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Source: *ELH*, Vol. 57, No. 4 (Winter, 1990), pp. 811-833

Published by: [Johns Hopkins University Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2873086>

Accessed: 26-01-2016 08:09 UTC

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“OH, LET MEE NOT SERVE SO”: THE POLITICS OF LOVE IN DONNE’S *ELEGIES*

BY ACHSAH GUIBBORY

For modern readers, accustomed to distinct separations between private and public, love and politics may seem strange bedfellows. But recent studies have made us aware of important connections between amatory poetry and patronage, between the discourse of (courtly) love and the seeking of advancement by aspiring men at Queen Elizabeth’s court.¹ Arthur Marotti, especially, has analyzed the political circumstances and dimensions of Donne’s amatory poetry, arguing that we should see it as “coterie” poetry written in an “encoded” language, embodying Donne’s frustrated ambitions for socioeconomic, political power even when, *especially* when, he is writing about love.²

Marotti’s discussion of the interrelations between politics and the languages of love is deservedly influential. But his argument (both in the book on Donne and in his important earlier article on Elizabethan sonnet sequences) fosters a certain distortion, for repeatedly Marotti’s language implies that the *real* subject of this poetry is socioeconomic power and ambition. While he brilliantly shows the political dimensions of the languages of courtly love as used in Elizabethan poetry, the effect of his argument is to suggest not so much the *interrelations* between love and politics but the centrality of socioeconomic concerns. Love becomes merely the vehicle of the metaphor; the tenor is invariably political. In the interest of deciphering this political “meaning,” amatory relations between men and women tend to all but disappear.

I want to build on Marotti’s sense of the political dimension of Donne’s witty love poetry, by arguing not that love is a metaphor for politics but that love itself is political—involves power transactions between men and women. By privileging neither Donne’s ambitions for socioeconomic power nor his personal need for a fulfilling emotional relationship with a woman, I reevaluate the interrelationship between love and politics. I will focus on Donne’s depictions of amatory relationships—his representation of the female body, sexual relations, and sexual difference—to show how he represents power relationships in love and how love repeatedly

intersects public politics. In Donne's treatment of love in the *Elegies*, the public world of politics and the intimacies of the private world are often inseparable.³

The "direct, natural, and necessary relation of person to person is the *relation of man to woman*."⁴ Though the words are Karl Marx's, the notion was well understood in the Renaissance. As Milton's portrayal of the "society" of Adam and Eve makes clear, the relationship between man and woman is thought to constitute the basic unit of society. Apparently natural but also culturally determined, that relationship offers a potential image of the organization and distribution of power in the larger society. Milton's treatment of Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost* reveals his awareness of a political dimension to interpersonal, sexual relations. Donne, too, understood the political dimension of amatory relations, exploiting it in his *Elegies*. Donne repeatedly in these poems envisions relations between the sexes as a site of conflict, thereby mirroring a larger society in which there is considerable anxiety about the lines and boundaries of power.

Exploring male/female relations, Donne's *Elegies* focus insistently on the body, especially the female body. The human body commonly functions as what the anthropologist Mary Douglas has called a "natural symbol" of society—a "model" symbolically expressing the values and orders, powers and dangers, of the social body.⁵ Thus it is not surprising that Donne's representations of the body, as well as of male/female sexual relations, have a sociopolitical significance.

In discussing the male/female relations in the *Elegies*, I will deal with the misogyny evident in many of these poems, but often repressed in critical readings of Donne.⁶ There is in many of the *Elegies* a persistent misogyny, indeed a revulsion at the female body, which has provoked various responses. Some readers give these poems scant attention, preferring to focus on the more easily admired poems of the *Songs and Sonnets* like "The Good-morrow," "The Canonization," or "The Ecstasy," which celebrate a mutual love that attributes to the mistress special importance and value. Others see the misogyny as simply a matter of "literary convention" (which skirts the issue of why authors are attracted to some literary conventions and not to others), or as an example of Donne's desire to shock or his outrageous wit, or as one posture among many that Donne tries out in his poetry. But these critical responses effectively tame Donne's *Elegies*. Yes, Donne is being outrageously,

shockingly witty, but why are women the subject of degradation in so much of the wit? Granted there is humor in these poems, but jokes often have a serious dimension and reveal much about the person. And though Donne adopts various personae and tries out a variety of postures, at some level he possesses an ability to identify (even if briefly) with these roles. It is unfair to Donne's poetry, and inconsistent, to treat the misogynous, cynical poems as rhetorical posturing or as exercises in witty manipulation of literary convention (hence, not "really" meant) while reading the celebrations of mutual love as indicative of Donne's "true" feelings. Though we may not like to admit the presence of misogyny in one of the greatest love poets in the English language, we need to come to terms with it, especially in the *Elegies* where it appears so strongly. What I will be arguing about the *Elegies* is not meant to be taken as the whole picture of Donne—obviously, the canon is extensive and various, and his attitudes are quite different in many of the *Songs and Sonnets*—but it is one part of Donne's works that needs to be understood and historicized rather than repressed if we are to have a fuller understanding of the poet and the canon.

Many if not most of Donne's *Elegies* were written in the 1590s, when England was ruled by a female monarch who demanded faithful service and devotion from aspiring men.⁷ The mere presence of a female monarch is insufficient to account for the *Elegies*, but it does suggest an initial historical context for these poems. Elizabeth, the "woman on top" (to use Natalie Zemon Davis's phrase) was an anomaly in a strongly patriarchal, hierarchical culture in which women were considered subordinate to men.⁸ It is difficult to ascertain the effect that rule by a female monarch had on the position of women. Though she may have provided an encouraging example for women, it is likely that, as the exception, she actually confirmed the rule of patriarchy in English society.⁹ But for men there were tensions inherent in submission to the authority of a queen in what was otherwise a culture in which power and authority were invested in men. As Constance Jordan remarks, the prospect of a female ruler "could hardly have been regarded with anything but concern"; and the actual presence of a woman on the throne in England gave focus to a debate about the legitimacy of woman's rule.¹⁰

Tensions over submission to female rule are strikingly evident in Donne's representation of private love relationships in the *Elegies*.

