidity of a time, or a land, that will not be able to recognize a 'real' miracle when it sees one. There is a trace of cynicism in this lyric which is similar to that of the close of 'Aire and Angels'. Differences may be slight between men and angels, and between saints and lovers, but they definitely exist, according to Donne. 'The Relique' may or may not suggest a passionate love; in any case, it does not record a consummation, but a mutual fulfilment. Moreover, it ironically decries the idea that the "harmlesse lovers" are saintly relics, just as it does the thought that a bracelet is a love-token. Yet, sainthood is the very basis ' The Canonization', a hymn about a consummated love affair. Once again, we stand amazed at the disparities between poems that have surface connections, but which on careful scrutiny are quite different in conception.

As I have indicated, the sainthood of the lovers in the cult of love is assured in 'The Canonization'. This poem is the quintessence of miracle, for the lover searches for imagery from alchemy, folk-lore, religion, the world of art, of the court, and of public affairs, to prove the miracle of love as complete fulfilment. In other words, it will not be a profanation to tell the "layetie" their love now, for it has become sanctified in its own right. The lovers' mysterious union in love has established them in love's hierarchy of saints. Mistakenly believing in the piety of this sainthood, petitioners from countries, towns, and courts now will beg the pattern for such a reconciliation of conflicting passions, for such a covenant between lovers, whose uniqueness cannot be copied.

The artistry of Donne's poems of valediction and arrival is like that of Shakespeare's final plays. Donne sees the human comedy of love in terms of a conflict of motives within the lover's mind. 'The Indifferent' shows a vacillation between the freedom and bondage of love. Since a set of circumstances has to be met before the lover can love, there is only instability in this kind of uncertain love. On the other hand, in the poems of miracle, mistrust has been vanquished in a stability that blends both the physical and the spiritual qualities of the lovers. This stability is a happiness like the contentment of Ferdinand and Miranda. "The Tempest is mellow with the ripeness of knowledge, for its maker has discovered the right ritual for the marriage of the inner and the outer world, of the real and the ideal, the experienced and the imagined, the

dream and the actuality."[19] Donne's genius shows that he, too, is a visionary who sees that it is possible to realize the spiritual miraculous; likewise, he is a magician who, by the right ritual of an incandescent imagination can resolve the violent griefs of the self-indulgent lover, and the fierce joys of the committed lover into an enchantment that has no boundaries, only horizons with countless new dawns. But this new-found felicity is not all sorcery, for there is a nobility inherent in it. In 'The Anniversarie', Donne says to his mistress, "Let us love nobly", in a context that suggests the eccentric nature of their love that "truly keepes his first, last, everlasting day".

That the lovers truly inhabit a world of their own divination is seen as being all the more miraculous when we read what Donne says about the actual centre of life in Meditation X of Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions:

> This is Natures nest of Boxes; The Heavens containe the Earth, the Earth, Cities, Cities, Man. And all these are Concentrique; the common center to them all, is decay, ruine; only that is Eccentrique, which was never made; only that place, or garment rather, which we can imagine, but not demonstrate.[20]

Only in imagination is to be found incorruptibility; only in a world that is beyond sense but, paradoxically, has its roots in sense, is the miracle

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[19] Allen, Image and Meaning, 78.

[20] Coffin, ed., The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose, 428.

of a total love to be accomplished. Wonderful to tell, lovers can possess, can be, that eccentric world.

The role which imagination plays in Donne's Songs and Sonnets cannot be overemphasized, for his poetic ingenuity is constantly seeing the dissimilar in the similar. For example, an isolation of self in the early songs is similar to an isolation of two in the later poems in the self-sufficiency of each poetic concept. Obviously, however, a wealth of infinite variety lies between the lines of this simple parallelism. Donne's imaginative viewpoint in the early songs is completely unlike that of the later poems. The distinguishing mark of these poems of miracle is the certainty of their wonder and fantasy, whereas the early lyrics are only surface-sure. The confidence which they project is based solely in the senses, and as such is always capricious. In the poems of fantastic wonder, the miracle has become flesh, and love is eternal whether it is deadened by a numbing despair, or transformed by an ecstasy. In 'Loves Growth' in a rare display of images from nature, Donne sums up the mystery of it all:

> Gentle love deeds, as blossoms on a bough,
> From loves awaken'd root do bud out now.
> If, as in water, stir'd more circles bee
> Produc'd by one, love such additions take,
> Those like to many spheares, but one heaven make,
> For, they are all concentrique unto thee;
> And though each spring doe adde to love new heate,
> As princes doe in times of action get
> New taxes, and remit them not in peace,
> No winter shall abate the springs encrease.

The metamorphosis of the poetic love convention is now complete: 'true love' is no longer a fantastic game, but a real-life performance, and the lover, neither a suppliant nor a conqueror, but a new hero in the art of loving.

CONCLUSION

At first glance, John Donne's Songs and Sonnets appear to be self-contradictory love-songs which seem to celebrate two distinct kinds of love, "prophane", and platonic or spiritual. This distinction is too simplistic, and needs qualifying. Although the classification of the poems in this thesis has been generally based on Helen Gardner's division of the lyrics into two sets, the first group dating before 1600, and the second after 1602, this partition tends to be misleading. As Professor Gardner says in the Preface (vi) to her edition, her arrangement of the poems brings together poems related in theme or form, or both. But Donne's themes are inordinately jumbled within any prescribed sequence, unless style alone is the criterion of judgment. For instance, the motif of death which figures so prominently throughout the lyrics is interpreted in both sets in a context of fictional murder and realistic revenge: in the first set, hearts are deliberately cut up in autopsies, or can be shivered into pieces at one blow, but likewise (and this is also true of the second set) the lover's revenge can be swift and retaliatory. Furthermore, at times the mistress is the unwitting victim of her own deceit, with the lover-avenger laughing

gleefully as he gets away unscathed. Then again, in a reversal of roles, the lover can be both victim and revenger. Thus, 'The Message', and 'The Apparition', although they equally owe their provenance to the Petrarchan cliché of revenge, and appear in Helen Gardner's first set, nevertheless project differing viewpoints, since they are born out of dissimilar situations, and sustain diametrically opposed moods. It follows that revenge can be comically contrived, or tragically conceived. Donne is adroit at turning a theme this way and that to reveal the gleam of the various postures and attitudes of the lover, as well as the nuances of love itself. How best to catch that certain gleam, and show those nuances to advantage, has been the aim of this thesis.

The spectrum of love which is displayed in these brilliant lyrics is as variable as the diversified emotions of the lover, and as unpredictable as his psychological states which change according to each particular mood. The disparateness of the lyrics, however, and the effect of their diversity is wholly defensible for difference does not denote dissonance. The disparity of these love-poems can be related to the lover's valid response to crises in his love experience. Thus, a schema that sets Donne's discrete poems into a dramatic framework gives them a wide perspective in point of view which shows the extent of their poetic craftsmanship, but also their freedom in the use of archetypal patterns and poetic genres. The Songs and Sonnets contains a variety of genres which, if arranged according to an order that takes

style as well into consideration, presents us with an imaginative, intellectual, and artistic development.

Nonetheless, the hero of the Songs and Sonnets is the poet-lover whose avowed motive seems to be to contradict himself at every turn, for he reveals that love is uncertain, selfish, self-deluding, bold, jealous, revengeful, evanescent; however it can also be steady, selfless, quiet, hopeful, uplifting and eternal. Love is not static; it is volatile. Love is all things but, paradoxically, only one thing, itself. In the elegy 'Change', Donne says at the end, "Change is the nursery/Of musicke, joy, life, and eternity". To corroborate this opinion, the fickle lover in the lyric 'Communitie' says, "chang'd loves are but chang'd sorts of meat". In 'A Lecture upon the Shadow', however, a serious-minded lover analyses love in shades of black and white, "Love is a growing, or full constant Light/And his first minute after noone, is night". In another disguise, Donne's voice is heard in a cathedral-like intonation," And by these hymnes, all shall approve/Us Canoniz'd for Love". In the early dawn of a new love, the lover is overheard saying, "If ever any beauty I did see/Which I desir'd and got, 'twas but a dreame of thee". Then again, a dream does not always signify a vision of loveliness. It can involve love as intrigue, disguise, hauntings, catastrophes and dire warnings that do not simply say, "Take heed of loving mee", but threaten with "I had rather thou shouldst painfully repent/Then by my threatnings rest still innocent". In one poem, if

