

A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE POETRY OF THOMAS CAREW

A Thesis

Presented to
the Graduate Faculty of the Department of English
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Jenny L. Penner
December, 1975

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Since the seventeenth century Thomas Carew has been variously labelled as a court trifler, a trivial writer, and a libertine, and his poetry has generally been regarded as mere froth. However, that estimation of Carew is a patently unfair one, since he reveals a poetry of many themes and voices. In his private voices he creates numerous dramatic situations through which he is able to present a variety of attitudes toward love, and in his public voices he writes numerous occasional poems for the court society of Charles I. Contrary to his reputation, Carew is not a simplistic poet who is to be read merely as an example of Cavalier libertinism. Like many other Stuart lyricists, he presents a kaleidoscopic vision of human relationships through multiple voices and themes.

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I. INTRODUCTION

As a member of the glittering seventeenth century court of Charles I, Thomas Carew acquired the reputation of a wit and a libertine, a reputation that was enhanced by both his poetry and his life. Immensely popular during the latter half of the seventeenth century, his poetry went through four editions between 1640 and 1671 and received commendations from John Suckling, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, the Earl of Clarendon, and Aurelian Townshend. So popular, in fact, was his beautiful lyric "Aske me no more" that it was probably the most imitated poem in the seventeenth century.¹ In contrast to the popular reception given him in the seventeenth century, the eighteenth century with its emphasis upon balance and decorum looked with disfavor upon Carew, especially after Pope concluded that he was a "bad Waller."² Faring no better with nineteenth century critics, Carew was described by William Hazlitt in 1820 as an "elegant court trifler,"³ an evaluation that has seldom been challenged even in our own century. What little attention accorded Carew has been based primarily upon an appreciation of his conscientious craftsmanship rather

than upon a recognition of any depth in his poetry. With the exception of such critics as F. R. Leavis, Rufus Blanshard, and Edward I. Selig, who have assigned him a higher place in the poetic tradition, Carew has primarily been thought of as a derivative poet, very much limited by a lack of genius and a concern with trivial subjects.

One of the recurring problems in Carew criticism has been a tendency to emphasize his biography over his poetry. Consequently, those libertine aspects of his life and his poetry have received far more attention than either his craftsmanship or his displays of wit. For example, critics usually allude to Izaak Walton, the great biographer of the seventeenth century, who described Carew as a "poet of note and a great libertine in his life and talke."⁴ Also cited is Walton's contemporary, the Earl of Clarendon, who similarly assessed Carew's life as fifty years "spent with less Severity or Exactness than they ought to have been."⁵ Even in our own century, the scandalous aspects of Carew's career have prompted such descriptions as "young rascal," "indolent fellow," and "violent lover."⁶ Naturally, this kind of criticism, along with that of Clarendon and Walton, has only served to increase Carew's notoriety both as an

"elegant court trifler" and as a Cavalier.

In the centuries since Carew's death there has been little interest in his canon or in his role in the literary tradition. In fact, the nineteenth century critics who commented on Carew, and even the twentieth century critic, Carl Holliday, have demonstrated a noticeable difficulty in conceiving of Carew's poetry as anything more than a lyrical comment upon his life. A few twentieth century critics, such as H. J. C. Grierson⁷ and F. R. Leavis,⁸ have pointed out the beauty and smoothness of Carew's verse and, as a result, have distinguished him on an aesthetic basis from the other Cavalier poets; however, they seldom expend much time in dealing with his poetry directly. Most of the other twentieth century Carew critics, including Douglas Bush,⁹ Joseph Summers,¹⁰ and Rufus Blanshard,¹¹ have approached Carew as a figure in the shadows of Donne and Jonson and have been, therefore, usually more concerned with his relationship to other literary figures than with his poetry itself. Generally, they have cited Ben Jonson as the major influence on Carew's smooth, highly polished verse and John Donne as the major influence on the intellectual framework of Carew's poetry. In

attempting to illustrate this important point, however, they have put most of their efforts into studies of the similarities between a few poems by Carew and those of his masters. As a result, their studies have concentrated primarily on showing how Carew consciously follows in the tradition of the two masters rather than in analyzing most of the poems in his canon. Rather consistently, then, scholars have ignored the majority of poems in Carew's canon and, on the whole, have failed to develop an adequate criticism of his poetry.

Rather than concentrating upon biography or history, however, this paper will attempt to demonstrate the inadequacy of the usual labels for Thomas Carew and to offer in their place an alternate and, it seems to me, more viable approach to his poetry. Much more than a court trifler, a trivial writer, and a libertine, he, like other Stuart lyricists, reveals a poetry of many themes and voices. He is concerned with such dichotomies as the physical and the spiritual, the beauty of life and the imminence of death, fickleness and constancy, and physical presence and absence. As H. M. Richmond lucidly explains, Carew's poetry, along with that of other early seventeenth century lyricists,

becomes a "tension of mental attitudes far exceeding in scope the initial sexual urge."¹²

Sir John Suckling, a contemporary of Carew's, recognized a basic difference in their poetic philosophies, even if modern critics do not. That difference, which Suckling records in two of his poems, proves to be one of the reasons why Carew merits more consideration than he has usually been given. In the first poem, "A Sessions of the Poets," Suckling wryly comments on the foibles of some of the versifiers of the day, among them Jonson, Carew, Waller, Vaughan, D'Avenant, and himself. Even though the poem is written in a humorous vein, it contains astute critiques of the aforementioned poets. In the case of Thomas Carew, Suckling pointedly describes and derides his friend's serious attitude towards poetry.

Tom Carew was next, but he had fault
That could not well stand with a laureat;
His Muse was hard-bound, and th'issue of 's brain
Was seldom brought forth but with trouble and pain.¹³

Advocating a much less serious-minded aesthetic himself, Suckling pokes fun at Carew's emphasis upon craftsmanship, thereby revealing his own rather limited conception of poetry as gentlemanly diversion. In contrast to Carew's

conscientious attitude toward craftsmanship, Suckling seldom bothered to expend much effort on composition and certainly was not much concerned about revision. Besides revealing Carew's aesthetic bent, Suckling's description may also represent a deeper insight into Carew's temperament and character. Implying more than conscientious craftsmanship, the phrase "hard-bound Muse" may also refer to the tensions of the mental process itself, tensions which Carew repeatedly demonstrates in his poetry through presentation of diverse and often contradictory attitudes toward love. Thus, his art, unlike that of Suckling, is the product of a belabored mind which brings forth its poetry "with trouble and pain."

Still another poem by Suckling gives credence to a more profound estimation of Carew's poetic world than the one to which critics generally subscribe. In the poem, "Upon my Lady Carlisle's walking in Hampton Court Garden," Suckling presents two speakers, Carew and himself, and their contrasting reactions to a beautiful woman. Speaking first, Carew describes Lady Carlisle's beauty, not in terms of her physical assets, but instead from the perspective of her remarkable effect upon the environment.

Carew alone perceives her positive transformation of her surroundings, and he describes that transformation in an almost ethereal manner, soaring above the present realities.

Tom. Didst thou not find the place inspir'd,
 And flowers, as if they had desir'd
 No other sun, start from their beds,
 And for a sight steal out their heads?
 Heard'st thou not music when she talk'd?
 And didst not find that as she walk'd
 She threw rare perfumes all about,
 Such as bean-blossoms newly out,
 Or chafed spices give?¹⁴

In hyperbolic terms Suckling mocks his friend's psychological rather than strictly physical response to a female. Presenting Carew in a humorous light, he depicts him as a love-stricken man, totally transformed by the woman's personality. So enchanted is Carew by her personality that he is moved to metaphoric descriptions of her transformation of the environment. In direct contrast to this perspective, however, is Suckling's strictly physical concern for Lady Carlisle's body.

J.S. Alas! Tom, I am flesh and blood,
 And was consulting how I could
 In spite of masks and hoods descry
 The parts deni'd unto the eye:
 I was undoing all she wore;
 And had she walk'd but one turn more,
 Eve in her first state had not been
 More naked, or more plainly seen.¹⁵

Though Suckling writes his poem tongue-in-cheek, he

nevertheless points to a basic difference in sensibility, which the poetic canon of each man reflects. This does not mean that Carew ignores sexuality, but that he sees it in a slightly different perspective. The physical does not receive his primary consideration, and it seldom becomes the sole attraction. On the contrary, the women in Carew's poetry are usually both mentally and physically beautiful, and they are most highly praised for their recognition of the necessity of equality in the love relationship. On the basis, then, of Suckling's two poems, one of which gives an indication of Carew's aesthetics and the other of his sensitivity, it is fair to conclude that the poetry of Thomas Carew may prove more varied than the label "libertine" would suggest.