Many poems attack or reject female dominance in love and attempt to reassert male control. Though Marotti has well described fantasies of control in these poems, it has not been sufficiently appreciated how much the degradation and conquest of women is presented as essential to that control, nor how these efforts to control woman have a special sociopolitical meaning. "Private" relations between man and woman are closely connected to the pattern of relations in the larger social body—a point recognized by Milton in his divorce tracts, for example, when he set about to reform the institution of marriage. Though the private and public spheres became increasingly separated in England during the seventeenth century, in the world of Donne's *Elegies* they are still closely interrelated.¹¹ Repeatedly, the attack on female rule in amatory relations spills over into an attack on female rule in the public world. Private love and public politics become subtly intertwined as Donne's amatory elegies are inscribed in politically resonant language. Many of the poems are both explicitly amatory *and* covertly political. Hence they possess a politically subversive potential at the same time as they probe the dynamics of amatory relations.

The conventions of courtly love poetry, with its chaste, unattainable, superior woman, desired and sought by an admiring, subservient, faithful male suitor, were especially appropriate for articulating complex relationships between Queen Elizabeth and the ambitious courtiers seeking her favors.¹² That Donne rejects and mocks these conventions in his poetry has not gone unnoticed. As Marotti well puts it, Donne in his *Elegies* is rejecting "the dominant social and literary modes of the Court, substituting plainspeaking directness for polite compliment, sexual realism for amorous idealization, critical argumentativeness for sentimental mystification, and aggressive masculine self-assertion for politely self-effacing subservience" (*Coterie*, 45). But it has not been sufficiently appreciated that the rejection of courtly love and the assertion of self are achieved in large part through a ritualized verbal debasement of women. It is common to speak of Donne's Ovidian "realism," but in some elegies, "realism" seems too mild a term for the debasement Donne substitutes for idealization.

Repeatedly, Donne's *Elegies* represent women, not as idealized creatures, closed and inviolable in their chastity, but as low, impure, sometimes even disgusting creatures. Donne rejects

“classical” representations of the female body (finished, elevated, pure), which characterized courtly and Petrarchan love poetry, in favor of the “grotesque” female body—not so much out of an attraction toward the vitality of the grotesque body as out of an impulse to demolish the idealized image of woman, thereby making her undesirable and hence, no longer an object of worship.¹³

Elegy 2: The Anagram wittily, systematically subverts the conventions of female beauty as the speaker tells how Flavia has “all things, whereby others beautiful bee” (2), but in the wrong order, proportion, places, or forms. Her small and dim eyes, large mouth, jet teeth, and red hair make her grotesque and “foule” (32). Like Shakespeare’s sonnet 130 (“My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun”), this elegy playfully mocks conventional Petrarchan descriptions of female beauty (golden hair, small mouth, pearly white teeth), but Donne’s details may also glance at the physical appearance of the aging Queen Elizabeth, who in her later years had visibly rotten teeth and wore a red wig.¹⁴ The poem itself reenacts the descent from high to low not only in its announced subject (the ugly mistress) but also in its movement from describing her face to describing her genitals, which are guarded by a “dirty foulness” (42) that will keep out all rivals and ensure her chastity for the man who dares marry her. “Though seven yeares, she in the Stews had laid, / A Nunnery durst receive [her], and thinke a maid” (48–49). Even “Dildoes” would be “loath to touch” her (53–54). The language of the poem unpleasantly links her face and her genitals—both are “foule” (32, 42). Just as the foulness of the one reflects the foulness of the other (and Donne uncovers both), so the larger implication of the poem is that this low grotesque female body mirrors, even in its distortion, the traditionally beautiful female body. She has all of “beauties elements” (9) and is thus an “anagram” of beauty. As in his *Paradoxes and Problems*, Donne delights in being outrageous, in exercising his wit in defending the indefensible. The paradox here serves to undermine the idea of female beauty (and hence desirability) and to suggest that “beauty” (and the power of beautiful forms) is humanly constructed—Donne suggests that the man can rearrange Flavia’s “parts” to make her beautiful just as we arrange “letters” different ways in order to produce a variety of pleasing “words” (15–18).

If *The Anagram* presumes a continuity (not merely a contrast) between the ugly and the beautiful female body, *Elegy 8: The Com-*

parison makes this connection explicit.¹⁵ The poem begins by contrasting idealized descriptions of the female body with grotesque ones:

As the sweet sweat of Roses in a Still,
As that which from chaf'd muskats pores doth trill,
As the Almighty Balme of th'early East,
Such are the sweat drops of my Mistris breast,
And on her necke her skin such lustre sets,
They seem no sweat drops, but pearl carcanets.
Ranke sweaty froth thy Mistresse brow defiles,
Like spermatique issue of ripe menstrous boils.

(1–8)

The focus on excretions, however, defiles the pure, classically beautiful body. Beneath the oppositions between high and low runs the sense of what these two supposedly different women share—an open, sweating, excreting, potentially diseased body. As in so much of his writing, Donne is obsessed with decay and death, here particularly associated with the female body. The nausea which surfaces elsewhere in Donne (for example in the *Satires* and *The Second Anniversary*) here is evoked by woman. Like *The Anagram, Elegy 8: The Comparison* tends to conflate face and genitals, the high and low parts of the body, metaphorically linking “menstrous boils” and “thy Mistresse brow” and moving from descriptions of the women’s heads to descriptions of their breasts and finally to their genitals.

The idealized description of female beauty is progressively undermined by the grotesque one. In spite of the contrasts drawn, the differences come to seem more those of perception or description (that is, verbal and imaginative constructs) than of “objective” material reality. If the “ugly” woman is associated with death, so too is the beautiful one:

Round as the world's her head, on every side,
Like to the fatall Ball which fell on Ide,
Or that whereof God had such jealousie,
As, for the ravishing thereof we die.

(15–18)

Beneath the appearance or illusion of beauty is foulness, dirt, disease, death. Though *his* mistress’s breast seems “faire,” the breasts of the rival’s mistress are “like worme eaten trunkes, cloth’d in seals skin, / Or grave, that’s durt without, and stinke within” (24–

26).¹⁶ And her breasts are an anticipation of things to come. Though *his* mistress's genitals are like a "Lymbecks warme wombe" (36),

Thine's like the dread mouth of a fired gunne,
Or like hot liquid metall newly runne
Into clay moulds, or like to that AEtna
Where round about the grasse is burnt away.
Are not your kisses then as filthy, 'and more,
As a worne sucking an invenom'd sore?

