CHAPTER FIVE

THE SATYRES: FIVE VIEWS OF COUNTERFEITS AND THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

No renaissance poet except Jonson points up so effectively as Donne the reinforcements that lyric and satire may gain from each other, and none is so absolute in what he expects of true dialogue. These two propositions are related and bear upon the topography of Donne’s imaginative world: lyric for him is often either a witty probing of relations-of-two or an enactment of communion in an enclosed place; satire reacts to the failure of personal relations and looks abroad to the court and the city. Lyric and satire are the systole and diastole of his secular poetry. Their portrayal especially of vicissitude prepares for his view of the world’s betrayal of the soul in the devotions and sermons and his rescaling there of the soul’s difficult ascent. The secular Donne prefers the closeted intimacy of dialogue and often finds other situations suspect. Besides having sins peculiar to them, as he tells Sir Henry Wotton by epistle, the greater settings of town, court, and country combine each others’ vices “as in the first Chaos confusedly.” And “So pride, lust, covetize, being severalli” are also each in all, “And mingled thus, their issue incestuous.”

In contrast private triumphs of the “The Good-morrow’s” kind are founded upon trusted union and avoidance of potential short-circuits, at which Donne glances in ironic asides. In the satiric songs and sonnets and in the Satyres themselves, he measures the fickleness of “fondling motley humorists” and others by the stan-
dard of personal loyalty and constancy. As he remarks in the first satire, "For better or worse take mee, or leave mee: / To take, and leave mee is adultery" ("Satyre 1," 25–26). The speaker's displeasure with the court and the city (he usually ignores the country) rises out of what he regards as the treachery and the counterfeiting that reign abroad. Where the speakers of *Songs and Sonnets* base true dialogue on the openness of one party to another, the satirist finds himself among those whose first inclination is to impress and to use others. He may be further isolated, as some readers think, by his own moral aloofness and holier-than-thou view of human error.2 Whether or not he is, he gathers nothing resembling Jonson's associates within his chambers, nor is his rough-hewn language calculated to set a standard of reasonableness for like-minded people.

One of Donne's more impressive statements on erosions of trust comes in the "Fourth Satyre." Pope's translation gives us a valuable slant on it, because unlike Donne's original it assumes that the satirist addresses a compatible group. The difference shows clearest at the climax, where Pope capitalizes on Donne's fury to make somewhat different points. He had this to work with:

```
And, My Mistresse Truth, betray thee
To th'huffing braggart, puff Nobility?
No, no, Thou which since yesterday hast beene
Almost about the whole world, hast thou seene,
O Sunne, in all thy journey, Vanitie,
Such as swells the bladder of our court? I
Thinke he which made your waxen garden, and
Transported it from Italy to stand
With us, at London, flouts our Presence, for
Just such gay painted things, which no sappe, nor
Tast have in them, ours are; and naturall
Some of the stocks are, their fruits, bastard all.
```

Donne's puppets, Italian wax-works, and counterfeit nobles compose a confused theatrical world that makes the real and the fake almost indistinguishable. The splendid clothes of nobles end up in plays, and the theater's wardrobe is in turn rented out to poverty-stricken courtiers. Truth is worth an idealist's enthusiasm, but no one knows where to locate it. Nor is the speaker's own style impeccable in its rush to assail what offends him, as Donne uses enjambment and a hurried style to reinforce his impatience. Whereas Jonson never strays very far from apothegms for an implicit group that can profit by them, Donne's speaker calls out from his isolation like a Jeremiad prophet never far from diatribe.3
Pope's view of the wax works is naturally very similar, but his persona is less over-wrought at having to turn away from his fair mistress:

O my fair Mistress, Truth! Shall I quit thee,
For huffing, braggart, puffed Nobility?
Thou, who since Yesterday, hast roll'd o'er all
The busy, idle Blockheads of the Ball,
Hast thou, O Sun! beheld an emptier sort,
Than such as swell this Bladder of a Court?
Now pox on those who shew a Court in Wax!
It ought to bring all Courtiers on their backs.
Such painted Puppets, such a varnish'd Race
Of hollow Gewgaws, only Dress and Face,
Such waxen Noses, stately, staring things,
No wonder some Folks bow, and think them Kings.4

More of the beau monde shows in Pope's idle blockheads, and the sin of his courtiers is a deficiency in taste, dress, decorum. Donne is more concerned with a general lifelessness and betrayals of trust that create bastards, or in a word, truth, not taste. Neither version has any great difficulty identifying waxen evils, and the chief counterfeiter in both is a bore who corners the speaker and fills his ear with public scandal.

Also, both are concerned with credibility, or as Pope concludes:

Scar'd at the grizly Forms, I sweat, I fly,
And shake all o'er, like a discover'd Spy.
Courts are too much for Wits so weak as mine;
Charge them with Heav'n's Artillery, bold Divine!
From such alone the Great Rebukes endure,
Whose Satyr's sacred, and whose Rage Secure.
'Tis mine to wash a few slight Stains; but theirs
To deluge Sin, and drown a Court in Tears.
Howe'er, what's now Apocrypha, my Wit,
In time to come, may pass for Holy Writ.

Donne had written with somewhat less aplomb:

I shooke like a spyed Spie. Preachers which are
Seas of Wit and Arts, you can, then dare,
Drowne the sinnes of this place, for, for mee
Which am but a scarce brooke, it enough shall bee
To wash the staines away; Though I yet
With Macchabees modestie, the knowne merit
Of my worke lessen; yet some wise man shall,
I hope, esteeme my writs Canonical.

The differences are partly tonal and stylistic, but in writing of the court Pope also implies common views of propriety that Donne does not. Donne's isolated speaker in the wilderness finds a dis-
crepancy between the truth that claims his personal allegiance and "gay painted things," and he speaks his mind regardless of who may be listening. In the conclusion, too, where Pope's concern is a general acknowledgment of wit, Donne's speaker hopes at best for a single wise man who might some day take him to heart. The weakness of his own wit drives him from court and makes him a less effective instrument for its correction than heaven's artillery. The satirist finds himself prying into things better left unseen except by the final judge—compared with whom no secular moralist has much cleansing power. For Donne's speaker, then, it is all society, not merely the strength of his own witty attack, that is in jeopardy.