Not only is it difficult to append the label "libertine" to all of Carew's poetry, but it is also questionable to even describe his life in such a fashion. He may very well have written erotic poetry and have conducted his life with "less severity or exactness" than he should have, but that does not mean that he was totally lacking in many of the period's accepted moral standards. Some of Carew's conservative moral attitudes are pointedly revealed in one of his letters

to John Suckling. The occasion of the letter was the rumor of Carew's impending marriage to a widow whom Carew had previously courted. In his usual sardonic, cynical tone, Suckling wrote a letter to his long-time friend, urging him to refrain from marriage to the widow. As Suckling wryly comments in his letter, one should never court a relapse after once being cured of the fever. After all, "to make Love the second time in the same Place, is (not to flatter you) neither better nor worse then to fall into a Quagmire by chance, and ride into it afterwards on purpose."¹⁶ Continuing his acid comments on marriage, Suckling caustically defines the nuptial state as "the curing of Love the dearest way, or waking a losing Gamester out of a winning dream: after a long expectation of a strange banquet, a presentation of a homely meal." After denouncing marriage itself in this witty and cynical fashion, Suckling then turns to the problem of marriage to a widow. A widow, he writes is a "kind of chew'd-meat." Thus, to ride upon one "half-tyr'd beast on the long journey of life" is absurd, if not stupid. Finally, he advises "Tom" to at least have the good sense to unite with a maid if he insists upon entering the marriage

bonds. 'Tis better (if a man must be in Prison) to lie in a private room then in the hole."

Carew's reply to Suckling's dry cynicism is superb. Not only does he manage to incorporate a similar wry humor into his reply, but he also is able to turn all of Suckling's points upside down with a very positive statement about love and marriage, one which other critics have generally chosen to ignore. As Carew remarks, "'Tis confest that Love changed often doth nothing; nay 'tis nothing: for Love and change are incompatible: but where it is kept fixt to its first object, though it burn not, yet warms and cherisheth, so as it needs no transplantation, or change of soyl to make it fruitful. . . ." ¹⁷ Carew's strategy in his letter is to counter Suckling's crude analogies with similarly gross metaphors of his own. By using the very same style and tone, he is able to point up even more effectively the inadequacy of Suckling's position. This technique of successfully imitating and yet revitalizing other styles is surely one of Carew's major talents, one which he displays to perfection in his poems on Ben Jonson and John Donne. In his rejoinder to Suckling, Carew explains that he does indeed "know what marriage is, and

know you know it not, by terming it the dearest way of curing Love: for certainly there goes more charge to the keeping of a Stable full of horses, then one onely Steed: and much of Vanity is therin besides: when, be the errand what it will, this one Steed shall serve your turn as well as twenty more." In his letter Suckling crudely defines the Widow as a piece of "chew'd meat," but Carew subsequently reverses the analogy and describes her as the "chewer, rather than the thing chewed." He compares her to "a strait-boot" that "will come on easily and do a man much credit and better service." In a last thrust at Suckling's almost obscene, yet humorous comments, Carew finally concludes that "it is better lying in the hole, then sitting in the stocks."

Carew's reply to John Suckling's letter is finally an affirmation of love, constancy, and marriage. Admittedly, it is presented in a terribly ironic and cynical vein, but that sardonic tone does not ultimately undermine Carew's purpose. It is indeed typical of him to adopt a certain style or a certain convention for the purpose of mocking it. In this sense, he is a superb critic as well as a love poet and an elegiast.

Like Suckling, Thomas Carew was a member of court

society, a position which influenced his poetry in both subject matter and tone. Consequently, any criticism of Carew must attempt to evaluate the influence of the court of Charles I upon his life and poetry. Carew arrived at the court in early manhood, after having been dismissed from the service of Sir Dudley Carleton because of a youthful indiscretion. As a result of his dismissal, Carew set his eyes upon the court and finally became the King's sewer in 1630, a position which he held until his death in 1640. At the court of Charles I, Carew acquired such friends as Ben Jonson, William D'Avenant, John Suckling, and John Crofts, and became part of a social milieu that cultivated beauty and the arts. Charles I, himself a man of refinement and education (although not a particularly astute "politician"), encouraged and generously supported the arts, among them poetry, painting, music, drama, and the masque. Because of the material support of the king and queen, the members of the court became dependent upon royal patronage and, consequently, produced an art that was often occasional.

The court itself was characterized by an almost fraternal atmosphere which allowed the King and his

subjects to cultivate the arts. This is not to say that there was never discord at Charles's court, because the need of monetary support undoubtedly prompted much jockeying for position and patronage. Yet among those poets who remained at court, there was an equally strong desire to perpetuate the good life of art and peace which the reign of Charles had come to symbolize for them. Their dedication to the Royalist cause is most vividly displayed in their defense of the King in his battles with the Scots and later in the Civil War. In an effort to perpetuate this conservative, Royalist, aristocratic, hierarchical world, the Cavalier poets, including Carew, Suckling, and Lovelace all fought for Charles either in the Scottish campaign or in the Civil War.

Because of Carew's position at court, he was careful to select those poetic subjects that would appeal to the king and queen. Like most of the other poets of the court, he wrote primarily love lyrics and elegies, and thus he confined himself to a somewhat narrow range of subject matter. However, within that limited range, he produced a poetry of many themes and voices as well as superior craftsmanship.

Notes

Chapter I

¹ H. M. Richmond, The School of Love. The Evolution of the Stuart Love Lyric (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1964), p. 110.

² Joseph Spence, Anecdotes, Observations, and Characters, of Books and Men. Collected from the Observations of Mr. Pope and Other Eminent Persons of His Time (London: W. H. Carpenter, 1820), p. 21.

³ William Hazlitt, Lectures on the Literature of the Age of Elizabeth (London, 1909), pp. 192-3.

⁴ Rhodes Dunlap, ed. "Introduction," The Poems of Thomas Carew with His Masque COELUM BRITANNICUM (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1949), p. xlvi.

⁵ Earl of Clarendon, The Life of Edward, Earl of Clarendon . . . Written by Himself (Oxford, 1827), I, 40-1.

⁶ Carl Holliday, The Cavalier Poets (New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1911), p. 81.

⁷ H. J. C. Grierson, Cross Currents in English Literature in the Seventeenth Century (London, 1929).

⁸ F. R. Leavis, Revaluation. Tradition and Development in English Poetry (New York: George W. Stewart, 1947).

⁹ Douglas Bush, English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 1600-1660 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1945).

¹⁰ Joseph Summers, The Heirs of Donne and Jonson (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970).

¹¹ Rufus Blanshard, "Carew and Jonson," Studies in Philology, 52 (1955), 195-222.

¹² Richmond, The School of Love, pp. 97-98.

¹³ R. G. Howarth, ed., Minor Poets of the Seventeenth Century (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1931), pp. 185-188, 11. 36-40.

¹⁴ Howarth, Minor Poets of the Seventeenth Century, pp. 199-200, 11. 1-9.

¹⁵ Howarth, Minor Poets of the Seventeenth Century, pp. 199-200, 11. 24-31.

¹⁶ The quotations from John Suckling's letter are found on pp. 211-212 of The Poems of Thomas Carew with His Masque COELUM BRITTANICUM by Rhodes Dunlap.

¹⁷ The quotations from Thomas Carew's letter are found on pp. 211-212 of The Poems of Thomas Carew with His Masque COELUM BRITTANNICUM by Rhodes Dunlap.

II. THE LYRIC POEMS

With the exception of one or two major poems, the lyric poetry of Thomas Carew is for the most part unstudied and unappreciated. The lyrics are usually dismissed with such labels as "libertine" and "froth," and Carew himself is just as promptly dismissed as one of the "mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease." Yet his poetry, although usually not equal to that of Donne and Jonson, has its own merit in both the technical and intellectual sense. More than an imitator of the two master poets, Carew, like Donne, is an innovator in the study and dissection of love. Throughout his lyric poetry, he deftly explores the complex subject of love by creating a variety of voices which present widely differing attitudes toward it.