(39–44)

Mere touch is contaminating, defiling. The disgusting descriptions of the female body as diseased, impure, and polluting, themselves contaminate the idealized representation of woman so that by the end of the poem, the speaker's denunciation seems to include not just "comparisons" and the "ugly" mistress but woman generally: "Leave her, and I will leave comparing thus, / She, and comparisons are odious" (53–54). Perhaps the two mistresses described in the poem are not different women but rather a single woman seen in two ways. The misogynist thrust of the poem, which betrays the male speaker's desire to keep uncontaminated, may explain the discomfiting comparison used to represent the speaker's sexual relations with the beautiful mistress: "Such in searching wounds the Surgeon is / As wee, when wee embrace, or touch, or kisse" (51–52). The delicacy of mutual tenderness jars with the queasy sense of exploring tender (open? bleeding?) wounds.

The repulsion toward the female body evident in so much of the poem makes it difficult to worship or adore woman. By de-idealizing woman, Donne reconstructs male/female relationships—as embodied in the sex act—to confirm a hierarchy in which the male remains superior:

Then like the Chymicks masculine equall fire,
Which in the Lymbecks warme wombe doth inspire
Into th'earths worthlesse durt a soule of gold,
Such cherishing heat her best lov'd part doth hold.

(35–38)

This passage does more than describe the temperate heat of his mistress's genitals (which contrasts with the barrenness and excessive heat of the other woman's). By drawing on the Aristotelian association of the male with fire and spirit and of the woman with earth and lower forms of matter, it also reconfirms the traditional

hierarchy in which men were seen as naturally superior. As Aristotle explains in *De generatione animalium*,

the female always provides the material, the male provides that which fashions the material into shape; this, in our view, is the specific characteristic of each of the sexes: that is what it means to be male or to be female. . . . the physical part, the body, comes from the female, and the Soul from the male.¹⁷

In generation, which for Donne as for Aristotle confers a purpose or end on sexual intercourse, woman is like the warm limbeck, the necessary container—and at the same time the (in itself) worthless dirt, the earth—the material that needs to be informed by a masculine soul. Merging Aristotelian sex differentiation with Paracelsian alchemy, Donne represents man as contributing the heat, the “Chymicks masculine equall [in the sense of the original Latin *aequus*, ‘even’] fire,” as he “inspire[s]” the “durt” with a “soule of gold.” Thus even the seemingly idealized description of woman at last reconfirms her inferiority and subordination to man.

Donne’s emphasis on sex, on the body, and notably on female genitals in these poems has typically been seen as characteristic of the Ovidian influence, and of his “realism.” But it is a peculiar realism that focuses so exclusively on one part of the body. The speaker in the witty, satirical *Elegy 18: Loves Progress* assumes a superior posture as he denies woman the qualities of “virtue,” “wholesomeness,” “ingenuity” (21, 13) and defines her essence as her genitals, the “Centrique part” that men love (36). Men should pay no attention to the face and those higher parts of the female body, which are dangerous distractions that threaten to waylay or even “shipwracke” (70) men on their journey to the harbor of love: her “hair” is “a forrest of ambushes, / Of springes, snares, fetters and manacles” (41–42), her lips give off “Syrens songs” (55), her tongue is a “Remora” (58); her “navell” (66) may be mistaken as the port; even her pubic hair is “another forrest set, / Where some doe shipwracke, and no farther gett” (69–70). Seduction becomes a journey of exploration and discovery, but also potential entrapment for the unwary male. The female body he traverses actively seeks to thwart him.

Satirizing Petrarchan idealizations of women, Donne implies that such refinements are new and monstrous perversions of nature: “Love’s a beare-whelpe borne; if wee’overlicke / Our love, and force it new strange shapes to take / We erre, and of a lumpe a monster make” (4–6).

If worshipping woman from a distance and praising her virtue and beauty are modern, monstrous innovations, Donne implies he is restoring older, natural, and correct amorous relations. Mocking the platonic ladder of love (set forth first by Diotima in Plato's *Symposium* and later by Bembo in Castiglione's *The Courtier*) whereby the lover ascends from the beauty of a particular person to an admiration of beauty generally to a vision of ideal, transcendent beauty, Donne sets up a different pattern of love whereby men may "ascend" if they "set out below" and start from "the foote" (73–74).¹⁸ The "progress" of love is thus a journey of progressive mastery, in which the goal or "right true end of love" (2) (the female genitals) is kept firmly in sight at all times. The refusal to idealize, indeed the impulse to debase that "end" of love shapes the poem's final lines, which first describe sexual intercourse as paying "tribute" to woman's "lower" "purse" and then compare the man who uses the wrong means to attain this end to a person who foolishly tries to feed the stomach by purging it with a "Clyster" (91–96).

What we have here, as in so many of the *Elegies*, are strategies for reasserting male control in love. To some extent these are reminiscent of Ovid. Alan Armstrong's description of Ovid's contribution to the development of the elegy suggests both his special appeal for Donne and also a parallel in these two poets' redistribution of power in love relationships. Much as Donne would subvert Petrarchan conventions, Ovid himself undercut Latin elegiac conventions such as the enslaved lover, asserting instead that love is an art with the lover in control rather than ruled by his passions and mistress. Ovid gave the "elegiac lover a degree of rationality and self-control reflected in his urbane wit and complete self-consciousness."¹⁹ Such a description of Ovid, with its emphasis on mastery, is more valuable in explaining the appeal and usefulness of Ovid to Donne than the commonplace label of "Ovidian realism." Ovid's concern with control may have had a political dimension (though obviously not identical to Donne's), expressing a desire for independence in a society of limited freedoms, in which one could be exiled at the pleasure of the emperor. (One thinks of the premium Cicero and Horace in their own ways placed on rationality, self-control, and self-sufficiency as means of insulation from dangerous political vicissitudes.) Ovid's love elegies continue the stance of political non-conformity evident even earlier in Catullus and Propertius. But there are differences between Ovid's and

Donne's elegies, for gender assumes a special importance in Donne's efforts at mastery. The misogyny that surfaces in Donne's poems, and becomes a strategy for defining the male speaker's superiority, recalls not Ovid's elegies so much as Juvenal's *Satires*.²⁰

Since the conventions of courtly love were an integral part of the ideology of Queen Elizabeth's court, appropriated and encouraged by the queen as articulating and confirming her power, Donne's sharp rejection and subversions of these love conventions might be expected to have political implications. His choice of genre itself reflects not simply his literary taste but a political stance, for he is distancing himself from the preferred discourse of the Elizabethan court. He elects in the 1590s to write not sonnets of courtly love but satires and elegies—genres marked by misogyny and insistence on the male speaker's power and control. The anti-establishment implications of his choice of genres and of the misogyny in Donne's elegies accord well with our knowledge that in the mid 1590s Donne was associated with the Essex circle, having embarked on two expeditions against Spain under Essex in 1596 and 1597.²¹