the lover says "good-morrow to our waking soules, in another poem he can insist, as he does on 'Loves Infiniteness", "Yet I would not have all yet/Hee that hath all can have no more"; but then, in a dramatic reversal that solves the lover's dilemma, he agrees that there is a better way than changing hearts to join them, "so wee shall/Be one, and one another's All". For, "If our two loves be one, or, thou and I/Love so alike that none doe slacken, none can die". But lovers do literally die, witness 'A Nocturnall' and leave their partners in a paralysis of grief that is totally enervating in its exquisite sorrow. Moreover, there is no recollection by the bereaved lover in 'A Nocturnall' of the ecstasy of a transfigured love which was enjoyed by the lovers on earth, only a macabre preparation towards the long night's festival of death's deep midnight.

What, then, is Donne trying to say, if anything, in these variegated lyrics which he first circulated surreptiously in manuscript form during his own life-time, and never allowed to be printed? Are they merely the random evaporations of the overly-active mind of a typical young upstart University wit, and 'sonneteer' who reluctantly, but compulsively, bared his heart in "whining Poetry", as he would have us think in 'The Triple Foole'? Or are the lyrics complete little dramas in themselves that, taken collectively, tell the personal story of one man's comedy of love? The Songs and Sonnets is a collection of quite distinct poems, but evident within its heterogeneity is a logical and

artistic progression that shows a remarkable correspondence to the known facts of Donne's personal life and experience.

Donne was understood and appreciated by his own contempories who considered that he had "refin'd" verse by means of the flame of his original genius. Our own age finds his poetry stimulating and relevant. Why should this be? Is it because Donne is singularly witty, exuberant, obscure, over-sexed, or overly dramatic? Surely the value of Donne's lyrics does not rely solely on the fact that a sensitive poet is boasting of his youthful conquest in love, or recording his private yearnings for a reluctant mistress? Is not the worth of these lyrics indicated by the fact that they are not limited by the poet's sensibility, but can be related to the truth of experience in which all men have a share? "Truth is relative within absolute limits."[1] The limits in Donne's lyrics are the primordial emotions of love and hate, with all the gradations of feelings arrayed between forming the matrix of the lover's emotional response. Donne's truths are not, however, only psychological truths for they have a veracity conceived in imagination and brought into being through art, which fact is proved by their mythic origin in song, dream, magic, fantasy, and vision, and the incredible lustre of their style and prosody.

To understand more fully the poet of the Songs and Sonnets,

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[1] Eberhart, 'Will and Psyche in Poetry' in The Moment of Poetry, 48.

therefore, it is expedient to discover the extent to which his inspiration is literary, and the exact nature of his originality for, according to Professor Gardner, both have been disguised by his vividly dramatic imagination.[2] The complexity of these lyrics lies in the paradoxical play of Donne's imagination whose intermittent flashes of insight illuminate the lover to reveal the restless spirit which lies hidden within its prison, and prism of flesh, for Donne's ingenuity is not only concerned with the metaphysics of love, but also with love's momentary passions. Donne is a superb craftsman who gives utterance to the manifold voices of the lover, and as such, is skilled at blending artificial conventions and realism within poetic structures that are as artistically contrived and imaginative as those of the drama. Furthermore, it would seem reasonable to suppose that the drama was an important influence on an impressionable poet, for Donne's liking for play-going is well documented, as are his friendships with the practising dramatists.