To fully appreciate the inadequacy of a one-sided view of Thomas Carew, one need only look at the poetic canon itself.¹ There is found not only the voice of the court libertine, for which Carew is primarily known, but also the additional voices of the rejected lover, the constant lover, the absent lover, the complimentary lover, and the elegiast. Like Donne, Carew also considers the subject of love from the female point of view and

thus creates four poems with female speakers. As a result of his creation of multiple voices and moods, Carew is able to present a variety of viewpoints toward love, no single one of which may actually be called his own. Throughout the lyrics he consistently focuses on the conduct of practical affairs in a love relationship and, therefore, explores the many possible attitudes in any given situation. Like Donne, he strives to view this most complicated subject from as many angles as possible.

Although it is usually overlooked, the matter of voice is of major importance in Carew's work. As far as the majority of critics are concerned, the poems are the product of the poet's own voice and thus are merely a reflection of his life. However, from that critical stance arises a seemingly insurmountable problem. The poems simply do not agree and, more often than not, directly contradict each other. For example, in the poem, "Song. Eternitie of Love protested," the poetic voice admonishes lovers to seek eternal love, while in "The Second Rapture" it advocates relations with any "wench about thirteene." Obviously, the two poems reveal totally contradictory attitudes toward love,

which cannot be resolved by relying upon the principle of a single voice. Unless one recognizes the existence of a multiplicity of voices, presenting a variety of attitudes toward love, there is really no way of reconciling the individual poems or of making much sense of Carew's poetry.

Understanding the principle of voice in Carew's poetry depends first of all upon a distinction between its public and private aspects. The works which have a public voice, or one that speaks to a general audience, include praises of new books and plays, some of the verse compliments, warnings to prospective lovers, the country house poems, and, finally, the elegies. Those poems with a private voice, however, operate under the principle of a restricted rather than a general audience. In some instances, the private voice or persona speaks to himself in a kind of dramatic soliloquy, while on other occasions he is involved in a dramatic situation in which he addresses another person. Through the creation of a voice or a persona for his poems, Carew is able to present numerous postures toward love, ranging from the cynical lecher to the constant lover. Rather than conforming to the Cavalier stereotype, his poems differ

markedly in theme as well as voice, some advocating the carpe diem philosophy, others idealizing a permanent, mutual relationship. In this respect, he vividly demonstrates the wide scope of his love lyric rather than the limitations of a single perspective.

One of the major voices in Carew's lyric poetry is the complimentary lover, whose primary purpose is to offer a verse compliment to his lady. The verse compliment, of course, is nothing new in love poetry, since it dates back even to the classical writers. What is interesting about Carew's verse compliments is their variety in both voice and mood. In some of the compliments, for example, the lover praises the physical beauty of the woman by comparing her to objects in nature. In others, he assumes a much different stance and praises her mental qualities rather than her physical beauty alone. There are also those compliments in which the speaker assumes a very playful tone for the purpose of gently mocking the Petrarchan traditions. In other words, Carew creates a variety of voices in his complimentary verses which in turn enable him to assume many different stances and moods in this ancient lyrical form.

Of all the voices which Carew uses in the complimentary poems, perhaps the most interesting and the most unique is the persona who reveals a psychological rather than strictly physical perception of the woman. This voice stands in contrast to the persona in "Lips and Eyes" who sees only the mistress's beautiful exterior without also perceiving her unique personality. In such poems as "The Comparison" and "In Praise of His Mistress," however, the persona raises the very important question of the proper relationship of the lover to his mistress. Is the relationship to be entirely physical, or are there other factors to be considered? For such seventeenth century poets as John Suckling, of course, the usual practice was to place primary emphasis upon the sexual aspect of love. In contrast to Suckling, however, there were other Stuart lyricists, including Carew, who stressed the psychological, as well as the physical, response of the lover to his mistress's beauty. As demonstrated by Carew's poems, "The Comparison," and "In Praise of His Mistress," the woman's body no longer forms the sole attraction for the lover, but is instead only one of many assets that he

comes to appreciate and admire. Indeed, her physical appearance, although appealing from his perspective, may very well prove unappealing to someone else. It is her personality that has persuaded him of her beauty and worth.

Another example of the importance of a psychological rather than strictly physical perception of the woman's assets is found in the poem, "To one who when I prais'd my Mistris beautie, said I was blind." Here in a unique kind of compliment the persona affirms the beauty of his mistress in the face of adverse comment by declaring the blindness of the other man, rather than by enumerating the woman's physical assets.

For if her graces you discover,
 You grow like me a dazel'd lover;
 But if those beauties you not spy,
 Then are you blinder farre then I.
(p. 33, ll. 13-16)

From the lover's point of view, the other man possesses an inferior vision which is incapable of perceiving his mistress's true loveliness and worth. In summary, then, this persona's attitude depends finally upon a psychological rather than a physical response to the woman.

Whereas in many of Carew's verse compliments the psychological nature of the lover's response is made implicit rather than explicit, there are at least three

poems in which the poetic voice openly declares its importance in creating the woman's beauty. In "Ingrateful beauty threatned," the lover directly confronts his proud mistress Celia and claims personal responsibility for her reputation as a beauty.

Know Celia, (since thou art so proud,)
 'Twas I that gave thee thy renowne:
 Thou hadst, in the forgotten crowd
 Of common beauties, liv'd unknowne,
 Had not my verse exhal'd thy name,
 And with it, ympt the wings of fame.
 (p. 17, ll. 1-6)

Without the lover's unique perception of her beauty and his subsequent poetic rendering of it, no one else would even have been cognizant of her worth. Through the filter of his mind comes the transformation that gives her beauty life. In another of Carew's lyrics, "Griefe ingroست," the same idea is put forth again.

If she must still denie,
 Weepe not but die:
 And in thy funeral fire,
 Shall all her fame expire.
 (p. 44, ll. 7-8)

The mistress's continued disdain will not only result in despair for him but also in certain anonymity for her. She has not acquired fame because of her stunning beauty, as did the mistresses in the classical lyric tradition,

but instead because of the lover's unique perception of her beauty. His psychological response to her qualities has produced her fame.

Finally, the poem, "To the Painter," reveals, perhaps, even more vividly than the others, the emphasis that Carew places upon the importance of the lover's psychological response to the woman. Addressing the artist who is painting a portrait of his mistress, the lover explains the inevitable inadequacy of such a work; the artist cannot possibly incorporate the lover's unique vision into his portrait.

Yet your Art cannot equalize
 This Picture in her lovers eyes,
 His eyes the pencills are which limbe
 Her truly, as her's copy him,
 His heart the Tablet which alone,
 Is for that porctraite the tru'st stone.
 (p. 107, ll. 43-48)

It is the lover's mental and emotional perception of the woman that provides the most accurate representation of her beauty and worth. The artist can see only her exterior features, while the lover is able to penetrate her mind and emotions and then evaluate with his heart. Thus, the persona in this poem concludes that his compliment is inevitably more true and, thus, more valid than any which the painter could offer. Like the former poems,

this one also stresses the importance of the psychological nature of the attraction, as well as the need for a mutual relationship.

Another variation which Carew makes on the verse compliment is the inclusion of a voice which playfully mocks the Petrarchan conventions. The voice that Carew uses in this gentle satire, however, is never as sharp or critical as the anti-courtly poetry of Wyatt and Donne, who directly criticize the eloquent rhetoric that had become so fashionable in sixteenth century English poetry. Carew, of course, is not in a position to criticize the courtly ideal exhibited in much of sixteenth and seventeenth century poetry, since he himself is dependent upon the court of Charles I for his present position, as well as future patronage. In addition, his sentiments against the stylistic eloquence of the court poets and their emphasis upon manner rather than matter are simply not as strongly felt and, consequently, not as strongly expressed as those of Wyatt and Donne. Carew, primarily, is concerned with the excesses of the tradition, and by poking fun at those excesses, he hopes to remedy them.

"The Complement" serves as a good example of Carew's alteration of the Petrarchan conventions. The voice in this poem at first assumes the stance of the typical courtly lover who carefully catalogues his mistress's charms. Employing the traditional technique of hyperbole and metaphor, he compares her hair to "threeds of lawne," her cheeks to flowers, her lips to coral, her neck to a silver pillar, her breasts to mountains of snow, and so on, as he maintains the usual order of head to foot description. What makes the poem unique, however, is this persona's alteration of the expected pattern. Rather than strongly affirming his love for all her beautiful parts, he playfully and repeatedly remarks that "I do not love thee" for each of those physical assets that he so carefully describes. Gradually, the poem builds in intensity as one wanders for what other possible reason the lover could value his mistress so much. Finally, in the last stanza the speaker delightfully and gently turns the whole poem around by remarking that indeed he loves her, not for any one of those things alone, but for all of them together.