One senses a would-be lyric speaker behind this, defeated for the time being by a lack of worthy communicants and a place to stand but prepared to welcome both. He prefers another sort of community altogether from the one available to him, built upon openness and secure in its intimacies. As it turns out, the intimacies that appeal to him will be mainly those of lovers, as in the Songs and Sonnets, or of writers and receivers of epistles, or later, of confessor and God; they will never be broadly social or even selectively sociable. Donne will invariably refuse to let them be compromised, which in the case of the itinerant soul in the Anniversaries means abandoning the world altogether. The intensity of the union that Donne pursues washes out or reduces to shadow all peripheral substances and all lesser contracts and mediating institutions. The listener is the other party, or on occasion an onlooker. In the verse epistles, too, Donne addresses a friend or a patron, sometimes through someone else simply to add a third party.

But that is to look ahead. It is the Satyres that initially set forth the nature of trust and its violation, and they warrant close scrutiny both for the preparation they offer in reading the lyrics and for their own sakes. In dramatizing the contrast between the integrity of the private place and the role-playing of the street, "Satyre I" follows a short-story line from the arrival of an acquaintance at the speaker's chamber to their encounters with several satiric types outside and eventually to the friend's abandonment of the speaker and return. Language is slippery; books are not shared; no rituals of food and entertainment serve to draw a circle together. Movement is toward dispersal and centerless street wandering rather than centripetal and contractual. Manners are subject to revision according to one's sidewalk opportunities. Parting is less resonant with morality and disintegration here than the parting of lovers but
is nearly as disturbing to the speaker. The place into which his visitor comes, virtually a closet, suggests both the privileges of Donne’s private harbors and their constrictions. Since the ladies of the Songs and Sonnets have not yet put in an appearance, the speaker’s companions are divines, philosophers, statesmen, historians, and poets, both miscellaneous and print-bound, all of them difficult to apply to street life except in contrast. In that respect the integrity of the book and the power of writing already throw out predictions of “A Valediction of the Booke” and “The Canonization,” the first concerned with lasting bonds and the second with contrasts between the ostentatious power of the chronicled great and the integrity of lovers residing in their small sonnet rooms. But for the moment the studious speaker’s statesmen are “jolly” figures who teach us “how to tie / The sinewes of a cities mistique bodie,” and his poets are “Giddie fantastique” fellows—better companions certainly than the one who comes to drag him forth, and perhaps supportive of membership in Jonson’s circle if the speaker were more inclined to talk about them. If they do tie a mystic body together, it can only be hypothetically, not by exercising real influence through him.

Where books offer an intangible and inapplicable society, sidewalk traffic is readily visible but in costumed disguise. The speaker’s “wild uncertaine” friend calculates the worth of each passerby according to the cut of his cloth, though for the speaker himself virtue alone gives satisfaction:

\begin{verbatim}
At birth, and death, our bodies naked are;
And till our Soules be unapparrelled
Of bodies, they from blisse are banished.
\end{verbatim}

Despite this outbreak of sermonizing, the speaker portrays with some wit and economy the flightiness of his companion:

\begin{verbatim}
Now we are in the street; He first of all
Improvidently proud, creeps to the wall,
And so imprison’d, and hem’d in by mee
Sells for a little state his libertie;
Yet though he cannot skip forth now to greet
Every fine silken painted foole we meet,
He them to him with amorous smiles allures,
And grins, smacks, shrugs, and such an itch endures,
As premises, or schoole-boyes which doe know
Of some gay sport abroad, yet dare not goe.
\end{verbatim}

What he identifies is similar to what Oliver Wendell Holmes’s autocrat of the breakfast table calls simply publicity-seeking by
those who expect to leap into the limelight at a single bound: whereas true fame comes when one is not looking, the ladder of notoriety is easily climbed but it “leads to the pillory which is crowded with fools who could not hold their tongues, and rogues who could not hide their tricks.” What subjects the court and the city to fluctuating confusion is a lack of common standards and just such quests for prominence. Where all that shows in “lace, pinke, panes, print, cut” (1.97) is transitory, surfaces prove to be either impenetrable or merely whimsical.

In exploring the failings of poetry and the law, “Satyre II” turns up two other phases of betrayed trust. Although critics have sometimes found the two interests of the poem less related than they might like, the speaker considers both poets and lawyers in the context of language and unites them in Coscus, once a poet and now a lawyer. The poem’s concern with language is another side of society’s failure to commit itself to open, recognizable truths. The judgment that Donne implies is similar to that of Jonson’s Discoveries: “Wheresoever, manners, and fashions are corrupted, Language is. It imitates the publicke riot. The excess of Feasts, and apparell, are the notes of a sick State; and the wantonnesse of language, of a sick mind” (Discoveries, pp. 592–93). Or again, in Jonson’s words, “Language most shewes a man: speake that I may see thee. It springs out of the most retired, and immost parts of us, and is the Image of the Parent of it, the mind. No glasse renders a mans forme, or likenesse, so true as his speech” (p. 625). Performance for pay undermines that rendering in both lawyers and poets. A good poet should be an asset to a community that seeks models of behavior; but the sorts of poets who are Donne’s target here pirate the wit of others and assist counterfeiters and wax-works in obscuring truth.

Coscus’s plague of legal terms corrupts specifically the language of courtship. It trivializes what should be the strongest bond of a society by making its intimate addresses jargonish with “continual claims,” “injunctions,” “rival suits” and “proceedings.” Stringing such things together, one can actually assemble whole sentences, as in “If I returne next size in Lent, / I should be in remitter of your grace”; or, “in th’ interim my letters should take place / Of affidavits” (54–57). The speaker is not amused:

> words, words, which would teare
The tender labyrinth of a soft maids eare,
More, more then ten Sclavonians scolding, more
Then when winds in our ruin’d Abbeyes rore.

57–60
It is difficult to gauge the decibels of ten tongue-lashing Slavs, but the effect is that of Babel.

The affectations of a Coscus are different from those of "Satyr I," but they have similar repercussions. In effect in a noisy world people seek the most noticeable way to sally forth and the most imposing speech. Meanwhile, the good works for which lawyers should be trained go undone, and connections between the private soul and public works are broken. The results Donne finds equivalent to misreadings of biblical texts:

when he sells or changes land, he impaires
His writings, and (unwatch'd) leaves out, ses heires,
As slyly as any Commenter goes by
Hard words, or sense; or in Divinity
As controverters, in vouch'd Texts, leave out
Shrewd words, which might against them cleare the doubt.

97–102

Clear sense and correct explication are the foundations of received truth and therefore of community:

But (Oh) we'allow
Good workes as good, but out of fashion now,
Like old rich wardrops; but my words none drawes
Within the vast reach of th'huge statute lawes.

