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THE SATIRES OF JOHN DONNE

by

Henry D. Janzen

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies through
The Department of English in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts at the University
of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario

1964

UMI Number: EC52533

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a detailed study of the five formal satires of John Donne. Its purpose is twofold: to examine them as satires, and to show to what extent they cast light on the person of Donne himself.

The introductory chapter includes a justification for the study and a statement of the different techniques used by Donne in expressing his satiric attacks.

The second chapter comprises the detailed analyses of the five satires. Each analysis follows the same general method. The object under criticism and Donne's pattern of attack are described. All significant references and allusions to literature and to historical, religious, and current events are explained and related to the poet himself. Throughout an attempt is made to see the satire as a work of art.

The concluding chapter is a second look at the first four satires, which may be seen as internal dialogues between worldly Jack and moralistic John.

Although the thesis as a whole shows that Donne's satires are directed at various objects in the contemporary scene (the Puritan middle-class, bad poets and worse lawyers, the search for religious truth, the court and courtiers, and legal abuses), it also demonstrates that, in a sense, the first four are directed as well against

aspects of his own personality. This study also shows Donne as a man of diversified learning and clever wit.

PREFACE

This thesis has grown out of a realization that the five formal satires of Donne have heretofore been neglected by scholars and critics. Although mention is made of them in literary histories, studies in the development of English satire, and books on Donne as a poet, no single work has, as far as I know, been devoted to them as works of art in themselves. I am indebted to Dr. Itrat-Husain Zuberi, my director, for calling my attention to this fact and guiding me in my attempt to present a detailed study of the five satires. Without his encouragement and constructive criticism this thesis could not have been completed. I also wish to thank Dr. John F. Sullivan and Dr. John W. Deck, the two other members of my committee for their helpful suggestions on the improvement of the manuscript. Mrs. Helen Haberer also deserves my gratitude for typing the thesis.

The text of the satires which I have used is that of Sir Herbert J.C. Grierson in his definitive two-volume edition of The Poems of John Donne, Oxford University Press, 1912. Whenever I have quoted from a satire, I have indicated the source by line number within parentheses after the quotation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

John Donne's five formal satires, which he wrote in the 1590's when he was in his early twenties, have received an unjustifiably small amount of scholarly attention. Studies in the development of satire as a literary genre normally devote at most five or six pages of general comment to Donne, while critical discussions of Donne as a satirist usually deal either with certain lines in particular satires or with Satyre III only. So far I have not found a study which deals with all five of Donne's satires systematically and in detail. Such a study is necessary, however, if we are to measure the full scope of Donne's achievement as a poet.

A detailed analysis of the satires is justified for three reasons. First, Donne's earliest reputation was based mainly on his work as a satirist. Dryden commented on it, and Pope's major concern with Donne was to "improve" his satires by deftly rewriting them. Secondly, the satires by their very nature cast light on both the contemporary scene and the person of Donne himself. Thirdly, they are interesting in themselves as literary works.

In general, contemporary satires have, of all works of literature, probably the least appeal to posterity, and Donne's are no exception. Nevertheless, although the versifi-

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cation is usually harsh, the meaning sometimes obscure, and the various references to persons and events frequently drive us to the editor's notes, the satires are still deserving of close attention. Chief among the features of the poems which repay the effort of analysis are their refreshing, almost vulgar, directness, the humorous turns of expression, the witty blend of idea and image in so many of the metaphors, and the different techniques through which the satiric attacks are expressed. Donne's techniques are indeed varied. Some of the satires he "brings to life" by embodying the faults of a class in an individual type and then venting his spleen against it. This method is executed in the first, second, and fourth satires. One of the satires (the third) is a moralistic sermon, another (the fourth) is a burlesque, and yet another (the fifth) is a sequence of witty metaphors.

It is my earnest hope that this thesis may help bring into proper focus the five formal satires, works which are an important part of the early achievement of John Donne.

¹ George Saintsbury reminds us that "the astonishing roughness of the Satirists of the late sixteenth century was not due to any general ignoring of the principles of melodious English verse, but to a deliberate intention arising from . . . [an imitation of] . . . Satiric verse among the ancients [which] allowed itself, and even went out of its way to take, licenses which no poet in other styles would have dreamt of taking. . . . It is not probable, it is certain, that Donne and the rest imitated these licenses of malice prepense." (George Saintsbury, "John Donne," in John Donne: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Helen Gardner [Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1962], p. 15.)

II. THE SATIRES ANALYZED

THE FIRST SATIRE

In Satyre I John Donne criticizes the Puritan middle-class of London. His method of attack is to embody the principal faults of the society in the person of the "fondling motly humorist" (1) and then to describe his own experiences in his company. Donne's addressing his companion as "humorist" has an important significance, for he is using the term "humour" in the sense in which Ben Jonson defines it in his play, Every Man out of his Humour. Jonson says:

. . . So in every humane body
The choller, melancholy, flegme, and bloud,
By reason that they flow continually
In some one part, and are not continent,
Receive the name of Humours. Now this farre
It may, by Metaphore, apply it selfe
Unto the generall disposition:
As when some one peculiar quality
Doth so possesse a man, that it doth draw
All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,
In their confluents, all to runne one way,
This may be truly said to be a Humour. 2
(Induction. 98-109)

In this way, Jonson helps cast light on the character of Donne's companion as one who has a "humour."

The theme of the satire, as has already been implied, is the vices and follies of middle-class London society whose

² Ben Jonson, Every Man out of his Humour, in Ben Jonson, ed. C.H. Herford and Percy Simpson (Oxford, 1925), III, 431-432.

faults are characterized by fickleness, sycophancy, and immorality. It is expressed in the form of a narrative in which the revelation of the character of the "humorist" is of primary importance. This exposure is accomplished through an action which includes direct address, dialogue, and description of behaviour. Briefly, the action of the satire is as follows. The narrator-persona, whom for the sake of convenience we shall simply refer to as Donne, allows himself, albeit reluctantly, to be drawn out of his library by the "humorist" who wants to go for a walk in the streets of London. After scolding his companion for his habitually unreasoning and sycophantic behaviour and impressing upon him that he does not want to be abandoned "in the middle street / Though some more spruce companion thou dost meet" (15-16), Donne goes with him. Once in the street, the "humorist" proceeds to make a perfect fool of himself, just as Donne had feared:

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 prentises, or schoole-boyes which do know
 Of some gay sport abroad, yet dare not goe.
 And as fiddlers stop lowest, at highest sound,
 So to the most brave, stoops hee nigh'st the ground.
 (71-78)

Soon, however, he does leave to talk to a "many coloured Peacock" (92) of the court, and after he has rejoined Donne and the two have walked a while, he sees his mistress in a window.

And like light dew exhal'd, he flings from mee
 Violently ravish'd to his lechery.
 Many were there, he could command no more:
 He quarrell'd, fought, bled; and turn'd out of dore
 Directly came to mee hanging the head,
 And constantly a while must keepe his bed.
 (107-112)

The name of "humorist" is therefore suited to the ill-behaved gallant, and Donne is justified in calling him "wild uncertaine thee" (12).

When Donne, before he goes out with the "humorist," cautions him against leaving his company in favour of "some more spruce companion" (16) like a captain "with forty dead mens pay (18), a "briske perfum'd piert Courtier" (19), or a "velvet Justice" (21), he emphasizes the seriousness of such inconstancy by comparing the state of ordinary companionship with marriage:

For better or worse take mee, or leave mee:
To take, and leave mee is adultery.
(25-26)

Thus, using the language of the marriage vow, Donne gives a moral significance to the "humorist's" faithlessness. In spite of his companion's apparently sincere repentance of his "vanities and giddinesses" (51), Donne is still not convinced, for as they leave the house, he cites three condemnatory comparisons:

But sooner may a cheape whore, who hath beene
Worn by as many severall men in sinne,
As are black feathers, or musk-colour hose,
Name her child's right true father, 'mongst all those:
Sooner may one guesse, who shall beare away
The Infanta of London, Heire to an India;
And sooner may a gulling weather Spie
By drawing forth heavens Scheme tell certainly
What fashioned hats, or ruffes, or suits next yeare
Our subtile-witted antique youths will weare;
Then thou, when thou depart'st from mee, canst show
Whither, why, when, or with whom thou wouldst go.
(53-64)

These three analogies, presented in such rapid succession, create a vivid impression of absolute futility and uncertainty. The "humorist" is incurably fickle; his repentance will have

no lasting effect, for his willpower is ineffectual. He is wallowing in the quagmire of his own unpredictable and uncontrollable nature.

The references to the "Infanta of London, Heire to an India" (58) and to "drawing forth heavens Scheme" (60) have a significance beyond their use for purposes of analogy. With regard to the former, Sir Herbert Grierson offers two interesting interpretations:

It is not necessary to suppose a reference to any person in particular. The allusion is in the first place to the wealth of the city, and the greed of patricians and courtiers to profit by that wealth. 'No one can tell who, amid the host of greedy and expectant suitors, will carry off whoever is at present the wealthiest minor (and probably the king's ward) in London, i.e. the City'. . . . There is probably a second allusion to the claim of the Infanta of Spain to be heir to the English throne. ³

The first of Grierson's explanations appears better to fit the sense of uncertainty that Donne is trying to express. Nevertheless, the second possibility is also valid; indeed, the ambiguity of meaning strengthens Donne's analogy. The second interpretation of the allusion is also important in that, as it refers to the current question of royal succession, it indicates that Donne is well aware of what is going on in international politics. The expression "drawing forth heavens Scheme" (60) refers to the attempts of the astrologers to look into the future by studying the various constellations and planets. Donne in this analogy shows some degree

³ Herbert J.C. Grierson, ed. The Poems of John Donne (Oxford, 1912), II, 108.

of knowledge of the activity of these space-gazers; his use of the pejorative epithet, "gulling weather Spie" (59), points out that he is aware of the inherent deception of their pseudo-science.

The sycophantic tendencies of the "humorist" are closely related to his inconstancy. Enough has already been said about Donne's scolding and the "humorist's" subsequent conduct in the street. It is necessary to notice, however, that Donne also attacks an even more fundamental evil than mere sycophancy; he condemns the gallant's habit of evaluating a man on the basis of his outward appearance and material possessions. Donne states his objection clearly when he says:

Oh monstrous, superstitious puritan,
 Of refin'd manners, yet ceremoniall man,
 That when thou meet'st one, with enquiring eyes
 Dost search, and like a needy broker prize
 The silke, and gold he weares, and to that rate
 So high or low, dost raise thy formall hat:
 That will consort none, untill thou have knowne
 What lands hee hath in hope, or of his owne,
 As though all thy companions should make thee
 Jointures, and marry thy deare company.