I love not for those eyes, nor haire,
Nor cheekes, nor lips, nor teeth so rare;
Nor for thy belly, nor the rest:

Nor for thy hand, nor foote so small,
 But wouldst thou know (deere sweet) for all.
 (p. 101, ll. 61-66)

This last stanza, of course, points up what the speaker in this poem has been trying to do. His rhetorical technique is actually two-fold. On the one hand, he gently mocks the Petrarchan convention which insists upon a detailed description of the woman's parts by making that last stanza a literal list of her physical assets. On the other hand, he also uses a delightful and playful tone to create a genuine compliment for a beautiful woman.

Still another alteration that Carew's complimentary voice makes upon the Petrarchan tradition is found in "The Comparison." The voice in this poem, like the voice in "The Complement," begins with an ironic version of the list of beautiful parts. The lover informs his mistress that her "tresses are not threads of gold," her eyes are not like diamonds, her lips are not like rubies, and so on. According to the lover, those stock hyperboles are actually inadequate descriptions of his mistress's beauty, because they are mere earthly comparisons. At this point the persona playfully pushes the usual Petrarchan technique of hyperbolic description to the

extreme by creating a new series of hyperboles which compare the mistress to heavenly rather than earthly things. By piling hyperbole upon hyperbole, he points up the absurdity of such overdrawn comparisons and thus mocks the Petrarchan convention itself. Moreover, he also embellishes his heavenly hyperboles with allusions to classical mythology, another technique in the Petrarchan tradition. The crimson on the mistress's cheek is like "that redd / That Iris struts in when her mantl's spread" (p. 99, ll. 17-18). Her white teeth are like the color of Leda's swan, and her breath is actually Jove's frankincense. It is at the conclusion of "The Comparison," however, that the speaker most effectively undercuts the tradition of excessive praise of the mistress's physical parts. Whereas in the first part of the poem he had indirectly mocked those conventions, in the last part of the lyric he explicitly states the far greater importance of the inner person.

Faire Goddess, since thy feature makes thee one,
 Yet be not such for these respects alone;
 But as you are divine in outward view
 So be within as faire, as good, as true.
(p. 99, ll. 25-28)

Since the outward appearance is finally not the woman's most important asset, mere cataloging of her physical

beauty will not ultimately satisfy the lover's needs. From this persona's perspective, it is the inner character rather than the external appearance which gives the woman true beauty and worth. Thus, the speaker in this poem moves from gentle mockery of a tradition which emphasizes the woman's physical beauty to the affirmation of the importance of inner qualities.

In contrast to the playful tone of the persona who gently pokes fun at the Petrarchan traditions, the voices in such verse compliments as "Aske me no more," "Song Celia Singing," and "A New-yeares Sacrifice. To Lucinda" are actually more representative of the serious tone exhibited in the majority of the verse compliments. In particular, the beautiful lyric, "Aske me no more," is one of Carew's most sophisticated poems in both tone and voice. Ostensibly, the poem seems to follow the old tradition of praising the woman's physical assets. The lover begins by comparing her beauty to that of the rose, the sun, the nightingale, and the stars, all standard images in verse compliments. However, the dramatic situation in the poem transforms the traditional compliment, which usually praises those aspects of beauty that are transitory, into a profound tribute to those aspects

of beauty that are eternal. In response to his mistress's questions, the lover repeatedly voices the refrain, "Aske me no more." Apparently, she has evinced serious and prolonged concern over those elements in nature which either decay or disappear. Where goes the fading rose when June is past? What happens to the sunshine after day, the nightingale after May, and the star after its fall from the heavens? And, of course, the final question implicit in her mind must concern the transitory nature of her own beauty. What will happen to their love when her beauty is gone? In contrast to his mistress's apprehensiveness, the lover reveals no anxiety about the possible decay of her beauty. The carpe diem theme has no place in his philosophy of love. He not only perceives the beauties of nature reflected in her physical presence today, but also assures her of the eternal quality of her beauty that will be reflected in her presence forever. What insures that permanence is the eternal presence of the "Phenix," her heart or spirit, which continually gives birth to her beauty. Not a matter of mere physical assets, her beauty exists in his mind where she becomes the repository of all beauties in all times. Once again, the love

relationship ultimately rests upon a psychological rather than strictly physical response to each other.

In the verse compliments Carew is working within an old tradition simply by choosing that particular form, and yet at the same time he is making some profound alterations upon that same tradition. Just as he deftly incorporates Suckling's style into a letter which criticizes Suckling's attitudes, Carew also uses the Petrarchan conventions in his verse compliments in such a way as to point up their inadequacies. In addition to gently mocking the excesses of the Petrarchan traditions, he also emphasizes the importance of a psychological perception of the woman rather than a strictly physical one. From this perspective, the woman becomes more of a human and more of an equal, rather than a goddess, as in the Petrarchan tradition, or a sex object, as in the classical tradition. To achieve this wide range of attitudes and tones, he creates a variety of voices, some playful, some serious, some profound, and he places them in dramatic contexts.

In addition to the varied personas within the verse compliments, there is a second major voice in Carew's poetry--the rejected lover, another traditional lyric subject. In most of the poems in this category

Carew again uses a private voice, speaking in a soliloquy framework or in the context of a dramatic situation. In either case, the rejection which the lover experiences and over which he laments is usually not so much a case of total repudiation as it is a refusal by the mistress to contribute and share equally in the love experience. The word "equall," one of Carew's most frequently used terms, has special significance in his poetry, because it reveals a continuing emphasis upon the necessity of reciprocity in the love relationship. In this sense, Carew transforms the traditional subject of the rejected lover into the more complicated question of the role of man and woman in any relationship. Rather than a goddess who is far removed from them, as in the Petrarchan tradition, the speakers in Carew's poetry usually prefer a woman whose humanity enables her to respond to them on a personal level.

One example of this desire for a more equal relationship is found in the poem, "Mediocritie in love rejected," in which the persona demands either the woman's total commitment or else her total rejection. He does not share her conception of love as a game to which one gives half-hearted devotion. Similarly, the speaker in "A Divine Mistress" also states his preference for a

relationship based upon reciprocity. He begins his soliloquy by describing the extraordinary beauty of the woman, a beauty so remarkable, in fact, that one would assume she was divine. After affirming her loveliness, however, the lover explains that he would actually be more content with a less beautiful but more cooperative woman who would forego the constant display of disdain. Rather than a far-removed goddess, to whom he must always be subservient and from whom he most always receive rejection, he desires an earthly woman who will share equally in their love relationship. As he remarks, "She hath too much divinity for mee, / You Gods teach her some more humanite."

In "Disdaine returned," one of Carew's finest poems, he again employs the voice of the rejected lover. Speaking to himself in a soliloquy framework, the persona recalls his tempestuous relationship with Celia, and as a result of that recollection he resolves never to return to his former state. Although he vividly remembers the woman's attractiveness, he finally concludes that a person's surface beauties are never as important as the inner realities.

Hee that loves a Rosie cheek,
Or a corall lip admires,
Or from star-like eyes doth seeke

Fuell to maintaine his fires;
 As old Time makes these decay,
 So his flames must waste away.
 (p. 18, ll. 1-6)

In "Disdaine returned," as in many of his other lyrics, Carew also employs the theme of the ravages of time upon external beauty. Rather than making the theme on this occasion a part of the seduction process, however, Carew uses it to show the insignificance of a lovely exterior.

But a smooth, and stedfast mind,
 Gentle thoughts and calme desires,
 Hearts, with equall love combind,
 Kindle never dying fires.
 Where these are not, I despise
 Lovely cheekes, or lips, or eyes.
 (p. 18, ll. 7-12)

Using an idea also found in Donne's "Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," the speaker asserts that without the "smooth and stedfast mind," the "gentle thoughts and calme desires," and "hearts, with equall love combind," the cheeks, lips, and eyes of a woman are of no consequence. Only hearts equally united in love are able to produce fires that will never be extinguished. Thus, from this persona's point of view, the real significance of a person is found in the mind, not merely in physical characteristics. Unfortunately, in Celia's mind the lover finds only pride and scorn.