109–12

Mere words even of a more open and rational sort are helpless to guarantee a social contract in these confusions of the city and the court. Perhaps for that reason the third satire turns to religion and frames a quest for a church, both to reinforce truth and to give it institutional stability. We know the gravity for Donne personally of that search, which occupied him through most of his mature years. At the sequential center of the five satires and at their spiritual and conceptual center as well, he tries to locate just what truth should be in its doctrinal form. In doing so he passes momentarily close to the boundaries of lyric but in a mode closer to that of the Holy Sonnets than Songs and Sonnets. The soul's first pursuit must be just such a truth, by which Donne means not the sort of truth that attaches to incidents and occasions, to axioms, or even to the postulates of science and credos, but truth absolute, centered, universal:

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;
Yet strive so, that before age, deaths twilight,
Thy Soule rest, for none can worke in that night.

3. 79–84
The image of this free-standing, exalted truth Donne stations in a privileged position in a passage that has been rightly recognized as crucial to him. He delays the phrase “Truth stands” syntactically and plants it unqualified and sturdy in the center of the line, where it is readily visible from all regions. Ostensibly, he means such a truth to be theological and doctrinal, but it can just as well be personal and serve the functions of the poet’s centering myth. Though he persisted in his efforts to find employment at court and continued to praise kingship lavishly in the sermons, none of Donne’s statements about majesty or those who serve it leads us to believe that he subsequently saw any possibility of a secular or public equivalent to such truth or even strong reinforcement of it. His hope here is to find a religious institution to enshrine, propagate, and defend it.

The attributes of the hill do not transfer to truth itself, however, which is momentarily beyond concretion; they apply rather to the pathway one takes, or to the circumstances of pilgrimage. What Donne sketches is “the way” that occupies so much Reformation questing and gives Bunyan the central metaphor for Pilgrim’s Progress, which as we will see later is partly a metaphor for discourse. Indeed, as the focus shifts from truth to him who climbs toward it, Donne slips away from the goal, much as Bunyan’s Christian frequently falls back and starts up again. The passage trails off on the topic of an old age that seeks rest—that comes not to light but to twilight. Where truth stands aloof as the living substance the intellect should grasp, night marks the onset of obscurity and the borderlands of elegy.

The quest for truth embodied in a church runs into other difficulties as well. The higher truth stands, the more it blinds the beholder:

```
hard knowledge too
The mindes indeavours reach, and mysteries
Are like the Sunne, dazling, yet plaine to'all eyes.
```

Seemingly, no one can find a way to domesticate it or attract a membership to it. It seems literally to have no place. Pursuit finds its most formidable barriers not on the steep hill, however, where one might be inspired to win most where the way is hardest, but in its human byways where kings, vicars, and men of law set the rules. Souls that will be tried by truth’s high standard at judgment find themselves exhorted to live, in the interim, by the charters of magistrates:
So perishSoules, which more chuse mens unjust
Power from God claym'd, then God himselfe to trust.

In the larger structure of "Satyre III" as well as in the passage on truth itself, the gleaming vision that could unite men gives way to shabby substitutions—primarily of a social sort that the other satires identify.

If "Satyre III" sets a standard for the soul's pursuit—putting abstract truth in place of communal norm—"Satyre IV" establishes a psychological or affective locus for one who seems increasingly vulnerable to isolation. The speaker's assailant in this case is not the harmless flutterer of the first satire or the comparatively harmless poets and lawyers of the second but an informer who spreads malice simultaneously through the social body and the speaker's mind. No preparatory exposure to corrupt language can immunize one against him:

Pedants motley tongue, soldiers bumbast,
Montebankes drugtongue, nor the termes of law
Are strong enough preparatives, to draw
Me to beare this: yet I must be content
With his tongue, in his tongue, call'd complement:
In which he can win widdowes, and pay scores,
Make men speake treason, cosen subtlest whores,
Out-flatter favorites.

His language is subtler and more insidious than Coscus's and his art of lying surpasses even that of chroniclers. Like Jonson's town criers and spies in "The New Cry"—the gossipy sort expressly not invited to supper—he libels great men, names the princes they have paid for their offices, describes their sexual habits, and gives the inside dope on foreign affairs. Like Jonson's ripe statesmen, they talk in whispers and spread anxiety. Jonson's court spies, of course, also deal in the coded language of insiders; they talk reserved, locked up, and full of fear,
Nay, ask you how the day goes, in your ear:
Keep a Star-Chamber sentence close, twelve days,
And whisper what a proclamation says.
They all get Porta, for the sundry ways
To write in cipher, and the several keys
To ope the character. They've found the sleight
With juice of lemons, onions, piss, to write,
To break up seals, and close 'em.

"The New Cry," 17-29

Donne is less concerned with the ciphers and the secrecy and more with the poisonous reception of intelligence, which in the
spectrum of kinds of information and truth comes at the opposite end of that hard-won variety that stands on the eminence:

I more amas'd then Circes prisoners, when
They felt themselves turne beasts, felt my selfe then
Becoming Traytor, and mee thought I saw
One of our Giant Statutes ope his jaw
To sucke me in; for hearing him, I found
That as burnt venom'd Leachers doe grow sound
By giving others their soares, I might growe
Guilty, and he free.

Donne imagines a metamorphosis of men into beasts and makes the speaker himself momentarily not merely one such but a lesser one about to be devoured. Rather than taking refuge in a safe chamber that reduces the world to manageable proportions, the victim of courtly conspiracy finds himself entering a great orifice, the location of false words and a place to be eaten. When the "makeron's" barrage of words ends in a request for a loan, he is able to buy some peace; but the aftereffects of the visit are as disturbing as the visit itself, as though a circle has after all been established—of the devil's kind. In the inmost self, even in his dreams, the speaker feels contaminated:

At home in wholesome solitarinesse
My precious soule began, the wretchednesse
Of suiters at court to mourn, and a trance
Like his, who dreamt he saw hell, did advance
It selfe on me.