(27-36)

It is interesting to note that in lines 35 and 36, in order to lay stress on the "humorist's" materialistic sense of values, Donne uses another analogy of marriage. This, following so closely upon the marriage metaphor in lines 25 and 26, seems to emphasize that to Donne fickleness, sycophancy, and materialism are all closely-related aspects of the "humorist's" vice and folly. The simile "like a needy broker" (30) further underlines the latter's completely materialistic attitude. Later, in describing the walk in the street, Donne

again points out his companion's preoccupation with outward appearance:

And as fiddlers stop lowest, at highest sound,
 So to the most brave, stoops hee nigh'st the ground.
 But to a grave man, he doth move no more
 Then the wise politique horse would heretofore,
 Or thou O Elephant or Ape wilt doe,
 When any names the King of Spaine to you.
 (77-82)

In order to interpret this passage correctly, we must realize that "brave" and "grave" are not used in the sense of aspects of character, but as aspects of dress. "Brave" here means "finely dressed, showy," while "grave" means "plain, not showy."

The "humorist's" account of his conversation with the "many-coloured Peacock" (92) of the court presents Donne with an opportunity to make a sarcastic comment on his companion's education. Grierson's organization of the passage in question (lines 100 to 104) into stricter dialogue form helps to clarify the meaning:

Donne. Why stoop'st thou so?

Companion. Why? he hath travail'd.

Donne. Long?

Companion. No: but to me (Donne interpolates 'which understand none') he doth seem to be
 Perfect French and Italian.

Donne. So is the Pox. 4

Grierson then explains, in justification of his interpretation of the words "which understand none":

But it seems to me that these words have no point unless regarded as a sarcastic comment interpolated by Donne, perhaps sotto voce. 'To you, who understand neither French nor Italian, he may seem perfect French and Italian - but to no one else.' Probably an eclectic attire was the only evidence of travel observable in the

⁴ Grierson, II, 109.

person in question.⁵

The immorality which Donne attacks is specifically sexual in nature. The description of the "humorist's" unpleasant experience in his mistress's house (lines 106-112) has already been quoted, and since the passage makes its point clearly, no further comment is needed. The other reference to the "humorist's" sexual misconducts, however, is more complex, for it involves a matter beyond that of mere fornication. Donne says to his companion, just before they begin their walk:

Why should'st thou (that dost not onely approve,
But in ranke itchie lust, desire, and love
The nakednesse and barenesse to enjoy,
Of thy plumpe muddy whore, or prostitute boy)
Hate vertue, though shee be naked, and bare?
(37-41)

Although the sentence "Why should'st thou . . . Hate vertue, though shee be naked, and bare?" is somewhat obscure, we may interpret the passage as follows. Donne is pointing out not only the sexual immorality of the "humorist", but his hypocrisy as well, a hypocrisy which lusts after the flesh, yet apparently despises the body and hates the virtuous who may, for various reasons, dress in such a fashion that a part of the body is exposed. In this way Donne sharply attacks the ambiguous position of a Puritan society which dogmatically detests the physical nature of man while in practice sinfully enjoying the sexual aspect of it. A second meaning of the passage without the parentheses may be that "vertue", though poor and scantily-dressed, does not fawn around the

⁵ Grierson, II, 110.

wealthy and influential as does the "humorist," Consequently he hates anyone who, though suffering from poverty, demonstrates a greater strength of character by not stooping to sycophancy in hopes of material advancement.

Donne continues by stating:

At birth, and death, our bodies naked are;
 And till our Soules be unapparrelled
 Of bodies, they from blisse are banished.
 Mans first blest state was naked, when by sinne
 Hee lost that, yet hee was cloath'd but in beasts skin,
 And in this course attire, which I now weare,
 With God, and with the Muses I conferre.
 (42-48)

This passage is significant, for in it Donne states his concept of the interdependence of body and soul. He refers to the body as the clothes of the soul, and justifies its importance by asserting that it is through the body and its faculties that man can achieve happiness in life (See lines 43 and 44). His meaning here becomes unmistakably plain when we realize that in Donne's time "till" denoted "during the time that, so long as, while." Donne's defence of the body leads him to a reference to Adam whose "first blest state was naked, when by sinne / Hee lost that" (45-46). Adam after the Fall was not dressed like the "briske perfum'd piert Courtier" (19) and others of wealth and influence about whom the "humorist" fawns; he was "cloath'd but in beasts skin" (46). And Donne then adds that he himself wears just "course attire" (48), yet is still worthy of communion with God and the Muses. Thus Donne, as well as defending the intrinsic goodness of the body, asserts that fancy clothes do not make the man.

There is an aspect of this satire which extends beyond the satiric attack on the vices and follies of middle-class London society; it concerns the person of Donne himself. A satire by its very nature exposes the writer and his attitudes and values as much as, if not more than, the object under attack. Donne's moral attitude is presented clearly, whether implicitly or explicitly, in his mercilessly direct assault on the "humorist". But Donne reveals himself in other respects also.

Assuming that Donne's pose as the indignant critic has not affected his sincerity, we can learn several interesting things about him. Firstly, Donne has a sharp consciousness of sin:

But how shall I be pardon'd my offence
That thus have sinn'd against my conscience?
(65-66)

He feels that his association with people like the "humorist", whose values are directly opposed to his own, is a violation of the sense of integrity of his Christian conscience, hence a sin.⁶ Secondly, Donne is a studious man, a lover of reading. Izaak Walton tells us:

Nor was his age only so industrious, but in the most unsettled days of his youth his bed was not able to detain him beyond the hour of four in the morning; and it was no common business that drew him out of his chamber till past ten; all of which time was employed in study; though he took great liberty after it.⁷

⁶ For a greater insight into Donne's later acute consciousness of sin, see his Divine Poems, especially A Hymne to God the Father.

⁷ Izaak Walton, The Life of Dr. Donne in The Harvard Classics, ed. Charles W. Eliot (New York, 1909), XV, 356.

What Walton tells us is reinforced and somewhat elaborated by Donne in this satire. In the context of the poem, Donne's study has been interrupted, probably before ten o'clock in the morning, by the impatient "humorist." His response to the "humorist's" invitation to go for a walk shows us what books he has in his library and how he feels about them.

Away thou fondling motley humorist,
 Leave mee, and in this standing wooden chest,
 Consorted with these few bookes, let me lye
 In prison, and here be coffin'd when I dye;
 Here are Gods conduits, grave Divines; and here
 Natures Secretary, the Philosopher;
 And jolly Statesmen, which teach how to tie
 The sinewes of a cities mistique bodie;
 Here gathering Chroniqlers, and by them stand
 Giddie fantastique Poets of each land.
 Shall I leave all this constant company,
 And follow headlong, wild uncertaine thee?
 (1-12)

His books deal with a great variety of subject matter by many different authors. The "grave Divines" (5) would be St. Thomas Aquinas, Theodore Beza,⁸ and other theologians, including Cardinal Bellarmine. That Donne closely examined the religious arguments of Bellarmine is told us by Walton, who remarks that he (Donne) showed "the then Dean of Gloucester . . . all the Cardinal's works marked with many weighty observations under his own hand."⁹ "Natures Secretary, the Philosopher" (6) is probably Aristotle, while the "jolly Statesmen" of line 7 might include Machiavelli, Castiglione,¹⁰ and other writers of political theory and practice. The "gathering Chroniclers"

⁸ See Donne's Satyre IIII, line 55.

⁹ Walton, p. 325.

¹⁰ See Donne's Satyre V, lines 2 and 3.

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(9) likely include Holinshed, Stow, and Hall as well as the historians Paolo Giovio, Bishop of Nocerna, and Laurentius Surius, a Carthusian monk. ¹² About the "Giddie fantastique Poëts of each land" (10) Grierson says:

In a letter Donne tells Buckingham, in Spain, how his own library is filled with Spanish books "from the mistress of my youth, Poetry, to the wife of mine age, Divinity." This line in the Satires points to the fact, which Donne was probably tempted later to obscure a little, that his first prolonged visit to the Continent had been made before he settled in London in 1592, and probably without the permission of the Government. The other than Spanish poets would doubtless be French and Italian.
 . . . Of French poets he probably knew at any rate DuBartas and Regnier. ¹³

Certainly Donne read Dante, for he refers to him in Satyre IV as one "who dreamt he saw hell" (158).

Donne uses several interesting figures of speech in this opening section. He refers to his books as "this constant company" (11); in this way he personifies them as a whole and establishes them as a contrast to the inconstant "humorist". In line 3 he uses the word "consorted" to indicate that he regards his books as a friend with whom he shares a common lot. His library is a prison and then a grave, a small and intimate place in which he wishes to remain forever. An especially attractive metaphor is his presentation of the intricacies of local government as "The sinewes of a cities mistique bodie" (8). In this metaphor of the city as a living organism, the meaning of the adjective "mistique" must be

¹¹ See Donne's Satyre IV, line 97.

¹² See Donne's Satyre IV, line 48 and also Grierson, II, 120.

¹³ Grierson, II, 106.

defined. "Mistique" should not be given a religious or philosophical significance; Donne is using it to mean simply "of hidden meaning or nature, enigmatical, mysterious."

There are indications in this satire that Donne keeps up with the times. He is familiar with the current happenings in London. The "wise politique horse" (80) refers to a performing horse exhibited by a man called Banks, while the elephant and the ape are other animals on display about the same time.¹⁴ Regarding the ape, Grierson explains that it "would come over the chain for a mention of the Queen (as later of King James) but sit still . . . for the Pope and the King of Spain."¹⁵ We may assume, then, that Donne has actually seen these performing animals; Walton's remark that Donne "took great liberty after" ten o'clock in the morning supports this assumption. In line 88 Donne mentions a man "which did excell / Th' Indians, in drinking his Tobacco well."¹⁶ This comparison shows that Donne has some knowledge

¹⁴ It is on the basis of the references to these animals that Grierson dates the satire as having been written around 1594-95. Quoting Chambers, he says: "It is probable, therefore, that by 1591 Banks had not yet come to London, and if so the date 1593 on the Harl. MS. 5110 of Donne's Satires cannot be far from that of their composition." He continues: "The same lines run on:

Or thou O Elephant or Ape wilt doe. This has been passed by commentators as a quite general reference; but the Ape and Elephant seem to have been animals actually performing, or exhibited, in London about 1594." (Grierson, II, 100-101).

