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JOHN DONNE'S POETRY AND SERMONS:

SOME PARALLELS IN SPIRITUAL DISCOVERY

by

Scot Bishop

Department of English

McGill University, Montreal

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ABSTRACT

This study argues that there is an essential unity to John Donne's poems and sermons. Chapter One is a survey of Donne criticism: Ilona Bell suggests Donne "seeks communion, but is continually prepared to recognize disjunction." It is argued that Bell's notion is validated in both genres where Donne renders concrete a movement of thought or emotion through figurative language. Chapter Two examines how the sermons move between the literal sense of scripture, and its multiform spiritual significance. Chapter Three examines the writerly tradition of the Church Fathers in relation to some of Donne's poetry. Augustine read the bible as a unified entity, The Word, and yet understood it through manifold meanings. Donne writes of the union of lovers' souls, yet weaves in the theme of inconstancy and separation. In sum, this study discusses how Donne's creation of figurative meaning produces both his literary intensity, and some parallels of spiritual discovery in his poems and sermons.

RESUME

Cet essai argumente qu'il existe une unité essentielle entre les poèmes et les sermons de John Donne. Le premier chapître est un survol des critiques de Donne: Ilona Bell suggère que Donne "cherche une communion, mais est toujours prêt à reconnaître la disjonction". Il y est argumenté que la proposition de Bell est vérifiée dans les deux genres ou Donne rend concret un mouvement de pensée ou d'émotion à travers le language figuratif. Le deuxième chapître examine comment les sermons passent du sens littéral des Ecritures à des significations spirituelles multiformes. Le troisième chapître examine la tradition écrite des docters latins en relation avec quelques poèmes de Donne. Saint-Augustin lisait la Bible comme une entité unie, le Mot, mais cependant en comprenait ses sens variés. Donne écrit à propos de l'union de l'âme des amants, mais élabore les thèmes de l'inconsistance et de la séparation. En somme, cette étude discute comment la création du sens figuratif chez Donne produit une intensité littéraire et des parallèlles de découverte spirituelle dans ses poèmes et ses sermons.

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CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION AND SURVEY OF DONNE CRITICISM

Donne's intense interest in the association between the literal and the spiritual sense of language is a theme that runs through both the sermons and poems, and points to the unity of Donne's artistry. When Evelyn Simpson suggests that "Donne's finest prose frequently merges into poetry by the intensity of his mood . . ." (X: 3)[1], she underscores this theme. This present study draws closer to Donne's use of figurative language and uses his sense of language as a lens to focus on the unity of artistic development in the poems and sermons. It will be seen that surprisingly little of the secondary literature has concentrated on the similarity in theme and in figures in the poems and sermons. It was formerly assumed that Donne's poetry reflected the growth of "Jack Donne" libertine into "Dr. John Donne," the somber dean of St. Paul's; that sensual love poetry typified his youth, while obsessive thoughts of sin and death characterized his later career.[2] This thesis will explore the parallels between the poems and sermons in terms of language, development of symbols, and Donne's sources. What does the evidence tell us about Donne's distinctions between the literal sense, on the one hand, and the spiritual senses of the moral, allegorical, and anagogical on the other hand?[3] In terms of the unity of Donne's intensity of language, does he move beyond the literal sense to the

spiritual, or rather is the spiritual sense somehow embedded in the literal? St Augustine suggested in his Confessions that "God's use of physical reality is to intimate and reflect spiritual reality in his Word" (54). So there seems to be an inseparable parabolical or metaphorical sense within the literal sense. Since, for Donne, a thought or emotion is allied with language as a divine influence working in the human heart, his quest for figurative language to unfetter yet fix meaning leads to what may be called his spiritual discoveries. Through an examination of Donne's use of language, and the religious writerly tradition from which he speaks, one learns more about the way Donne viewed the world, placed human love with divine love, and developed the power to fix and fascinate our attention.[4]

One striking example of Donne's ability to unfetter yet fix meaning is his use of the word "oriens". Oriens is the present participle of the Latin orior, I rise, and also means sunrise, and hence the east (O.E.D. 332). Donne, however, uses the word in another sense when he asserts that "the name of Christ is Oriens . . ." By using the name Oriens for Jesus Christ, Donne both lays stress on Christ's humanity, and yokes the literal and spiritual senses in a particularly striking way. Donne also associated oriens with the early morning, a time that he loved (V: 25, 280-82).

When Donne talks of the gradual union of person and word he adopts metaphor as solution:

> But the eyes of our soul, shal be so enlightened, as that they shal see God Sicuti est . . . . Now the sight of God in this text, is the knowledge of God, to see God, is but to know, that there is a God. (IV: 168)

And in Satyre I when Donne says that it is "With God, and with the Muses . . ." that he confers, he implies it is the writer who literalizes the harmonious correspondence of the literal and the spiritual. With some exceptions -- Erich Auerbach on Dante and figural typology, Northrop Frye on Blake, M. H. Abrams on the Romantics -- it is not the literary critics but the biblical scholars who have questioned the affinity between secular and sacred word. It is in an examination of the language of Donne's poems and sermons that we may appreciate an aspect of their mutual concerns.

Figurative language in Donne's sermons persists as sedimentation long after the resonance of prophetic style in the Bible. For literary critics, figurative language becomes the problem it was meant to resolve. For example, in the Gospels there are divergent accounts of appearances by Jesus to one or more of the disciples. These appearances, like Donne's observation that to see God is but to know that there is a God (IV: 168), cannot be taken at face value. The

idea of an appearance is probably not made to convey an actual sighting but rather to suggest something along the lines of recognition. This is the sense it has in the Epistles, when Paul describes his blinding on the road to Damascus, his vision of Jesus, and his subsequent conversion. It is clear from the context that what Paul really experiences is a voice, a word that survives today with a full complement of notoriously ineffable connotations. This study will explore Donne's particular sense of recognition as well as his writerly sources in the early Christian writers who prompt Donne to suggest that the sight of God in the text is the knowledge of God (IV: 168).[5] The critical perspective of this study takes account of the basic presumption of structuralist and deconstructive procedures that man does not speak, that only language speaks. Structuralist applications have lead to interesting insights into the degree which, when we use language, language is also using us. But this assertion is figurative, and as Derrida puts the matter, the logic of figurative language "invariably reveals a certain excess: something that doesn't fit." Derrida has developed the view that the author is dead and the human reader liquidated in a sea of linguicity; that man himself is no more than a "simple fold in our language" that is fated to disappear; hence the deconstructive interpretation, as Derrida suggests, must try "to pass beyond man and humanism" (Of Grammatology: 103).

Nevertheless, this present study perceives that John Donne's poems and sermons are dramatic, presupposing human listeners. Each poem and sermon has in consequence its particular voice, its distinct figurative language; and each, its own writerly sources. The unifying argument of this study is that Donne bridges the distinction between humanity and divinity with figurative language in both the sermons and the poems in strikingly similar ways: through the effort of rédoublement, of thinking of the poems from the point of view of the sermons and visa versa, the unity of Donne's artistic development will be argued, and the nature of the relationship between the literal and spiritual aspects of his work will be explored.

The second chapter of this thesis will examine Donne's pursuit of the manifold spiritual meaning of Scripture beyond the oneness of the literal sense. A similar shape emerges from the sonnets where there are comparable themes of the separate meanings of inconstancy set against the oneness of the union of lovers' souls. One notices that Donne's increasingly frequent and effective practice of pursuing the spiritual significance of Scripture in his sermons by enlarging on -- or, as Donne called it "dilating" -- figures of speech or common nouns in his texts does not stay within the traditional literal sense. In "The Role of the Lady in Donne's 'Songs and Sonets,'" Ilona Bell suggests that Donne is unconventional in his sense of a particular

"'dialogue of one' or two, that 'new made Idiome,' which seeks communion, but is continually prepared to recognize disjunction" (128). Patricia Howison's commentaries on Donne's sermons parallel Bell's thesis on the poems when she points out that the homeletic tradition that Donne inherited was one where scriptural truth can be both one -- "The Word" -- and manifold (135). Donne is ready to accept the oneness of scripture in a limited way, but he grows to pursue the spiritual significance of scripture by enlarging on the figures of speech in his chosen texts. Throughout the sermons Donne's practise is to give preliminary attention to the literal sense, but then the emphasis is on what the multiple senses term the moral sense -- the applicability of the text to the state of man's soul (Howison 132). It will be seen that there are parallels between Donne's sense of the communion of love in the sonnets -- "Here you see me and I am you" ("A Valediction: of my name in the window") -- that is often complicated by a sense of disjunction, and the sermons wherein the singularity of the textual meaning is complicated by expanding the Word of God in human discourse -- "dilating" the figures in the text -- to move from the traditional literal meaning towards a sense of spiritual discovery.

There are several possible avenues of critical approach. Without a doubt, several current critical approaches have been marked by a disconcerting tendency to

deprive literature of much of that combination of strength and pathos so characteristicly stressed by the early Christian writers and by Donne. These grammatologies have not only challenged the compensatory nature of literature by exposing the fabrications of its rhetoric, they have also tended to evaporate the pathos of interrogated emotion and disjunction, and the tension between faith and despair, by regarding these not humanistically, in relation to language, but scientifically, as features of the structure of signification itself. While it is important to examine skeptically the rhetorical construction of a "voice" or of an authorial "presence," and while it is necessary to recognize how thoroughly any self is affected or governed by language, the problem of subjectivity may be overlooked if its entire assimilation into language is taken for granted. So thoroughly is one told to regard the self as scarcely different from yet another textual structure that one retains little sense either of what that "scarcely different" might mean or of the biographical context that goes into the making of that structure.

This sketch may be a caricature, yet it is in response to the present climate of thought that the critical framework of this study has been formed. One tries neither to remystify Donne's language nor to sentimentalize subjectivity and Donne's predicament, but one can hope to use this discussion of figurative language in the sermons

and in the poems as a perspective from which to reexamine the connections between the poems and sermons. Of all poets, Donne requires and provides such a perspective, for his poetry and prose are characterized by an unusually powerful intertwining of emotion and rhetoric, of the spiritual and the literal. After this introductory chapter, the rest of which develops an interpretive and historical survey of Donne criticism, I concentrate on studying individual works. It is the poems and sermons, after all -- their emotional force, their beauty and complexity -- that draws one to Donne as a writer.

There is no doubt that Donne has been a poet of major importance in this century. Between 1910 and 1930 Donne was rehabilitated, in large part due to the work of T. S. Eliot. Donne influenced and shaped the style of lyric poetry of Eliot, Auden, Pound, Thomas, and others.[6] Donne is a strangely modern figure who speaks to us in our own accents across the centuries. The dramatic and colloquial qualities of his poetry, and his incisive psychological insights make it easy for one to regard him as a contemporary. But if one relates to him as a contemporary figure, then one is perhaps kidnapping Donne into one's own assumptions. One needs to keep in mind the fact that Donne is a man of the late Renaissance, steeped in scholastic, theological, and mystical learning alien to the twentieth century.[7] Yet Donne does move us through the projection of dramatic personae who

emphasize separate aspects of his complex personality. Perhaps it is wrong then, to see a young man sowing his wild oats and writing about it, as one reads Donne's amorous lyrics, the epistles, love elegies, and satires of the 1590s. It is reductive to conclude that these writings are informed only by a dialectical process, and that the poet laterally moves between the contradictory depths of sensuous and intellectual experience. These writings, taken as a whole, suggest that although young Donne knew well of sexual passion, he was at the same time desperately concerned with the search for some principle of divine unity underlying both emotional experience and religious longing.[8]

Within the limits of this chapter it can only be hoped to bring out certain themes in the critical work on Donne, and to show which way the body of criticism points. It is possible to follow changes in Donne's reception from the seventeenth century to the end of the nineteenth. Both the book A. J. M. Smith edited, John Donne: The Critical Heritage (London: Oxford UP, 1975), and the book Frank Kermode edited, Discussions of John Donne (Boston: Harvard UP, 1962) provide useful information about Donne's critical reception over the years. The "Elegies on the Authors Death" printed with Miles Fletcher's first edition in 1633, Poems by John Donne and reprinted in Grierson's Donne's Poetical Works (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912) give us a sense of Donne's reputation at the time of his death. The reception

of Donne's work in the nineteenth century is discussed in R. Granqvist's The Reputation of John Donne 1779-1873 (Uppsala Press, 1975). Through these works a picture is painted; different shadings have been brushed by different critics at various times and illustrate what aspects of Donne's work were of interest at a particular time. Different tastes of successive centuries are overlaid and it becomes apparent, in metacritical terms, that the Donne texts become conditional rather than transcendent.

Donne was not re-invented in the twentieth century, but it seems he was a different figure from the Donnes of earlier periods. In the early twentieth century two essays seem to be central to the history of Donne criticism. One is Grierson's introduction to his edition of the poems, and the other is T. S. Eliot's "The Metaphysical Poets." Grierson's introduction and edition stress the idea of a "metaphysical school" that started with Donne. Eliot's essay extends this emphasis. Taken together, Grierson and Eliot sparked much of the subsequent studies of Donne. In the introduction to The Metaphysical Poets (London: Penguin, 1957), Helen Gardner who has edited several editions of Donne's poetry, has attempted to define the term "metaphysical".

