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A Tribute to John R. and Lorraine M. Roberts

Sean H. McDowell

On 31 May 2017, the world of Renaissance scholarship lost one of its brightest luminaries, John R. Roberts, who passed away quietly in his home, surrounded by his beloved wife and noted Crashaw scholar Lorraine M. Roberts and their children. A little more than half a year later, on 22 January 2018, Lorraine followed her husband into death after a short illness, also at home surrounded by family. The Robertses' passing marks the end of an era in the fields of Donne and Crashaw studies. It is like the felling of a pair of favorite trees at the edge of a clearing: after that tremendous crash, the skyline never is the same again. They will be missed by many whose lives they touched in innumerable ways.

John R. Roberts (1934 – 2017)

Jack Roberts was the first President of the John Donne Society and, for more than half a century, the leading bibliographer of scholarship on Donne, George Herbert, and Richard Crashaw, the one person in those fields who could boast (but never did) of having read *everything* published on each of these poets. He was the score keeper who never kept score, the one who reminded us where we had been and who suggested where we might go, the one who helped us see our scholarship as part of a larger set of conversations extending across generations. His wit and generosity were legendary.

Fig. 1. The Roberts at the wedding anniversary celebration of Bob and Elaine Bielski.

With unparalleled dedication and selflessness, Jack devoted his career to the skillful promotion and elucidation of the poetry he loved so much and of the scholarship that provided new insights into it. "We're supposed to be the creators of knowledge," he said once in an interview, "not just the people passing it along."[1] His signature contribution was to enable us to see, with great clarity, the nature and scope of this creation through his bibliographies and his essays about critical history. But his work encompassed more than the purely bibliographical or evaluative. His earliest publications fostered a greater awareness of Catholic recusant writing on the religious imagination during the reign of Elizabeth I and later. A devoted Catholic, though he was born into a Protestant family in rural Indiana, Jack felt a special affinity for the poetry of Robert Southwell, SJ, and

[1]Sean McDowell, "A Gentleman and a Scholar," *Columbia Missourian* (January 9, 1991): section D, 1.

Crashaw, whose devotional sensibilities he understood quite well. His first book, *A Critical Anthology of Recusant Devotional Prose, 1558–1603* (1966), made available hard-to-find selections of recusant translations of Catholic devotional treatises, most of which were published originally by clandestine presses during the period when the Elizabethan government intensified its persecution of English Catholics after the Spanish Armada.

During the 1960s, Jack began what he later described as his life's work: the collection and annotation of all the scholarship—first on Donne and later on Herbert and Crashaw—published in every language, starting from the early twentieth century onwards. He tirelessly strove for completeness and comprehensiveness in each of his bibliographies and developed a precise understanding of the strengths and limitations of the scholarly tools used to find them, especially the MLA Bibliography. Additionally, he developed a set of standards that subsequently influenced the development of *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne* and the bibliographical work of others.[2] Mindful of his own critical biases, he suppressed these in his annotations. Instead, he strove for objective summaries of the essence of every item he annotated because he believed the bibliographer's central obligation was to communicate, not evaluate, the scholarship in question. In this way, he worked to raise awareness about the full range of scholarship published, even those items that otherwise might have escaped notice, without passing judgment.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Jack firmly established himself as the premier bibliographer on the English Metaphysical poets. *John Donne: An Annotated Bibliography of Modern Criticism, 1912–1967*, the first of his bibliographies, was published by the University of Missouri Press in 1973 to critical acclaim. His second Donne bibliography, which covered the decade of scholarship from 1968 to 1978, appeared in 1982. While he continued working on Donne ("John Donne, never done," as he often said), Jack extended his bibliographical attention to Herbert as well: he published *George Herbert: An Annotated Bibliography of Modern Criticism, 1905–1974*, also with the University of Missouri Press, in 1978. He later expanded the range of his coverage of Herbert

[2]See, for example, Jacob Blevins, *An Annotated Bibliography of Thomas Traherne Criticism, 1900–2003* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006).

criticism from 1974–1984 in the revised edition of this book, also published by the University of Missouri Press in 1988.