Throughout the 1590s Essex was engaged in a prolonged struggle for power with the queen that set him against the court establishment and that ended only in 1601 with his trial and execution for treason. His conflicts were not only with Cecil and Raleigh, his rivals for political favor, but also with the queen herself—a point evident in J. E. Neale's conclusion that "had she let a man of Essex's nature pack the royal service and the Council with his nominees, she would probably in the end have found herself a puppet-Queen, in tutelage to him." Disdaining the subservience that characterized his stepfather Leicester's relation with the queen, Essex found it difficult to subject himself to Elizabeth's will, repeatedly betraying in his actions and letters a particular and growing dislike of serving a woman.²² A letter of advice from Francis Bacon after the Cadiz expedition warned Essex that his all too evident resistance to Elizabeth's authority was dangerous: describing Essex as "a man of a nature not to be ruled," Bacon asked "whether there can be a more dangerous image than this represented to any monarch living, much more to a lady, and of her Majesty's apprehension?" (*Lives and Letters*, 1:395).

Essex was ambitious for glory and honor. But that matters of gender were also involved is startlingly evident in the violent public argument that took place between Essex and the queen in summer 1598 over the appointment of a governor for Ireland. Angry at

the queen's rejection of his candidate, Essex turned his back on her in a "gesture of contempt," which prompted the queen to strike him on the ear. Essex put his hand on his sword, swearing that "he would not put up with so great an indignity nor have taken such an affront at the hands of Henry VIII himself" (*Lives and Letters*, 1:489–90). His anger at having to take this abuse from a woman is apparent in the letter he afterwards wrote Elizabeth, complaining of "the intollerable wrong you have done both me and yourself, not only broken all laws of affection, but done against the honor of your sex" (*Lives and Letters*, 1:493). Essex's feeling that there was something perverse in her exercise of authority, in his having to submit to a female ruler and accept her humiliations, was not limited to this occasion, and it was apparently shared by others. Young men surrounding Essex were privately saying that they would not submit to another woman ruler, thus reviving the issue of gender that Elizabeth had faced at the beginning of her reign.²³ In 1597 the French ambassador Sieur de Maisse observed that, though Elizabeth's government pleased the people, "it is but little pleasing to the great men and the nobles; and if by chance she should die, it is certain that the English would never again submit to the rule of a woman."²⁴

Such sentiments find an echo in Donne's privately circulated *Elegies*. The *Elegies* embody attitudes toward female rule that were also being expressed by Essex and his circle. The whole pattern of Donne's anti-Petrarchanism and revisions of gender relations betrays a discomfort with (indeed, a rejection of) the political structure headed by a female monarch. Intimate private relations between man and woman and the power structure of the body politic mirror and reinforce each other. If the private and the public are so closely related, perhaps a change in relations in the private realm will generate a corresponding change in the world of politics.

The political dimension of Donne's love elegies is particularly evident in the sense of seduction as mastery that pervades *Elegy 19: To his Mistres Going to Bed*, in which Donne moves easily between the bedroom and the political realm of empires and monarchs. In this witty, exuberant poem we are far from the degradation and disgust of *The Anagram* or *Comparison*. For the speaker joy, enthusiasm, and delight reign.²⁵ But even here, as the speaker commands his mistress to undress, Donne transfers power from the woman, desired and praised, to the man who hopes to possess her. She is wittily idealized and commodified through a variety of stun-

ning conceits that aim to conquer her (his “foe” [3]) through hyperbolic praise: she is a “farre fairer world,” a “beauteous state,” “flowery meades,” an “Angel,” “my America,” the repository of “whole joys” (in Donne’s wicked pun) (6, 13, 14, 20, 27, 35). But the other side of compliment, admiration, and reverence is the desire to possess and thus master the colonized woman. The speaker affirms his power not only through the accumulated verbal commands of the poem but also through a crucial shift in metaphor in lines 25–32:

License my roving hands, and let them goe
Before, behind, above, between, below.
O my America, my new found lande,
My kingdome, safeliest when with one man man’d,
My myne of precious stones, my Empiree,
How blest am I in this discovering thee.
To enter in these bonds, is to be free,
Then where my hand is set my seal shall be.

At the beginning of this passage the woman is the monarch, providing a license; but the moment she gives this license she loses her sovereignty. What was implicit from the first now is clear. The man becomes not only explorer but conquerer, and she becomes *his* land and kingdom. The repeated possessives reinforce the sense of his mastery, and by the end of this passage he has now become the monarch, setting his “seal.” Self-aggrandizement, of course, characterizes much of Donne’s poetry, even his divine poems, but the metaphors and images in these lines have a distinctive political resonance as they dethrone the woman and restore sovereignty to man.²⁶

As soon as this politically subversive note has been sounded, Donne momentarily retreats from its implications, first praising “full nakedness” (33) then flattering the woman as both a “mystique book” and a divinity who imputes “grace” to the special few allowed to see her mysteries “reveal’d” (41–43). But once her confidence in female superiority has been reestablished, Donne gives a final twist to the argument that conclusively and wittily reasserts male supremacy by placing the man “on top”: “To teach thee, I am naked first: Why than / What need’st thou have more covering than a man” (47–48). The act of sex confirms what is seen as the legitimate, rightful mastery of man—a mastery that conflicts both with the conventions of courtly love and with the political situation in England in the 1590s. Seduction fantasies, even as they represent

woman as supremely desirable, complement Donne's strategy of debasement, for both aim at restoring male sovereignty.²⁷

But, as readers have noticed, the mastery and control Donne's speakers strive for in the *Elegies* is often frustrated or incomplete.²⁸ The very metaphors describing women contain a disturbing potential for suggesting women's resistance to any individual man's control. The *Elegies* show a recurring tension between the male mastery asserted and an implicit female resistance to mastery which undermines the restoration of male sovereignty. The land, despite man's attempts to enclose and possess it, is always vulnerable to being "possessed" by other men, as the speaker of *Elegy 7* ("Natures lay Ideot . . .") only too well has learned. His mistress's husband may have "sever'd" her "from the worlds Common" (21), enclosed her as private property, and her lover may have further "Refin'd" her into a "bliss-full paradise" (24), but these acts prove inadequate attempts to civilize her. For all the speaker's position of superiority (he claims to be her teacher, even her God-like creator who has "planted knowledge" and "graces" in her [24–25]), she has thrown off his authority and is leaving him for other lovers. The poem ends with angry, impotent outbursts, in which verbal degradation reveals both the desire to control the woman through what *Elegy 16: On his Mistris* calls "masculine persuasive force" (4) and the striking inability to do so:

Must I alas
Frame and enamell Plate, and drinke in Glasse?
Chafe wax for others seales? breake a colts force
And leave him then, beeing made a ready horse?