Again and again in the poetry dealing with the rejected lover, the various personas call for an end to pride, disdain, cruelty, scorn, inconstancy, and coldness, for which must be substituted the "equall flames" of love. Even in the seduction poems like "To A. L. Perswasions to love," the speaker insists upon a mutual involvement rather than a one-sided enjoyment. The concept of a mutual sympathy, then, becomes one of the important means by which Carew and other Stuart poets cope with the complicated aspects of sexual attraction.

The most famous of all of Carew's personas is the libertine, the voice most often associated with the Cavaliers. Since the libertine voice almost always incorporates erotic description and indecent proposals into the poem, it has achieved far more notoriety than any of Carew's other poetic voices. Yet the libertine posture in Carew's poetry is remarkably varied in tone and mood, its variety depending upon the situation which the poet has created. For example, the libertine voice in "The Second Rapture" contrasts markedly with the libertine persona in "A Rapture." One is obscene, while the other is not, and yet they both are part of the libertine tradition. The difference lies in the

shades of tone and mood revealed in the speaker of the poem and in his unique dramatic situation.

The most obvious and, indeed, most outrageous of Carew's libertine poems is "The Second Rapture," a work often cited by critics as representative of the kind of sensuality in which Carew revels. However, the poem must not be construed as a statement of Carew's personal philosophy, but instead should be understood as one of the many dramatic situations which he creates to present still another attitude toward love. One of his most exaggerated personas, the voice in "The Second Rapture" is an old lecher who seemingly has lost the fires of sex. At the opening of the poem the speaker carefully expounds upon the nature of true happiness to another man. He begins his explanations by listing those things which do not constitute happiness.

No worldling, no, tis not thy gold,
Which thou dost use but to behold;
Nor fortune, honour, nor a good wife,
That makes thee happy; these things be
But shaddowes of felicite.

(p. 103, ll. 1-6)

The first part of the poem is actually an ironic introduction to what is really the poem's main idea. From the way in which the speaker addresses the other man, it would appear that he himself is some kind of

aescetic or recluse who is not entangled in worldly affairs. He calls the man "worldling," implying that his acquaintance is engrossed in the concerns of this present world. Moreover, the speaker explains that what the other man assumes to be happiness is really only a shadow of happiness. By this point in the poem, the speaker's rhetorical devices have prepared the reader for some pious lecture on the nature of true happiness. What follows in the rest of the poem, however, is actually quite a shock, as the reality of the speaker's character is vividly unveiled.

Give me a wench about thirteene,
 Already voted to the Queene
 Of lust and lovers . . . (p. 103, ll. 7-9)

Whose tender touch, will make the blood
 Wild in the aged, and the good . . . (p. 103, ll. 13-14)

By the middle of the poem, the nature of the persona's character becomes clear. He is an old man past sixty, who hopes again to "make the blood / Wild in the aged and the good . . ." Assuming that a young, beautiful girl will remedy his impotence and "renew the age" and "the old decayed appetite," he longs for her kisses upon his withered "mouth of threescore years."

This is true blisse, and I confesse,
 There is no other happiness.
 (p. 104, ll. 27-28)

In his advice to the worldling, the persona remarks that riches, fortune, honor, long life, children, friends, and a wife cannot ultimately produce happiness; only sexual renewal can provide true bliss. Much like January in Chaucer's "The Merchant's Tale," the old lecher in this poem also believes that, regardless of age, one must seek the gratification of the senses. Thus, the persona in Carew's version of the union of age and youth is so highly exaggerated and grotesque (obscene if you will) that he is probably the most easily recognizable voice in all of Carew's poetry.

With the cynical old lecher as persona, "The Second Rapture" differs markedly in tone from that of Carew's most famous poem, "A Rapture." Although they are usually both cited as examples of the libertine position, they actually reveal dissimilar tones and voices. In "A Rapture" the persona exhibits no cynicism or perverseness in his seduction of his mistress, but instead presents his personal conception of not only the beauty but also the innocence of physical pleasure. Admittedly, the poem is erotic, but that does not mean

that it is also obscene or distasteful. On the contrary, it is a remarkable seduction poem which is characterized by two seemingly paradoxical qualities--innocence and eroticism.

Unlike the arguments in other seventeenth century seduction poems, such as Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" and even Carew's own "Song. Perswasions to Enjoy," the argument in "A Rapture" does not include the carpe diem philosophy, and it does not depend upon a cynical or playful tone for effect. In a very serious tone, the lover praises the natural quality of their love, which contrasts sharply with the artificiality, sterility, and hypocrisy of the conventions that condemn that relationship. Even though the poem contains highly erotic elements, they are placed in a philosophical framework that points up the absurdity of society's mores.

The Gyant, Honour, that keepes cowards out,
Is but a Masquer, and the servile rout
Of baser subjects onely, bend in vaine
To the vast Idoll, whilst the nobler traine
Of valiant Lovers, daily sayle betweene
The huge Collozes legs, and passe unseene
Unto the blissful shore . . .

(p. 49, ll. 3-9)

Seeking to consummate their relationship, the lover makes a very good case for the rejection of the usual

obstacle to physical pleasure, the preservation of honor. Only a "weak modell wrought / By greedy men," honor is simply a social form, which actually perverts the laws of nature. Thus, the first major point in the lover's argument is the fraudulence of honor. From that assertion he moves easily into the second major argument in the persuasion process--namely the unnaturalness of abstinence.

. . . nor is it just that Hee
Should fetter your soft sex with Chastitie,
Which Nature made unapt for abstinence.
(p. 53, ll. 151-153)

Rather than abstinence, explains the lover, the laws of nature dictate fruition. Moreover, by obeying the laws of nature, one also enjoys the pleasures of physical intercourse, which the speaker proceeds to describe in rich detail.

The nature of the persona's persuasion in this poem is two-fold. There is the philosophical framework which discounts honor and uplifts nature. Secondly, there is the creation of a blissful paradise in which the consummation hopefully will occur. In this paradise, or "Loves Elizium," resides "the Queene of Love and Innocence, / Beautie and Nature," who "banishes all

offense." The love scene itself is even described in religious terms, which succeed in pointing up the almost spiritual nature of their physical union. In this atmosphere of "holy vapours" and "steadfast peace," the lover hopes to create such a blissful environment for their relationship that further resistance will be forgotten.

Then shall thy circling armes, embrace and clip
My willing bodie, and thy balmie lip
Bathe me in juyce of kisses, whose perfume
Like a religious incense shall consume
And send up holy vapours, to those powres
That blesse our loves, and crowne our sportfull
houres,
That with such Halcion calmenesse, fix our soules
In steadfast peace, as no affright controules.
(p. 51, ll. 91-98)

It is in this atmosphere of innocence and purity that the lover introduces the erotic descriptions of intercourse, which in this context become beautiful rather than obscene.

Because of the serious tone of its persona, Carew's "A Rapture" must be seen as one of his more serious efforts in the presentation of numerous attitudes toward the love relationship. Like Donne's "Elegy XIX" ("Going to Bed"), "A Rapture" follows the tradition of the seduction poem, but ultimately it is much more than a call to bed for physical pleasure. Instead, it is

a plea for innocent and free love, unrestricted by the hypocrisy of the social order. In contrast to this view, however, many earlier critics have stressed only the sensuous imagery in the poem, completely disregarding the lover's serious objections to the artificial restraints of "Honor" and custom imposed by man upon the natural relationship. Not the usual seduction poem, this work serves as another example of the kinds of transformations that Carew performs upon traditional love themes through the use of a variety of personas.

Another of his ~~seduction~~ poems, usually considered an example of the libertine posture, is "To A. L. Perswasions to Love." Unlike "A Rapture," it does include the traditional carpe diem argument, but it also presents a surprising affirmation of the need for permanency in a relationship. Given Carew's reputation through the centuries, one would certainly anticipate the speaker's utilization of such arguments as the brevity of youth and the evanescence of beauty in his efforts to persuade his mistress to yield to him. Those standard carpe diem arguments are in keeping with the tradition and art of seduction, and this persona makes use of them to the fullest.