To the image of corruption and vanity that "Satyre IV" presents, Donne adds one further portrait in "Satyre V," which concerns a narrower but related matter—the failure of the court and its officers to render justice to suiters. We do not need to consider it in detail, but it adds to the portrayal of social disruption the notion that without a last resort—an honest authority—anyone no matter how sound can be beggared. Suitors are like streams swallowed by "a vast ravishing sea." Consumed alive before worms can get them, they are vulnerable to such as the Pursivant, who breaks and enters, declares them heretics, and delivers final judgment. Although less concerned with language and manners than the other satires, "Satyre V" is equally bitter about this corruption of the courtly system and the part of the social contract that should guarantee privacy and property but does not—sufficient reason, if Donne were Jonson, to form one's group and begin looking for private shelter.
I have not wanted to abbreviate too much in this initial stage, because the *Satyres* have not been as well connected with what follows as they might be. From here on I will select the fewest possible instances to cover the ground and follow up the inside-outside contrast in Donne’s gathering of the greater into the lesser in his own kind of synecdochial minimum. The court that he glimpses off and on in the *Satyres* and *Songs and Sonnets* operates under a disregard for codes similar to the disregard Wyatt found objectionable in Henry VIII’s court and Spenser discovered in journeying from Kilcolman to London. Donne was clearly prepared to explore different settings for the poet even before the ostracism that came of his marriage and led to his search for refuge at Pyford, Mitcham, and Drury Lane. The stage is also set for the cultivation of epistolary addresses to Lucy Harrington, Henry Wotton, Henry Goodyear, Mary Magdalen Herbert, and the Countess of Huntingdon. More important to the styles he developed in establishing the margins of private bowers, he learns to counter spies, false women, costumed peacocks, and opportunists by playing irony against Petrarchan formulas and the values of streetwalkers and court worldlings. The satire embedded in *Songs and Sonnets* belongs not to a Jonsonian man-among-men but to a critical observer who holds to a privileged truth that thrives only when two people give their undivided attention to each other and use their wits to inform their feelings.

**TWO IN ONE: THE SUBSTANCE OF LOVE AND SETTINGS OF COURTSHIP**

The satires describe and criticize a social vacuum that renders most urban and courtly contacts of little value to Donne in the figure of the poet. Love cannot be socialized or individual strengths brought into general use without standards that begin in fidelity. Where the loves of Spenser’s illustrative knights and ladies are useful in the poet’s tying together the parts of a chivalric whole, Donne’s lovers begin by removing mutations between them and their personal truth. The fulfillment of self is guided by intellect and framed by dialogue without the Spenserian propensity for landscapes and adventures. Behind the rugged (and sometimes ragged) attack of the *Satyres* on vices is a vulnerability to isolation that suggests no further quests or initiations, merely further threats of abandonment. In the offing is Elizabeth Drury’s forsaking of the world as its principle of order and spiritual life, but that is an enlargement of the desertion theme. More immediately and
personally, several songs and sonnets explore the breaking up of love's fragile arrangements, as in the desertion of the beloved, for instance, that leaves the speaker spiritless in “A Nocturnall upon S. Lucies Day,” spiritless and deprived not merely of social contact but of metaphysical essence and the substance of truth.

The implications of Donne’s encompassing negativity hang upon love’s uncompromising demands. When he writes in “The Sunne Rising,” “She is all States, and all Princes, I / Nothing else is,” he gives a new twist to an old macrocosm-microcosm figure. Unlike his predecessors the poet feels no need to lament being so devoted to love, although he is sometimes defensive. As “The Canonization” indicates, the lovers themselves may even become objects of worship or models of truth for those on pilgrimage from the country, court, and city. As the language of the songs establishes its own habitation, seekers may approach its expressed pattern and share the substantiating power of hymns that have their living emblems in love’s hermitage. Not only the united bodies and souls of two, then, but a certain population can be present to love, which needs only tangible signs and dialogue to be set in view and sustained more broadly. But that expression requires the reform of loves’ onlookers also, and so love replaces other indoctrinations with the self-created and proclaimed truth of the poet and his love in their showcase. I’ll return in a moment to that need for publicity and the difficulties that attend it in the bookmaking occupation it entails.

If Donne makes such large claims jokingly at times, he appears to do so not to undermine conviction but to disarm skepticism. Both the brashness of “The Sunne Rising” and the reverence of the last two stanzas of “The Canonization” are complicated by playfulness and read better with the Satyres and the satiric wit of other Songs and Sonnets in mind. Even so, “nothing else is” and “by these hymnes, all shall approve / Us Canoniz’d for Love” stand as bold assertions of a secular faith and a social possession seen entirely in their terms. So surprising are the claims of some poems that readers have been tempted to assume an undercutting of the speaker, in the way Robertsonian readings of medieval courtly love literature find in it a clerical championing of caritas over audacious passion. I do not detect that particular kind of irony in Songs and Sonnets, which use their double-edged language typically to protect lyricism or prepare for it. The beloved is herself said to be not merely like something, as a partial substitute for it, but to be the thing itself—or so “The Sunne Rising” asserts. No prince as such needs more than his state; and as it fully occupies him, so the
lovers' room is total planet to the sun: "Shine here to us, and thou art every where; / This bed thy center is, these walls, thy sphære." This must be said in awareness that the sun shines indifferently on a vast globe of things and creatures, but it serves to underscore the speaker's indifference to that globe. Within reach simultaneously are both center and periphery, essence and embodiment, the thing and its expression. No rupture divides any phase of one's possession from another phase, and time itself becomes irrelevant.

If something about that uncompromising grasp of love's substance seems familiar, it is perhaps the language of sacramental union that it resembles. Donne borrows from devotional thought frequently, much as Petrarchans do but without using love as an upward avenue or as in Herbert's love for another object in "Let me not love thee, if I love thee not": it concludes in itself. Despite his echoes of such thoughts, however, it is difficult to locate anything just like love's sacred sites even among later poets who have his example before them. When the cavaliers exaggerate the appeals of love, they do so by way of gallantry; no one takes them seriously. Ordinarily, the concept of sacred places and privileged moments attaches to something like Marvell's garden or Vaughan's enigmatic topography. The compression of everywhere into one place is common enough, of course. Herbert's follower Ralph Knevet is typical in finding the body itself to be a compressed world, though a problematic one:

Man is no Microcosme, and they detract
From his dimensions, who apply
This narrow terme to his immensitie:
Heaven, Earth, and Hell, in him are pack't:

Hec's a miscellane of goods, and evills,
A temper mixte with Angells, Beasts, and Devills.

Yea the immortall Deitye doth daigne,
T'inhabite in a carnall cell:
So precious gemmes in the darke center dwell,
So gloomy mines fine gold retaine
But by vicissitudes, these Essences
The various heart of Man wont to possesse.⁶

A frequenter of commonplaces, Knevet repeats that sentiment in "The Mansion" in which the Lord, to show the miracle of his humble love, establishes godhead in a stable and in the low province of "despis'd Galile," brought down from "his bright Throne above." Thinking of Herbert he also finds his own volume, A Gallery to the Temple, a body of "letters" available to special entries of the spirit, until body, world, and book all become God's vessels. Thus in "The
Imprese," he imagines engraving some fine motto to display "High Dignityes, / And honours gay" (p. 133) in the ruby God has given him; but only the "blessed Name" of Christ and the image of his "death of shame" makes a true motto, since residence lies in the privileged name itself—not in metaphor or analogy.