¹⁵ Grierson, "Introduction", to The Poems of John Donne, ed. Sir Herbert Grierson (London, 1933), p. xxv.

¹⁶ Tobacco was introduced into England during the early years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. The custom of smoking appears to have been fairly widespread in England before 1600.

of the American Indian and his way of life. He has surely read all of the available accounts of the voyages to the Americas, not only by Englishmen but also by other Europeans. He knows what is happening in the area of overseas exploration.

Particular attention should be focussed on the religious aspects of the satire. Aside from the religious references mentioned earlier, Donne also uses religion for purposes of analogy. He calls the "humorist's" vices "sinnes" (50) and agrees to accompany him when he repents "like a contrite penitent" (49). While his companion is talking to the "many-coloured Peacock" (92), Donne patiently waits for his "lost sheep" (93) like the Biblical good shepherd who watches over his flock. Finally, he utters "God strengthen thee" (100) when he asks the "humorist" why he bowed so low to the courtier. Considered in their entirety, these various allusions and comparisons form an important element of reference in the satire.

THE SECOND SATIRE

Donne's Satyre II is written in an epistolary form.

After greeting his reader, Donne states his position:

Sir; though (I thanke God for it) I do hate
Perfectly all this towne, yet there's one state
In all ill things so excellently best,
That hate, toward them, breeds pittie towards the rest.
(1-4)

In this way Donne prepares his reader for the subsequent attack on Coscus, a bad poet turned worse lawyer, in whom are embodied the various aspects of the corruption of justice in England. The "one state / In all ill things so excellently best" (best used ironically to mean worst) is the degenerated state of justice which is the primary theme of the satire; "the rest" refers to his minor grievances, chief among which is the condition of the art of poetry. The movement in the satire is from poetry in general to Coscus as poet, then as a lawyer.

Donne's consideration of the current literary situation in England has six facets. First, he dismisses in a pitying tone the writers of the widely imitated conventional love poetry as "poore, disarm'd, like Papists, not worth hate" (10). Then, in a derogatory tone, he describes the dramatist as

One, (like a wretch, which at Barre judg'd as dead,
Yet prompts him which stands next, and cannot reade,
And saves his life) gives ideat actors meanes
(Starving himselfe) to live by his labor'd sceanes;

As in some Organ, Puppits dance above
 And bellows pant below, which them do move.
 (11-16)

Next, Donne ridicules the sonneteers who try in vain to "move Love by rithmes" (17). Grierson's comment on the "Rammes", "slings", and "pistolets" of lines 19 and 20 clarifies Donne's metaphor:

'As in war money is more effective than rams and slings, so it is more effective in love than songs.' But there is a further allusion in the condensed stroke, for 'pistolets' means also 'fire-arms.' Money is as much more effective than poetry in love as fire-arms are than rams and slings in war. ¹⁷

He continues by criticizing poets who write for patrons and those who write because it is the fashionable thing to do:

And they who write to Lords, rewards to get,
 Are they not like singers at doores for meat?
 And they who write, because all write, have still
 That excuse for writing, and for writing ill;
 (21-24)

His concluding remarks are directed at the plagiarist:

But hee is worst, who (beggarly) doth chaw
 Others wits fruits, and in his ravenous maw
 Rankly digested, doth those things out-spue,
 As his owne things; and they are his owne, 'tis true,
 For if one eate my meate, though it be knowne
 The meate was mine, th' excrement is his owne:
 (25-30)

But Donne decides that all of these offenders against the art of poetry do him no personal harm. He goes on to say that there are many other sinners of varying kinds and degrees (See lines 31 to 38.), but reiterates that "these punish themselves" (39) and have nothing to do with him.

¹⁷ Grierson, II, 110.

There is one, however, who arouses the full force of Donne's displeasure:

. . . the insolence
Of Coscus onely breeds my just offence,
Whom time (which rots all, and makes botches poxe,
And plodding on, must make a calfe an oxe)
Hath made a Lawyer, which was (alas) of late
But a scarce Poet; . . .

Grierson believes that Coscus may be Donne's name for the author of an anonymous series of love sonnets entitled Zepheria (published in 1594) in which legal terminology is extensively used. He concludes:

Quite possibly Donne has taken the author of Zepheria simply as a type of the young lawyer who writes bad poetry; and in the rest of the poem portrays the same type when he has abandoned poetry and devoted himself to 'Law practice for mere gain,' extorting money and lands from Catholics or suspected Catholics, and drawing cozening conveyances. If Zepheria be the poems referred to, then 1594-5 would be the date of this Satire.¹⁸

In lines 49 to 57 Donne mimics a love suit as it would probably have been presented by Coscus, a suit full of "language of the Pleas, and Bench" (48).¹⁹ He condemns such a style of wooing as being nothing but

. . . 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)

Coscus's inability to write good poetry is not, according to Donne, a too serious or hopeless matter; his practice

18

Grierson, II, 103.

19

For a different interpretation of this passage (49-57), see Lucille S. Cobb, "Donne's Satyre II, 49-57," The Explicator, XV (November, 1956), item 8.

of law, however, is a different affair. Donne attacks his motive by declaring:

. . . but men which chuse
Law practice for meere gaine, bold soul, repute
Worse then imbrothel'd strumpets prostitute.
(62-64)

The rest of the satire is mainly devoted to Donne's satiric attack on the corrupt practices of Cocus, the lawyer. There are three aspects to these practices.

The first aspect is his lying "to every suitor. . . in everything" (69) and perjury. In the passage where Donne says that Cocus must lie

Like a Kings favourite, yea like a King;
Like a wedge in a blocke, wring to the barre,
Bearing - like Asses; and more shamelesse farre
Then carted whores, lye, to the grave Judge; . . .
(70-73)

occur the controversial lines, 71 and 72. These lines have been variously interpreted by different scholars,²⁰ who agree, however, in one respect; they all reject Grierson's insertion of the hyphen between "bearing" and "like" in line 72. Removal of the hyphen would make "like" a preposition and allow us to interpret the difficult lines as follows: Cocus pushes ("wring") himself forward in court so as to be close to the Bar to which he hangs on as tightly as a block of wood holds a wedge driven into it. His

²⁰ In addition to Grierson's interpretation (II, 111-112), others are: Charles Sisson, "Donne's Satyres, II, 71-73," Times Literary Supplement, 13 March, 1930. Lucille S. Cobb, "Donne's Satyre II, 71-72," The Explicator, XIV (March, 1956), item 40. Vernon Hall, Jr., "Donne's Satyre II, 71-72," The Explicator, XV (January, 1957), item 24. Thomas Ollive Mabbott, "Donne's Satyre II, 71-72," The Explicator, XVI (December, 1957), item 19. John V. Hago-pian, "A Difficult Crux in Donne's Satyre II." Modern Language Notes, LXXIII (April, 1958), 255-257.

behaviour ("bearing") is like that of donkeys ("Asses") jostling about for a preferred location in their pen. In his stupid-looking position at the Bar he lies more shamelessly than "carted whores" brought in to face the judge.

The comparisons that Donne uses to lay stress on Coccus's immoral conduct, both professional and private, indicate as well a cynical attitude toward kings and clergy:

. . . for
 Bastardy abounds not in Kings titles, nor
 Symonie and Sodomy in Churchmens lives,
 As these things do in him; by these he thrives.
 (73-76)

Donne's purpose in mentioning simony is to criticize, by analogy, Coccus's questionable methods of professional advancement.

The second aspect of Coccus's evil practices is his extortion of money (79-80) and land (85-86) from unfortunate litigants who have become involved with him. Donne emphasizes these malpractices through coarse, homely imagery:

And spying heires melting with luxurie,
 Satan will not joy at their sinnes, as hee.
 For as a thrifty wench scrapes kitching-stuffe,
 And barrelling the droppings, and the snuffe,
 Of wasting candles, which in thirty yeare
 (Relique-like kept) perchance buyes wedding geare;
 Peecemeale he gets lands, and spends as much time
 Wringing each Acre, as men pulling prime.
 (79-86)

The third aspect of his malpractice is his falsification of legal documents. He draws up "Assurances, bigge, as gloss'd civill lawes" (88), but neither writes them himself nor pays to have them written; he doubtless steals copies of papers drawn up by other lawyers and alters them

to suit his own purposes, as Luther changed the Lord's Prayer by adding "the Power and glory clause" (96).

Furthermore,

. . . when he sells or changes land, he 'impaires
His writings, and (unwatch'd) leaves out, ses heires,
(97-98)

as cunningly as dishonest Biblical scholars omit words which embarrass their particular theological position. As a result of his careful textual adulteration of deeds and wills, he has taken possession of forest lands, the timber of which he has sold for personal profit, and has caused the dissolution of old estates. Such is the implication of the following questions:

Where are those spred woods which cloth'd hertofore
Those bought lands? not built nor burnt within dore.
Where's th' old landlords troops, and almes? . . .
(103-105)

In expressing his satiric comments on the literary situation and legal malpractices, Donne uses many religious terms. In most cases, the tone of these comments is cynical and sometimes bitter, indicating Donne's sympathy with English Catholics. His other religious references are also significant. The comparison of Coscus's pride in his "title of Barrister" (47) with that of "new benefic'd ministers" (45) is rather neutral. The mention of those who "outswear the Letanie" (30) is, however, not so innocent. Grierson remarks that

. . . Warburton in a note explains . . . : 'Dr. Donne's is a low allusion to a licentious quibble used at that time by the enemies of the English Liturgy, who, disliking the frequent invocations in

the Litanie, called them the taking God's name in vain, which is the Scripture periphrasis for swearing.' 21

Near the end of the satire, Donne compares the length of Coscus's legal papers to Martin Luther's enlargement of the Lord's Prayer. He says that Coscus

Therefore spares no length; as in those first dayes
When Luther was profest, He did desire
Short Pater nosters, saying as a Fryer
Each day his beads, but having left those lawes,
Addes to Christs prayer, the Power and glory clause.
(92-96)

Donne's point is that as Coscus neither writes his own "Assurances" nor pays to have them written, their length is to him an indifferent matter. Similarly Luther, when he is no longer obliged to repeat the Lord's Prayer many times a day, feels free to emend it.²² Donne's final religious reference clearly ridicules the lack of integrity in some Biblical textual scholarship. He declares that Coscus falsifies property deeds

As sllily 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.
(99-102)

This satire also tells us three things about John Donne's personal likes and dislikes. It is evident from the first thirty lines that he has definite opinions about current trends in poetry and drama. He advocates moderation,

21 Grierson, II, 110.

22 For further information on Luther's emendation of the Lord's Prayer, see the "Appendix" to this thesis.

especially in eating and drinking, for he declares:

. . . In great hals
 Carthusian fasts, and fulsome Bachanalls
 Equally I hate; meanes blesse; in rich mens homes
 I bid kill some beasts, but no Hecatombs, 23
 None starve, none surfet so; . . . (105-109)

Finally, he has a deep concern for the administration of law and justice. His satiric assault on degenerate lawyers as characterized by Coscus shows us this. But two explicit statements emphasize his attitude:

Shortly (as the sea) hee will compasse all our land;
 From Scots, to Wight; from Mount, to Dover strand.
 (77-78)

and the pessimistic closing lines (109-112):

. . . 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.