That Donne could jest with the best of the wits of the day is seen to good advantage in his Catalogus Librorum Aulicorum printed in 1650 by the younger John Donne, as it is also evident in Donne's

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[2] Gen. Intro., xxi of her text.

verses prefixed to Coryat's Crudities. According to Mrs. Simpson, the Catalogue probably belongs to Donne's earlier period,[3] that is, when he was writing the Songs and Sonnets rather than the Divine Poems. Many of his poems on the comedy of love that parody manners and modes can be assigned to this early period too. Donne hated pretence and hypocrisy; his Satires and Catalogue attest to this fact, as indeed, most of his writing does.

According to all the available evidence, it seems certain that Ben Jonson and Donne were good friends of long standing. We know that Jonson said that Donne was the first poet in the world in some things, although he jibed at him about deserving hanging for not keeping accent. When Jonson said that Donne's The First Anniversary was profane and full of blasphemies, we can assume that this was a facetious remark. We know that Jonson esteemed Donne highly as a critic, for he told Drummond that he intended Donne when he created the character Criticus in the Dialogue of the Preface of his translation of Ars Poetica. The destruction of this Preface in one of the disastrous fires which ravaged Jonson's library is an incalculable loss to Donne criticism. Both Jonson and Donne had a lot in common, for they were careful craftsmen who valued perfection of form. "To Jonson and Donne matter was more important than words, and the management of thoughts dictated the

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[3] A Study of the Prose Works, 151.

rhetorical form."[4] They both avoided language and imagery which was not apt. This would account for Jonson's commendation and committal to memory of certain lines from 'The Calme' and 'The Bracelet', for he would appreciate Donne's realism and flair for satire and humorous hyperbole when the subject called for them.

In Donne's early poems of comedy, there is a type of comic irony, similar to that of the best dramatic comedy of the day, for his early lyrics share a comic spirit which is its equivalent. Donne, like the great Tudor-Jacobean dramatists, had the rare ability to record the ludicrous which, according to Aristotle, is the subject of comedy. Renaissance critics thought that Aristotle meant by this definition to distinguish between the risible and the ridiculous, between mere laughter, and laughter mixed with contempt or disapprobation.[5] To-day, we tend to think of comedy in terms of the drama, as being a light and amusing play with laughable characters where there is always a happy ending. In 1598, Ben Jonson in the Prologue to Every Man in His Humour declaims about comedy:

> And persons such as comedy would choose
> When she would show an image of the times,
> And sport with human follies, not with crimes.

To interpret the ironic comedy of Donne's early songs with-

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[4]Wilson, Elizabethan and Jacobean, 54.

[5] Spingarn, A History of English Criticism in the Renaissance, 289.

out due reference to human follies, which were considered to be the common errors of man's life, would be to discount the current Elizabethan theories of comedy and the expectations of the audience, some members of which were reading Donne's lyrics in manuscript. In Prologues, Epilogues and Choruses, the audience was harangued. There was no artifice to this, for this was a direct method for the solicitation of a group-response which was always secured although the threshold of emotional reaction was low.[6] This low threshold of audience response is the key to an understanding of Donne's so-called profane, or negative poems, for these early ribald lyrics are only token exposés of man's sexual license and profligacy. They are meant to be sheer fun, for they do not disgust; their appeal lies in the way that Donne has caught the pure animal passion of the sex drive in the lilt and insistent stress of their lines. Donne does not repudiate sexual love, any more than he parodies an ideal love. In the early songs, Donne may satirize the heroic lover in his self-deception, or scorn the outrageousness of an outworn convention, but he never ridicules love as an abstraction, nor the lover in the grip of an over-powering personal feeling. When it comes to encyclopaedic questionings about his "silly" love, Donne deals in ironic thrusts and pointed sarcasms at times, but this is only when he is searching for the "vain bubble" of love. When he

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[6] Bradbrook, Elizabethan Comedy, 19.

finds a fulfilling, total love in the poems of miracle, there is no hesitation, no trace of self-seeking, or self-criticism, only an attempt to grasp at the inexplicable, to relive the miracle. Donne's genius, therefore, is that he adapts current poetic conventions to the psychology of the individual in a poetry that does not intellectualize, but informs by sophistic paradox. Little if any influence is felt from theology per se throughout these lyrics; and the same could be said of philosophy despite what Dryden said. It is enough that these lyrics speak the language and passion of love itself, a love whose ultimate vision is metaphysical.