Such poets as Herbert, Vaughan, and Knevet each in his way fills sacred places with a plenary truth of emblematic things and holds that locating the soul among them helps it. I will explore some tactical advantages of such places later; the pertinent matter here is Donne's daring in sanctifying his own chambers by the presence of the lady or co-presence of the two-in-one. Their possession of each other seals off the lyric site and permeates them with the undying substance of revealed souls. They may thus set aside other programs for self-improvement—careers, religious conversions. But in reverse any place once favored can also be betrayed, and for this Donne again suggests a pattern for later poets. In "The World" for instance, Knevet asks "What magicke spell / Confines mee to this Circle Wide?" and wonders if the special power of letters has not gone (literally) to the devil:

What characters devis'd by arts of Hell,
Have my affections to this prison ty'd?
This place of exile, where my life,
No better is then lingering death.

"The World", p. 138

Far better to be buried alive in a cell, which "habitation is / Better then Hell" (p. 146). More tellingly, when love is removed in "A Nocturnall upon S. Lucies Day," Donne makes the void that results equivalent to the mystic's dark night. Even a love that merely wanes in "A Lecture upon the Shadow" drops instantly into dark.

The latter poem is especially instructive in its interplay of shadows and full substances and its construction of a standard of truth that the mind can seize upon to make love permanent. It also finds a middle style between outright lyric and irony in its quasi-lecture mode. The speaker is not blindly devotional but inclined to translate feeling into principles, as handles for love's intangibility. Having done so, he makes one of Donne's more resolute claims for self-fulfillment in the context of internal threats to fidelity. In their recognition of each other's true selves, these lovers, too, arrange a world about them and make possessing, being, knowing, and celebration all virtually identical. Where "The Good-morrow" recognizes that possession depends upon candor, "A Lecture" is preoccupied with the repercussions of deceit, which comes, the lecturer says, in two phases, before love's zenith and after, if it declines:
Stand still, and I will read to thee
    A Lecture, Love, in loves philosophy.
These three houres that we have spent,
Walking here, two shadowes went
Along with us, which we our selves produc'd;
But, now the Sunne is just above our head,
We doe those shadowes tread;
And to brave clearenesse all things are reduc'd.
    So whilst our infant loves did grow,
    Disguises did, and shadowes, flow
From us, and our care; but, now 'tis not so.

That love hath not attain'd the high'st degree,
Which is still diligent lest others see.

Except our loves at this noone stay,
We shall new shadowes make the other way.
    As the first were made to blinde
    Others; these which come behinde
Will worke upon our selves, and blind our eyes.
If our loves faint, and westwardly decline;
    To me thou, falsly, thine,
And I to thee mine actions shall disguise.
    The morning shadowes were away,
    But these grow longer all the day,
But oh, loves day is short, if love decay.

Love is a growing, or full constant light;
And his first minute, after noone, is night.

The lecture comes appropriately at a moment when love's truth and therefore the implications of potential decline are clear. Love's language at this stage is not that of courtship or adulation and is just barely that of lyric. In the line "And to brave clearness all things are reduc'd," the first stanza opens out modestly—in a combination of declaration and commemoration. This expansion climaxes the narrative order before a concluding axiom and an analytical phase have fully explained the parallels between love's growth and the sun-shadow movement. The thrust of the lecture as a whole is in fact toward usable axiom—usable because the situation is dramatic and admonition is crucial to it. Although in its growing stages love may be fearful of exposure, in the full sun it has the courage to be exhibited, to be showy, and reduce all else to itself. A love still diligent is not capable of scaling that height because its concealments force a breach between the lovers and society. Since they cannot openly practice the graces that love is supposed to foster, the reactions to the world that "The Canonization" dramatizes are not possible.

More difficult to account for is Donne's extremity in denying half-way measures in love's decline. It may be that having dis-
covered the essence of love and become defined by it, one does not settle for less, any more than Bunyan's Christian once located in the celestial city could live outside its gates. In the terms of "The Good-morrow," deception between lovers who have once understood each other exposes a fatal defect in their union; that which was not mixed equally dies. The "Oh" of the second stanza recalls the pitch of "brave clearness" and moving beyond lecture signals both the realization of love's substance and its potential loss. However, the outbreak does not remove the cautionary "except" or the two "ifs." Admonition prevails, not love's decline, since love need not follow the sun's course. If all one requires to break the parallel is continuation in the truth, any elegiac feeling for fragile love is premature. For the time being, love is qualified only by wise council and foresight, as in the final couplet's balancing of the potential plunge against defiance. Behind that defiance must lie a mustering of the resources of the psyche, a gearing up of the intense soul to choose its own immortality through love's covenant.

As "A Lecture" suggests, one trademark of Donne's recurrent view of love is the way in which it controls onlookers. All readers need a text, however, and love's body is a better book for some than invisibly united souls. The question of texts and their readability and thus of symbols and their efficacy becomes foremost. "The Exstasie" and the final stanza of "The Canonization" are concerned with love's interpreters, what sort they are, what they have to interpret. Moreover, Donne is frequently torn between privacy, as "The Good-morrow," "The Sunne Rising," "Valediction: forbidding Mourning," and other poems stage it, and the need to exhibit, one of the besetting sins of the Satyres. The Songs and Sonnets are full of tokens, hieroglyphs, and love's special figurative instruments. The writing of sonnets or making of pretty rooms obviously helps evangelize, since in that form all may see, approve, hymn. But Donne can never quite make up his mind whether lovers should actually refashion the world through special revelations that only they can make or leave it to its own devices. The sonnet as pretty room compromises: it is intimate and private, but the right sort of visitors may approach it. Either way, the union of two-in-one depends first upon the lovers' own waking souls: they must meet in affections and faculties and in dialogue to gain strength from their union and only then offer something to bystanders and begin to repair the damaged personal trust the Satyres anatomize.

How much the lovers know about their love is also open to question and is not a matter to be brushed aside lightly. Mysteries
trouble their union in “The Relique,” “The Exstasie,” “Valediction: forbidding Mourning,” and “Lovers Infiniteness”—in which possession outruns recognition and analytic powers. Any failure in either possession or understanding is likely to raise the speaker’s wrath:

Some that have deeper digg’d loves Mine then I,  
Say, where his centrique happinesse doth lie:  
I have lov’d, and got, and told,  
But should I love, get, tell, till I were old,  
I should not finde that hidden mysterie;  
Oh, ’tis imposture all.

“Loves Alchymie”

This both assumes the hidden mystery and in exasperation finally denies it, but clearly what others say love is the speaker doesn’t see. Where love is more open, the need to know what elements it is less pressing; where street experience prevails, it is difficult to say exactly where the center is unless cynics and sensualists are allowed their reductive answer.