> The concentration of metaphysical poetry demands that we pay attention and read on . . . it had its origins in the general desire at the close of Elizabeth's reign for concise expression, achieved

> by an elliptical syntax, and accompanied by a staccato rhythm in prose and a certain deliberate roughness in versification in poetry. Along with this went admiration for difficulty in the thought. Difficulty is indeed the main demerit of this way of writing for those who dislike it . . . it is one of its merits for those who approve it. The metaphysical style heightens and liberates personality. It is essentially a style in which individuality is expressed. Donne speaks his own mind in his own voice with pungency in his thought. (17, 28)

Most twentieth century critics suggest that when "Donne speaks his own mind in his own voice" his poems reveal certain characteristics: dazzling wordplay, often explicitly sexual; paradox; subtle argumentation; surprising contrasts; intricate psychological analysis; and striking figures selected from nontraditional areas such as law, physiology, scholastic philosophy, and mathematics. "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning", which will be examined closely in Chapter Three, contains the famous comparison of lovers' souls to the legs of a compass. It is Donne's poetry, especially the Songs and Sonets and religious poems, which has dominated discussion of his work since Eliot, although Evelyn Simpson published A Study of the Prose Works of John Donne in the nineteen-twenties (Oxford: Clarendon Press,

1924), and there has been considerable specialized scholarly work on aspects of his prose writing. Some examples appear in John Donne: Essays in Celebration (London: Oxford UP, 1972) edited by A. J. M. Smith. Twentieth century writers on the sermons suggest, by and large, that the sermons are memorable for their imaginative explorations of biblical passages and for their intense explorations of the themes of divine love and the decay and resurrection of the body. One of the most complete discussions is Schleiner's Imagery of John Donne's Sermons (Providence: Brown UP, 1970). The concept of a metaphysical school, established by Grierson and Eliot, was developed in the 1930s. George Williamson, explicit about his debt to Eliot, published The Donne Tradition: A Study in English Poetry from Donne to the Death of Cowley (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1930) and F. R. Leavis in his Revaluation of the Metaphysical Poets (London: Oxford UP, 1936) briefly extended Eliot's observations in the first chapter "The Line of Wit," importantly stressing Eliot's idea of a "dissociation of sensibility" in the mid-seventeenth century. It seems that this idea did much to increase interest in what Gardner called the metaphysical style. The concern with Donne's followers was taken further by A. Alvarez in The School of Donne (London: Hutchison, 1961) and Earl Miner in The Metaphysical Mode from Donne to Cowley (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1969), both of whom provide stimulating scholarship.

Concurrently, there have been many articles published on Donne's poetry, and these fall roughly into two areas of study: either handbooks of close reading or studies which emphasize particular aspects of context. Clay Hunt's Donne's Poetry (New Haven: Yale UP, 1954) is subtitled Essays in Literary Analysis and demonstrates well the nature of the former area of study. Wilbur Sanders' John Donne's Poetry (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1971) has a wider range but shows a similar preoccupation with detailed discussion of voice and tone. J. B. Leishman's The Monarch of Wit: An Analytical and Comparative Study of the Poetry of John Donne (London: Oxford UP, 1951) is a more scholarly work, but one that tends to stress Donne's individuality, following Eliot, and underplays traditions and contexts that bear upon Donne's work. Still, other scholars have tried to correct this imbalance by taking a broader view of the traditions and contexts that shaped Donne's experience. In The Poetry of Meditation: A Study in English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century (New Haven: Yale UP, 1954), Louis Martz seeks to place Donne's religious poetry within a tradition of religious meditative theory and practice. Donald Guss in John Donne, Petrarchist: Italianate Conceits and Love Theory in the Songs and Sonets (Detroit: Michigan UP, 1966) is interested in Petrarchian influences of Donne, while N. Andreasen explores medieval and sixteenth century Christian love in John Donne: Conservative Revolutionary (Princeton:

Princeton UP, 1967). Murray Roston in The Soul of Wit: A Study of John Donne (London: Oxford UP, 1974) studies Baroque and Mannerist elements in the poetry, and William Zunder explores the socio-political context in The Poetry of John Donne: Literature and Culture in the Elizabethan and Jacobean Period (New York: Harper and Row, 1982).

Hunt's book, Donne's Poetry: Essays in Literary Analysis, is an extreme example of a New Critical approach, decontextualizing individual poems almost completely. Hunt attempts to persuade that literature transcends subjectivity or politics. Paradoxically, it is because the fictional universe is wholly subjective and therefore the value of its ideology is almost irrelevant to its literary value. The latter instead depends on what might be thought of as the quality of the apologia, how successfully the work transforms ideology into ideal, an ideal that works to the extent precisely that it obscures its provenance. Disliking that provenance implies no literary judgement, for a work may be quite wrong and even wrongheaded about life and politics and still an extremely successful rendering of its contrary vision. The most recent criticism of the Songs and Sonets has attempted to humanize Donne's soul, to emphasize feelings rather than intellect, psychology rather than philosophy.[9] Other accounts retain tradition and literary histories, either by looking back from Donne (Guss, Andreason) or by seeing him as beginning a tradition

(Leavis, Alvarez), but there has been a marked tendency to divorce texts from biographical and socio-political considerations and verse from prose. Leishman's handling of biography is not extensive. John Carey, however, in John Donne: Life, Mind and Art (London: Oxford UP, 1981) made an ambitious attempt to write of the whole Donne. It is Carey and Zunders' books which suggested the direction of this present study.

Nevertheless, the more one studies Donne's poetry and sermons the more one is concerned with how they do what they do -- the poetic craftsmanship, the sense of wit and irony, the mastery of the spiritual. Reading Donne, one discovers a strong sense of the moment, of listening to the actual intimate responses and reflections of an active writer. For those who believe that criticism is a political act -- that the task of the critic is to identify the politics or ideology of the text and to ferret out the devious ways in which the text attempts to disguise its ideology -- Donne's work has become an Eldorado. But the rigid thematic approach (literature is inevitably linked to political conviction and social conflict) seems to reduce all literary works to the same level. Differences in narrative technique, in style, in moral purpose, become irrelevant. Perhaps the best criticism leads one back to the work with a new appreciation of the author's skill as a writer rather than as an ideologue. Ilona Bell's "The Role of the Lady in Donne's Songs and

Sonets (SEL 23, 1983) and Patricia Howison's "Donne's Sermons and the Rhetoric of Prophecy" (English Studies in Canada 2, 1989) are two such essays that critically frame Donne in a writerly tradition and thus provide a jumping off point for this present study. In the next chapter we will explore how Donne, paralleling his use of figurative language in the poems, evolved an eloquent style in the sermons to mirror not only the inferred intent of the Holy Ghost in a text, but the movement of Donne's own mind in undertaking to penetrate its meaning.

NOTES

1. Quotations from Donne's sermons are taken from The Sermons of John Donne. Eds. G. R. Potter and E. M. Simpson, 10 vols. (Berkeley: California UP, 1953-62), and are noted by volume and page number, (X: 3).

2. See especially Walton, Lives: Donne, Wotton, Hooker, Herbert, and Sanderson, 1640-1678 (New York: Harper and Row, 1927); Bald, John Donne: A Life (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

3. For excellent discussions see especially Schleiner The Imagery of John Donne's Sermons (Providence: Brown UP, 1970), and Stanwood and Asals John Donne and the Theology of Language (Missouri UP, 1986).

4. For a full discussion of Donne's religious writerly influences see especially Simpson, Sermons X, Part Two, ch. 2: "Donne's Sources: The early Fathers, especially St. Augustine", Bald, and Walton who suggests: "He was like Augustine and St. Heirom [sic]".

5. See Simpson in Sermons X, Part Two, ch. 2 for a discussion of the writerly tradition of the early Church fathers especially Augustine, Gregory, Jerome, and Ambrose. Chapter Three of this study explores how their figurative language frames Donne's poems.

6. For a full discussion see Eliot "The Metaphysical Poets." in Discussions of John Donne, ed. Frank Kermode (Boston: Harvard UP, 1962).

7. The scope of Donne's learning can be gleaned from the books in his library found in Keynes, A Bibliography of Dr John Donne, Appendix IV, "Books from Donne's Library" (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1958). See also Bald for an interesting discussion of Donne's education.

8. Virginia Woolf, The Second Common Reader (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1960), suggests a like sense of these poems: "Even while he was at his most fickle and gave fullest scope to his youthful lusts, Donne could predict the season of maturity when he would love differently" (23).

9. See discussion in essays in Just So Much Honor, ed. Peter Amadeus Fiore (University Park: Pennsylvania UP, 1972), and especially Barbara Hardy, The Advantage of the Lyric: Essays on Feeling in Poetry (Bloomingdale: Indiana UP, 1977), ch. 2, "Thinking and Feeling in the Songs and Sonnets of John Donne".

CHAPTER II - LITERAL TO SPIRITUAL BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IN RELATION TO FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN THE SERMONS.

Donne never ceased showing how "sermon" derived from "sermo"; for him preaching meant, always and above all, preaching the Word of God, the scriptures, the only sure source of divine truth available to human minds. In one regard he carried out as literally as possible the great imperative of Christ the Word Incarnate to his apostles, the first ministers of the Church -- if "literally" is taken as faithful adherence to the words of the original. As Potter and Simpson contend in their Index of Scriptural Texts of the Sermons in Volume X, there is a profusion of Biblical citations and allusions in Donne's discourse. He is given to introducing tags and phrases from the Vulgate as a kind of oral punctuation setting off the subsequent citation of the whole verse in an English rendering, almost as if to signal where the preacher's words end and the Word of God begins. In the Sermon at St. Paul's, 28 Jan. 1627, Donne makes this vital distinction clear: "All the Sermon is not Gods word, but all the Sermon is Gods Ordinance, and the Text is certainly his word" (VII: 320). Also, Donne's frequency of citation makes preaching conducive to faith by showing how God keeps his promises. The evidence is that God is the God of his Word; thus far conviction in the faith resembles

conviction at the bar. Donne the jurist persists in Donne the preacher.

But Donne does not go to great pains to consult the Hebrew and Greek texts and the numerous translations available in his day to establish an authoritative and authentic reading of a verse (Potter and Simpson, Volume I, "The Literary Value of Donne's Sermons"). Donne's philological research seems to have the opposite objective: to open many possibilities of nuance and meaning, not to settle upon one. As he saw the matter, the problem of misunderstanding or missing the sense of scripture was less likely to be one of scholarship than of sin. A sermon, which was to convey the sense of Scripture, was supremely serious business because the salvation of souls was at stake. Donne has many reproaches for those who, in preaching or being preached to, trivialize or frustrate the purpose of saving souls. Donne reprehends preachers who cater to popular taste with racy topicality, making affairs of the time their text. He reprehends his audience for the thought that they are part of a crowd rather than realizing that God through the preacher is addressing each of them. As his ministry wore on Donne came to recognize that the major obstacle to the sense of Scripture was human curiosity and the love of speculation -- whether expressed in the allegorical excesses of medieval exegesis or the inveterate theologizing on God's eternal

decrees which occupied the Puritanically inclined London preachers and populace:

> That which Christ hath plainly delivered, is the exercise of my Faith; that which other men have curiously disputed, is the exercise of my understanding . . . . It is the text that saves us; the interlineary glosses, and the marginal notes, and the variae lectiones, controversies amd perplexities, undo us. . . . It is the hand of man that induces obscurities; the hand of God hath written so, as a man may runne, and read; walk in the duties of his calling here, and attend the salvation of his soul too. (III: 207-08)[1]

Human nature being what it was, preaching was still very much needed -- as Christ knew, who ordained it for his church -- even though God's Word itself was clear enough to be grasped by any man. The danger which preaching counteracts is that of losing oneself in intellectual vagaries instead of coming to the total response of being which is faith. So obvious was this for Donne that he only points it out once in his sermons in an aside: "A Sermon intends Exhortation principally and Edification, and a holy stirring of religious affections, and then matters of Doctrine, and points of Divinity, occasionally, secondarily, as the words of the text may invite them" (VIII: 95).[2]

But if Donne does not bother much with the definitions of the sermon, he is led by his awareness of the waywardness and error of human reasoning into a continual, Anglican insistence that the individual expositor test the meaning of a text by, and conform it to, the sense of the place accepted by the Church. If a preacher does not submit himself to the Church, his words are not of the nature of a divine ordinance but only personal opinion. Donne is very far from radical theories; rather, he carefully points out mistakes and discrepancies in commentators of every persuasion. He refers in his preaching to St. Augustine's impassioned acknowledgement in the twelfth book of the Confessions that, even if Moses were to appear and were implored to explain what he said in Genesis, he would do so in Hebrew and would be hard to understand. As Donne remarks in his sermon preached at St. Paul's 8 May 1625, "The best men are Problematicall, Onely the Holy Ghost is Dogmaticall" (301).

What, however, was to be understood by submitting to the Church? This is the poet-divine who wrote "Show me deare Christ, thy spouse, so bright and cleare. . . ." The answer given in the sermons transcends the geographical and sectarian conceptions of the sonnet. To Donne as a public spokesman for the via media, the Church is the high road traveled by Christians of all places and times, a concourse of fundamental beliefs and doctrines in which deviations

show themselves as the exceptions they are. In Donne's retelling of the notable dictum of St. Vincent of Lérins, a fifth-century Father, individual interpretations of Scripture must be consonant with "that which all Churches alwayes have thought and taught to be necessary to salvation" (III: 209).[3] The requirement is not merely in the interest of human community but in keeping with the divine authority invested solely with the Church. The peril and perplexity of Donne's private search for the meaning of the Word in the little world of his self led first to the urgent tone of the Devotions and then, in the sermons postdating the recovery from his illness, to a special emphasis on the means of salvation -- preaching and sacraments -- which are the Church's ordinances alone. The Church viewed as the broad mainstream of Christian teaching and tradition was the necessary guarantor and assessor of any man's attempt to find religious truth.