Donne is the first English lyric poet to treat human sexual love as the supreme, active force which it really is. The energy of the early poems is felt in a tension which the heroic lover imposes upon himself. For example, the lover of 'The Indifferent' vacillates between freedom and bondage: a set of circumstances has to be met before he can love. Donne shows that there is no stability in this kind of heroic love, only the excited insecurity of the pull between desire and commitment. The outstanding characteristic of the early lyrics is that they make implicit the fact that this insecurity is not just a male domain, for the woman, also, is a querulous malcontent. The woman, as much as the man, can be burned by the ironic heats of love, for "that vice-nature custome" is no respecter of persons, and heroines can be victimized as well as heroes.

In Donne's caricature of the Petrarchan God of Love, one can identify Donne's derision of the victim who knows that he is the unwilling accomplice for love's sake ('Loves Diet'), although he has been known to hold out for a time ('Loves Exchange'), even to the point of vainly wishing for complete freedom from lust as well as love ('Loves Usury') or as Donne puts it in 'Farewell to Love' from the "sport". Nevertheless, after reading 'The Will', one has the gnawing suspicion that Donne, himself, is not so much sinned against as sinning. The lover and/or Donne, however, eventually comes to the realization that love, which should be giving him something in return, is really deceitful in demanding from him tribute like sighs, tears, and his "ragges of heart",while at the same time enlisting aid from cohorts like the giant, Disdaine, and the enchantress, Honor, to slay him. Suddenly, the bubble of his blown-up self-importance and petulant self-pity bursts in the knowledge that he can revenge himself on a mistress whose heart is as black and brittle as a cheap"jeat"ring, and who has the effrontery to use "the stile of conquerour". This mistress is supernatural: her picture has such a potent, magical property that men die after just one look ('The Dampe'); this divine being can call men from cloisters, even from the dead; this sorceress can melt both poles of the earth at once, bring life to the desert, and make more mines in the earth than there are quarries ('Loves Exchange'). Since this mistress is a she-devil, and deserves to die, the stage assuredly is set for the lover's revenge.

Donne's poems of revenge parallel the inner drama of the Jacobeans, whose plays were whirlpools of the disordered states of mind of dramatic characters, in the use of poetic devices like the dream and the dumb show. Accordingly, Donne shows a precocious use of the contemporary Tragedy of Revenge convention when he utilizes its dramatic advantage for lyric poetry. The world of the deceived lover is a dislocated world in which disillusionment, unfulfilled dreams, despair, and thoughts of revenge assail the lover, and he is all but overwhelmed by his own despair. In The White Devil (II. i. 248-9) Isabella says, "Hell, to my affliction/Is mere snow water", and if she does not resort to revenge, there are others who will.

Revenge is the antithesis of forgiveness, and in a poem like 'The Apparition' forgiveness is never for a moment entertained by the lover. Similarly, in The Duchess of Malfi, the Aragonian brothers never allow their forgiveness to put right a world of insatiable hatred and madness. In The Changeling, Beatrice-Joanna never removes her evil mask. Her pretence at virtue is only a foil: "There was a viser/ O'er that cunning face, and that became you" (V. iii. 48-9). DeFlores, like the lover in 'The Apparition', says, "If but to vex her, I'll haunt her still/Though I get nothing else, I'll have my will" (I. i. 243-4). The lover in Donne's poem asserts "Then shall my ghost come to thy bed/And thee, fain'd vestall, in worse armes shall see". In the couplet that ends the poem the lover indicates that he, too, will have his will, "I'had rather

thou shouldst painfully repent/Then by my threatenings rest still innocent". The classic dream that once was an erotic love-dream where fantasy reigned supreme ('The Dreame'), has become instead the scene of a gothic haunting.