One usefulness of the world-as-audience is that it requires explanations. In offering misreadings it forces the lovers to articulate love’s principles and discover what they truly possess. It opens a window in the lover’s chambers, or gives them something like a balcony on which to come forth. Presumably cerebral understanding cannot hurt their union and may shore it up against invasion and dispossession. Thus in “The Relique,” thought of future inquiries and of the messages one might leave behind prompts the speaker to translate love into symbols and interpretive statements. To correct an idolatrous age, one might, for instance, leave a message behind simply to say that “we lov’d well and faithfully.” Beyond that basic certainty, however, lie miracles about which neither “this paper” (the current poem) nor a relic will be able to speak directly:

These miracles wee did; but now alas,  
All measure, and all language, I should passe,  
Should I tell what a miracle shee was.

It is not clear just how much all this will mean to an idolatrous age anyway, or to its curious grave-digger, who will speculate somewhat bemusedly upon the device he uncovers. Certainly the lovers have no real need to explain themselves, although if the past tense, “Shee was,” is what the future uses and not the poet’s,—thinking of an already departed lover,—the speaker may even now be sorting things out with her. In either case he is paying tribute as well as explaining. Taken as a pledge and keepsake, the bracelet of bright
hair, like the poem, will betoken fidelity and unbreakable union to any apt interpreter. Indeed, all interpreters of love’s mysteries resemble religious adepts. They must turn away from a broader social discourse to understand love’s special language. What one might wish to say beyond that—about the essence of love—surpasses reason, measure, language.

Symbols and tokens provide at best problematic ways for lovers to convey love’s totality to interpreters, still less for them to understand themselves. Explaining incomplete or failed love is no easier. The psyche in Donne’s close quarters often dwells in vacillation. By supreme acts of overreaching, it climbs to highs of satisfaction and seems to see all the way to eternity’s gateway, as in “The Anniversary” and “The Good-morrow.” But it needs signs for its scaling equipment. Articulation and definition are but the tools of its faith; or to vary the language slightly, souls cannot go far without mind, which requires a good deal of learning in Donne and some honing by argument. Well-worked metaphors and conceits are more important than formal logic in that honing. Conceits like the bracelet are valuable partly because they can be held up to prolonged scrutiny before one discovers their limits and the borderlands of reason itself.

An image similar to “The Relique’s” bracelet is changed in “The Funerall” to “That subtile wreathe of haire, which crowns mine arme.” Less brilliant and less starkly contrastive to the grave, the token in this case does not hypostatize love but calls into question a relationship the speaker himself claims not to understand, although he puzzles through it. Love and its betrayal are both beyond reason but not as miracles. The poem finally must make obscurity its instrument of revenge: burying the lady or a piece of her carries her into an oblivion that “this paper,” unlike the paper of “The Relique,” refuses to explicate. The wreath itself will not hold or retrieve the absent spirit, of course; both remain riddles. The word “bravery” brings into the conclusion some of the confidence of “A Lecture upon the Shadow,” but in a vengeful mood:

As ’twas humility
To afford to it all that a Soule can doe,
So, ’tis some bravery.
That since you would save none of mee, I bury some of you.

This has ringing finality in a context that otherwise stresses speculation and posturing. But despite its determination, the answer to the lady is not altogether satisfying, and no amount of assertion can
fill the vacancy she has left; “some” is a lesser piece of her than the total of the speaker she has attracted and then rejected. A certain lyric force resides in the speaker’s anger, but the apostrophe it generates stops up the expansion of self that comes with other celebrations of love’s staying power. In effect, the poem announces a failure in the lyric crossing to the other.

It is partly that staying power that validates love’s publicity and preempts other subjects of panegyric for Donne in the Songs and Sonnets. The glory that counts to the idealistic speaker of those lyrics is the lovers’ own and sometimes its reflection of the divine state that they anticipate. “The Anniversarie” anticipates it with less antagonism toward detractors and less trauma than Donne’s lyrics ordinarily exhibit. It is perhaps Donne’s most forthright poem. For once he supplies no tokens or emblems to carry love’s image, only comparatively lesser things to gauge its height:

All Kings, and all their favorites,  
All glory of honors, beauties, wits,  
The Sun it selfe, which makes times, as they passe,  
Is elder by a yeare, now, then it was  
When thou and I first one another saw:  
All other things, to their destruction draw,  
Only our love hath no decay;  
This, no tomorrow hath, nor yesterday,  
Running it never runs from us away,  
But truly keepes his first, last, everlasting day.

The speaker is content to be unironic and without his lecture materials for a moment, but even so we recognize his simplicity here as that of a complex poet who comes to such moments of repose the hard way. The narrative of love’s growth incorporates some of the richness of “The Good-morrow’s” celebration of the first day’s discovery and “Loves Growth’s” management of love’s seasonal expansions. The magnificence of the several “alls” and the context of worldly glory, in the rising crescendo of abstraction that takes into its sweep all tomorrows and all yesterdays, are justified by love’s endurance. In the longer concluding line, Donne approaches a liturgical language that veers from chronicle and toward books of prayer. Declaration gains its lyric force from that simplicity, as also in “Only our love hath no decay.”

The final line of the first stanza of “The Anniversary” capitalizes on an accumulated sense of the “abler soul” of two-in-one, pits it against a decaying world of deceptive splendor, and projects an eternity for love’s lyric possession. The second stanza, however, is more somber:
Two graves must hide thine and my coarse,
If one might, death were no divorce.
Alas, as well as other Princes, wee,
(Who Prince enough in one another bee.)
Must leave at last in death, these eyes, and eares,
Oft fed with true oaths, and with sweet salt teares.

Once Donne has established the possibility of a private glory equivalent to that of princes, the short journeys of corpses to graves is less dampening than it would otherwise be. That the present love, or an increased version of it, will return to them when "soules from their graves remove" gives basis enough for love's dialogue. However, the "Alas" and emphatic "wee" give timely point to the parting that must come. One's final chamber is not the little room that is an everywhere but the grave where none embrace.

Making love known and durable is a worthy project for the poet as love's publicist, then, but it has its dangers, and all love's expressive modes have their limits. Donne pays some attention to the potential erosion of meaning in love's bodies and its emblems in poems like "The Exstasie" and "A Valediction: of the Booke." In the latter posterity as well as present onlookers must learn to know the lovers, primarily through annals compiled from letters. There love is "sublimed" by fire, and "Rule and example" may be found, which suggests no disastrous falling away from reality in transcription. Indeed, divines, lawyers, and statesmen may throw away other studies and find all they seek in this one volume:

This Booke, as long-liv'd as the elements,
Or as the worlds forme, this all-graved tome
In cypher write, or new made Idiome;
Wee for loves clergie only'are instruments,
When this booke is made thus,
Should againe the ravenous
Vandals and Goths inundate us,
Learning were safe; in this our Universe
Schooles might learne Sciences, Spheares Musick, Angels Verse.