Also in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Jack added Crashaw to his annotational efforts, with *Richard Crashaw: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism, 1632–1980* (1985).[3] This time, he began his coverage much earlier, in 1632, the year Crashaw published his first poem, "In faciem Augustiss. Regis à morbillis integram," in *Anthologia in Regis Exanthemata: Seu Gratulatio Musarum Cantabrigiensium de felicissimè conservata Regis Caroli valetudine*, the Cambridge University volume congratulating Charles I on his recovery from smallpox. While his principles of objective annotation remained the same in this volume, the bibliography as a whole implicitly countered anti-Crashavian biases in eighteenth- through twentieth-century scholarship by placing these within a much broader context. By starting the bibliography in 1632, long before commentators in the eighteenth century and afterwards began taking Crashaw to task for perceived deficiencies in style and sensibility,[4] Jack situated all contributions within a comprehensive history of taste, so that readers could chart the rise and fall of Crashaw's critical fortunes with more precision. Years later, he and Lorraine collaborated on other efforts to correct misapprehensions about Crashaw's work. For the Robertses, the study of Crashaw represented more than simply an engagement with one poet's work but carried wider implications, as Jack described in the "Preface" of his bibliography:

> Although many items in this bibliography (especially the earlier ones) are quite obviously minor efforts, often inspired more by religious prejudice or denominational zeal than by serious critical thought and objective scholarship, others represent important contributions to our understanding not only of Crashaw's poetry but also of the art and sensibility of the seventeenth century, of so-called metaphysical and baroque poetry and poets as a whole, and,

[3]University of Missouri Press, 1985.

[4]For more on the eighteenth-century shift in critical perceptions of Crashaw, see my essay, "From 'Lively' Art to 'Glitt'ring Expressions': Crashaw's Initial Reception Reconsidered," *JDJ* 24 (2005): 229–62.

> in some cases, of the very nature of poetry itself and of the creative process.[5]

As with his work on Donne, Jack maintained his commitment to Crashavian criticism throughout his career. He published a review essay on "Recent Studies in Richard Crashaw (1977–1989)" in *English Literary Renaissance* in 1991[6] and formally extended his Crashaw bibliography proper in "Richard Crashaw: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism, 1981–2002," published in this journal as part of "A Special Issue Devoted to Richard Crashaw" in 2005.[7]

Jack's extensive reading of Donne, Herbert, and Crashaw scholarship enabled him to see and to help others see work on these poets as an ongoing conversation, often repeating itself unintentionally and sometimes moving with dramatic swiftness in new directions. Moreover, prior to the internet and its bewildering wealth of online resources, Jack's bibliographies raised awareness about major contributions that otherwise might have been missed. Out of a desire to promote such scholarship, Jack undertook a series of editorial projects to consolidate landmark essays and notes. His *Essential Articles for the Study of John Donne's Poetry*, published in 1975 by the Harvester Press Limited in England and The Shoe String Press, Inc., in the United States, collected and reprinted thirty-nine important articles on Donne's poetry. He intended the volume to "complement rather than supplant" the "almost established canon of Donne criticism" by making readily available items he found "both critically interesting in and for themselves" and also reflective "in some way [of] several of the major concerns of Donne scholarship" at the time.[8] Four years later, as part of this same series, he brought out *Essential Articles for the Study of George Herbert's Poetry*, a gathering of thirty-four essays that followed the same selection criteria and principles of arrangement as the earlier volume. These volumes still provide excellent foundations for the study of both poets. Later, in the 1990s, Jack edited two collections of essays, focused on gathering together "new perspec-

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[5]*Richard Crashaw: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism, 1632–1980*, p. 1.
[6]Vol. 21.3 (Autumn 1991): 425–45.
[7]Vol. 24 (2005): 1–228.
[8]*Essential Articles for the Study of John Donne's Poetry*, p. xii.