For that lovely face will faile,
Beautie's sweet but beautie's fraile;

'Tis sooner past, 'tis sooner done
 Than Summers raine, or winters Sun:
 Most fleeting when it is most deare,
 'Tis gone while wee but say 'tis here.
 (p. 4, ll. 31-35)

What one does not anticipate, however, is the center section of the poem in which the lover advises A. L. to select a man who will love her not only in the present while her beauties exist but also in the future when they have departed. This second advice comes as somewhat of a surprise, not because it represents a change in tone in the poem, but because it is not usually associated with the seduction tradition.

Then wisely chuse one to your friend,
 Whose love may, when your beauties end,
 Remaine still firm . . .
 (p. 5, ll. 49-51)

Cull out amongst the multitude
 Of lovers, that seek to intrude
 Into your favor, one that may
 Love for an age, not for a day . . .
 (p. 5, ll. 55-58)

It must be emphasized again that the lover's tone is not altered when he moves from the carpe diem argument to that of the permanent relationship; from the beginning of the poem he displays a sincerity that seems to preclude a cynical interpretation of his two-fold advice to A. L. Like the complimentary and the rejected lovers, this persona also represents another possible

attitude toward love, one which combines immediacy as well as permanency.

Throughout his lyric poetry, Thomas Carew creates a variety of moods and voices, including the complimentary lover, the rejected suitor, and the libertine. There is yet another voice in his canon, the constant lover, but generally that speaker is overlooked by commentators since he does not lend support to Carew's reputation as a libertine.

Unlike the other personas in his poetry, the constant lover continually looks beyond the gratification of the physical nature to the importance of the moral and spiritual natures. In contrast to the cynical old lecher in "A Second Rapture," this persona, like some of the speakers in the verse compliments, emphasizes the beauty of his mistress's mind which in turn illuminates her external beauty. The mistress of the constant lover also deserves to be known for her external beauty, but only insofar as it complements the true beauty of her mind. In addition to his praise of inner beauty, this persona stresses such equally serious values as purity and constancy. As demonstrated in the poem, "Good Counsel to a young Maid," the constant lover is concerned

less with physical proportion than with absolute values. Although Edward Selig interprets this lyric as a cynical, ironic comment upon innocence,² actually the poem (as well as its counterpart by the same name) represents a rather straightforward warning against promiscuity and an encouragement of purity and constancy. In the first of the two poems the persona addresses a young girl and admonishes her to beware of the usual techniques of the lover. According to the counsel of the speaker, the lover's tears are merely "smooth streames" designed to elicit her pity and ultimately to gain her consent. Moreover, the speaker also warns her to beware of the many poems, "netts, of passions finest thread," which the lover will compose to "catch her maiden-head." Upon examination of the persona's counsel, one realizes that he is actually warning the woman about the dangers of succumbing to those elements of the Petrarchan tradition which her lover might incorporate into his seduction.

Rather let the Lover pine,
Then his pale cheekes, should assigne
A perpetuall blush to thine.
(p. 13, ll. 16-18)

Rather than giving any credence to the lover's compliments, his tears, and his poems, the young girl should

ignore his advances and reject all of his proposals.

In the second "Good counsell to a Young Maid," the speaker similarly warns a young female listener against indiscriminate love. She too is admonished to spurn the usual techniques of the courtly lover. The man who courts her on bended knee, who submits himself to her service, and who adores her as he would a deity must be rejected, because all his protestations are deadly snares to entrap her.

So shalt thou be despis'd, faire Maid,
 When by the sated lover tasted;
 What first he did with teares invade,
 Shall afterwards with scorne be wasted;
 When all thy Virgin-springs grow dry,
 When no streames shall be left, but in thine eye.
 (p. 25, ll. 13-18)

Rather than revealing a cynical tone about love, the speaker in the poem puts forth a serious warning about the consequences of indiscriminate love.

Besides the desirability of purity, still another characteristic stressed by the constant lover is permanency, a quality idealized in such poems as "Eternitie of love protested," "Upon a Ribband," and "A Pastorall Dialogue." In "Eternitie of love protested," the speaker criticizes those whose love is characterized by mutability.

How ill doth he deserve a lovers name,
Whose pale weake flame,
Cannot retaine
His heate in spight of absence or disdain;
But doth at once, like paper set on fire,
Burne, and expire!
True love can never change his seat,
Nor did he ever love, that could retreat.
(p. 23, ll. 1-8)

Totally opposed to a relativistic attitude toward love, this speaker, much like Donne's persona in "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," reproves those who fail to cultivate stability and permanency in a relationship. Like the other voices in this thematic group, this speaker also values purity, mutual affection, and permanency, characteristics which the libertine voice in "A Second Rapture" would find repulsive.

In Thomas Carew's small canon of poetry, the majority of poems deal with the subject of love. It is natural, of course, that he should concern himself primarily with amatory subjects, since he was a member and officer of the court of Charles I. Yet, like Donne, Carew is not content to repeatedly put forth a single idea about such a complex subject; instead, he continually looks at the phenomenon from a kaleidoscopic perspective. He presents a variety of stances by creating different personas, each of whom adopts a

different attitude toward love. In this way, Carew runs the gamut of attitudes toward love and thus considers this most complicated subject from many angles.

Once one has read the lyric poems of Thomas Carew it becomes increasingly difficult to support the critical position of the presence of only one voice in the poetry, a voice which reflects the poet's own life. The existence of so many contradictory attitudes toward love, ranging from those of the cynical lecher to those of the constant lover, precludes a strictly biographical interpretation of Carew's poetry. The problem then takes on another form. Can any one voice or attitude be assigned to Carew, or they all his, but in different moods? The answer to that question is no different from the answer to the same question applied to Donne, Marvell, or even Milton. Each of these poets can create voices who assume contrary positions on any given subject. There is, for example, the contrast between Donne's "Community" and his "A Vale-diction: Forbidding Mourning," the contrast between Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" and "The Garden," and finally the contrast between Milton's "L'Allegro" and "Il-Penseroso." In the same fashion, Carew too creates opposing voices and attitudes which render his poetry

more complex than the strictly biographical interpretation would seem to allow.

Notes

Chapter II

¹ All quotations from the poems of Thomas Carew in this paper are taken from the following edition: Rhodes Dunlap, ed., The Poems of Thomas Carew with His Masque COELUM BRITANNICUM (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1949).

² Edward Selig, The Flourishing Wreath. A Study of Thomas Carew's Poetry (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1958), p. 119.

III. THE OCCASIONAL POEMS

Not only is Thomas Carew a poet of love in all its many facets, but he is also an elegiast and critic, a fact which reveals a wider scope of subjects than his libertine reputation would seem to allow. In his public voice, as opposed to the private voice of the love lyrics, he writes occasional poems upon such diverse subjects as the marriage of friends, the death of an acquaintance, the beauty of the country life, the illness of the king or queen, and the publication of new plays and books. As evidenced by his choice of topics, Carew's occasional poetry, like his love lyrics, is heavily influenced by his position at court, and, consequently, reflects that social milieu in theme and tone.

Many of Carew's occasional poems are elegies, the subjects of which are always members of court society, whom Carew would be expected to praise; yet much too frequently they are also people whom Carew hardly knew at all. Because the elegies are written about people with whom Carew was often unacquainted, the poems are frequently rendered lifeless and unconvincing. Too often, he uses the time-worn conventions of the elegy without also infusing them with new life. In addition, he sometimes creates unwieldy conceits that somehow

never manage to be more than window dressing. Specifically, such conceits as found in the elegy entitled "Maria Wentworth" are indicative of comparisons that are often too contrived and too ingenious.

So though a Virgin, yet a Bride
To every Grace, she justifi'd
A chaste Poligamie, and dy'd.
(p. 56, ll. 16-18)

Carew himself recognized the problems inherent in the composition of elegies and other occasional poetry and even spoke of those problems in his elegy on the Lady Anne Hay.

But who shall guide my artlesse Pen, to draw
Those blooming beauties, which I never saw?
How shall posteritie beleve my story,
If I, her crowded graces, and the glory
Due to her riper vertues, shall relate
Without the knowledge of her mortall state?
(p. 67, ll. 19-24)

Although Carew himself indulged in the kind of hypocrisy which he criticizes, he still recognized and was bothered by its stifling influence upon his poetry. Rather than abandoning the court society, however, he preferred to play its games and thus to reap its benefits. As a result, it becomes apparent in many of the occasional poems that the fire with which Aurelian Townshend believed Celia to have infused Carew's love poetry simply

disappeared in many of the poems in the public voice. Consequently, the occasional voice is surely the weakest of Carew's many voices, although it too includes a few remarkably good poems.