In demonstrating the proper interpretation of Scripture, Donne's sermons contain many references to the principles which had been standard since the time of St. Augustine and were professed in his day by Roman Catholics and others alike: to acknowledge that the Word of God encompasses all meaning -- so that any passage may mean a number of things -- but to distinguish clearly between its literal sense and its possible spiritual or figurative senses. A crucial test for the literal sense was to insure

that it could stand within and maintain the integrity of its context. Donne pursues consideration of the senses of Scripture in three frequently quoted passages which bear directly on an understanding of his preaching methods and how the multiplicity of meaning in the literal sense of scripture relates to the multiplicity of meaning in the figurative language of the poems. In these three passages, one in the Essays in Divinity written shortly before his ordination in 1615, one in his Christmas sermon of 1621, and one in his Easter sermon of 1624, he insists on the supremacy of "the literall sense." This Donne defined, echoing Aquinas in the tenth article of the first question of the Summa Theologica, which in turn owes much to St. Augustine, as the principal intention of the Holy Ghost in a particular place.[4] St. Thomas himself observes (citing the twelfth book of the Confessions) that a multiplicity of meanings is not unfitting within even the literal sense of Scripture since its author is the all-knowing God.[5] Then he gives some examples of the multiplicity of the literal sense of Scripture. Conventionally, the literal sense is a factual or historical statement, dealing with things, persons, and events having ordinary objective existence. But according to St. Gregory the Great -- whose elaboration of the influential Augustinian discussion of "words," "things," and "signs"[6] is quoted by St. Thomas -- the literal sense of the bible is peculiar in that, when its words refer to things,

the things refer to other things. The peculiarity is due to God's use of physical reality to intimate and reflect spiritual reality in his Word. Thus there is an inseparable "parabolical" or metaphorical or figurative sense within the literal sense.

Despite all this latitude in the literal sense of Scripture, St. Thomas insists that the distinction between it and the spiritual sense is a real one which cannot be defined or synthesized away. He proceeds to comment on the different spiritual senses and the steps toward a deepening understanding of religious truth which they represent, however differently they may be termed or classified. The first of the spiritual senses is the moral, which signifies what things one should do -- especially by means of the examples of Biblical personages or of the pattern of the life of perfection as led by Christ. The second is the allegorical, in which the things of the Old Testament signify; that is, imitate the New. The third is the anagogical, in which things of this world signify what relates to the eternal glory of heaven. Aquinas is careful to say that this schema is not definitive, merely illustrative. He calls attention to the legitimate alternative classification made by Hugh of St. Victor, in which the historical, allegorical, and tropilogical are distinguished and the anagogical is made a subclass of the allegorical. But in all events the primacy of the literal

sense, the progression of the spiritual senses, and the distinction between the two are to be borne in mind by the expositor of Scripture.

Donne makes the same insistence on the distinction between the literal and the spiritual or figurative senses, but in the Essays he gives the subject his own pessimistic colouring, focusing rather on conflicting human opinions than on the plenitude of the mind of God as expressed in his Word: "The word of God is not the word of God in any other sense than the literall, and that also is not the literall, which the letter seems to present, for so to diverse understandings there might be diverse literall senses; but it is called literall, to distinguish it from the Moral, Allegorical, and the other senses. . . (39-40). In the affirmative Christmas sermon of 1621, his first as Dean of St. Paul's, Donne gives a more traditional (from Augustine and Aquinas) shaping to the distinction:

> And therefore though it be ever lawfull, and often times very usefull, for the raising and exaltation of our devotion, and to present the plenty, and abundance of the holy Ghost in the Scriptures . . . to induce the diverse senses that the Scriptures doe admit, yet this may not be admitted, if there be danger thereby, to neglect or weaken the literall sense itself. (III: 353)

Finally in the Easter sermon, his first after the illness that gave rise to the profusely metaphorical Devotions where correlations are pursued between texts of Scripture and aspects of personal experience, Donne reiterates the distinction between the literal and spiritual or figurative senses only, seemingly, to make it of no effect. Significantly, he asserts of the Holy Ghost that "his principall intention in many places, is to expresse things by allegories, by figures; so that in many places of Scripture, a figurative sense is the literal sense" (emphasis mine) (VI: 62).

Questions arise from this line of discussion as to; one, how to relate Donne to an exegetical tradition, and two, how to create statements of principle about what he does with a text. One can shift the responsibility by pointing out that neither St Augustine nor St. Thomas, nor, for that matter, any other writer, makes a satisfactory distinction between the metaphors, parables, and other figures of speech that are included in the literal sense of Scripture and the types, allegories, and other kinds of symbolic significance that are designated as spiritual senses. To be sure, St. Augustine does say that the figurative dimensions of the literal sense are in the speaker's mind, so that the meaning of the text is, literally, the meaning of the metaphor, while other kinds of figurative significance are in the mind of the reader,

hearer, or interpreter. But this distinction is blurred in turn by his assertion that the Holy Ghost's advance knowledge of the different ways man would understand the Bible was taken into account in the forms of expression used and by his acknowledgement that the same text can be literal to one person and figurative to another, yet the opinions of both can be warranted.[7] Thus the partially conflicting traditional aims of placing Christian doctrine on the high ground of the literal sense and of maintaining the primacy of the spiritual significance in every word of the Bible, which caused the formulation of the multiple senses, have been invoked to account for the awkwardness of relating precept to practice in Donne's preaching.[8]

Although there is much truth to the claim that Donne shares in the view of Scripture and its interpretation which became traditional after St. Augustine, it does not seem to be sufficient explanation of Donne's particular method to simply invoke the general inconsistencies found in the tradition. Throughout the sermons Donne's practice is to give little more than preliminary attention to the literal sense understood as the historical or factual content of a text; the emphasis is overwhelmingly on what the multiple senses term the moral sense -- the applicability of the text to the state of a man's soul and what he ought to do. Sometimes, though rarely, Donne uses the progression of the multiple senses as the organizing principle of a sermon (II:

49-164; V: 296-393; VI: 39-62), the proportions enlarge least of all the literal sense and most of all the moral and, shading into it, the allegorical. By using the terminology of the multiple senses he invites reference to them. This in turn reveals that Donne's increasingly frequent and effective practice of pursuing the spiritual significance of Scripture by enlarging on -- or, as he called it, "dilating" -- figures of speech or common nouns in his texts does not stay within the confines of the traditional literal sense. Dennis Quinn concludes: "It is most historical and most accurate to think of Donne's sermons as spiritual or, specifically, tropological exegesis" (326). While Schleiner asserts that Donne's "is as outspoken a plea for the use and usefulness of scriptural allegory as one could expect from a Protestant pulpit" (196). On the other hand Donne demonstrates his affinities with a post-Augustinian age, the newer emphasis on historicism and textual investigation, by attacking the excesses and absurdities of allegorical interpretation from the time of the Fathers to his own.

Donne's particular contribution is to make explicit the adjustment from writing controversy to preaching sermons, the shift from questions of logic to questions of living. In this shift his great mentor still served as guide, as this passage from a sermon delivered late in his career clearly attests:

> First then, undertaking the consideration of the literall sense . . . we joyne with S. Augustine . . . . So far I will goe, saies he, so far will we, in his modesty and humility accompany him, as still to propose, Quod luce veritatis, quod fruge utilitatis excellit, such a sense he agrees with other Truths, that are evident in other places of Scripture, and such a sense as may conduce most to edification. (IX: 94-5)

By observing that the elements of a right exposition of Scripture come to a convergence of veritas and utilitas, Donne reveals one of the most significant correspondences between his thinking and that of St. Augustine: the inseparability of the moral life from the awareness of truth. Thus in a stately passage in a sermon from his middle years at St. Paul's Donne addressed the individual hearer. If one could not remember all the appeals made to faith by citations of places of Scripture and all the appeals made to reason and judgment by sentences from the Fathers and Schoolmen, "yet if thou remember that which concerned thy sin, and thy soul, if thou meditate upon that, apply that, thou hast brought away all the Sermon, all that was intended by the Holy Ghost to be preached to thee" (VII: 328-9).

According to Donne, the intention of the Holy Ghost, the literal sense of Scripture, and the sermon, were brought home to the soul through the knowledge of one's own nature.

Thus, along with the principles of Biblical interpretation governing the dispensing end of preaching, Donne emphasized at the receiving end the Augustinian practice of self-scrutiny, exhorting his hearers to discover inwardly their likeness, however defaced, to God, in whose image man was made. For only through knowing one's own nature could one come to realize one's destiny as projected in the two Testaments -- the progression from Law to Gospel, in St. Paul's terms the putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new, the regeneration whereby human existence passed from sin and death to the perfect and everlasting life envisioned in the beginning by its divine Creator. Some attention must now be given as to how Donne's explorations and spiritual discoveries in his sermons and poems run parallel to his sense of Scripture.

From conceiving the soul as the image of God St. Augustine came to develop his seminal theories of psychology and epistemology. What Donne says about the soul manifests the continuing influence of Augustine on his preaching.[9] The crux of the work is St. Augustine's interpretation of Genesis 1.26, where man is said to have been made in the divine image. This is taken to mean that the workings of the human consciousness reflect the relations of the Persons in the Trinity, and St. Augustine traces the reflections in what he considered to be the two essential activities of the soul -- knowing and loving. Both require a subject, an

object, and an interplay between them: knowledge comes into being only when there is a knower, something to be known, and the recognition by the one of the other, and love can exist only when there is a lover, a beloved, and the affection between them. (In the next chapter we will explore how this idea of love manifests itself by looking closely at some of Donne's poems.) According to St. Augustine, knowledge and love are illustrations of the operative unity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but beyond that they are the means to bring man a saving knowledge of God. The exercise of the soul's powers, in self-scrutiny and the study of scripture, leads first to perception of the true being and purpose of man, and then to a restoration of its divine likeness defaced by sin. Knowledge of God is the means to love of God. Thus creation and redemption constitute a correspondence in process between man and God.

These mutual implications between psychology and theology arise out of St. Augustine's endeavor in De Trinitate to make the divine nature intelligible through a series of analogies. The most appealing one for Donne associated each of the Persons of the Trinity with its respective human faculty. Among the soul's three powers, understanding was linked with the Father, will with the Son, and memory with the Holy Ghost. First the memory, charged with recollections of God's goodness, impressed itself on the understanding. The memory alone prompted the rest of the

soul to the attainment of knowledge and goodness by which its divine image was restored (43). The Augustinian analogy between the Trinity and the faculties of man became the basis for two widely disseminated treatises on spiritual growth and regeneration, St. Bernard's Tractatus de gradibus humilitatis et superbiae and the Itinerarium mentis in Deum. Later in the sixteenth century the tradition was taken over into a manual of meditation, Exercitia spiritualis by St. Ignatius Loyola.

One is acquainted with the affinities between Donne's work and Ignatian meditation from Louis Martz's "John Donne in Meditation: The Anniversaries," and his Poetry of Meditation (43-56, 107-112, 135-149). Donne reaffirmed the Augustinian and Bernardine spiritual dynamic with his frequent use of the term "meditation" to describe his own sermons and underscore the Augustinian reciprocal relation between knowing and loving God. For Donne the preacher this was the importance of the theory of psychology underlying systematic meditation: that it showed the way to rousing and working upon the reason and will of man. Whatever the particulars by which he came to the recognition, he did recognize the shared objectives of preaching and of meditation: spiritual renewal and growth. As he adapted the methods of meditation to his poetry, he adapted the psychology of meditation to his sermons. "Accustome thy selfe," he exhorted his listeners, "to meditations upon the

Trinity, in all occasions, and finde impressions of the Trinity, in the three faculties of thine own soule" (III: 154).

When Donne speaks in this manner the Augustinian cast of his thinking emerges -- the subjectivity of the process by which man comes to know and love God. St. Augustine's characteristic pessimism remains the strongest element in Donne's analyses of human behaviour. Without arguing, for example, whether the pessimism of The Anniversaries is personal or impersonal, it becomes clearer from this vantage point that the often-noted medievalism of outlook in these two poems seems closer to Augustinianism. With St. Augustine Donne the preacher deplores the difficulty of working on the understanding, for it requires "long and clear instruction," while the will, in addition to needing "an instructed understanding," is "in it self the blindest and boldest faculty." Thus, reaching the conclusion reached in book X of the Confessions, Donne concludes: "Here then the Holy Ghost takes the neerest way to bring a man to God, by awaking his memory" (II: 235). Elsewhere in the sermons he declares that "the Memory is oftener the Holy Ghosts Pulpit that he preaches in, then the Understanding" (VIII: 261), indicating the direct implication from Scripture to preaching:

> Of our perverseness in both faculties, understanding, and will, God may complain, but as much of our memory; for, for the rectifying of the

> will, the understanding must be rectified; and that implies great difficulty: But the memory is so familiar, and so present, and so ready a faculty, as will always answer, if we but speak to it, and ask it, what God hath done for us, or for others. The art of salvation, is but the art of memory. (II: 73)

Donne emphasized the memory as the preacher's gateway to the faculties of reason and will. He had, moreover, a broad conception of of the powers of the memory. Donne followed the Platonizing lead of St. Augustine in investing the memory with the additional power of reflecting upon the acquired and innate knowledge of the mind. What is remembered becomes "a second, a ruminated, a reflected knowledge," designated by the terms "recognition" and "acknowledgment" (IV: 306, IX: 84-5). The whole impetus in Donne's sermons, as in the analysis of memory in the Confessions, is to move beyond the truth of the all too strongly felt Pauline lament -- "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Romans 7.19) -- to a spiritual discovery of regenerative potential in some human faculty. This spiritual discovery is made in the memory, "the stomach of the soul," which takes in and assimilates God's blessings. But Donne goes a step further than St. Augustine in his own metaphor, which represents the

memory as not only passively reflecting but actively projecting the goodness and mercy of God:

> And therefore . . .we may be bold to call it the Gallery of the soul, hang'd with so many, and so lively pictures of the goodness and mercies of thy God to thee, as that every one of them shall be a catachism to thee, to instruct thee in all thy duties to him for those mercies: And as a well made, and well plac'd picture, looks alwayes upon him that looks upon it; so shall thy God look upon thee, whose memory is thus contemplating him, and shine upon thine understanding, and rectifie thy will too. (II: 237)[10]

Considering the great importance of this faculty in Donne's view of human nature, it is not surprising that he regarded the ministry of the Church, by which divine grace is made available, as primarily appealing to the memory. "Now, our actions in the Church . . . awaken, and work upon the memory, which is an easier faculty to work upon, then the understanding or the will" (II: 259). "You see, Preaching it selfe, even the Preaching of Christ himselfe, had beene lost, if the holy Ghost had not brought all those things to their remembrance." (VIII: 269). This perspective had a number of other ramifications including the degree to which the figurative language of the Scriptures are a means by which the Holy Ghost works upon the human memory and

furnishes a model of spiritual discovery for the poet and preacher. Another ramification was Donne's wholehearted participation in the Anglican recourse to primitive and catholic Christian belief and practice, the Creeds, Councils, and Fathers -- the corporate "memory" if you will of the continuing body of Christ. Yet another was Donne's love of church music, liturgy, and ceremony, which stimulated the sensory responses of the memory and made the soul more tractable to divine things. Donne, for example, publicly defended "Ritual, and Ceremoniall things" in an outdoor sermon to the London populace at St. Paul's Cross on May 6, 1627 (VII: 430), but a more personal endorsement is reported in Walton's Life of Donne. Donne had the "Hymn to God the Father" which he wrote in his sickness of 1623-24 set "to a most grave and solemn tune" and "often sung to the organ by the choristers of St. Paul's Church in his own hearing, especially at the evening service," whereupon he was known to remark:

> 'The words of this hymn have restored to me the same thoughts of joy that possessed my soul in my sickness when I composed it. And, Oh the power of church-music! that harmony added to this hymn has raised the affections of my heart and quickened my graces of zeal and gratitude. . . .'

And Donne was certain that in such spiritual stirrings he felt and discovered what others felt and discovered for in

confronting God this uncommon divine felt himself a most common man. If his preaching is the the fullest expression of his genius, it is also the fullest testimony of his adherence to the writerly and homiletic precedent in seeing the abundantly figurative language of Scripture as the means by which the Holy Ghost works upon the human memory and furnishes a model of spiritual discovery for the writer and preacher.

The abundantly figurative language of Scripture set a model for Donne for the sermon to follow. This was not a new, but rather an age-old assumption. It had guided St. Augustine's contention in book IV of De doctrina Christiana that, as the words of the Bible contained all wisdom and eloquence, the preacher was to draw as he needed on the full resources of humane learning in the service of divine truth. Schleiner points out that until the Reformation the Augustinian conception of Scripture and the sermon carried all others before it; and its force continued to be felt in the preaching manuals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which prescribed patterns of sermon construction derived more or less strictly from classical oration: invention or division of the text into its several parts, disposition or amplification of the parts with a view to opening up their meaning, and finally a general or specific application of the text to the audience. Yet there were

conflicting opinions about the nature of Scripture and the sermon surrounding Donne.

The radical Puritan John Downame spoke for many in asserting that "The holie Ghost in penning the Scriptures hath used great simplicitie and wonderful plainnesse" (Bush 328). In his preaching manual The Arte of Prophecying (1592) William Perkins took the doctrinaire Calvinist position that the sermon was not to profane its exposition of God's Word by mingling it with human art or learning. The spreading practice of preaching extemporaneously rather than from memory with the assistance of brief notes, as Donne did, was justified by pointing to Christ's calling of rude, unlettered men to be his disciples, whom he then made the apostles and first ministers of the Church. Donne decried extemporaneous preaching and did so on the grounds that it was presumptuous to proceed as if circumstances were identical with those of the early Church, when most people were entirely ignorant of the Gospel and the apostles were under the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The intervening centuries of Christianity had established careful and workable procedures governing the office, or as Donne called it, the "Ordinance" of preaching.[11]

But this newly current judgment of the apostles had not been altogether unanticipated even by St. Augustine, who admitted in the fourth book of De doctrina Christiana that when he first confronted Latin versions of the Bible with

his background in classical rhetoric he was appalled by what seemed to be blatant crudity and ignorance. Only as he came to thorough study and understanding of the Bible did he reach the view, lyrically expressed in chapter 7, that it had issued from the mind of God both wisely and eloquently, with wisdom and eloquence so sublimely cojoined that the one was at no point separate from the other. This context is of utmost importance for what it reveals of St. Augustine's (and hence Donne's) conception of Scriptural, and indeed, all language as the physical embodiment of mental and spiritual reality. Augustine's continual insistence is on the inherent rationale and dynamic of Scriptural language as the sensible manifestation to human minds of the thought and intent of God. Thus the latter half of the fourth book is devoted to showing that the question is not whether to use figurative or literal phrases or whether, among the conventional levels of style, the high or moderate or low should be used in this or that instance. For everything in Christianity is of the greatest importance, pertaining to nothing less than what God has done for man and what man must do in return. The point is that everything in Scripture reflects or expresses in some way the ultimate divine purpose and that this must be the endeavor of the preacher too.

It will be evident that the Augustinian theory of sacred discourse (Scripture and sermon) has broad and

profound implications in itself, but it also functioned as part of the total Christian world-view that held from the time of the Church Fathers until the seventeenth century, and in which Donne was firmly fixed. The Christian world-view presupposed that everything God made, did, and said was a species of self-revelation, manifesting aspects of the divine mind and being. Implicit and explicit in this world view was the acknowledgment that for man, in his earthly life at least, God remained ultimately and essentially unknowable so these manifestations were of all the more value and significance. Among them the physical universe was treated as the Book or Creatures, and the peculiar natures of all animate and inanimate things were taken as evidence of the existence, power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator. The Scriptures, however, were God's highest and most complete revelation to man, brought to fulfillment in the person of Christ. The human need to experience through the sense and to understand by degrees is met in the concreteness, detail, and specificity of Biblical narrative: the progression from the Law and the Prophets to the Gospel, and, above all, the central event of the Incarnation. The point is that what in St. Augustine and in Donne begins as writerly praise of the manifold richness of the Holy Ghost's language in Scripture comes to be a complex and all-embracing world-view in which every word and object and

event, rightly seen and understood, symbolizes the greatness and goodness of God.

The style which Dr. Johnson first termed "metaphysical" in his Life of Cowley has as its contextual framework then, the complex and all-embracing symbolic world-view of Christian tradition. To discuss more specifically Donne's use of figurative language in the sermons it is of interest to begin with his writerly praise of the qualities of biblical expression, for this is a very pronounced feature of his sermons, one of his most obvious points of adherence to Augustinian conceptions, and runs parallel to his use of figurative language in the poems. The soaring strain inspired by his source is sounded early in Donne's ministry:

> There are not so eloquent books in the world, as the Scriptures: Accept those names of Tropes and Figures, which the Grammarians and Rhetoricians put upon us, and we may be bold to say, that in all their Authors, Greek and Lain, we cannot find so high, and so lively examples, of those Tropes, and those Figures, as we may in the Scriptures: whatsoever hath justly delighted any man in any mans writings, is exceeded in the Scriptures. The style of the Scriptures is a diligent, and an artificial style; and a great part thereof in a musical, in a metrical, in a measured composition, in verse.[12] (II: 170)

What matters to Donne here and in numerous other passages throughout his sermons is the affective power of the Holy Ghost's eloquence ("whatsoever hath justly delighted any man") in patterns of sound, and figures of speech and thought that arouse the attention and impress upon it what is being said. This was, of course, also St. Augustine's motive in synthesizing the techniques of classical oratory with the message of Christianity: to infuse the Word of Life into the lives of men by instructing, pleasing, and persuading them with it. Donne acknowledges directly in another context that the Holy Ghost always speaks in such forms and phrases in the Bible as may best work upon them to whom he speaks (II: 304). Indeed Donne used many of the imitable techniques by which traditional preaching had enforced correspondences between sound and sense, image and idea. Donne learned from St. Bernard to balance and rhyme words and phrases to express the divine harmony of the universe, and from patristic and medieval predecessors generally to pursue the spiritual significance in every syllable of Scripture (Owst; Schleiner).

Yet it was Donne alone, paralleling his use of figurative language in poetry, who evolved an eloquent style to mirror not only the inferred intent of the Holy Ghost in a text, but the movement of Donne's own mind in undertaking to penetrate its meaning. His sermons consist of larger units of paragraphs and sentences which hold in suspension

and in tension many lesser elements -- these often registering insistent perceptions or hovering uncertainties -- but coalescing in discoveries charged with psychological energy and immediacy. When Bell suggests the poet "Donne is unconventional in the sense of a 'dialogue of one' which seeks communion but is continually prepared to recognize disjunction" (128), she recognizes in Donne's "new made Idiome" a kinetic and evocative power that is evidently at work in both the poems and the sermons. Donne's parallel spiritual discoveries are related to the intensity of his insight into St. Augustine's conceptions of the soul, Scripture, and the sermon. In particular Donne's spiritual discoveries in the sermons arise out of the realization that the Holy Ghost was "a Metaphoricall, and Figurative expresser of himselfe" insofar as he was "a direct worker upon the soule and conscience of man" (IX: 328).

The abundance of imagery in the Bible -- which embraced all kinds of concreteness and detail because "things" were not simply "things" but also "signs" -- operated to fill the souls's gallery, the memory, with pictures that vivified the apprehension of meaning. Even more than the objects of the external world, the words of Scripture were means of revelation. Yet Donne's use of images and figures does not have the schematizing and abstracting effect of much traditional allegorizing of Scripture because he remains alert to the actualities of his text and context, seeking

always to highlight them as they are and not to blur them in a grand design. In Donne's sermons the stress is on the figuring, imaging, signifying force of Biblical language in order to make it memorable in the special Augustinian sense and thus to activate the reason and the will to holy ends. The parallel here is in the employment of the poetic genius, with its constant enforcement of analogies not readily apparent to ordinary minds. The sustained energy of Donne's preaching comes from his dwelling and enlarging upon images in his texts, and his extracting of latent metaphors where none are apparent. In all this Donne always gives the credit to the Holy Ghost, yet it is too simple to transfer the credit to the poetic genius of Donne. The complicated fact is that Donne relied greatly on the rich writerly tradition begun with the Church Fathers and expanded during the Middle Ages,[13] which in his age his verbal and figurative sensibilities found so congenial and true. It was precisely through steeping itself in the symbolic force of Scripture as traditionally interpreted -- the correspondence of physical object and spiritual truth -- that the sermon made its impression on the soul. In the next chapter we will explore how the same rich writerly tradition of the Church Fathers and of the Middle Ages strikingly shadow Donne's figurative language in the poems as he continually returns to the relation between earthly loves and divine love, between body and soul.

NOTES

1. Schleiner in The Imagery of Donne's Sermons also remarks on Donne's particular censuring of the sin of curiosity (59).

2. As counterpoint to the idea of a sermon as "stirring of religious affections" see Dennis Quinn, "Donne's Christian Eloquence," (Journal of English Literary History, XXVII 1960, 279), on the lack of distinction between a lecture and a sermon in Luther and Calvin.

3. The pronouncement, standardized as the Vincentian Canon by which the Church is to discriminate between authoritative and unauthoritative traditions, occurs in bk. I, ch. 2 of St. Vincent's Commonitorium: "In ipsa item Catholica Ecclesia magnopere curandum est ut id teneamus quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est. Hoc est etenim vere proprieque catholicum" (PL, L, 640).

4. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica. (Literally Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. New York: Benziger Bros., 1947. q.1, art. 10): "The literal sense is that which the author intends, and . . . the author of Holy Writ is God." Helen Gardner also remarks on Donne's use of Aquinas in The Business of Criticism (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1959,

136-37).

5. St. Augustine's De doctrina Christiana, bk. III, ch. 27. English translation under the title Christian Doctrine in The Fathers of the Church, IV (New York: Cima Publishing, 1957).

6. See De doctrina Christiana I:2-3; II:1-6,16; III: 5-10.

7. Regarding the respective points see De doctrina Christiana, III: 59, 27, 17.

8. Helen Gardner was the first to try to reconcile Donne's precepts and practices with the literalism of the age, The Business of Criticism (136). Dennis Quinn subsequently appealed to the difficulties in the tradition "John Donne's Principles of Biblical Exegesis," (Journal of English and Germanic Philology, LXI: 1962, 322-325). But perhaps the most useful account is Schleiner's, The Imagery of Donne's Sermons (185-200), which emphasizes the connection between the development of Donne's figures and the determination of the multiple senses of Scripture.

9. Schleiner examines the sealing imagery by which Donne most often represents the image of God in the soul, showing its traditional roots (109-199).

10. As Joan Webber remarks in Contrary Music (Madison:

Wisconsin UP, 1963, 208 n. 28), Donne errs in crediting St. Bernard the characterization of the memory as the stomach of the soul; the phrase occurs in bk. X, ch. 14 of St. Augustine's Confessions.

11. Schleiner connects rejection of extemporaneous preaching with the rhetorical principle of decorum (51-55), but adds that "the issue for Donne . . .is also quite clearly a matter of church discipline. Donne sees a functional link between careful preparation and theological conformity" (53-54).

12. It is interesting to note Schleiner's different use of this passage to demonstrate Donne's sense of rhetorical decorum (20-21).