²³ Hecatomb is a term referring to the slaughter of one hundred cattle at one time as an offering to the gods in ancient Greece. Donne here means simply a large-scale slaughter.

THE THIRD SATIRE

Donne's Satyre III investigates the question of finding and keeping the true Christian religion. His concern about the sickly state of religious devotion among the people of his day arouses in him a mixture of feelings ranging from pity to scorn, and he asks himself: "Can railing then cure these worne maladies?" (4). He decides it cannot, and therefore develops his satire in the form of a logical argument which becomes, in effect, a sermon. In this way, this third satire is different from all the others.

The first stage of Donne's argument is a comparison of the pre-Christian Greek philosophers, like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, with the so-called Christians of his own time.

Is not our Mistresse faire Religion,
As worthy of all our Soules devotion,
As vertue was to the first blinded age?
Are not heavens joyes as valiant to asswage
Lusts, as earths honour was to them? Alas,
As wee do them in meanes, shall they surpasse
Us in the end, and shall thy fathers spirit
Meete blinde Philosophers in heaven, whose merit
Of strict life may be imputed faith, and heare
Thee, whom hee taught so easie wayes and neare
To follow, damn'd? . . .

(5-15)

Donne makes the point that the "blinde Philosophers" who have not had the advantage of Scriptural revelation will, through their reasonable and virtuous lives, "surpass / Us in the end" who have the benefit of Scripture and tradition. The "hee" in line 14 refers, of course, to the reader's father who had tried to guide him in the "easie wayes" of the

Christian life.

With the exhortation, "O if thou dar'st, feare this [i.e., damnation]" (15), Donne begins the second stage of his argument. He compares the "great courage, and high valour" (16) required to lead a truly religious life in this world with the "courage of straw" (28) demanded by such perilous activities as: aiding the "mutinous Dutch" (17); sailing the oceans "in ships wooden Sepulchers, a prey / To leaders rage, to stormes, to shot, to dearth" (18-19); exploring "seas and dungeons of the earth" (20); and braving the "frozen North" (22), the dangers of the Spanish Inquisition (the "fires of Spain" in line 24),²⁴ and the terrible heat of equatorial regions "Whose countries limbecks to our bodies bee" (25). All of these risks, says Donne, are taken merely for the sake of possible financial gain, and anyone who rejects such worldly ambitions is scorned and forced to "eate thy poysonous words" (28). But no thought is given to the far greater danger of spiritual decay which leads to eternal damnation. In this way Donne condemns the materialistic values and false ideals of the people of his day. He advances into the third stage of his argument by addressing his imaginary listener:

O desperate coward, wilt thou seeme bold and
 To thy foes and his (who made thee to stand
 Sentinell in his worlds garrison) thus yeeld,
 And for forbidden warres, leave th' appointed field?
 (29-32)

²⁴ The "Children in th' oven" of line 24 is an allusion to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace. See Daniel 3.

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By striving for these "forbidden warres" of worldly gain, man neglects the life of faith and moral rectitude; moreover, he risks losing his life in a rashness which approaches suicide. Thus, he leaves "th' appointed field" of moral warfare which God expects him to fight.

Donne next explains who the "foes" of line 30 are:

Know thy foes: The foule Devill (whom thou
Strivest to please,) for hate, not love would allow
Thee faine, his whole Realme to be quit; and as
The worlds all parts wither away and passe,
So the worlds selfe, thy other lov'd foe, is
In her decrepit wayne, and thou loving this,
Dost love a withered and worne strumpet; last,
Flesh (it selfes death) and joyes which flesh can taste,
Thou lovest; and thy faire goodly soul, which doth
Give this flesh power to taste joy, thou dost loath.
(33-42)

Thus Donne identifies the devil, the world, and the flesh as the enemies to whom one should not yield. In lines 41 and 42 he again states his concept of the interdependence of body and soul. The soul is the principle of life which gives "this flesh power to taste joy" (42) through the faculties of sense.²⁵ Man must not be concerned with affairs of the body at the expense of the soul. The final end of the body is death (See line 40a.), but as the soul aspires to a higher goal, it should be loved and cared for.

The remainder of the satire is devoted to the fourth and final stage of Donne's argument. With the sentence "Seeke true religion." (43) he begins his consideration of the search for the true Church of Christ. First, he examines the different directions in which other seekers have

²⁵

Cf. Donne's Satyre I, lines 43 and 44.

gone.

. . . Mirreus
Thinking her unhous'd here, and fled from us,
Seekes her at Rome, there, because hee doth know
That shee was there a thousand yeares agoe,
He loves her ragges so, as wee here obey
The statecloth where the Prince sate yesterday.
(43-48)

Some, then, have joined the Roman Catholic Church whose heritage of rituals, ceremonials, and polity ("her ragges", or the remains of the primitive church) offer the security of tradition. Others have favoured Calvinism which has restored some of the attractive severity of the primitive Church. Grierson believes that "the Dutch character of the name", Crantz, indicates that "Donne has in view the 'schismatics of Amsterdam' (The Will) and their followers."²⁶

Crantz to such brave Loves will not be intrall'd,
But loves her onely, who at Geneva is call'd
Religion, plaine, simple, sullen, yong,
Contemptuous, yet unhansome; As among
Lecherous humors, there is one that judges
No wenches wholesome, but course country drudges.
(49-54)

Still others accept the Anglican Church, mainly, however, because of various pressures, political and economic, on dissenters:

Graius stayes still at home here, and because
Some Preachers, vile ambitious bauds, and lawes
Still new like fashions, bid him thinke that shee
Which dwels with us, is onely perfect, hee
Imbraceth her, whom his Godfathers will
Tender to him, being tender, as Wards still
Take such wives as their Guardians offer, or
Pay valewes. . . .
(55-62)

Helen Gardner provides an explanatory note to lines 60 to 62:

26

Grierson, II, 114.

Wards who refused marriages arranged for them by their guardians had to pay them a sum called 'the value of the marriage.' The recusant, similarly had to pay for not attending his parish church. ²⁷

Some, however, remain independent of formal church affiliation, for fear of joining what may prove to be the wrong one:

. . . Carelesse Phrygius doth abhorre
All, because all cannot be good, as one
Knowing some women whores, dares marry none.
(62-64)

Then, finally, there are those who are so liberal (or shallow?) in their outlook that they indiscriminately approve all forms of religion. Donne argues that such uncritical acceptance of any church is really a "blindnesse" which prevents one from finding the true Church.

Graccus loves all as one, and thinkes that so
As women do in divers countries goe
In divers habits, yet are still one kinde,
So doth, so is Religion; and this blind -
nesse too much light breeds; . . .
(65-69)

Donne now reaches the crux of his argument: there is one true Church and it can be found, but one must actively seek it. Two pitfalls must be avoided; namely, apathy and false judgment.

. . . but unmoved thou
Of force must one, and forc'd but one allow;
And the right; aske thy father which is shee,
Let him aske his; though truth and falshood bee
Neare twins, yet truth a little elder is;
Be busie to seeke her, beleeve mee this,
Hee's not of none, nor worst, that seekes the best.
To adore, or scorne an image, or protest,

²⁷ Helen Gardner, ed., The Metaphysical Poets (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1959), p. 47 note.

May all be bad; doubt wisely; in strange way
 To stand inquiring right, is not to stray;
 To sleepe, or runne wrong, is. . . . (69-79)

In lines 76 to 79 Donne makes some statements which require elucidation. When he says "To adore, or scorne an image, or protest, / May all be bad" he is pointing out that the true Church of Christ may be beyond both Roman Catholicism and the various forms of Protestantism, and that one must "doubt wisely," meaning examine reasonably, in order to find the truth. "To stand inquiring right," then, is not to err; what is wrong, however, is to do nothing or to commit oneself without making a reasonable judgment. Donne's approach here is humanistic. He is well aware of both the limitations and the potentialities of man, and he shows a lively interest in man's striving after the truth. Indeed, these lines, like the ones which follow, are, as J. B. Leishman remarks, "penetrated by an intense eagerness for truth and contempt for indifference."²⁸ As he will show later in his satire, Donne is also deeply concerned about the attempts made by both secular and religious authorities to dictate what a man should believe. Since he sees man as an essentially rational being, one capable of analysis and critical judgment, he feels that by careful examination based on intellectual honesty man can, on his own, find the true Church. Hugh I'Anson Fausset relates Donne's argument to the poet himself:

²⁸ J. B. Leishman, The Metaphysical Poets (New York, 1963), p. 9.

. . . - his refusal to accept the easy road of conventional faith, despite a craving, even in these years of physical fever, for religious satisfaction, attests a character bold and vigilant for truth, and one whose faith, if ever he attain to it, will have its roots in the well-ploughed earth, and its foundations on the rock. 29

Donne continues by describing figuratively the search and the difficulty of attaining the desired end:

. . . On a huge hill,
Cragged, and steep, Truth stands, and hee that will
Reach her, about must, and about must goe;
And what the hills suddennes resists, winne so;
Yet strive so, that before age, deaths twilight,
Thy Soule rest, for none can worke in that night.
(79-84)

This oft-quoted passage is significant as an example of Donne's skilful blending of idea and form. That is, the idea of upward struggle is expressed through lines which demand a slow, deliberate reading. This is especially evident in line 81: ". . . about must, and about must goe."