(27–30)

The female body's "openness" subverts all attempts at permanent masculine control, and insures that dominance will always be unstable and precarious. As the speaker in *Elegy 3: Change* puts it, "Women are like the Arts, forc'd unto none, / Open to'all searchers" (5–6). The conventional representations of woman as land/earth and as water convey a sense of her openness, her essential resistance to boundaries or limits, which Donne wittily exploits:

Who hath a plow-land, casts all his seed corne there,
And yet allowes his ground more corne should beare;
Though Danuby into the sea must flow,
The sea receives the Rhene, Volga, and Po.

(17–20)

Embodying the Aristotelian identification of woman with the supposedly lower elements of earth and water, such representations both suggest the difficulty of mastering woman and reinforce the notion of her necessary inferiority to man, making male sovereignty seem natural and imperative. Though the receptiveness of their bodies shows women were not made to be faithful to one man, the speaker argues that women are made for men in much the same sense as nature, in the Judaeo-Christian scheme of creation, was made for man—hence, the comparisons of women to birds, foxes, and goats in this poem. Given such hierarchy and “natural” inequality, for a man to submissively serve a woman would be as wrong as for animals to rule man.

Donne’s discomfort with serving a woman is perhaps most obvious in *Elegy 6*, the opening of which draws a rich, complex analogy between love and politics:²⁹

Oh, let mee not serve so, as those men serve
Whom honours smoakes at once fatten and sterve;
Poorely enrich’t with great mens words or lookes;
Nor so write my name in thy loving bookes
As those Idolatrous flatterers, which still
Their Princes stiles, with many Realmes fulfill
Whence they no tribute have, and where no sway.
Such services I offer as shall pay
Themselves, I hate dead names: Oh then let mee
Favorite in Ordinary, or no favorite bee.

(1–10)

Distinguishing himself from others, he rejects in both political and amatory spheres a service in which the lover/suitor is submissive, flattering, and unrewarded, and the woman falsely idealized, made into an idol by her admirer. Instead, Donne offers a different kind of “service,” clearly sexual, which “pay[s]” the woman (compare the “tribute” paid into the woman’s “purse” in *Elegy 18*) and is in turn rewarded. This kind of service restores male dignity, for it is not servitude but mastery. But mastery is desire rather than accomplishment, for the poem’s fictive occasion is the discovery that his mistress is unfaithful.

Recounting their relationship, he represents her as a destructive “whirlpoole” (16) or “streame” (21), himself as the delicate “carelesse” (innocent) “flower” which is “drowne[d]” in the water’s “embrace” (15–17). This image of the destructive stream also

appears near the end of *Satyre III*, where the stream is explicitly identified with royal power:

That thou may'st rightly'obey power, her bounds know;
Those past, her nature and name's chang'd; to be
Then humble to her is idolatrie;
As streames are, Power is; those blest flowers that dwell
At the rough streames calme head, thrive and prove 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:
So perish Soules, which more chuse mens unjust
Power from God claym'd, then God himselfe to trust.

(100–110)³⁰

The dating of this satire is uncertain, but the anxiety about royal power (figured as female and identified with the watery female element) would seem to place the poem in the company of those clearly written during the reign of Elizabeth.³¹ These complex lines of *Satyre III* articulate both fear of and resistance to royal power, as the speaker, identifying himself with the “blessed flowers” and unjust monarchs with tyrannous streams, rejects idolatrous submission to earthly rulers and hopes to find ultimate (though not necessarily earthly) safety by dwelling at the calm head (God, the source of all power).

In *Elegy 6*, the deceptive mistress, likened to the whirlpool or stream, takes on conventionally “masculine” attributes. She is active, aggressive; he becomes the vulnerable, passive victim. Not the man but the mistress is associated with fire when like the “tapers beamie eye / Amorously twinkling, [she] beckens the gid-die flie” to his destruction (17–18). He is the “wedded channels bosome” (24) which she, the “streame” (21), has deserted:

She rusheth violently, and doth divorce
Her from her native, and her long-kept course,
And rores, and braves it, and in gallant scorne,
In flattering eddies promising retorne,
She flouts the channell, who thenceforth is drie;
Then say I; that is shee, and this am I.

(29–34)

The cumulative effect of this language, transferring conventionally “masculine” terms (for example, “brave,” “gallant”) to the woman,

is not to question traditional distinctions between male and female but to show her unnaturalness, thereby reinforcing conventional distinctions between the sexes.

These distinctions were being reexamined in medical circles, as Ian Maclean has shown.³² During the late sixteenth century a limited revisionist medical discourse emerged as anatomists and physicians, attacking the Aristotelian idea of woman as imperfect man, argued that women and men were equally perfect in their respective sexes. But in contrast to medical discourses, ethical, legal, theological, and political discourses remained conservative in their view of woman. For all the remarkable innovation of Donne's *Elegies*, they are conservative, even reactionary, in their representations of the sexes. Like Aristotle, Donne presumes clear sex distinctions. Aristotle had justified what he saw as clear sex differentiation among the "higher" animals according to the principle that "the superior one should be separate from the inferior one": "wherever possible and so far as possible the male is separate from the female, since it is something *better* and more divine" (*De generatione animalium*, 2.1 [732a]). In the *Elegies*, Donne like Aristotle is concerned to enforce firm sex distinctions. But whereas Aristotle assumes fixed, stable categories, Donne's poems embody strong anxiety about transgressions of hierarchical distinctions between the sexes—an anxiety understandable in a culture in which those categories, both physiological and social, could no longer be assumed to be fixed or stable. Indeed, Queen Elizabeth herself was effectively destabilizing these clear sex distinctions by publicly cultivating an androgynous image of herself as both a desirable maiden to be courted and a strong, martial ruler who was master of all her subjects and noted for her "masculine" qualities of judgment and prudence.³³