13. For the most complete demonstration, see Schleiner, The Imagery of Donne's Sermons, 68-156.

CHAPTER III - "SUCH FORMS AS I HAVE BEEN MOST ACCUSTOMED TO": BODY AND SOUL IN DONNE'S POETRY.

Donne's approach to language in the sermons and the poems is often quite similar: even as a preacher Donne sees himself as part of a writerly church tradition. Donne tells us that his "spirituall appetite" led him to his favourite reading in the Old Testament.

> I acknowledge, that my spirituall appetite carries me still, upon the Psalms of David, for a first course, for the Scriptures of the Old Testament: and upon the Epistles of Saint Paul, for a second course, for the New, and my meditations even for these publike exercises to Gods Church, returne oftenest to these two. (VI: 30)

Furthermore, he justifies this preference by the examples of St. Augustine and St Chrysostom and recognizes that he is home when he is immersed in that writerly tradition.

> I may have another more particular reason, because they are scriptures, written in such forms, as I have been most accustomed to; Saint Pauls being Letters, and Davids being poems; for, God gives us, not only that which is meerly necessary, but that which is convenient too. (VI: 30)

As a preacher and writer Donne satisfies his "spiritual appetite" through the figuring, imaging, signifying force of

Biblical language in order to make it memorable in the special Augustinian sense and thus to activate the reason and will to holy ends. Donne's sermons give attention to the literal sense, but the emphasis is on the multiple senses and especially the moral sense: the applicability of the text to the state of a man's soul and what he ought to do. In particular, Donne's eloquence arises out of his realization that the Holy Ghost was "a Metaphoricall, and Figurative expresser of himselfe" as he was "a direct worker upon the soule and conscience of man" (IX: 14).

When Donne wrote about one kind of love in terms of another kind, the general enterprise was anything but original. What was original was the extent, suggesting an overwhelming preoccupation and a perpetual inner debate, to which he pursued such analogies through poem after poem, and the changing relations in which he placed very human loves with one another, and with divine love. Though his first biographer Walton radically simplified the relation between Donne the priest and Donne the secular man into a contrast -- "Now all his earthly affections were changed into divine love" -- he was right in pointing to the tension as significant, and seeing a kinship with St. Augustine. "Now the English Church has gained a second St Austine, for, I think, none was so like him before his conversion" (30). This had usually been taken and dismissed as little more than a rhetorical flourish, Walton's appeal to late

classical example to justify his writing of a modern saint's life. But Augustine's writings continually return to the contrast between earthly love and divine love, a contrast which is dramatised in his Confessions in the renunciation of his mistress at about the same time he embraced his mother's religion. Yet within this contrast he also plays upon certain resemblances, brings out the element of eros, of longing desire for the enjoyment of the beloved, embraced by agape, Christian charity.

It is also notable that Peter Brown's modern intellectual biography of Augustine quotes Donne's third satire when it comes to describe Augustine's commital to a Christian-Platonist idea of Truth as transcendent, after his wanderings in Manichean materialism (ch. 8). So Walton probably felt some real relation of sensibility between the two men that we may fail to detect, a relation which is more complex than Donne's tendency in later life to contrast "the mistresse of my Youth, Poesy" with "the wife of mine age, Divinity". Similarly when Walton suggested that there was "none so like Ambrose" as Donne the priest, and in his Life of George Herbert that Donne's friendship with Magdalen Herbert was "an Amity like that of St Chrysostoms to his dear and vertuous Olimpias; whom in his letters he calls a Saint: Or, an Amity indeed more like that of St Hierom to his Paula; whose affection to her was such, that he turned Poet in his old Age, and then made her Epitaph" (28), there

was more involved than the decorative colouring of an early Christian parallel. Walton is refering to the Christian roots of a special Western preoccupation with the relation between love and chastity, between body and soul, which is discussed powerfully in the writings of Ambrose and Jerome, addressed to women whom they, in their own sublimated manner, loved.

Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome were contemporaries of the late fifth century A.D. even friends, though their lives were spent mostly in widely distant parts of the crumbling Roman Empire: in North Africa, in Milan, in Rome, and in Bethlehem (Duckett, ch. 1). It would not be too much to suggest that in them the difference between love and sex came to full literary consciousness in Roman culture. Of course Plato had made his own fine distinctions for Greece centuries earlier, which worked like yeast in the asceticism of Byzantine Christianity and gave it a strong mystical flavour to justify a cult of purely spiritual love. These Church Fathers brought to their reading of Plato and Plotinus minds steeped in their own Latin reading. For Jerome and Augustine, the ideas of Ovid, Juvenal, Terence, and Virgil had to come to some sort of terms with the Gospels on one hand, and Greek mystical theology on the other (Drane, Duckett). The atmosphere generated was sometimes fairly hectic, swinging between sharp satirical portrayal of that forked beast humankind and ecstatic self-

giving to the divine Bridegroom. Augustine's religious eroticism, Ambrose's dramatisation of chastity, Jerome's fierce satire of sexual appetite in Woman -- the sensibility of Europe was shot through with them long before the Renaissance, which made more secular readers familiar with the original texts at the very time when the attitudes which they present were coming in for new scrutiny and reappraisal (Butler).

Jerome's double vision had a peculiar influence: Chaucer had learned much from him for his satirical portraiture of churchmen and women, but Castiglione could point to him as a model for the idealization of women, rather as Walton was to do in his Life of Donne: "Saint Hierom . . . setteth out certaine of his time with such wonderful prayses, that they might suffice the holiest man that can be." Augustine's Confessions has also been in its own special way a writer's book; Petrarch carried a copy with him continually and seasoned his love poems with its contrasts, and Shelley took from it his epigraph for Alastor ("I did not love but was in love with love, seeking something to love, loving the very state of loving.") and the thought of "Music, when soft voices die."[1] Until the Renaissance there was no book like it in its disarming account of an imperfect man's illusions of feeling and intellect, and his gradual ridding himself of them. Even in such an exceedingly modern book as Sartre's Verbes there is

something of the same process of mind-stripping and interrogation of emotion, though the conclusions are so very different.

Many Renaissance writers must seem to echo Augustine and Jerome, then, when echoing their clergy or Petrarch or Chaucer, but in Donne's writing there is something to suggest a closer first-hand aquaintance. This is not to suggest that he was imitating them directly, but rather that his problems were in some respects like theirs. Whether he read any of their writings as part of his early education there is no means of knowing, just as his Paradox, "That Virginity is a Vertue", cannot be dated with certainty to his student days at the Inns of Court (Bald 160). What is certain is Donne's general concern with religious questions from about that time, sharpened by the early death of his only brother, imprisoned for serving the Catholic cause (Bald 213). Choosing one's own stand can never be a simple academic matter when some of one's family are living underground; and there are signs that Donne both loved and hated the old Catholic values, including that hierarchy of virtuous states which placed absolute virginity closest to God. The great editions of Erasmus had brought Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome to new attention in the sixteenth century. But it is significant for the times that Erasmus both admired Jerome's powerful Letters with particular warmth, and in his own writings called in question his cult

of chastity and his undervaluing of marriage. And Donne's Paradox on virginity echoes the Erasmian point of view as well as the Erasmian style in defending marriage as the true fulfilment of virginity.[2]

When Donne began helping the Anglican Bishop Morton with his anti-Catholic propaganda in the 1600s, it is not surprising that he added to his library several works relating to the ascetic orders -- the Rules of St. Benedict and St Francis, De Vita Cartusiana, the writings of Tertullian and Cyprian, the life of the Blessed Aloysius Gonzaga the Jesuit, Creccelius, on the founding of monasticism.[3] And in Pseudo-martyr (1610) he translated a considerable passage from St Ambrose's De Virginibus, one of his celebrated works on the vow of chastity (Potter and Simpson X: 302). The motto he usually wrote in his private books is significant: "Per Rachael io servito, E non per Lea" ("For Rachael I have served, and not for Lea"), the conclusion to Petrarch's Rime, CCVI (Keynes Appendix IV). For many medieval writers the Biblical love story of Jacob was interpreted to contrast Lea, the wife of a forced match, with Rachael, the wife of love, as the active to the contemplative (Duckett 64). Petrarch secularized the story to refer to Laura's uniqueness, worthy of a life's unrewarded service, while Donne interestingly restored it to its religious sense.

The beginning of Donne's poetic enterprise has looked like an attempt to recover from surrender to Petrarchan passivity and self-abasement that dominating male sensuality untroubled by any Christian qualms. But Donne could not quite do it: in his most successfully direct "Elegie: to his mistris going to bed" he has to bring the language of spiritual theology to the help of a clever sexual invitation.

> Full nakedness, all joyes are due to thee.
> As soules unbodied, bodies uncloth'd must bee
> To taste whole joyes. (33-5)

In his treatise De virginitate Ambrose had expressed this spiritual idea strikingly, weaving together Plotinus and the Song of Songs:

> On hearing the voice of the Word do not seek the garment you took off, to put it on again . . . your pleasure, then, virgin, will lie in the depth of your own heart; you will be your own sweet source of pleasure. You will bring yourself none of the dissatisfaction that often comes to sinners for you will keep drawing more and more delight from a pure inner simplicity, denuded of all the deceitful outer trappings of the flesh (Ambrose 103).

Plotinus, in one of his Enneads, "On Beauty", struck an even

more ecsatic note, as he described the religious transformation of eros.

> So we must ascend again to the good, which every soul desires . . . the attainment of it is for those who go up to the higher world, and are converted and strip off what we put on in our descent; just as for those who go up to the celebration of sacred rites there are purifications, and stripping off of the cloths they wore before, and going up naked until, passing in the ascent all that is alien to God, one sees with one's self alone That alone, simple, single and pure, from which all depends and to which all look and are and live and think . . . If anyone sees it, what passion will he feel, what longing in his desire to be united with it, what a shock of delight! (Plotinus vol. 1)

This is the mystical state beyond morality which is made by Donne a parallel for the amorality of love. The writers we have discussed in this chapter had found in earthly love a parallel for divine discovery: Donne reversed the process. Women are "mystique books",[4] in their white robes they remind one of angels or penitants, but these are preliminary roles to revelation of their naked grace.

This seems to have come far from Ovid, but his poetry

was not devoid of the kind of playful divinisation as part of love's game: the Amores have touches here and there.

> Spare me, O by the laws of love's comradeship, by all the Gods who oft lend themselves for you to deceive, and by that face of yours, to me the image of high divinity, and by your eyes, that have taken captive mine (III xi 45-8).

If you Christianized this, but maintained the tone of easy blasphemy, would you not arrive somewhere near Donne's "Elegie: to his mistris going to bed"? Such Christianization involved an increase in tension: the sin-stricken other-worldly attitude Donne had to subdue in his poem was a more powerful interior force than Ovid's ritualized reverence for the gods. Donne's poem is remarkable for just that strength of his to subdue so much to the affirmation of the body.

In another much-admired poem of the 1590s, the third Satyre: "Of Religion", the analogies run in the opposite direction, and the life of the body becomes a shadow of the soul's life.

> Hard deeds, the bodies paines; hard knowledge too
> The mindes indeavours reach, and mysteries
> Are like the Sunne, dazling, yet plaine to all eyes. (86-8)
>
> Flesh (it selfes death) and joyes which flesh can taste,

> Thou lov'st; and thy faire goodly soule, which doth
> Give this flesh power to taste joy, thou dost loath.[5] (40-2)

There is something curious about the attitudes behind man's pursuit of both the body's pains and the body's joys. Men multiply courageous acts for useless ends (lines 17-32) and do not face the inner enemy (33-42). Their follies in embracing a particular sort of religion or irreligion are comparable to their follies in love and marriage. Here satire is at the far side of Donne's acceptance of a variant of the divine spiritual ideal. The fragments of broken Christendom are imperfect brides, but Truth is a bride worthy of being striven for.

> On a huge hill,
> Cragged, and steep, Truth stands, and hee that will
> Reach her, about must, and about must goe;
> And what th' hills suddennes resists, winne so.
> (79-82)

The caustic realistic vignettes of the lover of an aging beauty passée at Rome, the perverseness that is stirred by ugliness at Geneva, the youth submitting to an arranged marriage in England, the sceptical misogynist and the universal libertine, give place to a more sober allegorical language, which mounts to be dissolved in "God himselfe".

The classical element in Donne's Satyres has been pointed out by Grierson and others, and there is no doubt that he learned much from Horace and Juvenal. But the classical satiric stand-point is one of moderation between extremes; whereas Donne's standpoint is more absolute, more religious than moral. The contemporary satirist Joseph Hall could write consistently from the stance of In medio virtus ("virtue is in the mean"), whereas Donne's stance is rather In summo foelicitas ("Joy is in the extreme") symbolized by his mistress, named variously as "vertue" (Satyre I: 41) and "my Mistresse Truth" (Satyre III: 80; IV: 163) and "law" (Satyre V: 69). In the second Satyre we are made aware only of her absence, as love and marriage are bought and sold, honour is prostituted "worse than imbrothel'd strumpets" and lawyers behave like "carted whores" and use for their own ends "heire melting with luxurie." In this Satyre only does Done appeal to the mean, but notable it is in contrast to a dry divinity and orgiastic religion.

> In great hals
> Carthusian fasts, and fulsome Bachanalls
> Equally 'I hate; meanes blesse. (105-7)

Interestingly enough, it is to the mean he appeals also in his prose paradox on virginity. "Virginity is a vertue, and hath her throne in the middle: The extreams are, in Excesse, to violate it before marriage; in Defect, not to marry. In ripe years as soon as reason perswades and opportunity

permits, These extreams are equally removed from the mean: The excesse proceeds from Lust, the defect from Peevishnesse, Pride and Stupidity." This is not the gayest of Donne's Paradoxes; it is as though he is parodying the solemnity of moral discourse to press a point somewhat removed from the usual solemn conclusions.