Even though much of Carew's occasional poetry does reveal sharp weaknesses, few poets of any age have ever surpassed or even equalled the voice of the critic in at least four of his occasional poems. His elegy on Donne and his verse epistle to Jonson have frequently been cited as the finest of all critical documents on those two poets. They reveal a sharp critical acumen that belies the notion of Carew's court poetry as nothing more than flattery. In these two poems, as well as in the verse epistles to Aurelian Townshend and George Sandys, Carew once again demonstrates his remarkable ability to skillfully imitate and, at the same time, give life to the style of other poets. It is this characteristic of Carew that Leo Martz labels the "Mannerist quality," the "imitating to perfection the style of the great masters."¹ Because Carew is able "to enter into the very world created by other poets, to absorb them, understand them, and recreate them in his own mind,"² his critical ability can be said to be one of the highest order.

Following his death in 1631, many elegies were written about John Donne, including those by Ben Jonson, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Thomas Browne, Edward Hyde, Sidney Godolphin, and others, but Carew's elegy must surely rank at the top of the list. Not only does he praise Donne's poetic accomplishments in the text of the poem itself, but he also pays tribute to the master by skillfully imitating his style. Throughout the poem Carew uses the "masculine expression" or harsh diction and tortured syntax that characterize so much of Donne's poetry. There are none of the "soft melting Phrases" which are usually typical of Carew's own lyrics. Moreover, Carew also employs Donne's technique of enjambement, seldom using the end-stopped line so characteristic of Jonson.³ Finally, Carew's poem includes a number of notable conceits of which Donne himself would undoubtedly have approved.

In the course of his elegy, Carew makes clear his acute understanding of Donne's position in literary history. Not until T. S. Eliot resurrected Donne in his famous essay on the seventeenth century poets did modern literary criticism also come to understand Donne's dramatic influence upon language and literature. In his

famous essay in 1921 on "The Metaphysical Poets,"⁴ Eliot praised Donne for the remarkable synthesis in his poetry of both feeling and thought, and criticized later poets for their "dissociation of sensibility." Three hundred years earlier, however, Carew had already recognized the same operating principle in the poetry of John Donne.

. . . But the flame
Of thy brave Soule, (that shot such heat and light,
As burnt our earth, and made our darkness bright,
Committed holy Rapes upon our Will,
Did through the eye the melting heart distill;
And the deepe knowledge of darke truths so teach,
As sense might judge, what phansie could not reach;)
Must be desir'd for ever.

(p. 72, ll. 14-21)

As Carew brilliantly explains in his poem, Donne was able to penetrate and appeal to the heart or the emotions of man by first going through his eye or intellect. This conception is nothing less than Eliot's own "thought and feeling" synthesis elevated to poetry.

Throughout his elegy, Carew praises Donne for his revolutionary approach to and effect upon poetry. Unlike other poets of his age, Donne refused to imitate and borrow from the ancients and also refused to continually allude to gods and goddesses of mythology; instead, he brought a fresh originality to bear upon his poetry.

The Muses garden with Pedantique weedes

O'rspred, was purg'd by thee; The lazie seeds
 Of servile imitation throwne away;
 And fresh invention planted . . .
 (p. 72, ll. 25-28)

Not only did Donne's thought demonstrate a new originality and freshness, but his language also revealed a new freedom and inventiveness. Donne provided a new mine from which future poets could draw.

Thou hast redeem'd, and open'd Us a Mine
 Of rich and pregnant phansie, drawne a line
 Of Masculine expression, which had good
 Old Orpheus seene, Or all the ancient Brood
 Our superstitious fooles admire, and hold
 Their lead more precious, then thy burnish't Gold,
 Thou hadst beene their Exchequer, and no more
 They each in others dust, had rak'd for Ore.
 (p. 72, ll. 37-44)

Because Donne's diction is characterized by harshness and roughness, Carew explains, it does not charm the outward sense in quite the same way as softer, more mellifluous diction. Yet, according to Carew, Donne finally has the greater triumph, because he is able to make this "stubborn language" fit his own diction and syntax, as well as his marvelous "wit."

. . . Yet thou maist claime
 From so great disadvantage greater fame,
 Since to the awe of thy imperious wit
 Our stubborne language bends, made only fit
 With her tough-thick-rib'd hoopes to gird about
 Thy Giant phansie, which had prov'd too stout
 For their soft melting Phrases. . . .
 (p. 73, ll. 47-53)

Given the disadvantages of his seemingly unpoetic diction and syntax, Donne's accomplishments in his "masculine" style are really all the greater. In fact, Carew finds no poet of his day who would be able to replace or even approach the masterful style and inventiveness of Donne. Consequently, Carew laments over the "death of all the Arts" and apologizes for his own "untun'd verse."

Another of Carew's great occasional poems is his verse epistle to Ben Jonson, which was occasioned by Jonson's diatribe against the critics of his play, The New Inne. Hissed from the stage upon its first performance in 1629, the play was a total failure. Consequently, Jonson published the play himself in 1631, adding a poem at the end of the volume in which he indignantly attacked popular taste. It is this exhibition of temper to which Carew is responding in his verse epistle. In a remarkable display of critical brilliance, Carew points up the inadequacy of Jonson's play, The New Inne, while at the same time he extols those works of merit which Jonson had created in the past.

. . . yet 'tis true
 Thy commique Muse from the exalted line
 Toucht by thy Alchymist, doth since decline
 From that her Zenith . . .
 (p. 64, ll. 4-7)

Although he numbered Jonson among his friends, Carew candidly expressed his own dissatisfaction with the play; it simply did not approach Jonson's past accomplishments. As Carew explains in the poem, one must not expect adulation for all artistic efforts, because they are not all equal in quality and they are not all deserving of praise. Instead, he urges a moderate and balanced response to the sometimes uncivil criticisms from the populace. Rather than depending upon or becoming upset with popular opinion, one must instead look to posterity for a fair and discriminating appraisal.

Let others glut on the extorted praise
 Of vulgar breath, trust thou to after dayes:
 Thy labour'd workes shall live, when Time devoures
 Th'abortive off-spring of their hastie houres.
 (p. 65, ll. 43-46)

Praising Jonson for his economy in language and his masterful use of the ancient writers in his poetry, Carew advises him to ignore the opinion of the present and to depend upon the opinion of the future for an accurate assessment of his position in literary history. In urging a tempered response, Carew is merely suggesting that moderate and restrained approach to poetry and life that Jonson himself had always espoused. By using Jonson's own tenets to point up the great poet's short-

comings, Carew achieves a critical coup. His verse epistle is a remarkably insightful and creative work of criticism, which balances the positive and negative aspects of Jonson's poetry.

Carew's verse epistle to Aurelian Townshend is another important occasional poem, although it is generally slighted in most critical articles. The work is not significant because of its great poetry, but because of the light it sheds upon Carew's choice of subjects for his poetry and upon his attitude toward life at court. Joseph Summers, one critic who recognizes the poem's importance in the Carew canon, has cited it as a manifesto, so to speak, of Carew's philosophy of poetry, as well as that of the Cavaliers in general.⁵ The occasion of the poem is a letter from Aurelian Townshend, a poet friend of Carew's, who had asked him to compose an elegy upon the death of the king of Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus, in 1632. Rather than complying with the request, however, Carew declared his preference for other topics and refused to place his muse in service to the wider subjects of war and politics.

Tourneyes, Masques, Theaters, better become
Our Halcyon dayes; what though the German drum
Bellow for freedome and revenge, the noyse

Concerns not us,nor should divert our joyes;
 Nor ought the thunder of their Carabines
 Drowne the sweet Ayres of our tun'd Violins;
 Beleeve me friend,if their prevailing powers
 Gaine them a calme securitie like ours
 They'le hang their Armes up on the Olive bough
 And dance, and revell then, as we doe now.
 (p. 77, ll. 95-104)

In answer to his poet friend, Aurelian Townshend, Carew reveals his total allegiance to court society and hierarchy. He demonstrates an obvious preference for the closed society of polished ladies and gentlemen whose lives are centered around the arts. To protect this urbane society from the intrusion of the outside world, Carew insists upon using his talents for only those subjects that will perpetuate this peaceful, hierarchical, aristocratic, and conservative world.