In Donne's *Elegy 6* the rebellious woman, imaged as both fire and water, has transgressed the supposedly natural, proper boundaries distinguishing the sexes (as did the promiscuous mistress in "Natures lay Ideot," which is, I believe, why the gender changes in the last lines, where the woman is compared to a male "colt," broken in only to be enjoyed by another). The woman's assimilation of "masculine" attributes has effectively "feminized" the man (he is like a flower, or the earth that is the stream's channel). Donne's strategy is first to expose the blurring of gender distinctions as unnatural and then to restore those boundaries and reassert mas-

culine dominance.³⁴ Once he has exposed her betrayal, the speaker can reassert the “proper” male authority and supremacy as he warns her:

Yet let not thy deepe bitternesse beget
Carelesse despaire in mee, for that will whet
My minde to scorne; and Oh, love dull'd with paine
Was ne'r so wise, nor well arm'd as disdain.
Then with new eyes I shall survey thee, 'and spie
Death in thy cheekes, and darknesse in thine eye.
Though hope bred faith and love; thus taught, I shall
As nations do from Rome, from thy love fall.
My hate shall outgrow thine, and utterly
I will renounce thy dalliance: and when I
Am the Recusant, in that absolute state,
What hurts it me to be'excommunicate?

(35–46)

His warning effectively gives him control as he suggests that her beauty, and thus her power and authority over him, depends on *him*. Questioning the conventions that idealize the mistress, Donne suggests that the lover empowers the mistress and thus ultimately holds the reigns of control. Perhaps this is all just wishful thinking on the speaker's part, and Donne is just wittily playing with literary conventions; but in this poem which brings together love, religion, and politics, these lines have a dangerous subversive potential. When one returns to the opening analogies between amorous and political service, this ending implies that just as the power of the mistress depends upon the good will of her lover (and the power of the Roman Church depends upon the willing consent of nations), so the power of the queen depends upon her subjects.

Elegy 6 is not the only poem to imply that monarchs can be deposed. In *Elegy 17: Variety*, the speaker rejects constancy for variety in love and invokes political language that suggests that no allegiance is permanent:

I love her well, and would, if need were, dye
To do her service. But followes it that I
Must serve her onely, when I may have choice?

(21–23)

Constancy in love entails a loss of man's original “liberty” (62)—it ties him to a single person and makes him subservient to a woman. Rather than being faithful to one woman (and submitting to

“opinion” and “honor” [50, 45], which Donne associates with woman in the ideology of courtly love), he chooses to follow a male monarch, making a “throne” (64) for the deposed Cupid. The political implications of this poem, in which worship/admiration of a single woman is replaced by loyalty to a king, would not have been lost on Donne’s Elizabethan readers. But the poem might well have been unsettling even after Elizabeth’s reign, for by the poem’s end the attack on woman’s rule has expanded to question the sovereignty of all rulers. Though the speaker proclaims he will now loyally serve the king of love by pursuing a variety of women, eventually even this pursuit will become tiresome and this new loyalty bondage.

But time will in his course a point discry
When I this loved service must deny,
For our allegiance temporary is.

(73–75)

Paradoxically, continual variety itself will prove boring, so for a change he will become faithful to a single mistress, if he can find one beautiful and worthy. Then the cycle of constancy and change will begin again. Envisioning a succession of allegiances, all of which are provisional and temporary, the poem both explores the psychology of desire and undermines an absolutist interpretation of monarchy.

In their revisions of power the *Elegies* thus have a politically subversive aspect which helps explain why Donne not only did not want his poems published but also in later years apparently regretted having written them (or at least, regretted not having destroyed them). Five elegies (including *Loves Progress* and *To his Mistress Going to Bed*) were refused a license to be published with his other poems in 1633. Probably it was not simply their eroticism that offended. Donne’s elegies might have seemed dangerous not just during Elizabeth’s reign but even later in James’s and Charles I’s, when Donne had finally achieved a position of prominence in the church, for repeatedly they imply that allegiances can be withdrawn, that monarchs can be deposed—which was precisely the fate that awaited Charles.

But for all their extended political resonance, I see these poems as distinctly (though not narrowly) the product of, and a reaction to, the historical situation of England’s rule by a woman. Donne’s anti-

Petrarchanism, his debasement of women, his various subversions of women's rule, and his repeated attempts to reassert masculine sovereignty embody both the problematics of male submission to a female ruler and Donne's not unrelated personal sense that male desire requires an element of conflict, a feeling of superiority (however precarious) and the promise of mastery. Participating in the debate about women's rule as they contribute to the development of the love elegy, Donne's elegies embody a central tension: while basically conservative, even reactionary, in their insistence on male superiority and rule, they repeatedly demonstrate woman's unruliness, her subversion of permanent male rule. Thus power (whether in private, interpersonal relations, or in public, social ones) is seen as radically unstable.

The *Elegies* suggest that Donne was deeply disturbed by the sense that the old hierarchical order was threatened by a blurring of gender and sex distinctions (he attacks effeminacy as well as voracious, rebellious, aggressive women), by conventions such as neo-Petrarchan courtly love that seemed to invert the "proper" order in male/female relations, and by rule of a female monarch which seemingly enabled these other disruptions. Clearly, many things in late sixteenth-century English culture besides the presence of the queen on the throne contributed to the unsettling of traditional orders. But even if Queen Elizabeth's reign actually reinforced the existing hierarchies, Donne's *Elegies* are striking evidence that he may have perceived in it a threat to patriarchy, with its assumption of stable, permanent hierarchies. These poems reveal a deep sense of the connectedness of private and political human relations—and a strong sense that hierarchical power relations characterize the most personal and private area of human experience.

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NOTES

¹ See, e.g., Arthur F. Marotti, "'Love is not love': Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social Order," *ELH* 49 (1982): 396–428; Louis Montrose's two essays, "Celebration and Insinuation: Sir Philip Sidney and the Motives of Elizabethan Courtship," *Renaissance Drama*, n.s., 8 (1977): 3–35, and "'Shaping Fantasies': Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture," *Representations* 1 (1983): 61–94; and David Javitch, "The Impure Motives of Elizabethan Poetry," in *The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Norman, Okla.: Pilgrim Books, 1982), 225–38. Lauro Martines has suggested similarly complex relationships between courtly love poetry and politics in a paper "The Politics of Love Poetry in Renaissance Italy," given at a conference on "Historical Criticism

in an Age of Deconstruction" (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, October 13–15, 1989).