But it was in the first Satyre that Donne presented the reverse of his view of nakedness in Elegie XIX: why should the man who enjoyed the nakedness of flesh "Hate vertue, though shee be naked, and bare?

> At birth, and death, our bodies naked are:
> And till our Soules be unapparrelled
> Of bodies, they from blisse are banished. (42-4)

Man was naked in Eden, and even after the Fall his dress was coarse and simple, fit for conferring "With God, and with the Muses".[6] Here again the norm is the spiritual norm of the Platonic writers and the Church Fathers, who preserved the pressure of eros in their rhetoric at the very point where they denied its fleshly fulfilment, by turning toward their mistress Wisdom.

> Now let us enquire concerning this, what sort of lover of Wisdom thou art, whom thou desirest to behold with most chaste view and embrace, and to grasp her unveiled charms in such wise as she affords herself to no one, except her few and choisest votaries. (St Augustine Soliloquia)

It seems clear, then, that Donne's divided feelings on the matter of spiritual discovery give a peculiar strength to some of his poetry of the '90s: to the mockery of the love elegies is added the salt of blasphemy, to the mockery of the Satyres is added a strain of religious exaltation. Yet at the same time as he was addressing poems to fleshly mistresses and claiming Truth as his lady, he was playing a small literary game with his friends of the Inns of Court involving them and their Muses. In a succession of epistles to "Mr T. W.," "Mr. R. W.," and "Mr. B. B." words are spun out of words. These young men "have no Mistress but their Muse," not quite in Sidney's sense of addressing poems to fictitious ladies, but in the sense that they are in love with poetry without having any subject other than themselves and their light-hearted friendship. "Our Minds part not, joyne then thy Muse with myn, / For myne is barren thus devorc'd from thyne." Though there was mock-serious definition of "the Muse beeing the Soules Soul / of Poets," which "methinks should ease our anguish, / Although our bodyes wither and minds languish," there was also plenty of what one of the friends called "chaste and mistique tribadree". One source of this trans-sexual joking seems to be a paradoxical passage in Plato's Symposium about the spiritual children conceived and brought forth by those who have risen above the flesh:

> But there are some whose creative desire is of the soul, and who conceive spiritually, not physically, the progeny which it is the nature of the soul to conceive and bring forth . . .By intimate association with beauty embodied in his friend, and by keeping him always before his mind, he succeeds in bringing to birth the children of which he has long been in labour, and once they are born he shares their upbringing with his friend; the partnership between them will be far closer and the bond of affection far stronger than between ordinary parents, because the children they share surpass human children by being immortal as well as more beautiful. (90)

And before Donne, Montaigne had allowed his mind to play on the topic, considering that books were more satisfactory children than flesh-and-blood offspring. "And I wot not well, whether my selfe should not much rather desire to beget and produce a perfectly-well-shaped and excellently-qualited infant, by the aquaintance of the Muses than by the aqauintance of my wife" (201). The Muse, then, is the poet's anima, which both unites him spiritually to his male friend, and brings forth his poems. Already Donne is, however slightly, making the spiritual discovery of a union of souls rather than bodies.

"The Muse" was part of the literary vocabulary of the 1590s, with these associations: a sonnet of Donne's in this group, "If thou unto thy Muse be marryed," reminds one of Shakespeare's sonnet "I grant thou wert not married to my Muse," and both are concerned with the complex of poetry-writing and the inspiration of a close friend. Years later, when Donne came to write "To Mrs M. H.," addressed to Magdalen Herbert, this conceit of his youth still appealed to him sufficiently to become the basis of a joke in the epistle's first part. (One is reminded of Yeat's remark about the Muses in "A Vision" -- they "sometimes form in these low haunts their most lasting attachments.") "Mad paper stay, and grudge not her to burne / With all those sonnes whom my brain did create" (1-2). His child-poem is a naughty creature which will die when it reaches "that perplexing eye;" only when her miraculous hand touches it will it revive: "Thou grow'st by this / Her creature; glorify'd more then before." Magdalen Herbert herself is now his Muse.

> Then as a mother which delights to heare
> Her early child mis-speake halfe utter'd words,
> Or, because majesty doth never feare
> Ill or bold speech, she audience affords. (21-4)

But Donne is a good enough Platonist to know that he must praise his friend's beauty, both of body and soul. "In his pregnant condition physical beauty is more pleasing to

him than ugliness, and if in a beautiful body he finds also a beautiful and noble and gracious soul, he welcomes the combination warmly!" (Plato 91)

> Yet maist thou praise her servants, though not her,
> And wit, and vertue, and honour her attend,
> And since they 'are but her cloathes, thou shalt not erre,
> If thou her shape and beauty and grace commend.
> (29-32)

The poem ends with an affectionate reference to the man she intends to marry, Sir John Danvers: "But so much I doe love her choyce, that I / Would faine love him that shall be lov'd of her" (51-2). Donne has succeeded with good-humoured delicacy in suggesting a marriage of souls which does not involve any bodily claims, but does not suffer either from repression of feeling.

We have not yet described, however, the interesting conclusion to the correspondence of the Muses in the 1590s, which redeemed its triviality in an epistle to Rowland Woodward:

> Like one who in her third widdowhood doth professe
> Her selfe a Nunne, ty'd to retirednesse,
> So 'affects my muse now, a chast fallownesse.
> (1-3)

Already, in another poem to Woodward, "If, as mine is, thy life a slumber be," Donne had corrected his description of the Muse as "the Soules Soule" to the more platonically correct "Vertue, our formes forme and our soules soule, is". This poem is a fuller celebration virtue as the basis of friendship. It declares a pause in the writings of "love-songs weeds, and satyrique thornes" for reflection and introspection. The mood is one of self-reproach for pursuing "vanity" rather than "vertue". He feels like a widow who regrets the folly of too many marriages, or a man who has played rather than marrying: for both, "there is no Vertue, but Religion". That is, since they cannot atone perfectly for their earlier sins of omission, the only way out of their plight is the "religious life" in two senses, first "faith, and deare honestie," and secondly the "Vice-covering discretion" of the nun or monk. We are again in the world of ideas of Jerome, Augustine and Ambrose. Indeed Grierson, and following him Milgate, have indicated an Augustinian source for the line: "Quod non possint ibi verae esse virtutes, ubi non est vera religio" (The City of God xix 25). One of Jerome's most notable letters was in praise of Fabiola, turned nun after two sensational marriages; and others among his correspondents were widows, some of them merry, whom he exhorted to a life of retired contemplation. And Augustine's liason, though not technically adultery, was renounced by him as vanity. So "to use, and love Poetrie, to mee, /

Betroth'd to no one Art, be no adultrie; / Omissions of good, ill, as ill deeds bee."

There is no doubt that by the time Donne came to preach his sermons he was familiar with the epistolary style of the Church Fathers, which had this in common beyond their idiosyncracies, that they used the figurative language of warm affection, tinged with erotic feeling, to advocate spiritual discovery and the spiritual life, weaving together Cicero's ideas of friendship with the agape of St John's Epistles and something of the Platonic eros: "Sir, more than kisses, letters mingle Soules; / For, thus friends absent speake." Professor Milgate has quoted St Ambrose in illustration of these lines from "To Sir Henry Wotton," as he does again for two lines in "To Sir Henry Goodyere" (107). His dating for the poem to Goodyeare is 1605-10, but for the Wotton poem he has suggested an earlier date, 1597-8, that is, around the time Donne was also writing "Like one who in her third widowhood," which he places in 1597 (105). Already that epistle had the ring of the patristic epistolary manner, in its combining of exhortation to the retired life, symbolized in sexual renunciation, with a sharp side-glance at the world's ways and warm personal feeling.

> Manure thy selfe then, to thy selfe be approv'd,
> And with vain and outward things be no more mov'd,
> But to know, that I love thee and would be loved.[7]

What became of my lady virtue after 1600? She became incarnate, most obviously in those aristocratic ladies to whom he addressed his later verse-epistles, the Countess of Huntingdon, Lady Bedford, and Mrs Herbert, and most movingly but secretly in the lady of the later Songs and Sonnets that is perhaps Ann More. Most curiously, she died in Elizabeth Drury, the young daughter of his patron. The verse-epistles have been charged with affectation: how could all these ladies be Virtue in the flesh? There is a monotony about the basis of his praise, as well as a strong suspicion of exaggeration. Already aware of this possible criticism, Donne wrote a reply into his poems: if the ladies are not really so virtuous, then let them take his portrait as an example to follow. The charge of monotony, of over-generalization, is a more modern one, and J. B. Leishman pointed out that Shakespeare's sonnets are also open to it (Themes and Variations in Shakespeare's Sonnets 111). Donne is both more playful than Shakespeare in his pursuit of the idea of Beauty and Truth incarnate and the complications following. In finding these qualities in a number of ladies successively he is rising above the obsession with a single human example such as dominates Shakespeare's sonnets.

Elizabeth Drury has always seemed to be a special case of Virtue incarnate, even when her portrait is accepted as the "idea of a Woman and not as she was". Modern studies have brought out the pervasive Augustinian element in the

Anniversaries and have tended to present them as a fulfilment of Donne's spiritual searching, poems about his own inner death and resurrection even more than the death and ascension to heaven of a young girl's soul (Martz ch. 6; Manley; Hughes 307-26). This emphasis on inner development, however true, should not be allowed to play down the recognition of a tenseness in the poems, partly related to Donne's ambivalent attitude to woman and partly related to Donne's spiritual discovery that he "seeks communion, but is continually prepared to recognize disjunction" (Bell 128). Over against the ideal maiden we have:

> For that first mariage was our funerall:
> One woman at one blow, then kill'd us all,
> And singly, one by one, they kill us now.
> We doe delightfully our selves allow
> To that consumption; and, profusely blinde,
> We kill our selves to propagate our kinde.
>
> (Anatomy 105-10)

> Spring-times were common cradles, but are toombes,
> And false-conceptions fill the generall wombs.
>
> (385-6)

> For though the soule of man
> Be got when man is made, 'tis borne but than
> When man doth die. (451-3)

> Some women have some taciturnity;
> Some Nunneries, some graines of chastity.

(423-4)

Poore couse'ned cose'nor, that she and that thou,
Which did begin to love, are neither now.
You are both fluid, chang'd since yesterday.

(Progress 391-3)

If in the manner of his eulogy Donne continues the strain of his verse epistles to ladies, in his wry scepticism about the body, women, sex, marriage, and child-bearing he is writing in the vein of the Metempsychosis, "Love's Alchymie," and "Farewell to love". This is spiritual discovery with a vengeance: the leap from satire to religious exaltation in the context of meditation upon death reminds one of Jerome's elegiac epistles, as does his sense of living in a critical time in the world's decline; and Donne's "double" vision of woman, at once communal and disjunctive, idealizing and destructive, is akin to his. For Jerome's most powerful and repeated argument for virginity is not positive (as in Ambrose), but negative, the dispraise of sex and marriage. And it is Elizabeth Drury's virginity which distinguishes her from Donne's other paragons of virtue (Crutwell ch. 3).[8]

Richard Hughes has related this doubt in such startling contrast to Donne's celebratory love-poems associated with Ann More his wife, to the depressed mood of the years following his own marriage, which he described in a letter of 1612 as his "Metaphoricall death". His lyric "A feaver,"

in which the sick lady is "the worlds soul," in danger of leaving it a carcass and all other women worthless, has this in common with the First Anniversarie, that the lady is the all-too-fragile barrier between his idealism and his scepticism, so that without her he would lapse into simple misogyny.

> Oh doe not die, for I shall hate
> All women so, when thou art gone,
> That thee I shall not celebrate,
> When I remember, thou was one.

What does distinguish the lyric is that it is a living woman on intimate terms with him who preserves his idealism. In the Anniversaries the relation of the ideal woman with flesh and blood has become more tenous, more unstable.

> She, of whom th'Auncients seem'd to prophesie,
> When they call'd vertues by the name of shee,
> She, in whom vertue was so much refin'd,
> That for Allay unto so pure a minde
> Shee took the weaker Sex, she that could drive
> The poysonous tincture, and the stayne of Eve
> Out of her thoughts, and deeds; and purifie
> All, by a true religious Alchimy,
> Shee, shee is dead; shee's dead: when thou knowest this,
> Thou knowest how poore a trifling thing man is.
>
> (Anatomy 175-84)

Embedded in the Anniversaries is Donne's sense of the fragility of virginity at various levels: the loss from religion of a stable incarnate symbol of worshipful femininity, the loss of the "white innocence" of his own anima, with which death alone will re-invest him (Progess 114), perhaps also the loss of Ann More the pure virgin as she became merged in the dead world of commonplace things as wife and prolific mother. The First Anniversarie is a poem of longing for the lost "Idea of a woman" to give what he calls "heart," that is, value and meaning, to ordinary experience. Without a transcendant ideal, experience becomes its own justification, "For every man alone thinks he hath got / To be a phoenix" (216-17), creating his own subjective values, and in constant danger of falling back into nothing (157) through his inability to create value. The relation between the ideal and this world is always precarious: at best, it causes refinement of life, and at worst it dies through contact with the grossness of life as it is. The ideal is like a virgin whom men want to know in the flesh; but in this impossible knowledge she is lost. Shakespeare had explored the theme in the sonnet "They that have the power to hurt and would do none" and in Troilus and Cressida; Donne pursues it throughout the Anniversaries.[9] Elizabeth Drury was

> One whom all men who durst no more, admir'd,
> And whom whoe'er had worth enough desir'd,

As when a temple's built, saints emulate
To which of them it shall be consecrate.