tives" on Crashaw and seventeenth-century religious lyricism more generally.[9]

Remarkably, during this same period of high productivity, as if he didn't have enough to do, Jack shouldered substantial service roles in the Department of English at the University of Missouri, first as Director of Graduate Studies (1966–1974), then as Associate Chair (1969–1974), and finally as Department Chair (1974–1980). Jack believed that in the life of a professor, excellence in teaching, scholarship, or service need not come at the expense of either of the other two. He aired this view in an essay in the *ADE Bulletin* in 1978:

> If the department is carefully organized, if the responsibilities are shared and delegated, and if the chairman is truly dedicated to teaching and research, then it should be possible to handle the job as chairman and still remain active professionally. It may mean a stricter personal schedule, fewer coffee breaks, and much less time for golf or tennis, but I contend that an efficient chairman can find time to teach at least one course per term and develop a schedule (admittedly a flexible one) devoting an adequate amount of time and energy for scholarly work without neglecting either family or important personal needs.[10]

He added, "The person who cannot maintain this balance is not the right choice for this position."[11] These are the sorts of remarks one keeps from one's dean, if one can help it.

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[9]They are *New Perspectives on the Life and Art of Richard Crashaw* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990) and *New Perspectives on the Seventeenth-Century English Religious Lyric* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1994), respectively.

[10]"Reflections on the Chairmanship," *ADE Bulletin* 59 (1978): 34.

[11]Ibid. By all reports, Roberts *was* the right person for this job, though he greatly preferred scholarship and teaching to administrative work. He was especially effective at securing resources for his department when he was department chair. His nickname in the Arts and Sciences dean's office during this time was "The Shark" because he was so adept at persuading the dean to part with funds and other resources to support his colleagues and the department as a whole.

As with his impressive work ethic, Jack was legendary in the classroom as well, noted for his ability to delight while instructing. In this sense, much to the man was due. He had a facility for rendering complex concepts in familiar terms through stories and analogies drawn from his life. These enlivened his lectures and enabled students to come to know the poets he taught as flesh and blood people writing about experiences not entirely alien to the students' own. In a 1990 essay on teaching Crashaw, he gave an example of how he taught the Augustinian concept of memory:

> I pick out one student in the class, say John, and describe a party we might have to honor him. Knowing that John likes Chianti, lasagna, and Beatles records, we imaginatively design a party that includes all of those items. Then I suggest that, some months after that successful party, we learn that John has had a mortal accident on his motorbike during the summer and that naturally we are all deeply disturbed and saddened by the demise of our friend. I point out that, if I were to meet a student from the class on campus in the fall and we commiserated with each other about the tragedy, recalling the party we had all enjoyed, that would be simply memory as we usually think of it. But if in John's honor we held another party at which we recreated as fully as possible the past experience by having Chianti, lasagna, and the music of the Beatles, then we would have an example of the Augustinian concept of memory—bringing the past into the present, not just recalling a past happening. Although all analogies limp, the students seem to understand, sometimes for the first time, how liturgy and discursive prayer function, and they begin to recognize that public celebrations and ceremonies can often be deeply personal experiences for the participants. I point out that something like that operates in Crashaw's poems.[12]

[12]John R. Roberts, "Richard Crashaw: The Neglected Poet" in *Approaches to Teaching the Metaphysical Poets*, ed. Sidney Gottlieb (New York: The Modern Language Association, 1990), p. 139.