² Marotti, *John Donne, Coterie Poet* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1986). Further references to this work will be cited parenthetically in the text. See also John Carey, *John Donne: Life, Mind, and Art* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1981), chaps. 3–4, who similarly argues that "power is the shaping principle in Donne's verse" (117).

³ A. LaBranche, "'Blanda Elegeia': The Background to Donne's 'Elegies,'" *Modern Language Review* 61 (1966): 357–68, argues that "the study of essential human relationships" is "a principal theme of the love elegy" as developed by Catullus and Ovid and later by Donne (357). LaBranche's argument should make us wary of concluding too narrowly that Donne's concern is only socioeconomic politics.

⁴ Karl Marx, "Private Property and Communism," in *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, ed. Dirk J. Struik and tr. Martin Milligan (New York: International Publishers, 1973), 134.

⁵ See Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1970), 12, and *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), chap. 7.

⁶ Marotti's otherwise excellent reading of *The Anagram*, for example, glosses over the antifeminism when he comments, "The point of the exercise is not to indulge in a virtuoso antifeminism, but to question an entire range of amorous customs and rituals" (*Coterie* [note 2], 48). Other critics simply ignore those poems where the misogyny is difficult to avoid. In *The Metaphysics of Love: Studies in Renaissance Love Poetry from Dante to Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985), A. J. Smith, gracefully describing Donne's celebration of mutual love and the interdependency of body and soul, lavishes attention on "The Ecstasy" but nowhere mentions the *Elegies* (chap. 3, "Body and Soul"). Recently, George Parfitt has correctly directed attention to the "reductive," "immature" view of women in the *Elegies* (*John Donne: A Literary Life* [London: Macmillan, 1989], 30–39), but the misogyny of these poems still remains to be historicized and the political implications explored.

⁷ I have used Helen Gardner's edition of *The Elegies and Songs and Sonnets* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965) for the texts of the poems, though I refer to the elegies by the numbers assigned to them by Grierson in his 1912 Oxford edition. Specific references are cited parenthetically in the text by line number. I accept Gardner's dating of the *Elegies* as generally belonging to the 1590s (xxxii–xxxiii), though it is possible a few are later. *The Autumnall* has long been assigned a later date. Annabel Patterson, reminding us to be wary of assuming that all the elegies are early, argues that several belong to the period of James I (see "John Donne, Kingsman?," in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. Linda Levy Peck [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, forthcoming]).

⁸ Natalie Zemon Davis, "Women on Top: Symbolic Sexual Inversion and Political Disorder in Early Modern Europe," in *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society*, ed. Barbara Babcock (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1978), 147–90. Davis's concern is with the symbolism of sexual inversions, especially the image of woman on top, in popular forms of misrule, but her discussion does not extend to Queen Elizabeth and the questions raised by the political rule of a female monarch. This issue has recently been addressed by Constance Jordan, "Woman's Rule in Sixteenth-Century British Thought," *Renaissance Quarterly* 40 (1987): 421–51.

⁹ Davis (note 8) suggests that in literature, popular festivity and ordinary life, sexual inversions both confirmed women's subjection and offered potential for subversion and change (see, esp. 183). But Montrose (note 1) observes that "because she was always uniquely herself, Elizabeth's rule was not intended to undermine the male hegemony of her culture. Indeed, the emphasis upon her *difference* from other

women may have helped to reinforce it. . . . The royal exception could prove the patriarchal rule in society at large" ("Shaping Fantasies," 80). Jordan (note 8) judiciously concludes that the actual presence of a woman on the throne in Britain did not affect social conditions for women but did prompt debate over woman's rule and thus contribute to the general climate of rational inquiry that challenged the notion of fixed, absolute values (424).

¹⁰ Jordan (note 8), 421. Jordan examines the writings for and against gynecocracy prompted by the accessions of Mary I and Elizabeth I. Most notorious is John Knox's, *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (Geneva, 1558), published the year Elizabeth ascended the throne, though it was written specifically against the Catholic Mary I. Knox insisted that woman's rule is "monstrous," "repugnant to nature," and a "subversion of good order" (see, for example, 5v, 9r, 12v, 17r, 27v, though his charges are repeated throughout). Knox's diatribe was impelled by his anti-Catholic Protestantism, but the treatise is also an exhausting argument for woman's natural inferiority to man. Knox's treatise was answered by John Aylmer's *An Harboure for faithfull and trewe Subjectes, against the Late blowne Blaste* . . . (London, 1559), which in counselling obedience to the queen suggested Knox's position was seditious (B1r, B1v, R2v). On the tensions for men posed by obedience to a female monarch, see also Montrose, "Shaping Fantasies" (note 1), 61, 64–65, 75.

¹¹ Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection* (London: Methuen, 1984), argues that during the seventeenth century the "division between the public and the private [was] constructed in its modern form" (14).

¹² See Javitch (note 1), and especially Marotti (notes 1 and 2), "Love is not Love" and *Coterie*, chap. 1.

¹³ See Mikhail Bakhtin's useful distinction between the "classical" aesthetic and "grotesque realism" as two manners of representing the human body (*Rabelais and His World*, tr. Helene Iswolsky [Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1984], 18–30). But as Peter Stallybrass and Allon White well point out (*The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* [London: Methuen, 1986], 5–6), Bakhtin idealizes the grotesque when he identifies it with festivity and vitality. Donne's representation of the female body in the *Elegies* betrays a sense or revulsion that contradicts Bakhtin's sense that the bodily element is always "deeply positive" in "grotesque realism" (19).

¹⁴ The French ambassador André Hurault, Sieur de Maisse, described her in 1597 as wearing "a great reddish-coloured wig. . . . As for her face, it is and appears to be very aged. It is long and thin, and her teeth are very yellow and unequal. . . . Many of them are missing" (*De Maisse: A Journal of All That Was Accomplished . . . Anno Domini 1597*, tr. G. B. Harrison and R. A. Jones [London: Nonesuch, 1931], 25–26). On Elizabeth's appearance see also J. E. Neale, *Queen Elizabeth I: A Biography* (1934; rpt. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1957), 356, and Paul Johnson, *Elizabeth I: A Study in Power and Intellect* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), 13–14, 374–75. According to Neale, her hair originally had been reddish-gold (28).