(A Funeral Elegy 63-6)

So the World studied whose piece this should be,
Till she can be no body's else, nor she,
But like a lamp of balsamum desir'd
Rather, t'adorn than last, she soon expir'd
Cloth'd in her virgin-white integrity;
For marriage, though it do not stain, doth dye.

(Ibid 71-6)

Already in the Funeral Elegy one of the prime paradoxes of the Anniversaries is carried in the pun on "dye". Either the ideal dies (rising above worldy corruption) or dyes (coloured, destroyed by that corruption). Men's desire to keep her at this level is misdirected; it is rather they who must rise to her level (Anatomy, 281-2, 391-2; Progress, 65, 294, 339). Truth still stands on a high hill.

The Anniversaries then manage to comment extensively on the war of the sexes, and to have it both ways. If woman brings man to disaster at a sexual level, and is thus "the weaker Sex" corrupted by "the stayne of Eve," she also stands over against man, and by her intuitional type of goodness makes all his book-learning and cerebral activities look ridiculous. Surely this is part of the force of the refrain of the First Anniversarie in its first variation (183-4), see above), with its triple "Shee" balanced against

"man".[10] It was "she from whose influence all impressions came (But by receivers' impotencies lame)". Yet there is also a new world associated with her, where right relations are paradoxically restored: "The manner and stuffe of this, / Her vertue, and the forme our practise is" (Anatomy 77-8). This seems to match the Aristotelian and Augustinian view of the balance of the sexes: man is superior through his "skill of right doing" in which reason governs. Materia appetit formam, sicut foemina virum.[11] But in the interpretation of Aristotle this had been taken to imply the inferiority of women, a view which Augustine refutes in Confessions XIII: 32: men and women are equal at the level of mind; only sexually is there a differentiation. In Donne's couplet, he is playing with the whole discussion to expose a special instance in which woman is superior and yet in a sense "matter".

So half-concealed in the Anniversaries is a hierarchy of male and female, with the midwife Death (Anatomy 454) and Eve at the foot, rising through man whose soul is "she" to the "She" who is Elizabeth Drury. But ironically she is a type, not only of the Virgin Mary, as Louis Martz has shown, but of the Perfect Man, the Christ; and ultimately, unlike "This man, whom God did wooe" unsuccessfully (Anatomy 167) she was "Betrothed to God, and now is married there" (Progress 462).

She is established as a type of Christ in the introduction to the Anatomy, where language commonly applied to him is now made hers: "Her death did wound, and tame thee than". She is compared to "A Prince, expected long" who has now died, and it is "some blasphemy" to say he is merely dead. Her memory "Creates a new world; and new creatures be / Produc'd," who need to be told of "the dangers and diseases of the old" in order to avoid them. When one "knows" her death, one will realize the true misery of man, as in meditation on the Crucifixion. This seems to be the reverse of the sacred parody described by Martz in which the language of secular love poetry is applied to the divine Beloved. Instead, divine language is being applied to human life, the kind of language that we find in such a contemporary poem as Giles Fletcher's "Christs Victorie, and Triumph in Heaven, and Earth, over, and after death" (Cambridge, 1610).[12] This poem is witty in a manner half patristic, half Italianate, and its closing description of ascent to heaven is, like Donne's, based upon St Peter Damian's famous Latin hymn, "Ad perennis vitae fontem." Just as striking is his sudden break in the sacred narrative to compare King James with the Saviour, as small to great. The whole tone is optimistic: England is a great country, but heaven a greater. It would not be unlike Donne to make fun of such facile sacrilegious compliment by offering an even lengthier sacrilegious compliment of his own, but to an

unknown girl, and set within a more critical negative world view. It is an interesting index of English taste in poetry around 1610 that shortly after Fletcher's poem was published, in 1614, there appeared under the title "Via Regia" a series of elegies on a dead lady, one of which, entitled "Parodia", is a pastiche of passages from Fletcher's poem referring to Christ's death and resurrection, but now altered a little to refer to the lady.[13] The Anniversaries are also a "parodia" in this sense, that language usually understood to refer to sacred figures now becomes Elizabeth Drury's.

They are a kind of extended riddle in reverse, with the literal answer, the dead girl, stated plainly from the beginning and then surrounded by a multiplicity of identities. So different readings of the poem have proposed different "solutions" -- that she "is" the Virgin (from Ben Jonson to Martz), Queen Elizabeth and more recently the Logos, Sapientia, and St Lucy, not to speak of her creating an occasional Laura-effect. Perhaps the truth is that she "is" all these and more (the "anima mundi", the divine image in man, for example); she wears many faces, and this is all part of Donne's process of spiritual discovery and "spiritual mirth". In the Anniversaries play is associated with the new-born innocent earth which mingled and varied colours every day (Progress 349-50), and also with the imitation of heavenly qualities by earthly creatures. "And

'tis in heav'n part of spiritual mirth / To see how well the good play on her earth" (Elegy 105-6). But if readers are enjoined to imitate their saint, to "play" her, she herself is presented as playing a variety of roles in imitation of heaven. This is the very quality of her innocence, in contrast to the sad variations in terrestrial lovers, who are "both fluid, chang'd since yesterday".

> So flowes her face and thine eies, neither now
> That saint, nor Pilgrime, which your loving vow
> Concernd remaines. (Progess, 397-9)

Donne gives examples of blasphemy twice in the Anniversaries: it means the reduction of human death to flat physical explanation (Anatomy 51) and the false suggestion that virtue has been sullied with vice (Progess 6). On the other hand, Ben Jonson used the word in an opposite sense in his criticism of the Anniversaries in the "Conversations with Drummond", to mean not a reduction of human life but exaggeration, and Donne's reply to him did not really deny this charge. He rather shifted the emphasis away from any one of his many "sacred references" to "the Idea of a woman". By applying so many figures to his Idea he is in a larger way also parodying the style of religious praise, that multiple naming of God which through its very plenitude and contradictoriness leaves us finally with a sense of the mystery beyond all the names.

But soone, the reasons why you 'are lov'd by all,
Grow infinite, and so passe reasons reach;
Then backe again to 'implicite faith I fall.[14]

The mystery however is not of divine but of human life. It seems then that the loosening of Donne's Catholic ties allowed him a particular playful freedom in his use of certain kinds of traditional religious imagery and figures, and yet was not so absolute that he could not hark back on the appropriate occasion to a praise, somewhat between "recognizing communion and accepting disjunction," of virginity.

There is still another aspect of the paradoxicality of the Anniversaries which relates to spiritual discovery and especially to St Augustine. This is his play on the idea that Truth can die. As a young man Augustine was troubled by the thought that man's truth dies with him: this involved doubt both of meaningful immortality and of transcendent values. What if all human thought is relative, time-limited? From this state of mind he was rescued by his reading of the Platonists, especially Plotinus, who presented him with the eternal world of Ideas. Augustine's Soliloquia (Basic Writings of St Augustine 27-29)[15] presents the problem through a discussion between Reason and his Soul. "Can Truth perish?", Reason asks, and there follows a short scholastic dispute which leads up to: "Does it not seem to thee that when true things perish Truth does not perish, as Chastity

does not when a chaste person dies?" Augustine agrees, and Reason proceeds, "Truth is not in mortal things. But Truth is, and is not nowhere. There are therefore things immortal. And nothing is true in which Truth is not. It results, therefore, that nothing is true except those things which are immortal . . . Now everything which is not true, is false. Nothing therefore is rightly said to be, except things immortal." And "things immortal" are symbolized in the transcendent lady Wisdom who presides over the Soliloquia. Donne entertains the notion that Truth (Virtue, Chastity) can die, and that in this death "our weakness was discovered" (Anatomy 52). She dies becuase man is too imperfect and sinful to keep her. That was Augustine's dread; however, Donne adds, with the divine Incarnation and Atonement in mind, that Truth is recovered through death. "Though (a good man) had right, and power, and Place before, / Yet Death must usher, and unlocke the door!" (Progress 155-6). The death which Augustine presented as the way to reach Wisdom was the renunciation of this world: Donne sharpened the tension of the theme of spiritual discovery in his elegiac framework, but his concluding emphasis on essential joy could hardly be more Augustinian.

So far this chapter has been concerned almost entirely with poems on the periphery of modern interest in Donne: for the majority of readers the poetry of Donne continues to mean the Songs and Sonnets, and particularly those poems in

which he uses the figurative language of extremes to celebrate the middle state of love between ribaldry and renunciation, and explores in the manner of the Renaissance love theorists the reconciliation of body and soul, of action and contemplation. When the theme of spiritual discovery makes its appearance in these poems it owes something to Petrarch's love-religion, the idea of the relation of lovers as cult, sacred and secret, separating them from the ignorant laiety of common earthly lovers, and to be described in riddles. Yet Petrarch, while admitting the pull of the flesh, far from celebrating it, had lamented it; and it was the Italian sonneteers of later centuries who moulded his language to serve more frivolous ends, "Swearing his sense is merely deified" (Marston II i 3). Donne knew as well as anyone the temporary euphoria of sex which persuades one that he is "as it were immortall here on earth"; he made it a merry matter of praise in his "Paradox" on virginity, in some sort of analogy to "perfect immortality in heaven", and a matter of dispraise in "Farewell to love". He knew also that the sense of immortality which lovers feel can be related, not to sexual fulfilment but to restraint; that even sexual love at its highest has its own spiritual sense and its own special virtues. He was far from being the first Renaissance writer to say so;[16] the great Renaissance defence of married love against medieval values involved proving that the virtues of marriage are at least equal to

the virtues of the virgin state, and this could lead to the spiritual discovery of the qualities at the heart of marriage itself. So the theme of spiritual discovery was again in this context put in reverse, to demonstrate resemblances between the love of women and the love of God.

"A valediction: forbidding mourning" demonstrates strikingly Donne's transformation of imagery which traditionally represented the relation of the single soul with God. Take "gold to ayery thinnesse beate". A passage from the medieval allegorical poem, Guillaume Deguileville's "Le Pelerinage de la Vie Humaine", translated into English by John Lydgate, illustrates notably how the refinement of gold images the trial of the soul to reveal virtue. When a figure called Tribulacion approaches the Pilgram, she explains the use of her instruments to him:

> My toonges (as I shal expresse)
> Ben ycalled ek "Dystresse",
> Wych that werkyn to an herte
> fful gret anguissh and gret smerte;
> And in a pressour off gret peyne
> They kan ful offte A man dystreyne
> Both with-outen and with-Inne,
> As gold ffoyl ybetyn thynne. (15893-900)

Tribulacion is "gold-smyth . . . off Hevene, and the forgeresse / Wych in erth fforge the crownys of paradys". She has a double function: she makes the evil worse and

refines the good. More than that, she tests men to disclose of what sort they are: the wicked like empty barrels make most noise when she beats them. But when she tries the Pilgim with her instruments, he calls on the Blessed Virgin, so that Tribulacion has finally to praise him -- his sufferings have only served to raise his mind to a heavenly level -- and lets him go. In "A valediction: forbidding mourning" Donne moves to a certain extent within a similar frame of ideas. Besides the "expansion" which their two souls "endure" "Like gold to ayery thinnese beat", the tribulation of parting is treated as a test of the lovers' virtue. "As virtuous men passe mildly away . . . So let us melt, and make no noise", as proof that they live beyond the profane sublunary level. According to the older way, the soul's virtue is tested individually, as in the death of the good man at the beginning of the poem; but Donne's lovers are tried together, and the gold beaten thin seems to be an image of their interdependence in virtue, which is made explicit in the last three stanzas. As Ben Jonson has it in his poem on virtuous love, "It is a golden chaine let downe from heaven" which "combines / The soft, and sweetest mindes in equall knots".[17]

The image of the compasses, with which Donne's poem closes, could also refer to man's center in God, and this is how he used it in his "Obsequies to the Lord Harrington:

> O soul! O circle! why so quickly be
> Thy ends, thy birth and death, clos'd up in thee?
> Since one foot of thy compass still was plac'd
> In heav'n, the other might securely've pac'd
> In the most large extent through every path
> Which the whole world, or man, the abridgment,
> hath. (105-10)

This is the way Plotinus had presented the image of movement round the center in Enneads, 11. 2, "On the movement of heaven", where, starting from plato's Timaeus, 40, he meditated upon its metaphorical application to the soul. "If it is the center of the soul that is in question, soul runs round God and embraces him lovingly and keeps round him as far as it can; for all things depend on him: since it cannot go to him it goes round him." But Plotinus also thought of the universe and the individual soul as a hierarchic arrangement of sphere within sphere, the higher and outer causing the movement of the lower and inner circle. "So the lower soul, as the higher encircles it, inclines and tends toward it, and its tendency carries round the body with which it is interwoven." Such an idea of sphere within sphere as an image of the two souls was in Donne's mind when he wrote of "trepidation of the spheres" (11), that is, "libration of the ninth, the crystalline sphere, which communicates its movement to all the spheres beneath it" (Gardner, The Elegies, and the Songs and Sonnets 189). And

he continued to play upon it in describing how "Thy soule the fixt foot, makes no show / To move, but doth, if th' other doe" (27-28). The paradox of the fixt foot is that it too describes a small inner circle at its free end. Hidden in this enigmatic image then, is the double nature of woman that parallels the movement from literal to spiritual in the sermons: she is at once the lower soul which "leanes, and hearkens after" the higher, and the center of virtue, a divine adumbration. "Thy firmness makes my circle just, / And makes me end, where I begunne" (35-36). Each is one another's best, not sentimentally so, but in the discovery of virtue. This is the spiritual discovery of mutual faithfulness.