'The Relique', one of Donne's poems of miracle shows evidence of this same haunting quality, this terror at midnight. But, 'The Relique' is not all melodrama, although its macabre conceit, "a bracelet of bright haire about the bone", seems to establish it, at least pictorially, in this genre. From the tightly-knit lines of this lyric, there unfolds a miracle denoting sacrifice as well as rebirth, but a sacrifice of restraint, and of denial, not of surrender, such as is found in the phoenix image of 'The Canonization'. The miracle is that, although they are not sexual lovers, neither are they holier-than-thou personages: they are simply "harmlesse lovers". There is another dimension to this 'miracle': the element of divinity that inheres in the very word. In Donne's time, a pure love between men friends was considered possible and was lauded by an essayist like Sir William Cornwallis the Younger.[7] In 'Essay of Love' (5), he says that he does not consider the "conjunction of man and wife Love". He continues, "It is an allowance of God's and so good, and the name of it, I think, two honest affections united into one". Later in the same essay he says, "Love is divine and eternall; Affection like our flesh, momentary and mortall". His essay seems to confirm the

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[7]From Essayes, 20.

opinion that love is possible but difficult to obtain between men, impossible to experience with women. Donne makes degrees of love between the sexes a possibility. There is, however, in 'The Relique' which is the most 'platonic' of Donne's Songs and Sonnets, an enigmatic quality, which is "of the poem's essence".[8] In my opinion, the essence of this lyric lies in the metaphysics of its startling conceit, whose unexpected brightness spills over into the whole poem and eclipses the prosaic platonism of the poem's argument. Graves do not reveal secrets; they only supply riddles. Nonetheless, is it possible that this dramatic lyric is veering towards a special miracle, the deathlessness of love? "The truths of Donne's poetry are truths of the imagination, which freely transmutes personal experience. They are his own discoveries."[9] Could the discovery in 'The Relique' lie hidden in the image (which is to say the poem), and only waits to be revealed through the reader's intuition? It is a teasing, enigmatic question.

Two other poems of miracle, 'The Canonization', and 'The Exstasie', illustrate the same kind of dialectical turn of mind that informs

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[8]Sanders, John Donne's Poetry, 108.

[9]Gardner, Divine Poems, Intro., xxxvii.

most of Donne's lyrics. These poems do not contain irresponsible dichotomies of meanings, and they do not lack grace, for in their wit they are inspirational. A similar wit is to be found in the early songs, the only difference is that, now, we are in the realm of metaphysical speculation, not just syllogistic gymnastics. In 'The Canonization', the saints are not saints in any preordained religous sense, but only in the metaphoric language of love, which persists in the use of esoteric conceits in order to explain the imponderables of love's condition. When we understand that Donne is not trying to spiritualize love, but to explain its miraculous character, we realize that the Taper, Eagle, Dove, and Phoenix riddles are not placed in the poem necessarily to shock us with their sensuality, but only to indicate the ramifications of the larger riddle of love, and all that it implies. In the last stanza, one feels Donne's contempt for the people who will confuse the lovers for saints, for holy intercessors who will speak out on their behalf. This same contempt can be found in 'The Relique'. There, also, well-meaning people, through wishful thinking, and "mis-devotion", will misconstrue the true meaning of the relic which they will someday dig up.

If love is neither all sense, nor all spirit, what is it then? A poem like 'Aire and Angels' has one answer. Here, love is seen as a child of the soul, but it is no more ideal, in the sense of "extreme, and scatt'ring bright", than it is "nothing", in its physical nature: "Love must not be, but take a body too". The key to the new vision of love

that Donne sees is to be found in the phrase, Love must not 'be'; it must 'become'. This concept is not found in the early lyrics, and what changed Donne, and it seems that he did change in his personal relationships, is a matter of speculation although, from Walton on, the sobering influence of his marriage to Ann More, is taken seriously. It is possible that two poems like 'Sweetest love, I do not goe', and 'A Nocturnall' were prompted by Donne's love for his wife. It is, important, however, to recognize that Donne, in no way, commemorates married love, even if later he exultantly cries, "To-day put on perfection, and a woman's name", in the 'Epithalamion made at Lincolnes Inn' (1613).