As demonstrated by his verse epistle to Townshend, Carew's poetry in both its public and private voices repeatedly manifests a narrowness of subject matter and tone. He restricts himself primarily to love lyrics, but, even more importantly, he limits himself to the tone and the voice of the court. If one concedes that fact as a weakness in his poetry, then one must also deal with the reason for it. That reason, of course, is outlined in the aforementioned verse epistle to Aurelian Townshend,

in which Carew declares in the most explicit terms his preference for the peace and insularity of the English court. In response to this isolationist philosophy, Joseph Summers in The Heirs of Donne and Jonson criticizes Carew for his "smugly insular assumption of prosperity."⁶ That criticism is assuredly a valid one, since Carew does reveal a kind of myopic vision in his idealization of the English court. However, he also describes quite accurately in the first half of the poem the desperate power struggle that had occurred on the Continent. In the second half of the poem, he contrasts that atmosphere of war and death with the halcyon days of the English court. Rather than war and conquest and even heroic acts, Carew prefers his monarch's peaceful reign, which allows him to devote his "lyrique feet" to the "smooth soft way / Of Love, and Beautie . . ."

Carew's poem to Aurelian Townshend reveals a basic desire to isolate himself from the political power struggles of his world. That isolationist tendency is not characteristic of Carew alone; in fact, it is a common trend among seventeenth century poets. Ben Jonson was probably the first of the seventeenth century poets to write a country house poem, "To Penshurst," in

which he created an ideal world that conformed to the classical principle of moderation and the Christian concept of the chain of being. Other poets followed him in this genre, including Thomas Carew, Robert Herrick, Edmund Waller, and Andrew Marvell. All sought to create an ideal world away from the wars, politics, commercialism, and even the court. Ultimately, this desire to escape from the world found its most extreme exponent in Richard Lovelace, who in his poem "The Snail" expresses a desire to hide within himself, much as a snail withdraws into his shell. Lovelace, of course, is writing at a later date than Carew, specifically at the time of the Civil War when the once peaceful court of Charles I was disintegrating. Rather than retiring to an ideal world like that of Carew, Lovelace can only hope to escape by withdrawing into himself.

"To Saxham," Carew's most famous country house poem, was heavily influenced by Ben Jonson's, "To Penshurst." Like Jonson, Carew emphasizes the importance of the "inward happiness" of this ideal world rather than the exterior beauty of the edifice itself. In addition, there is also the concept of the plentitude of nature, which Carew expresses in a series of hyperboles.

The Pheasant, Partiridge, and the Larke,
 Flew to thy house, as to the Arke.
 The willing Oxe, of himselfe came
 Home to the slaughter, with the Lambe,
 And every beast did thither bring
 Himselfe, to be an offering.
 (p. 28, ll. 21-26)

As in the world of Penshurst, the animals at Saxham voluntarily deliver themselves to their masters in a vivid demonstration of the concept of the great chain of being. Everything occupies its proper place in this idyllic world; harmony prevails.

In 1639 Carew wrote his other country house poem, "To my friend G. N. from Wrest." One of his last poems, it contains references to Carew's recent military service in King Charles's ill-fated expedition into Scotland. Obviously punning on the word "Wrest," Carew reveals a deep longing for the peace and rest which this isolated estate hopefully will afford him.

I Breathe (sweet Ghib:) the temperate ayre of
 Where I no more with raging stormes opprest,
 Weare the cold nights out by the bankes of
 On the bleake Mountains, where fierce tempests
 And everlasting Winter dwells . . .
 (p. 86, ll. 1-5)

Involvement in the realities of the world has brought him extreme discomfort and pain, and it is finally only here in isolation at Wrest that he can again find peace

and contentment.

Like Penshurst and Saxham, the estate at Wrest reveals no awesome edifice of "carved Marble, Touch, or Porpherie." Instead, it is a "Mansion with an useful comeliness," "built for hospitalitie."

No Dorique, nor Corinthian Pillars grace
With Imagery this structures naked face,
The Lord and Lady of this place delight
Rather to be in act, then seeme in sight.
(p. 87, ll. 29-32)

The ideal in this world can be found in useful service to others rather than in an imposing appearance for the world. Instead of adorning their walls with lifeless statues, the lord and lady of Wrest populate their halls with living men in a demonstration of hospitality and love.

. . . for she more numerous traines
Of Noble guests daily receives, and those
Can with farre more convenience dispose
Then prouder Piles, where the vaine builder spent
More cost in outward gay Embellishment
Then reall use: which was the sole designe
Of our contriver, who made things not fine,
But fit for service.

(p. 87-88, ll. 49-56)

The last line of this quotation again presents the most important characteristic of Carew's rustic world--namely the usefulness and service that Wrest affords its inhabitants. Not only does the estate itself become

a building of hospitality and service, but the surrounding countryside also contributes to the well-being of the community. More than an emblem on the gate, "Amalthea's Horne of plenty" becomes the reality of their existence. In this atmosphere Carew "tastes the fruit / Of this blest Peace" and finds renewal and strength.

Carew's countryhouse poems reveal his basic conservatism and belie the notion of his libertinism. Like Jonson, he too experienced at times a pressing need to set himself apart from the intrigues of politics and court society. His desire to isolate himself from the cares of the world, however, never took the extreme form of Lovelace's compulsion to simply withdraw into himself behind some kind of psychological mask. Instead, Carew's retirement is a very healthy retreat into an ideal world of service and usefulness to others.

Notes

Chapter III

¹ Louis Martz, The Wit of Love (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1969), p. 100

² Martz, The Wit of Love, p. 100

³ For an excellent discussion of Carew's poems upon John Donne and Ben Jonson, see Louis Martz's The Wit of Love, pp. 94-100.

⁴ T. S. Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets," Times Literary Supplement, 20 Oct. 1921, pp. 669-670.

⁵ Joseph Summers, The Heirs of Donne and Jonson (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), p. 73.

⁶ Summers, The Heirs of Donne and Jonson, p. 73.

IV. CONCLUSION

The majority of Carew's canon consists of short love lyrics which express a variety of attitudes toward love. However, his canon also includes a number of excellent poems in the public voice, as well as the translations of nine psalms. Because of the preponderance of love poems, it has often been remarked that had Carew permitted himself a broader range of subject matter than that which the love lyrics allow, he would have been a much greater poet. In his verse epistle to George Sandys, Carew once commented on this problem of the pervasiveness of the love lyric in his poetry. Writing the poem on the occasion of Sandys's translation of the Psalmes, Carew includes a praise of Sandys's poetic efforts, as well as a tinge of regret over his own. Unlike Sandys, he cannot enter the holy place of God, but instead must forever remain with his "unwasht Muse" on the porch. In mentally reviewing this situation, Carew conjectures that his "earthy" flame may at some future time be devoured by a heavenly flame which will inspire him to write of the spirit rather than of the flesh.

Who knowes, but that her wandring eyes that run,
 Now hunting Glow-wormes, may adore the Sun,
 A pure flame may, shot by Almighty power
 Into her brest, the earthy flame devoure.

My eyes, in penitentiall dew may steepe
 That brine, which for sensuall love did weepe.
 (p. 94, ll. 15-20)

Though the passage does admit a feeling of regret, it never becomes a repudiation of the previous use of his talents. Repeatedly in this passage, as well as in the whole poem, Carew consistently uses the word "may," thereby qualifying any seeming repentance. He finally remarks that when his "restlesse Soule" shall "tire with persuit / Of mortall beauty," perhaps then he "shall no more court the verdant Bay, / But the dry leaveless Trunke on Golgotha." Given the verdant bay versus the dry, leafless trunk, it seems clear that Carew retains his preference for the subject of love.

The question of love obviously fascinated Carew, and, consequently, most of his poetry falls within the category of love lyrics. But even the primacy of that one subject does not render his work simplistic or uninteresting. Rather than using a single voice to express his personal opinions on the subject of love, he creates multiple voices in order to present the whole range of possible love postures. Assuming a very modern position with his emphasis upon the necessity of reciprocity and equality in the love relationship,

Carew gently mocks the Petrarchan tradition of blind, unreasoning subservience to the lady. Contrary to his reputation, Carew is not a simplistic poet who is to be read merely as an example of Cavalier libertinism. Like many other Stuart lyricists, he presents a kaleidoscopic vision of human relationships through multiple voices and themes.

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