This is not to say that the focus of Jack's lectures was contingent upon viewing Renaissance poets as our contemporaries. Jack was fond of referring to the distinction Kenneth Burke drew in a book review essay, entitled "On Covery, Re- and Dis-": while some critics sought to *recover* the original contexts of literary works and how their authors and original readers might have understood them, other critics concentrated on *discovering* new interpretations, predicated on modern concepts and theories that early modern writers would have considered strange or alien.[13] He was firmly one of the recoverers, both in his scholarship and in his teaching.[14] He brought poems alive through his keen wit, good humor, and eloquence. He knew how to engage students' attention. He would say, for example, after discussing one of Donne's erotic elegies, "I don't want you to think I'm a dirty old man . . . because I'm not that old." Jack's witticisms remained fresh in students' memories for years afterwards. Like any skilled performer, he possessed a repertoire of stories and one-liners to leaven the potentially drier topics of a class session. His students and colleagues recognized him as a force in the classroom. In 1974, the University of Missouri Arts and Sciences student government gave him the Purple Chalk Award for teaching excellence. His colleagues honored him with the Byler Distinguished Professor Award in 1979 and the Catherine Paine Middlebush Chair from 1982–85.

For most of his life, the Roberts lived and worked in the Midwestern United States. After earning a bachelor's degree at Indiana State University (1955) and a master's degree and a doctorate at the University of Illinois (1957, 1962), Jack held professorial appointments at the University of Wisconsin (1962–66), the University of Detroit (1966–68), and the University of Missouri (1968–2000), where he became Professor Emeritus in 2000. Not surprisingly, those who knew him well can recall the lively stories he used to tell about working at those places. He relished describing, for

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[13]Kenneth Burke, "On Covery, Re- and Dis-," *Accent* 13 (1955): 218–26.

[14]See, for example, his essay on "The Rosary in Elizabethan England" (*The Month* 218 [1964]: 192–97) or "'To weave a new webbe in their owne loome': Robert Southwell and Counter-Reformation Poetics," an essay he co-wrote with Lorraine in *Sacred and Profane: Secular and Devotional Interplay in Early Modern Literature*, edited by Helen Wilcox, Richard Todd, and Abraham MacDonald (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1996), pp. 63–77.

example, the long walk up the hill in the snow to the English Department in the early 1960s, and how he would make the trek to meet with the extremely proper and elegant Helen C. White, who was department chair at the time and who encouraged him to turn his full attention to the Metaphysical poets. His face would light up with mirth as he would describe how, as a new assistant professor, he had to share an office with the redoubtable Miltonist, Merritt Y. Hughes, whose *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose* (1957) he used in his Milton classes for much of his career. He sometimes did impressions of Hughes answering the office telephone in the third person: "Hello. This is Merritt Hughes in *his* office," his voice in an ethereal British accent.

Jack spent academic year 1980–81 as a visiting professor at the University of Manchester as part of a professorial exchange. Subsequently, he wrote a lively account of his experiences there in "Innocents Abroad: The Exchange Professorship—An American Perspective."[15] In 1982, St. Edmund's College, Cambridge University, invited him to be a visiting scholar. Two years later, the fellows at St. Edmund's elected him visiting fellow. Sometimes when he taught in the U. S., he wore his fellow's jacket, with its patch of the St. Edmund's coat of arms on the left breast. In the winter term of 1990, Jack served as Director of the Missouri London Program, a study abroad program for undergraduates.

The 1980s witnessed the beginning of Jack's involvement in two of the most important developments in the field of Donne studies in the past century, the advent both of *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne* project and of the John Donne Society. In 1980, Gary A. Stringer, the founding editor of the Variorum, formally announced this project at the MLA convention in Houston, Texas, and invited Jack and six other internationally recognized Donne scholars to be part of its advisory board.[16] From the beginning, Jack played a central role in defining the parameters of the commentary portion of the project. He

[15]*ADE Bulletin* 71 (1982): 34–37.

[16]For more on the history of the Variorum project and the formation of the Donne society, see Gary A. Stringer, "An Introduction to the Donne Variorum and the John Donne Society" (http://donnevariorum.tamu.edu/an-introduction/). A previous version of this essay was published in *Anglistik* 10.1 (March 1999): 85–95.