No other English poet, Shakespeare included, has interpreted the ecstatic love between a man and a woman as intuitively, as perceptively, as totally as Donne. These qualities of intuition, perception, and total vision, are all combined in 'Loves Growth', the most 'organic' of Donne's love-lyrics. In this poem, Donne does not say that love will never know vicissitude, or never change like the grass in its season, for he knows that love can be eclipsed into night if lovers are false to each other, ('A Lecture upon the Shadow'), or as Donne gracefully puts it, "if our loves faint, and westwardly decline". Also, Donne is well aware that death can either complete or destroy the miracle. The Petrarchists only recognized death in a fictional context in the joy of a sexual 'dying', or as a release from the pain of an unconsummated desire. Donne starkly sets forth the reality of the aftermath of an

actual death in 'A Nocturnall', where the lover is not inspired by the memory of a miracle (What a miracle she was!), but is become "a quintessence even from nothingnesse" in the throes of an unbearable grief. What, then, does 'Loves Growth' affirm, if it can be called organic, in the face of all this other evidence which Donne has gathered? In 'Loves Growth', Donne affirms that love needs nourishment from a root system, a living source of vitality and power, that is the essence, the miracle of all living things in the world of nature. Then gentle love deeds can, indeed, bud out "as blossomes on a bough". Love has come full circle from the cockiness of the heroic lover to the gentleness of the fulfilled one.

The poems celebrating this miracle, this mystery, express the union of the bodies and souls of lovers in a timeless, paradisal world of their own making. But Donne does not deal in allegory, as other seventeenth century poets do, any more than he does in symbol. This world is a metaphysical world because, although it is real to the lovers, it has an air of unreality about it. The lovers in their microcosm are like Marina in Pericles, being not "of any shore"(V. i. 104). The miracle of this love is, first of all, the lovers', then the poet's who makes pure poetry of love's miracle. This is not escapist poetry, nor is this an escapist world, for it is attainable here on earth. Donne makes this clear in 'The Exstasie' when he says, "Loves mysteries in soules doe grow/But yet the body is his booke". Also, Donne feels

that the lovers will have an enduring, artistic fame (as they have) because of the mystery of their love which sets them apart. The greatest paradox which Donne articulates in the Songs and Sonnets is the metaphysical perfectability of a sexual love, that the divinity of lovers does not lie in their divine natures, but is latent in their sexuality. The prelude of love that begins in equivocal paradox in the early art songs, finds its dénouement in an eternal paradox where the dream has become the reality, and yet remains all vision.

APPENDIX

THE SONGS AND SONNETS OF JOHN DONNE SUGGESTED CLASSIFICATION BY GROUPS

SONG

The Baite
The Message
Communitie
Breake of Day
Confined Love
'Goe, and catche a falling starre'

COMEDY

The Indifferent
Womans Constancy
The Paradox
The Prohibition
The Curse
The Computation
The Expiration
The Flea
A Jeat Ring Sent
The Legacie
The Will
Loves Usury
Loves Diet
Loves Exchange
Loves Deitie

TRAGEDY

Witchcraft by a Picture
The Dampe
The Dreame
The Apparition
The Funerall

TRAGEDY
(cont'd)

The Broken Heart
The Blossome
Twicknam Garden
A Feaver
The Dissolution
A Nocturnall

MIRACLE

Loves Infiniteness
The Sunne Rising
The Good-morrow
The Anniversarie
The Four Valedictory Poems
'Sweetest love, I do not goe'
The Exstasie
The Relique
The Canonization

THE QUESTION OF LOVE

The Triple Foole
Negative Love
The Undertaking
The Primrose
[Image and Dream]*
Farewell to Love
Loves Alchymie
Loves Growth
Aire and Angels
A Lecture upon the Shadow

* Elegie X in Grierson's edition

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