¹⁵ Marotti (note 2) observes that the "satiric debasement of women" in this poem "could imply a general critique of the cult of female beauty with its prescribed forms of hyperbolic praise" (*Coterie*, 50).

¹⁶ There may be yet another glance at the appearance of the aged queen here. The French ambassador De Maisse (note 14) recorded that the queen was given to displaying publicly, and fully, her "somewhat wrinkled" breasts (25, 36).

¹⁷ Aristotle, *De generatione animalium* [*Generation of Animals*], tr. A. L. Peck, Loeb Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1953), 2.4 [738 b]; cf. 1.2 [716 a]. Further references are cited in the text. Helkiah Crooke's *Microcosmographia: A Description of the Body of Man* (London, 1615), which collects anatomical information from "the best authors" from Aristotle and Galen to Casper Bauhin and André du Laurens, repeatedly cites Aristotle's description of the womb as "the

fertile field of Nature" (200, 221, 270). On Aristotelian ideas of sexual difference, see Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1980), chap. 3, and Thomas Laqueur, "Orgasm, Generation, and the Politics of Reproductive Biology," *Representations* 14 (1986): 1–41. Galenic medicine follows Aristotle's distinctions between the sexes, though Galen diverged from Aristotle in according women semen.

¹⁸ *Symposium*, in *The Dialogues of Plato*, tr. B. Jowett, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), 580–82; Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier . . . done into English by Sir Thomas Hoby* [1591] (London, 1900), The Fourth Book, 357–63.

¹⁹ Alan Armstrong, "The Apprenticeship of John Donne: Ovid and the *Elegies*," *ELH* 44 (1977): 419–42, esp. 433. Armstrong comments that Donne's elegies show "a more aggressive version of the techniques used by Ovid" (434) though the implications and significance of this aggressiveness are not the concern of his important article.

²⁰ L. P. Wilkinson, *Ovid Recalled* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1955), 44, describes Ovid's continuation of the non-conformist stance in Catullus and Propertius. For the misogynist strain in Juvenal taken up by Donne see especially Juvenal's sixth satire. Though Ovid depicts love as an art, a game, and a hunt, Wilkinson finds him "a sympathizer with women," with "an unusual inclination to see things from their point of view" (25, 86).

²¹ On Donne's connection with Essex, see Carey (note 2), 64–69, and especially M. Thomas Hester, "Donne's (Re)Annunciation of the Virgin(ia Colony) in *Elegy XIX*," *South Central Review* 4 (1987): 49–64. Hester argues that the opposition to the dominant court establishment that is inherent in Donne's association with Essex's circle underlies the anti-establishment implications of *Elegy 19*.

²² Neale, 350. On Essex and his relation with Elizabeth, see also Johnson (note 14), 369–74; J. B. Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558–1603* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), 365–68, 370–73; and Walter Bouchier Devereux, *Lives and Letters of the Devereux, Earls of Essex*, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1853). Further references to this work will be cited parenthetically in the text.

²³ Neale (note 14), 356.

²⁴ De Maise (note 14), 11–12. Montrose, who quotes this passage from De Maise, sees the attempts of Parliament and counselors to persuade the queen to marry as in part motivated by the degradation and frustration men felt with serving a female prince, especially one not subjected to any man in marriage ("Shaping Fantasies" [note 1], 80).

²⁵ Not all readers have stressed these qualities. Marotti (note 2), for example, finds this poem "a curiously antierotic treatment of a sexual encounter" (*Coterie*, 54). Carey's emphasis on Donne's obsession with power leads him to distort the tone of this poem, which he describes as "punitive," revealing a sadistic "urge to dominate" ([note 2], 106, 116, 117, 124).

²⁶ Cf. Essex's curious letter to Queen Elizabeth which reveals an urgent desire for mastery at the same time that he praises her as the object of all his desire: "If my horse could run as fast as my thoughts do fly, I would as often make mine eyes rich in beholding the treasure of my love as my desires do triumph when I seem to myself in a strong imagination to conquer your resisting will" (*Lives and Letters*, [note 22], 1: 292).

Carey (note 2) finds Donne "profoundly excited by the thought of majesty" (113), obsessed by "royalty" (115), but he does not consider that these matters are problematic or subversive. See Hester's (note 21) fascinating discussion of this elegy as a subtle, radical critique of the English colonizing in Virginia, of Sir Walter Raleigh, and (by implication) of Queen Elizabeth.

²⁷ Cf. Montrose's analysis of the seditious political implications of the seductive mastery of a queen ("Shaping Fantasies" [note 1], 62, 65). Marotti (note 2) argues

that Donne's seduction poems are vehicles for expressing fantasies of achievement and triumph in the social world (*Coterie*, 89–90). Both Montrose and Jordan ([note 8], 450) recognize that for Elizabeth virginity was a source of power, that to yield to a man in marriage entailed a diminution of her power.

²⁸ Marotti, *Coterie* (note 2), 52–53; also Stanley Fish's paper at the 1987 MLA, "Masculine Persuasive Force: Donne and Verbal Power," which argued that in the *Elegies* Donne and his surrogate speakers can never achieve the control they desire.

²⁹ See Marotti, *Coterie* (note 2), 56–57.

³⁰ For the text of this satire, I have used W. Milgate's edition of *The Satires, Epigrams and Verse Letters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

³¹ Paul R. Sellin, "The Proper Dating of John Donne's 'Satyre III,' " *Huntington Library Quarterly* 43 (1980): 275–312, questions the traditional dating of this satire as belonging to the 1590s, arguing that the poem grows out of Donne's experiences in the Netherlands in 1619.

³² On the revision of Aristotelian thought, see Maclean (note 17), 43–46.

³³ On the queen's androgynous image, see Montrose, "Shaping Fantasies" (note 1), 77–78. Sieur de Maisse (note 14) observes that the queen was "well contented . . . when anyone commends her for her judgment and prudence, and she is very glad to speak slightly of her intelligence and sway of mind, so that she may give occasion to commend her" (37–38).

³⁴ Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (note 5), 142, suggestively remarks that "beliefs in sex pollution" are likely to flourish in societies where the principle of male dominance is contradicted by other elements in the social life—which would suggest that misogyny and a reinsistence on female inferiority would flourish if the norm of male dominance in a patriarchal society was threatened by the rule of a female monarch. Donne's interest in sexual inversions, in the crossing of gender boundaries exemplifies her second category of "social pollution": "danger from transgressing the internal lines of the system" (122).