Donne stresses the need for immediate action:

To will, implyes delay, therefore now doe:
Hard deeds, the bodies paines; hard knowledge too
The mindes indeavours reach, and mysteries
Are like the Sunne, dazling, yet plaine to all eyes.
(85-88)

He points out that as "hard deeds" are accomplished through physical effort, so "hard knowledge" is achieved by an effort of the mind. Although no mental effort can enable man to understand fully the "dazling" truth at the heart of religious mysteries, "all eyes" can see that there is at

least a truth to be found.

Donne concludes his argument by urging the enlightened and victorious reader to "Keepe the truth which thou hast found" (89) in spite of the threat of persecution by kings. He champions the authority of God over that of earth's rulers, who have no power over man's soul:

Foole and wretch, wilt thou let thy Soule be tyed
To mans lawes, by which she shall not be tryed
At the last day? . . .

(93-95)

Although each of the two opposing camps, The Roman Catholic kings and popes and the Protestant leaders,³⁰ lays claim to being right, neither one will be able to justify man on the day of judgment, for theirs is but a limited power. In order that man might "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's,"³¹ he must know the limits of temporal power. To obey earthly rulers, whether political or religious, who have usurped powers beyond their limits is idolatry.

Donne emphasizes the danger of such idolatry through a wonderfully apt metaphor which ends the satire:

As streames are, Power is; those blest flowers that dwell
At the rough streames calme head, thrive and do well,
But having left their roots, and themselves given
To the streames tyrannous rage, alas, are driven
Through mills, and rockes, and woods, and at last,
almost
Consum'd in going, in the sea are lost:

³⁰ The individuals named in lines 96 and 97 may be identified as follows: "Philip" is Philip, King of Spain; "Gregory" is Pope Gregory XIII (or XIV); "Harry" is Henry VIII of England; "Martin" is Martin Luther.

³¹ Matthew 22:21.

So perish Soules, which more chuse mens unjust
 Power from God claym'd, then God himselfe to trust.
 (103-110)

This passage combines meaning with lyricism. The imagery is precise, the meaning is immediately apprehensible, the lines (especially 106 to 108) have a subdued roughness like the movement they describe. The effect of the whole is crowned by the moral which flows logically from the preceding ten lines (93-102), through the metaphor into explicit expression in the concluding couplet.

The recurring imagery of women plays an important part in the satire. In line 5, religion is a "Mistresse" and is referred to as such throughout the poem. Similarly, truth is also personified as a female. In line 27 worldly endeavours are alluded to as "Goddesse" and "Mistresse", while in line 39 the world is "a withered and worne strumpet." Later, Crantz's love for the simplicity of Calvinism is compared to the taste of one who "judges / No wenches wholesome, but course country drudges" (53-54). The existence of the Anglican Church is in lines 59 to 62 likened to the arranged marriage of a ward. Phrygius and his obsessive fear of marrying a whore (64), and Graccus with his "women are women" attitude (66-67) complete what may be called a feminine motif which runs through the satire and helps give it coherence.

It is difficult to date this poem from internal evidence, for as Grierson remarks:

The third Satyre has no datable references, but its tone reflects the years in which Donne was loosening himself from the Catholic Church but had

not yet conformed, the years between 1593 and 1599, and probably the earlier rather than the later of these years. . . . [It was] probably written between 1594 and 1597.³²

This period of Donne's life coincides with the years Walton refers to when he says that Donne

. . . presently laid aside all study of the law, and of all other sciences that might give him a denomination; and began seriously to survey and consider the body of divinity, as it was then controverted betwixt the reformed and the Roman Church. And . . . in that . . . search he proceeded with humility and diffidence in himself, and by that which he took to be the safest way, namely, frequent prayers, and an indifferent affection to both parties. . . .³³

Hugh Walker, in commenting on this satire, is correct when he says that Donne "loved neither of these extremes" of Mirreus and Crantz. He does not, however, understand the nature of Donne's quest when he remarks:

It is the search for truth that Donne loves. To him, as to Leibnitz, the search is more than the attainment; to him, as to Tennyson, there is more faith in honest doubt than in half the creeds. The search is itself a religion: . . . And the search leads him to a recognition that there is good in all religions, and that the Truth, full and final, is very hard to find. . . .³⁴

Donne no doubt enjoyed studying the works of the various religious writers whom he consulted, but Walker over-emphasizes the search at the expense of the goal. Donne is concerned with the end; he is not interested in the quest for its own sake. When he speaks of doubting, it is not a

³² Grierson, II, 103.

³³ Walton, pp. 324-325.

³⁴ Hugh Walker, English Satire and Satirists (Toronto, 1925), p. 71.

question of being a Christian or not being one. Donne's "doubt" is grounded on faith, for it involves a close, disinterested examination of the teachings of the various Christian churches with the full expectation "that God will guide such a disinterested effort to the truth."³⁵

In conclusion, we should emphasize several important points. Although the main theme of the satire is the search for "true religion," there is a significant subsidiary theme which concerns the limits of authority, a matter which has become more and more controversial throughout Europe as a result of the various movements of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. Donne expresses his objection to the fact that kings and popes and even organized churches try to force people to worship in a certain way, to believe this or that. His attitude is accurately summed up by Fausset when he says: "Ideally no institution has the right to substitute its creed for the personal and provisional reading of the Infinite which every man must make for himself."³⁶ As Donne is acutely aware of the difficulty of the religious search, he urges man to live an alert, thoughtful, and moral life, to attend to the spiritual health of the soul, and to resist the temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh. Thus his satire becomes a sermon. Indeed, Donne may really be preaching to himself,

³⁵ J. B. Leishman, The Monarch of Wit (London, 1957), p. 113.

³⁶ Fausset, p. 16.

for at this period of his life he has been experiencing the pleasures of life in London, the excitement of foreign travels and expeditions, and the crisis of religious uncertainty. The worldly adventurers and Mirreus, Crantz, and all other seekers for the true church may therefore be seen as reflections of aspects of Donne's self as well as representative targets for his satiric wit.

THE FOURTH SATIRE

The theme of Satyre IIIII is the vices and follies of courtiers. Donne's satiric attack on court life is expressed through an action which is a loosely-organized burlesque on Dante's Divine Comedy. We can detect certain parallels: the journey to Hell and Purgatory (the visit to the court), the guide (the bore), the description of the various sins of the "sufferers", and the vision (the trance in which Donne reviews his visit). While Dante's vision reveals to him the glorious truths of Heaven and the whole universe, Donne's trance does the opposite: it shows him a panoramic view of the perverted and foolish world of the court he has just left. The burlesque form of the satire is made explicit in several places. Donne begins his narrative of the "journey" with the words:

Well; I may now receive, and die; My sinne
Indeed is great, but I have beene in
A Purgatorie, such as fear'd hell is
A recreation to, and scarce map of this.
(1-4)

Later on he remarks:

. . . But since I am in,
I must pay mine, and my forefathers sinne
To the last farthing; . . .
(137-139)

In lines 157 to 159 he even alludes to Dante when he mentions him "who dreamt he saw hell," and as he passes in his trance through the great chamber, he wonders "why is it hung / With the seaven deadly sinnes?" (231-232).

Donne's method of attacking the evils of the court within this burlesque pattern is to embody its principal faults in the character of the bore and to relate his own experiences in his company, and then to give a general description of the courtiers on a typical day at court.

After setting the scene, Donne portrays the bore who descends upon him as soon as he has entered the court chamber:

. . . Towards me did runne
A thing more strange, then on Niles slime, the Sunne
E'r bred; or all which into Noahs Arke came;
A thing, which would have pos'd Adam to name;
Stranger then seaven Antiquaries studies,
Then Africks Monsters, Guianaes rarities.

(17-22)

Through several acid comments, Donne next condemns his character:

. . . 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, or outlie either
Jovius, or Surius, or both together.

(43-48)

Now follows a lengthy conversation between Donne and the bore in which they discuss matters of language and royalty. The dialogue suddenly becomes one-sided, however, as the bore overwhelms the visitor with a flood of court gossip. Donne is entirely at the bore's mercy, for all his attempts to stay the flood are in vain. Finally the courtier presents Donne with an opportunity to regain his freedom:

. . . He tries to bring
Me to pay a fine to scape his torturing,
And saies, Sir, can you spare me; I said willingly;
Nay, Sir, can you spare me a crowne? Thankfully I

Gave it, as Ransome; But as fiddlers, still,
 Though they be paid to be gone, yet needs will
 Thrust one more jigge upon you; so did hee
 With his long complementall thankes vex me.
 But he is gone, thankes to his needy want,
 And the prerogative of my Crowne: . . .
 (141-150)

After having paid off the bore, Donne hurries home, where he suffers another nightmarish experience:

At home in wholesome solitariness
 My precious soule began, the wretchednesse
 Of suiters at court to mourne, and a trance
 Like his, who dreamt he saw hell, did advance
 It selfe on mee; Such men as he saw there,
 I saw at court, and worse, and more; . . .
 (155-160)

Thus does Donne see all over 'again, but in a more general way, the evils and follies of court life. The rest of the satire is devoted to his description of what he sees in this "Underworld" revisited in his trance.

Of the aspects of conduct which comprise the "wretchednesse" of the different people at court, Donne, in various parts of his satire, mentions the following: vain pride (35-36 and 61-62); vicious speech (45-48 and 96); sycophancy (177-179); flirtation (187-191 and 210-218); preoccupation with outward appearance (195-210); immoderation (127); sexual immorality (128 and 173-174); rudeness (219-228); political corruption (101-107 and 121-126); financial distress (30-34, 143-144, and 180-187); treachery (46 and 129-133), and hollowness of character (169-173 and 184-185). The court as Donne paints it is indeed an "Underworld."