Such books are love's true records, "To make, to keep, to use." They have at least one advantage for most onlookers: where spiritual people look to a disembodied heaven, an embodied beauty can be studied in its very forms: "where love doth sit, / Beauty'a convenient type may be to figure it." Such is the power of apt words that even a lover's name scratched on his beloved's window represents him to her in "A Valediction: of my Name in the Window." Thus if they are not housed mutually in a room, his soul, he says, can still be emparadised in her. At the worst, letters on the window may be his "ragged bony name" or "ruinous Anatomie":

T

At best, by such odd ciphers and dialogue, lovers may be made known to each other and thereby held steadfast. Let others pay heed to that; their own courses may depend on their hermeneutic skill.

No sooner do both these valedictions propose a mode of writing that will make the absent lover present, however, than they take it back. “The Window” concludes after progressive retractions from its initial confidence:

But glasse, and lines must bee,
No meanes our firme substantiall love to keepe;
Neere death inflicts this lethargie,
And this I murmure in my sleepe;
Impute this idle talke, to that I goe,
For dying men talke often so.

Though this retraction could be construed a number of ways, the simplest psychological explanation would seem to be that the speaker sets up all sorts of overt acts including subscribing and inscribing love, but only fidelity really works. Words and souls must correspond before lovers can “letter” each other. The dying is merely cavalier hyperbole for “without you, dear, I perish.” A substantial love is an erotic, immediate presence that no phallic pen can replace; a less carnal substance must coexist in them if their words are not to lie. No substitute for either can really sustain them.

The valediction of the book ends even more “cryptically”:

Thus vent thy thoughts; abroad I’ll studie thee,
As he removes faire off, that great heights takes;
How great love is, presence best tryall makes,
But absence tryes how long this love will bee;
      To take a latitude
      Sun, or starres, are fitliest view’d
At their brightest, but to conclude
Of longitudes, what other way have wee,
But to marke when, and where the dark eclipses bee?

Again Donne plays with a critical absence-presence, this time without removing the book as intermediary. The distinction between great and enduring love is a nice one in both senses of the word. Heated or great love, as passion, requires physical presence; the second love, enduring and therefore spiritual before being brought to book—if it in fact exists—is tested by the unfulfillment of passion. The lover must choose the best expressive mode and
hermeneutic principle for the case in hand: any navigator-interpreter can take a latitude from obvious bright stars, but to chase down an eclipse traveling at a fast rate across Europe, and thus to see the something in nothing that love-in-absence has, requires great learning and skill. To "mark" is to write, and to write of such an absence is to scout out the eclipsed borderland, where light has just now disappeared and its very absence tells us what it was and why we craved it. The dynamics both of "A Lecture upon the Shadow" and "A Nocturnal" show here in the paradoxes of writing, not to undo writing altogether but to discover the true substance the book should reveal precisely in and through a lover's absence.

Again, then, at its best love's engraved and printed language may allow love to transfer its substance momentarily into a representation. But a single soul that tries to stand alone finds that it cannot do so, and one who has grown used to love and been deprived of it goes precipitously to ruin. In love's permanent absence, unless pretty sonnets give it a place to dwell, the force of its presence is doubly proved, but a void nonetheless opens just beneath the sacred place. In neither realized nor abandoned love does Donne find a sustaining public order or feel the need to adopt acknowledged codes of courtship. In effect, he seeks to build the logical, redeeming power of the logos into love's lyrics and to find incarnation granting love its best and most visible forms; lacking that living form of love, he turns to writing.

RETURNING TO THE FIRST NOTHING

Donne is obviously not convinced that natural settings contribute much to one who seeks meet dialogue and interprets its tokens, which is perhaps another reason that his poetry is removed not only from society but from the birds, trees, gardens, and animals of the medieval encyclopedia and renaissance topographia. ("The Exstasie" and "Twicknam Garden" are exceptions in their use of descriptive topoi, but neither seems concretely outdoors; they turn a spare number of decorations into virtual stage props.) Emblems in his book of love are defined by renaissance geometry, chemistry, and other learned disciplines. He concentrates on essences, quintessences, patterns, epitomes, and individual items that can be elaborated into conceits, such as the window pane, compasses, spider love, and mandrake roots. Although he is sometimes an urban poet, he does not dwell on the colors of urban street life either, which he reduces to general elements, actions, and silhouettes. Not
even music, arts, foods, rites, folk customs, trades and professions, or character types can be said to give body to his verse, which brings into view instead the realms of reading, intellect, and personal relations. As John Carey points out in his speculative search for Donne's shaping imagination, when Donne is concerned with bodies, it is mostly with their insides. He is a vivisectionist and physician, and even that mostly in the prose: "His language responds richly to the task, fabricating abhorrent and coagulated textures for the world's decaying materials." That is well put, and it points up one of the peculiarities of love's symbols as well—their obsession with the mechanisms of movement, inscription, and recovery by readers. The mechanics of writing on windows and the conditions of interpreting count almost as much as the messages themselves. When Donne elaborates on the grave digger's situation in "The Relique," for instance—what he will do, what others will say, the condition of the token and its marvelous survival in the grave—he entrusts love's truth to a strange mechanics of clues and their interpretation. A window pane, too, is a very difficult medium for writing and reading and not very expressive without the addition of colors and pictures. Better are sonnets that serve as pretty rooms but even there such rooms must be carefully defended and the audience prepared. Donne offers no furnishings or even acts and phases of love for helpful particulars.

The sites and surfaces of love are not textural or filled out with qualities, then, though they have operations. It is by a miraculous leverage that the private places of "The Sunne Rising" and "The Good-morrow" lift worlds into view. In both we are made aware of the scurrying activity of explorers, the king's men, and the sun itself, and of the reductive trading of all these for love, as though a large world were compressed inside a water-filled paperweight in one's hand. This mechanistic sense of how to bring a world into view is peculiar to Donne until Marvell augments it, and it is related I think to the private powers of self-completion he wished for the psyche. By rigorous acts of exclusion and denial, as the reverse motion of its plunge into truth, the psyche earns its own way, or finds (mainly in the **Holy Sonnets**) how short it falls and thus when and how to petition for help. One also needs to add to Carey's view of the vivisectionist at work the poet's translation of objects into the ideas they illustrate and the acts they perform. Bodies are not always decaying debris even in the Anniversaries and the sermons; they can be expressive symbols in those illustrated lectures that make specific points more persuasive in order to ensnare an au-
dience. Where surfaces count, then, it is not their most tangible properties and not always their mechanics that interest Donne but often their likeness or unlikeness to other things.