Love had from the beginning, then, something of the appearance for Donne of "an anchorit", as he called the deity in his elegy, "The autumnnall", when considering the love of an ageing yet charming woman. "Here, where still Evening is; not noone, nor night; / Where no voluptuousnesse, yet all delight" (21-2). Under his varying experiences of love, voluptuary and marital, admiring and flirtatious, ran his pursuit of Lady Virtue, to possibly see her multiform aspects shadowed forth in strange, even paradoxical places. But he knew very well that these shadows arose and would pass, in spite of asserting "He that believes himself, doth never lie". In the third Satyre he had shown himself a good Platonist, in the Augustinian

manner, and he continued to be. From time to time he might have the sense of being "as it were, immortall here on earth", and from this sense many of his best poems and sermons sprang; but he was no romantic, lost and bewildered when his Muse died. Instead, in a parallel way, he turned his amorousness, spiritual questing, and movements of figurative language rather fiercely upon God in the sermons, as we have seen in Chapter Two.

In conclusion, we have seen that the sermons consist of larger units of paragraphs and sentences which hold in suspension and in tension many lesser elements -- these often registering insistent figurative perceptions or hovering uncertainties -- but coalescing in spiritual discoveries charged with psychological energy and immediacy. So when Bell suggests the poet "Donne is unconventional in the sense of a 'dialogue of one' which seeks communion but is continually prepared to recognize disjunction" (128), she recognizes in Donne's "new made Idiome" a kinetic and evocative power that is demonstrably at work in both the poems and the sermons. The parallels of spiritual discovery in the poems and sermons are related, finally, to the intensity of Donne's insight into St. Augustine's and the Church Fathers' conceptions of the soul, Scripture, and the sermon. In particular Donne's spiritual discoveries in the sermons arise out of the realization that the Holy Ghost was

"a Metaphoricall, and Figurative expresser of himselfe (IX: 328).

The abundance of imagery in the Bible -- which embraced all kinds of concreteness and detail because "things" were not simply "things" but also "signs" -- operated to fill the souls's gallery, the memory, with pictures that vivified the apprehension of meaning. Even more than the objects of the external world, the words of Scripture were means of revelation. Yet we have also seen that Donne's use of images and figures in his sermons does not have the schematizing and abstracting effect of much traditional allegorizing of Scripture because as a writer he remains alert to the actualities of his text and context, seeking always to highlight them as they are and not to blur them in a grand design. Chapter Two examined Donne's stress on the figuring, imaging, signifying force of Biblical language, to make it memorable in the special Augustinian sense and thus to activate the reason and the will to holy ends. What is strikingly similar in the poems is how Donne uses figurative language to write about one kind of love in terms of another. The parallel in the sermons is in the employment of his poetic genius, with its constant enforcement of analogies -- human and divine -- not readily apparent to ordinary minds. The sustained energy of Donne's sermons comes from his dwelling and enlarging upon images in his texts, and from his extracting of latent metaphors where

none are apparent. In all this Donne gives the credit to the Holy Ghost, yet this present study suggests it is too simple to transfer the credit to the poetic genius of Donne. The complicated fact that emerges from this study is that Donne's unified artistic development in the poems and sermons relied greatly on the rich writerly tradition begun with the Church Fathers and expanded during the Middle Ages, which in his age his figurative sensibilities found so congenial and true.

NOTES

1. "Nondum amabam, et amare amabam, quaerebam quid amarem, amans amare." "Music, when soft voices die" may have grown out of Shelley's reading of the Confessions, X, on memory, and especially sect. 13.

2. Erasmus' Colloquia (Toronto: Toronto UP, 1985), which became one of the most famous school texts all over Europe, contains a lively discussion, "Proci et puellae", between a girl who is thinking of becoming a nun and a boy who wishes to marry her. When she says, "But chastity is the state most pleasing to God", her lover replies "And just for this reason do I want to marry a chaste girl, so that with her I will share a chaste marriage. We'll bring forth children for the country and for Christ. What a small amount of difference there is between this kind of marriage and virginity!" Against the argument of the girl that this is a violation of virginity, he replies that abstention is rather a kind of violence against nature. Abstinence from sex is no virtue, rather is intercourse virtuous. "I shall be your king, and you shall be my queen." These are arguments that Donne takes up in his Paradox XII, which has been reprinted in John Hayward's Nonesuch Library edition of Donne's Poetry and Prose, (London: Clarendon Press, 1929).

3. All these works are listed in Geoffrey Keynes, A Bibliography of Dr. John Donne (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1958), Appendix IV, "Books from Donne's library".

4. The image of woman as a book is Danteian: see E. R. Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages (London: Oxford UP, 1953, ch. 16). Donne had a copy of Dante's Convivio in his library, where he might have found such a comparison (1. x): Dante's commentary on his poems is going to draw attention away from accidental ornaments, since as with the beauty of a lady "the splendour of the jewels and of the garments excite more admiration than she herself. He, therefore, who wishes to judge well of a lady looks at her when she is alone and her natural beauty is with her, free from all accidental ornament." (Trans. E. P. Sayer, London, 1887, 36).

5. Compare Paradoxes and Problemes, Paradox VIII, "That Nature is our worst guide." Nature is given two contrary senses, 1) "our essence, our definition," 2) "our bodies afflictions, . . . our bodies pleasure . . . the worst part of us."

6. One may contrast Joseph Hall on the same theme, based on Juvenal's sixth Satire, in Virgidemiarum (1597), III. He contrasts early man with sophisticated urban man: "They naked went; or clad in ruder hide, / Or

home-spun russet, void of forraine pride . . ." The effect seems more classical than Donne's.

7. St Augustine's Epistulae 11 in The Basic Writings of Saint Augustine (New York: Macmillan, 1948, 93)written to his friend Zenobius from his philosophical retirement at Cassiacum, is a good example. The gist of the letter's argument runs: "We know that everything perceivable by the senses is transitory, and divine philosophy teaches us to control the body and allow the soul to pursue what is permanent. Even so, though my love for you transcends the senses, yet I miss you when you are absent in the body. Surely this fault is excusable; I want my absent friend to miss me as much as I miss him." Here Augustine plays lightly on the soul-body relation.

8. This point has been made well by Patrick Crutwell in The Shakespearean Moment (New York: Haper and Row, ch. 3). The fact that Elizabeth Drury was "not yet fifteen" relates interestingly to the approach of fifteen when the Virgin Mary was supposed to become betrothed to Joseph, and to Donne's view in Paradox XII, that virginity only became an active virtue in girls after they were fourteen. Donne offers a resolution to the battle between Love and Chastity in Progress 363-4: "And she made Peace, for no peace is like this, / That

beauty and Chastity together kiss."

9. Richard Southern, St Anselm's modern biographer, has described as "a work more reminiscent of the later Donne than of the later Anselm" his meditation "Lament for lost Virginity", which was reprinted during Donne's lifetime, and was translated into English in St. Bernard his Meditations (London: Clarendon Press, 1631): "Ah purity, no longer my loved, but my lost one, no longer my joyous, but my abandoned one, whither hast thou descended? in how foul, how bitter mire hast thou left me?

10. Compare a similar play in the epistle to the Countess of Huntingdon; "Man to Gods image, Eve, to mans was made":

Then we might feare that vertue, since she fell
So low as woman, should be neare her end.
But she'd not stoop'd, but rais'd; exil'd by men
She fled to heaven, that's heavenly things, that's you.
(19-22)

The Anglican work in praise of the Virgin Mary cited by Martz, Anthony Stafford's The Femall Glory (1635), has also this kind of play in its two prefaces, "To the feminine reader" and "To the masculine reader".

11. Helen Gardner, in The Elegies, and the Songs and Sonnets discusses this fully.

12. The poem's eighth stanza describes man as "Of this great world the small epitome / Of the dead world, the live and quick anatomy". Yet he is a nothing (III 12): "Who is it sees not that he nothing is, / But he that nothing sees?" And the first stanza describes the Saviour in the paradoxes which Donne then applied to Elizabeth Drury:

    The birth of Him that no beginning knew,
    Yet gives beginning to all that are born;
    And how the Infinite far greater grew
    By growing less; and how the rising morn,
    That shot from heaven, did back to heaven return;
    The obsequies of Him that could not die,
    And death of life, end of eternity,
    How worthily He died, that died unworthily.

    See also the discussion of Donne's strikingly similar use of "Oriens" in the first chapter of this study.

13. The edition of Fletcher's poem by W. T. Brooke describes this "parodia" 137-9. Another parody of a similar sort also appears (175-7), in which the prayer "Ave Maria" is applied to Queen Mary.

14. From the epistle to the Countess of Bedford, "Reason is our Soules left hand, Faith her right", 13-15.

15. Petrarch had also faced the death of Truth in his Rime. "Alas, dust has become her fair face, which alone was

made for us till now the sign of heaven and of good (268). Love and Courtesy have died with Laura (352), the shoot of Virtue has been uprooted (338); yet Fame and Virtue are not in death's power and live on. Donne, in contrast stays more exclusively on the death of virtue; his contrast between earth and heaven is more a reckoning of the moral balance than an estimate of personal loss. Here Petrarch seems more romantically modern, Donne more moralistic.

16. For a full discussion see A. J. M. Smith's "The metaphysic of love" 362-75.

17. From "Epode", "Not to know vice at all", first printed in Robert Chester's Love's Martyr (1601), along with Shakespeare's "The phoenix and the turtle".

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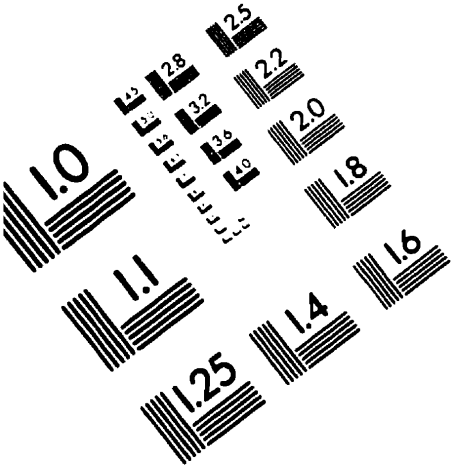

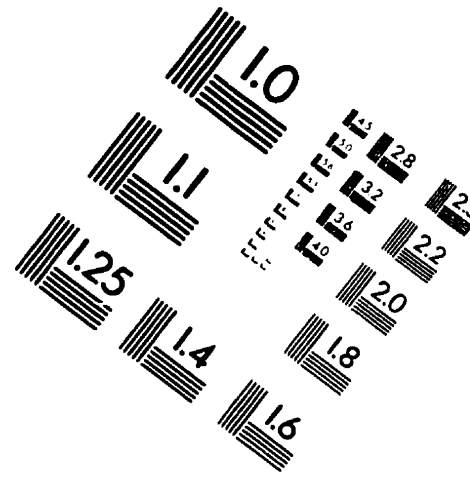

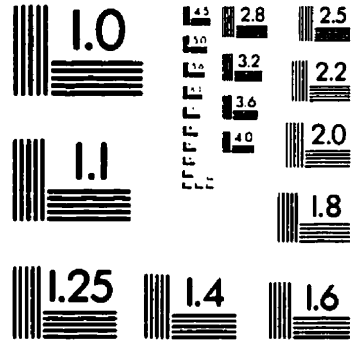

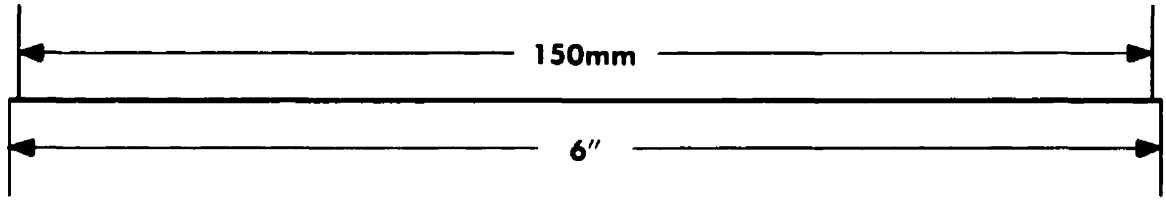

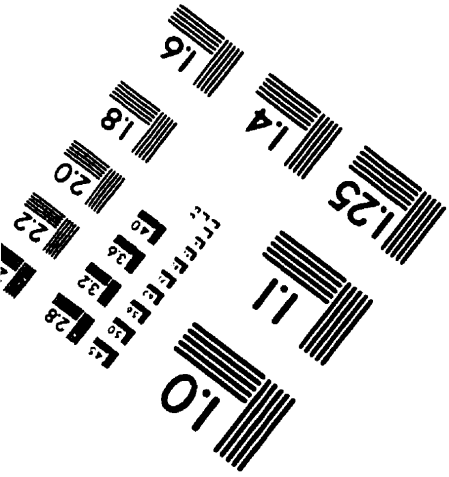

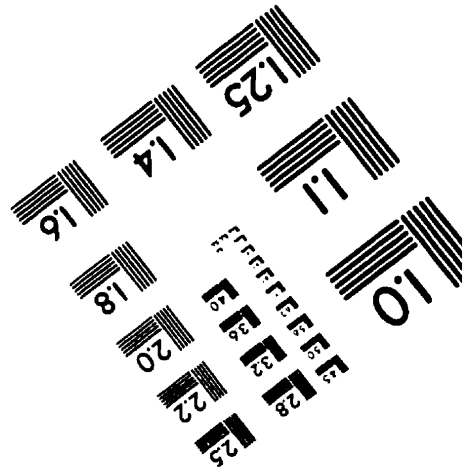

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