There are three significant religious allusions in this satire, and Grierson makes this general comment on

them:

A more veiled thread running through the poem is an attack on the ways and tricks of informers. The bore's gossip is probably not without a motive: . . . In the Satyres Donne is always, though he does not state his position too clearly, one with links attaching him to the persecuted Catholic minority. He hates informers and pursuivants.³⁷

Donne himself prepares us for the bore's possible "motive" when he says in line 46 that that individual can "Make men speake treason." At any rate, the "veiled thread running through the poem" is spun by a series of three interesting allusions. Near the beginning of the poem Donne compares the suffering he endures as a result of going to court with the penalty which an individual had to pay for attending mass:

. . . But as Glaze which did goe
To'a Masse in jest, catch'd, was faine to disburse
The hundred markes, which is the Statutes curse;
Before he scapt, . . .

(8-11)

Here Donne refers to the Elizabethan laws against the practice of Roman Catholicism. W. E. Lunt explains this situation:

In 1581 it was made treason to attempt to convert a subject of the queen to the Catholic faith, the saying or hearing of mass was forbidden under severe penalties, and Catholic recusants - that is, those who did not attend the established church - were fined £20 a month. These laws constituted the first serious attack on the Catholic religion as such.³⁸

³⁷ Grierson, II, 117.

³⁸ W. E. Lunt, History of England (New York, 1951), p. 355. S. T. Bindoff casts more light on the situation by explaining that "Saying Mass was to cost 200 marks and a year in prison, hearing it 100 marks and the same imprisonment." (Tudor England [Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1952], pp. 238-239.)

Keith Feiling, with his comment that "In 1585 Parliament . . . forbade the mere presence of Jesuits and priests in England,"³⁹ helps clarify Donne's point in describing the bore as

One, whom the watch at noone lets scarce goe by,
 One, to whom, the examining Justice sure would cry,
 Sir, by your priesthood tell me what you are.
(27-29)

The bore's clothes, then, are so strange that he might easily be mistakenly arrested as a priest from abroad. Finally, Donne's description of how a vain young courtier accosts a lady includes a pair of significant analogies:

. . . and a Lady which owes
 Him not so much as good will, he arrests,
 And unto her protests protests protests,
 So much as at Rome would serve to have throwne
 Ten Cardinals into the Inquisition;
 And whisperd by Jesu, so often, that A
 Pursevant would have ravish'd him away
 For saying of our Ladies psalter; . . .
(210-217)

The comparison in the first four lines of the above passage is based on the pun on the word "protests" and refers to the treatment that a Protestant would receive in Rome. The last three lines, however, return to the thread of Roman Catholic sympathy. It is interesting to note that although Donne's Catholic point of view is undeniably evident in the satire, lines 212 to 214 clearly indicate that he is also aware of the Roman Catholic persecution of Protestants in other lands. This fact tends to qualify Donne's position. He sympathizes with the persecuted minority, which

³⁹ Keith Feiling, A History of England (London, 1959), p. 402.

happens to be Catholic; were the situation reversed, he would no doubt sympathize with the Protestant minority.

Three other religious references are used solely for purposes of analogy in order to emphasize the vanity and pretentiousness of courtiers. The young gallant's preoccupation with the state of his dress is amusingly described thus:

Would not Heraclitus laugh to see Macrine,
From hat to shooe, himselfe at doore refine,
As if the Presence were a Moschite, and lift
His skirts and hose, and call his clothes to shrift,
Making them confesse not only mortall
Great staines and holes in them; but veniall
Feathers and dust, wherewith they fornicate:

(197-203)

The queen ("Presence") is compared to a high priestess; the clothes are treated as penitents coming to confession and worship. When he is finally satisfied that all is in order, the courtier enters "As a young Preacher at his first time goes / To preach" (209-210). And later, the face of the coarse and offensive Glorius is pictured "as ill / As theirs which in old hangings whip Christ" (225-226). This comparison probably refers to paintings or tapestries ("hangings") which show Christ being beaten by the soldiers with cruel facial expressions.

Aside from the allusions to Roman Catholic persecution, there are references to three other historical events. When Donne portrays the odd-looking bore as

Stranger then strangers; One, who for a Dane,
In the Danes Massacre had sure beene slaine,
If he had liv'd then; And without helpe dies,
When next the Prentises 'gainst Strangers rise.

(23-26)

he is referring to the numerous unpopular foreigners who have found in England a refuge from wars and religious persecution, but who are at times the victims of fanatic group uprisings. In line 114 Donne alludes to two important events; namely, the sailing of the Spanish Armada in 1588 and the capture of Amiens by the Spaniards in March, 1597. The fact that Amiens was regained by the French in September of the same year allows us to infer that Donne wrote this satire between March and September of 1597.

This satire, as does each of the others, tells us much about the interests and personal experiences of Donne. Five different aspects of Donne's life and activity are dealt with in varying degrees of detail. That Donne at this time has a French servant is mentioned in lines 83 to 87. The mere reference in a poem to such a servant would not in itself prove that Donne really has one, but Grierson casts light on the problem, for he has found that Donne in a letter talks of his "Monsieur."⁴⁰ Then, that Donne is probably a frequent theatre-goer is implied in two places. In line 93 he tells the bore "of new playes" and in lines 182 to 187 he describes how impoverished courtiers sometimes sell articles of clothing at the theatre. Next, Donne, in emphasizing the aridity of court life, compares courtiers to the miniature figures in the artificial waxen gardens displayed in London at the time by travelling Italian showmen (See lines 168 to 174). We may assume that Donne has

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See Grierson, II, 122.

actually seen such an exhibit, for he is always well aware of current happenings in London.⁴¹ Donne's calling the bore a "Makeron" is significant. The Oxford English Dictionary, in quoting lines 116 and 117, indicates that Donne's is the first use of the word in English.⁴²

Finally, there are numerous references which show that Donne reads widely and has assimilated a large sum of diversified knowledge. That Donne knows his Bible well is indicated in four places. He mentions animals "which into Noahs Arke came" (19) and a thing (the bore) which "would have pos'd Adam to name" (20). Later, after the bore has praised his own linguistic talents, Donne remarks:

. . . If you'had liv'd, Sir,
Time enough to have beene Interpreter
To Babels bricklayers, sure the Tower had stood.
(63-65)

Then, he concludes his satire with a reference to a now little-read book of the "Apocrypha":⁴³

. . . Although I yet
With Macchabees modestie, the knowne merit
Of my worke lessen: yet some wise man shall,
I hope, esteeme my writs Canonically.
(241-244)

His mention of "Africks Monsters, Guianaes rarities" (22) shows that he has read some journals of overseas

⁴¹ Cf. Satyre I, lines 80-82.

⁴² "Makeron" is an adaptation of the sixteenth-century Italian "maccarone," now "maccherone," meaning buffoon, blockhead, dolt.

⁴³ See footnote 45 on page 46, below, concerning the canonical problem of the "Apocrypha".

explorations. The second allusion, according to Grierson, is to the strange creatures described by Sir Walter Raleigh in his The discoverie of the large, rich and bewtiful Empire of Guiana, with a relation of the great and golden City of Manoa which the Spaniards call El Dorado, performed in the year 1595, which was published in 1596.⁴⁴ Later on, Donne shows that he is familiar with historical writings as well. The names "Jovius" and "Surius" in line 48 allude to the historians Paolo Giovio, Bishop of Nocerna, and Laurentius Surius, a Carthusian monk. The reason for Donne's scornful treatment of them here is that their histories reputedly have numerous inaccuracies. In line 68 he rejects the bore's suggestion that he participate in court life by saying his "lonenesse is, but Spartanes fashion." He thus favours the rugged individualism of the Spartans about whom he has read over the sheep-like, sterile conformity of the court hangers-on whom he has observed. Then he comments on the worthless gossip of his companion by comparing it to the mass of trivialities included in the well-known chronicles of Holinshed, Hall, and Stow (97).

Three names in addition to the Dante allusion in line 158 inform us of Donne's interest in other creative writers. The work of Rabelais is mentioned in line 59 in the reference to Panurge, the man of many languages in Rabelais's Gargantua and Pantagruel. "Arentine's pictures" in line 70 refers to the engravings based upon the often

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See Grierson, II, 118.

obscene poetry of the Italian writer, Pietro Aretino (1492-1557) while "Circes prisoners" in lines 129 and 130 are Ulysses's men who were changed to swine by Circe in Book 10 of the Odyssey.

Finally, there are four interesting miscellaneous references which further point out Donne's extensive knowledge. "Calepines Dictionarie" (54) is a polygot dictionary compiled by Ambrogio Calepino (1435-1511), an Italian Augustinian monk. The work was first printed in 1502. Donne is probably acquainted with the complete eleven-language edition which was published at Basle in 1590. "Beza" in line 55 is Theodore Beza (1519-1605), a French reformer and Calvinist theologian. His writings have surely been read by Donne who has detected the Jesuit character of some of Beza's arguments. The phrase "Some other Jesuites" (italics mine) in line 56 is therefore obviously ironical. Donne mentions the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus in line 197. Probably his intention is to ridicule the courtier's total absorption in such a triviality as the state of his outward appearance by contrasting it with Heraclitus's much more serious concern with the philosophical problems of change and appearance-reality. Donne's remark about "Durers rules" (204) is intended to ridicule the gallant's vain examination of the "Symetrie" of his body by drawing attention to the great German artist's rule of proportions in the human figure. What are meant to be rules for artistic creation are being used as standards of personal appearance!

It is necessary to note that in this satire Donne expresses his opinion on the efficacy of his satiric attacks. He has no illusions, for he says:

To teach by painting drunkards, doth not last
 Now; Aretines pictures have made few chast;
 No more can Princes courts, though there be few
 Better pictures of vice, teach me vertue;
 (69-72)

That is, the mere act of pointing out and describing evils is no guarantee that reform will be effected. Satire, then, will not really influence people; hence, Donne concludes:

. . . 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; Although I yet
 With Macchabees modestie, the knowne merit
 Of my worke lessen: yet some wise man shall,
 I hope, esteeme my writs Canonicall.
 (237-244)

Nevertheless, "some wise man" might take his satires seriously and give them close attention.

A thoughtful reader of his poems might say as Luther said of the books of the "Apocrypha" of which the "Macchabees" are a part:

Das sind Bücher, so der heiligen
 Schrift nicht gleich gehalten, und
 doch nützlich und gut zu lesen sind.⁴⁵

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Die Bibel oder die ganze Heilige Schrift des Alten und Neuen Testaments, nach der deutschen Übersetzung D. Martin Luthers. (Halle, 1888) [On title page of "Die Apokryphen"].