Donne's exhibition of ruin in "A Nocturnall," however, includes two words, chaos and absences, that look more directly toward the world of objects and the sermons' obsession with disintegrating bodies. They are used partly in the way of alchemy, since matter behaves according to formulas, and the secrets of its chain reactions may be extracted by forced experiment. Where fulfilled love argues for the redeeming, incarnate expression of united souls in eyes, hands, and gestures, bodies deserted by love are deprived of all value and all self-mastery. The mechanics take over. Love's now permanent absence carries the speaker back to a primal state of nothingness, before correspondences among things had come forth at the command of the logos. Even the composition that chemists deal with is not very textured or descriptive, nor does Donne dwell on the larger arrangement of discrete bodies that makes up the total order, which begins with the infusion of spirit. The absence of these and of reason as well leaves matter a dead husk or inert mechanism, as absence has left the lovers mere "carcasses." This negating of arrangement and form releases elements back to their original disjunction, as death and the lightless void of Saint Lucies' day destroy the integrity of wintry things. Chemistry and cosmology, the small and the large, are interdependent, and both are deprived of significance and expressive power by the death of the beloved, the world's center.

Donne's extraordinarily undoing of a world in "A Nocturnall" is no more than one might expect from his elementing a total world from love to begin with. He has assigned virtually the power of creation to lovers or at least made them second Adams and Eves without need of an outdoor Eden. Cosmos and chaos are inseparable concepts, as in other seventeenth-century poets as well. As we have seen in Milton, for instance, creation is composed of highly individualized things and creatures raised from the conglomeration of chaos; its negation is a hubbub of uncontrolled particles. In the "state" of chaos, nothing coheres:

Before thir eyes in sudden view appear
The secrets of the hoary deep, a dark
Illimitable Ocean without bound,
Without dimension, where length, breadth, and highth,
And time and place are lost; where eldest Night
And Chaos, Ancestors of Nature, hold
In contrast in the created cosmos each atom joins others in intelligible relation, and their interactions under the “Arch-chemic Sun” produces the best mixtures of heat, “Terrestrial Humor,” air, and fertile soil. The chemistry of the four elements is no more impressive than its cosmology. No one feels that fortunate participation of elements in the universal order more than Adam, who is the opposite of Donne’s speaker in “A Nocturnall,” the latter taking one step past Eden and its embowered love all the way to the world’s “first nothing.” While Donne’s speaker is unmoved by the sun, Adam celebrates its derivative light, as all things reveal their principles to him in its light and warmth. Adam’s naming of the separate bodies of the creation presupposes both their discreteness and their availability to sense and reason, until nothing of the universal blank or the godless void remains to be filled. The defect of loneliness that he recognizes and overcomes with the creation of Eve affects Donne’s speaker in unexpected and extreme ways, since love’s dialogue has not only completed the creation for him but given it value and held it together.

The mode of “A Nocturnall” carries beyond both satire and elegiac lyric to a kind of negative anatomy that repeats and savors the extinction of love’s sites—the grave, the book, the window pane, the household or pretty room, the bed. Even so, Donne suggests that all this erasure, which is the drift of elegy and of satire both, is simultaneously a cleansing or preparation for a phase to follow. I take that phase to be in some vague way paradisal and thus suggestive of love’s higher location, but the poem is not specific. The present is devoted to a definition of the emptied state and to a vigil that will presumably carry beyond the bitter isolation of “Love’s Alchemy,” “The Funerall,” “Twicknam Garden,” and the Satyres. The beloved is even now in that unstipulated place toward which one prepares with gestures of spirit and the purging exercises of word power. The emptying of the enumerated world may after all be the beginning of a communion beyond specific objects and occasions, in a place that need not be imagined so long as the union of lovers is not forbidden there. In that respect “A Noctur-
"nail" is an early version not of the sermons but *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, which begins with the individual sinner in his room, confined to bed and stricken with mortality, ready for translation elsewhere and therefore willing to assume that the world is already hopelessly ruined. In Donne’s rewriting of the epitome in prose versions, the new center is often such a ruin, beginning with the self having discovered early limits to its powers.

Hence it seems appropriate to conclude this mapping of Don­nean topography with two passages that remove sustaining substances and go on to devotional preparation for the next world, in which Donne imagines a new self bolstered by grace and freed of all awkward mechanisms. That “elsewhere” in the *Devotions* appeals to him more and more as time passes. Having appeared in the *Holy Sonnets* and the Anniversaries earlier, it counterbalances the suffer­ing of the *Devotions* with a glimpse of the “weight” of glory:

This is natures nest of boxes; the heavens containe the earth, the earth, cities, cities, men. And all these are concentrique; the common center to them all, is decay, ruine; only that is eccentrique, which was never made; only that place, or garment rather, which we can imagine, but not demonstrate, that light, which is the very emanation of the light of God, in which the saints shall dwell, with which the saints shall be appareld, only that bends not to this center, to ruin; that which was not made of Nothing, is not threatned with this annihilation.  

Light’s emanation in this setting reworks the satire-lyric interplay of negative and positive forces, here held in equilibrium by the special movement of Donne’s syntax. The extremes demand each other and force each other more clearly into view.

More impressively, in the Second Prebend Sermon, Donne enters “that pondus gloriar, that exceeding weight of an eternall glory” as merely one small clause in an extensively structured list of suf­ferings and future expectations of the same, in which, without that glory, “we are waighed downe, we are swallowed up.” In love’s place he establishes a glory that is unpossessable and unknowable except by faith or by repute but that nonetheless merits celebra­tion. In place of love’s betrayals and struggles with the mechanism of bodies and tokens, he lists clause after clause of physical and psychological tortures until almost miraculously he engineers the upward turn and its sense of repossession. This resurgence comes in full view of onlookers, whom Donne the preacher implicitly invites into the communicative act, not merely as onlookers seeking a pattern from above but as participants. In that broadening of the communicative circle, the preacher perhaps finds at last an answer to the isolated satiric speaker and the abandoned lover.  

In apos-
trophes to God, he forges a lyric crossing to replace other dialogues. A substantial world, still cited largely to be discarded, forms the topographical setting for that crossing and a gauge, in its destruction, of a huge recompense that must remain without body or name.