H. F. D. Sparks in his article "Canon of the Old Testament" explains the canonical problem of the "Apocrypha" which Donne has in mind: "At the Reformation . . . The Protestant bodies rejected the so-called "Apocryphal books" outright and reverted to the shorter Jewish Canon: at the Council of Trent (1546) the Church of Rome reasserted the validity of the traditional Christian longer Canon (a re-assertion repeated at the Vatican Council in 1870); while

He might, in other words, see them as exempla illustrating how not to live and act.

the Church of England, in her Articles of Religion, listed the books of the shorter canon as those 'of whose authority there was never any doubt in the Church' and added a list of 'the other books' from the longer Canon, which 'the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners, but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine.'" (Dictionary of the Bible, ed. James Hastings [New York, 1963], p. 123.)

THE FIFTH SATIRE

Donne's Satyre V is a sharp criticism of the practices of corrupt lawyers and judges. In contrast to Satyre II in which bad lawyers are attacked through the person of Coccus, this satire takes the form of a general assault in which Donne expresses himself through a series of logically-arranged metaphors.

He opens his satire by warning us that his subject is serious, not a matter for jest:

Thou shalt not laugh in this leafe, Muse, nor they
Whom any pittie warmes; . . . What is hee
Who Officers rage, and Suiters misery
Can write, and jest? . . .

(1-2; 7-9)

The tone of indignation which is here introduced is maintained throughout the poem.

Donne now paraphrases a concept of Paracelsus⁴⁶ in preparation for the first of his satiric metaphors:

. . . If all things be in all,
As I thinke, since all, which were, are, and shall
Bee, be made of the same elements:
Each thing, each thing implyes or represents.

(9-12)

Franz Hartmann explains this aspect of Paracelsus's cos-

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Geoffrey Keynes includes in his list of books from Donne's library the works of Paracelsus. It is therefore highly probable that Donne used these writings as the source of the idea expressed in lines 9-12. See Keynes, A Bibliography of Dr. John Donne (Cambridge, 1932), p. 178.

mology as follows:

As all things come from the same source, containing the primordial substance of all things they are all intimately related to each other and connected with each other, and are essentially and fundamentally a unity. Any difference existing between two dissimilar things arises only from a difference in the forms in which the primordial essence manifests its activity. . . .

Man, as such, is the highest being in existence, because in him Nature has reached the culmination of her evolutionary efforts. In him are contained all the powers and all the substances that exist in the world, and he constitutes a world of his own. 47

From Paracelsus, then, Donne moves logically on to his first two metaphorical condemnations of the "Officers" of the law:

Then man is a world; in which, Officers
Are the vast ravishing seas; and Suiters,
Springs; now full, now shallow, now drye; which, to
That which drownes them, run: These selfe reasons do
Prove the world a man, in which, officers
Are the devouring stomacke, and Suiters
The excrements, which they voyd. . . .

(13-19)

Two important ideas are expressed here. Firstly, the suitors are naturally dependent for legal help on the officers of the law as springs depend upon the seas. Secondly, the officers need the suitors as the stomach needs food, but when they have fully exploited the poor litigants, they cast them aside as if they were mere excrement. These two ideas are repeated in several of the succeeding metaphors.

The unfortunate plight of suitors is emphasized by this depressing image of death and dissolution:

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Franz Hartmann, The Life and the Doctrines of Philippus Theophrastus, Bombast of Hohenheim, known by the name of Paracelsus (New York, 1945), pp. 65 and 67.

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. . . All men are dust;
 How much worse are Suiters, who to mens lust
 Are made preyes? O worse then dust, or wormes meat,
 For they do eate you now, whose selves wormes shall
 eate. (19-22)

This strong image of utter despair is most effective in expressing Donne's point.

The first metaphor in the following passage, though rather commonplace, is nevertheless apt:

They are the mills which grinde you, yet you are
 The winde which drives them; and a wastfull warre
 Is fought against you, and you fight it; they
 Adulterate lawe, and you prepare their way
 Like wittals; th' issue your owne ruin is.
 (23-27)

The second metaphor above is extremely witty, and hence deserves explanation. The lawyer is an adulterer of the law, whose "husband" (the suitor) is but a weak, acquiescent cuckold (a "wittal"). The offspring from this act of adultery (the "issue") ruins both the "marriage" (the integrity of the law) and the "husband."

Having stressed his point about unjust officer - suitor relations almost to the stage of belabouring it, Donne suddenly addresses the queen:

Greatest and fairest Empresse, know you this?
 Alas, no more then Thames calme head doth know
 Whose meades her armes drowne, or whose corne o'rflow:
 (28-30)

But since the queen is unaware of what is happening to the administration of justice in her land, Donne turns to someone who is aware and who can take steps to remedy the undesirable situation:

You Sir, whose righteousnes she loves, whom I
 By having leave to serve, am most richly

For service paid, authoriz'd, now beginne
 To know and weed out this enormous sinne
 (31-34)

Grierson explains that the "Sir" whom Donne so enthusiastically addresses is "Sir Thomas Egerton, whose service Donne entered in 1598 and left in 1601-2."⁴⁸ In 1594 Egerton had been promoted to the bench as master of the rolls; in 1596 he became lord keeper and privy councillor.⁴⁹ Since he enjoyed the queen's confidence, he could exert pressure where necessary in order to accomplish reform of legal abuses. This satire, which has certainly been written between 1598 and 1601, is likely the result of Donne's expectation of such reform.

In lines 35 to 42 Donne contrasts this "Age of rusty iron" with a better time, an "iron Age . . ., when justice was sold." Now, however, litigation is more costly, both in itself (court fees) and in its injustices. He calls litigants gamblers ("gamsters") for they are never sure of obtaining justice; they submit to the various "demands, fees, and duties" of the court, but find at the end that both their money and the lands for which they have filed suit have passed into "other hands," probably those of the officers of the law.

Donne next poses the question:

If Law be in the Judges heart, and hee
 Have no heart to resist letter, or fee,
 Where wilt thou appeale? . . . (43-45)

⁴⁸ Grierson, II, 126.

⁴⁹ For a biographical sketch, see Sidney Lee, "Sir Thomas Egerton," in DNB., VI, 579-581.

He discusses this problem through the use of apt water imagery. The process of appealing an unfair decision is a difficult task, like struggling "Against the stream" (50) for, although the power of the lower courts "flows" ultimately from the queen ("the first maine head"), these courts can easily "drown" an appeal and "throw / Thee, if they sucke thee in, to misery, / To fetters, halters;..." (46-48). Donne's metaphor of the stream in lines 45 to 50, which also relates to the Thames comparison in lines 28 to 30, blends logically into the metaphor of the sea in the following lines:

. . . and in these labours [the appeal] they,
 'Gainst whom thou should'st complaine, will in the way
 Become great seas, o'r which, when thou shalt bee
 Forc'd to make golden bridges, thou shalt see
 That all thy gold was drown'd in them before;
 All things follow their like, only who have may have
 more. (51-56)

The moral in the last line of the above passage is reminiscent of Our Lord's remark to His disciples after He has told them the parable of the sower:

For to him who has will more be given, and he will
 have abundance; but from him who has not, even what
 he has will be taken away. 50

Donne's apparently perverse use of one of Christ's best known warnings is significantly valid when we examine his next metaphorical condemnation of legal costs:

Judges are Gods; he who made and said them so,
 Meant not that men should be forc'd to them to goe,
 By meanes of Angels; When supplications
 We send to God, to Dominations,
 Powers, Cherubins, and all heavens Courts, if wee

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Matthew 13:12.

Should pay fees as here, Daily bread would be
Scarce to Kings; so 'tis. . . . (57-63)

Donne's Roman Catholic sympathy shows through in the succeeding lines in which he compares the exploitation of litigants by lawyers to the actions of those commissioned to seek out priests in hiding:

. . . Would it not anger
A Stoicke, a coward, yea a Martyr,
To see a Pursivant come in, and call
All his cloathes, Copes; Bookes, Primers; and all
His plate, Challices; and mistake them away,
And aske a fee for comming? . . . (63-68)

It is necessary to note that throughout the satire Donne has been attacking only the corrupt practices of lawyers and judges; he has not been condemning the law as such. That he has, in fact, great respect for the law is indicated in lines 68 to 73. The officers who, in administering the law, cause "Faire lawes white reverend name to be strumpeted" (69) are the specific objects of Donne's contempt. He emphasizes this point as follows:

She is all faire, but yet hath foule long nailes,
With which she scracheth Suiters; In bodies
Of men, so in law, nailes are th' extremities,
So Officers stretch to more then Law can doe,
As our nailes reach what no else part comes to.
(74-78)

In concluding his satire, Donne shifts his point of view, as he directs a few words at the greedy suitor who fails in court:

Thou had'st much, and lawes Urim and Thummim trie
Thou wouldst for more; and for all hast paper
Enough to cloath all the great Carricks Pepper.

Sell that, and by that thou much more shalt leese,
Then Haman, when he sold his Antiquities. (83-87)

There are two interesting allusions in this passage. In line 83 Donne makes an ironic comment on the pretensions of law officers by referring to the "Urim and Thummim" on Aaron's breastplate of judgment.⁵¹ His mention of "the great Carricks Pepper" (85) is, according to Grierson, a reference to "'that prodigious great carack called the Madre de Dios or Mother of God, one of the greatest burden belonging to the crown of Portugal', which was captured by Raleigh's expedition and brought to Dartmouth in 1592."⁵² The mention of Haman and his "Antiquities" is an obscure reference; it may simply refer to a contemporary about whom no records remain. Donne's final remark relates the greedy suitor who attempts to gain property which is really

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See Exodus 28: 29-30: "So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breast-piece of judgment upon his heart, when he goes into the holy place, to bring them to continual remembrance before the LORD. And in the breast-piece of judgment you shall put the Urim and Thummim, and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goes in before the LORD; thus Aaron shall bear the judgment of the people of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually." The "Urim" and "Thummin" were small devices, like lots, by which the Hebrews of ancient times sought to determine the will of God. They were worn on the high priest's "breastpiece of judgment" as a symbol of his authority under the Law. For further information see A. R. S. Kennedy's article, "Urim and Thummim," in Dictionary of the Bible, ed. James Hastings (New York, 1963), pp. 1019-1020.

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Grierson, II, 104.

beyond his reach to the dog in Aesop's fable:⁵³

O wretch that thy fortunes should moralize
 Esops fables, and make tales, prophesies.
 Thou'art the swimming dog whom shadows cosened,
 And div'st, neare drowning, for what's vanished.
 (88-91)

Aside from the learned references already discussed, there are two others which also emphasize the diversity of Donne's reading. In lines 2 and 3 he alludes to Castiglione as "He which did lay / Rules to make Courtiers." In line 42 he tells of Angelica who escaped "the strivers hands." Grierson explains that this refers to an Italian romance in which a young lady, Angelica, escapes while two suitors, Ferrau and Rinaldo, fight to decide who shall possess her.⁵⁴ Both references emphasize the attraction that Italian writers exert on Donne.

⁵³ See Aesop, "The Dog and the Shadow" in Folk-Lore and Fable: Aesop, Grimm, Anderson, in The Harvard Classics, ed. Charles W. Eliot (New York, 1909, XVII, 12).

⁵⁴ See Grierson, II, 2 and 126.

III. CONCLUSION: A SECOND LOOK

At this point it is necessary to take a second look at the satires as a whole. They have as targets recognizable objects in contemporary life: fickle gallants, bad poets, corrupt lawyers, boring courtiers. This thesis has dealt with each satire on this basis, considering it as the poetic result of Donne's keen observation of the current scene as it unfolds around him. There is, however, another way of perceiving the first four satires. We may see each satire as a dialogue between the sensual, worldly Jack and the reflective, moralistic John. Indeed, S. F. Johnson takes this approach in his brief discussion of Satyre I when he says: "The contrast between the two is presented as a conflict between spiritual-intellectual man and physical-sensual man, with the values pertaining to each."⁵⁵ I feel that Johnson's interpretation is valid, and that it may be extended to cover certain essential aspects of the second, third, and fourth satires as well. The fifth satire does not fit this pattern, for it is directed against legal abuse in general and is diffuse, having no specific centre of orientation as has each of the others.

Since the first four satires were all written in the 1590's, a comparison between the activities of Donne

⁵⁵ S. F. Johnson, "Donne's SATIRES, I," The Explicator, XI (June, 1953), item 53.

during this period and certain aspects of the poems in question should prove rewarding. From the time of his admittance to Lincoln's Inn on 6 May 1592 until he becomes the secretary of Sir Thomas Egerton in 1598 Donne is deeply involved in a life of pleasure, study, and adventure. Life in Elizabethan London is always exciting, especially when one has the company of gay young students and bold men-about-town. Sir Herbert Grierson gives a relevant quotation from Sir Richard Baker's Chronicle of the Kings of England where he speaks of John Donne as "not dissolute but very neat: a great visiter of ladies, a great frequenter of plays, a great writer of conceited verses."⁵⁶ It seems, then, in the light of Baker's remark, that Donne's criticism of the "humorist" for his fickleness and his wenching may actually be an imaginative chastisement of Jack by John. In this way, Satyre I may be seen not only as an objective satire, but also as a self-satire, the result of introspection and analysis of personal experience and desire. Cocus, the insolent lawyer in Satyre II, may be the poetic materialization of a haunting fear of what he himself might become if he should pursue his law studies to their logical conclusion. In 1596 Donne accompanied Essex and Raleigh on the Cadiz expedition, thus becoming in fact the adventurer who risks dangers at sea and in Spain whom he tries to reform in the third satire. The

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Grierson, "Introduction," p. Xvii.

pagans, then, who choose life's worldly ways and the various religious sectarians of the same satire are in reality "all offshoots of their young satirist, say rather aspects of his anti-self, disturbing refractions from the central light of his vacillating personality."⁵⁷ During his secretaryship under Sir Thomas Egerton from 1598 to 1602 Donne is in close contact with the court; he experiences the courtly life and penetrates its shams and pretences. Likely in the fourth satire he pictures himself, the court hanger-on, and is disgusted.

Fausset's perceptive remark on the poems as self-satires is a fitting conclusion to this argument:

In particular, then, as well as in general these early satires reflect their author. Donne may ridicule a Mirreus or a Crantz, a Phrygius or a Gracchus, for the theological quibblers they were: but he, too, was all at sea in religious dogma and widowed of religious faith. He may pour scorn on a Coscus for his pride of law and his paddling in poetry; but the young law student of Lincoln's Inn, dabbling in satirical verse, bore a striking resemblance to his butt. Donne, we need hardly say, was quite unconscious of expressing himself in the victims of his wit, but often a man is even more illumined by his scorn than by his praise. 58

In one respect Fausset seems to misunderstand Donne. A poet with such insight and capacity for self-analysis as Donne possesses can hardly be "quite unconscious of expressing himself in the victims of his wit." Surely Donne is consciously aware whenever his criticisms apply to himself.

⁵⁷ Fausset, p. 52.

⁵⁸ Fausset, pp. 53-54.

Regardless of how we interpret the satires, whether we perceive them as objective attacks or as interior dialogues, we must admit that they are powerful, direct, and interesting. Probably the following comment by an anonymous early nineteenth century writer (who sees them as objective) best sums up the satires as a whole:

Donne's Satires are as rough and rugged as the unhewn stones that have just been blasted from their native quarry; and they must have come upon the readers at whom they were levelled, with the force and effect of the same stones flung from the hand of a giant.⁵⁹

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See essay "Donne's Poems," in Discussions of John Donne, ed. Frank Kermode (Boston, 1962), p. 15.

APPENDIX

Luther and the "Power and glory clause"

Donne's mention of Martin Luther's addition of the "Power and glory clause" to the Lord's Prayer as given in Matthew 6: 9-13 was only one of a number of such sixteenth century criticisms of the reformer's work. Jerome Emser (1477/78 - 1527), for instance, "one of the foremost opponents of Martin Luther during the early years of the Protestant Reformation,"¹ also commented on Luther's emendation of the Lord's Prayer in his critique called Jerome Emser's Annotations Concerning Luther's New Testament Improved and Emended (Dresden, 1524). In the annotation to Matthew 6 he said of Luther:

. . . he adds a clause at the end, which our text does not have and which in practice has never been used by us; namely, 'For thine is the kingdom, the power and the holiness [heyligheit] forever, amen.' But where here remains the statement of Moses in Deuteronomy 4 - namely, that nothing is to be added to nor subtracted from the word of God -, which statement he [Luther] so frequently rubs into the ears of the papists? Indeed, he himself has thus in so short a saying often twisted, abbreviated, added to and subtracted from the words of Christ.²

The remarks of both Donne and Emser seem to imply that this emendation was original with Luther. This was, however, not the case.

¹ Kenneth A. Strand, Reformation Bibles in the Crossfire (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1961), p. 21.

² Quoted by Strand, p. 85.

J. De Fraine in his article, "The Our Father," provides us with much valuable historical information:

According to E. Lohmeyer the Our Father is given in the Gospels in two independent oral traditions, a Galilean one, represented in MT [Matthew], and an Antiochean one, represented in LK [Luke]. The doxology at the end of the Our Father, "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen," although found in almost all the late Greek mss., is not found in any early Greek mss. and is certainly not part of the original text. It is a liturgical addition, witnessed to as early as the Didache (8, 2) and the Const. Apost. (7, 24), and based on such doxologies as those found in 2 Tm [Timothy] 4, 18; 1 Par [Paralipomenon, or Chronicles] 29, 11; Dn [Daniel] 2, 37; 4 Esd [Esdra, or Ezra] 4, 38. 40. It is not in the Vg [Vulgate], and therefore not in any Catholic versions of the Bible. Although it was given in the text of the AV, it is relegated to a footnote in the RSV [Revised Standard Version].³

There was one Biblical scholar who acted as an intermediary between those late Greek manuscripts which contained the doxology and Martin Luther who included it in his version of the New Testament. This individual was Erasmus, who "Since the time when Valla's Annotationes had directed his attention to textual criticism of the Vulgate, . . . had, probably during his second stay in England from 1505 to 1506, at the instance of Colet, made a new translation of the New Testament from the Greek original, which translation differed greatly from the Vulgate."⁴ He also found it necessary to prepare a new edition of the

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As translated by Brendan McGrath, in Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible, ed. A. van den Born. Trans. and adapt. by Louis F. Hartman (Toronto, 1963), p. 1687.

⁴ Johan Huizinga, Erasmus and the Age of Reformation (New York, 1957), pp. 90-91..

Greek text, which he did, and in "the beginning of 1516 the Novum Instrumentum appeared, containing the purified Greek text with notes, together with a Latin translation in which Erasmus had altered too great deviations from the Vulgate."⁵ The Lord's Prayer as found in Matthew 6 of his translation⁶ is:

. . . Pater noster, qui es in coelis sanctificetur nomen tuum. Veniat regnum tuum, fiat voluntas tua, quemadmodum in coelo, sic etiam in terra. Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie, & remittito nobis debita nostra, sicut & nos remittimus debitoribus nostris. Et ne inducas nos in tentationem. Sed libera nos a malo. quia tuum est regnum, & potentia & gloria, in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Significantly, the doxology only is printed in half-size type, indicating, we may assume, that Erasmus did not regard it as genuine.

Although Luther disagreed with Erasmus on many fundamental religious questions, he was doubtless impressed by his translation, which he largely accepted. It is highly probable that the doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer thus passed from Erasmus's Latin translation into Luther's German version,⁷ which reads:

. . . Unser Vater in dem Himmel. Dein Name werde geheiligt. Dein Reich komme. Dein Wille geschehe auf Erden, wie im Himmel. Unser täglich Brodt gib

⁵ Huizinga, p. 91.

⁶ Novum Testamentum omne, multo quam antehac diligentius ab Erasmo Roterodamo . . ., 2nd ed. (Basel, 1519), p. 11.

⁷ Die Bibel oder die ganze Heilige Schrift des Alten und Neuen Testaments, nach der deutschen Uebersetzung Dr. Martin Luthers (Halle a.S., 1888).

uns heute. Und vergib uns unsere Schulden, wie wir
unsern Schuldigern vergeben. Und führe uns nicht
in Versuchung, sondern erlose uns von dem Uebel.
Denn dein ist das Reich, und die Kraft, und die
Herrlichkeit in Ewigkeit. Amen.

(Matt. 6: 9-13)

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