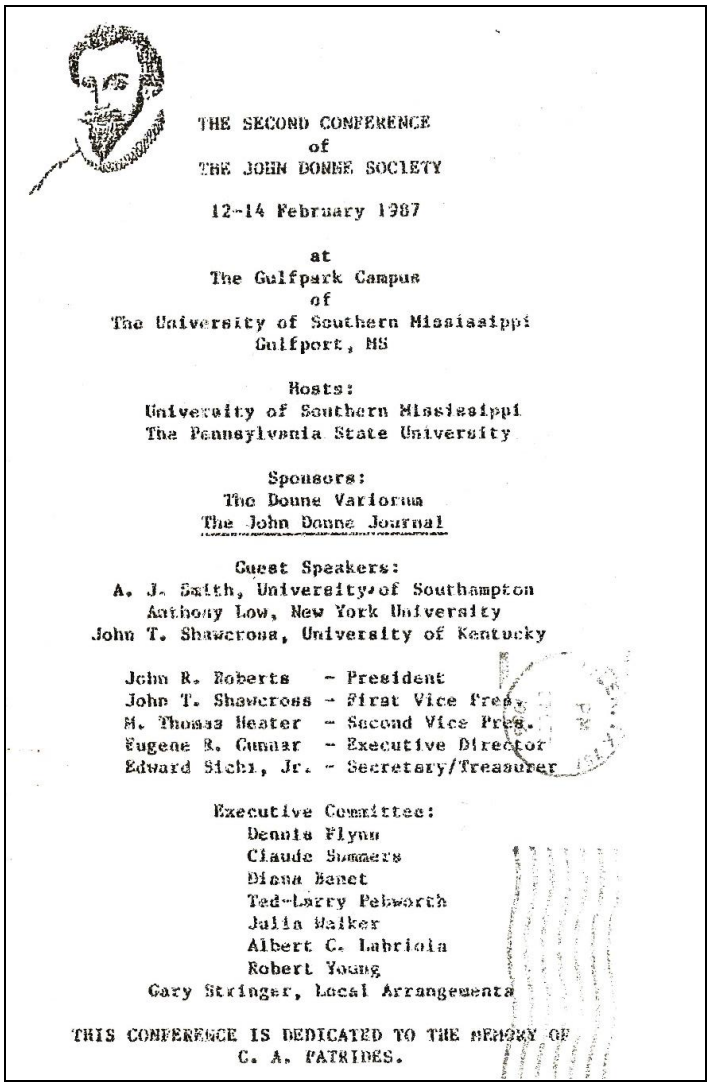
served as Chief Editor of the commentary for the first two volumes published, volume 6: *The Anniversaries and the Epicedes and Obsequies* (1995) and volume 8: *The Epigrams, Epithalamions, Epitaphs, Inscriptions, and Miscellaneous Poems* (1995). In addition, he was the volume commentary editor for volume 2: *The Elegies* (2000), the third volume published. In later years he served as Variorum project bibliographer. In November 2001, the South-Central Modern Language Association selected this volume for the prize for the best scholarly or critical book published by a member or members in 2000. Through his editorial roles in the Variorum, Jack helped establish and maintain the commentary standards the project continues to follow to this day.

Under Stringer's direction, the Variorum project began holding workshops and meetings in early 1980s. At the 1984 meeting at the University of Southern Mississippi's Gulf Park Campus in Gulfport, Mississippi, Stringer decided to add a session of formal paper presentations, which, in turn, led to Eugene Cunnar's suggestion that Donne scholars organize into a formal John Donne Society. The first Donne Society conference followed soon after, in February, 1986, again at the Gulf Park campus, home of what would become known as the famous Friendship Oak, a 500-year-old live oak, within an easy walk of the Gulf of Mexico.[17] The conference was held annually at this same location for the next eighteen years. At this first conference, Jack was elected the first President of the John Donne Society and presided over the second annual conference in February, 1987 [Fig. 2].

In addition to his ongoing commentary work, Jack from time to time wrote analyses of the state of Donne studies, summations with suggestions based on his extensive reading. The first of these, an address at the MLA convention in Houston in 1980, appeared as "John Donne's Poetry: As Assessment of Modern Criticism" in the first volume of this publication (1982). This essay, which was reprinted in the second edition of Arthur L. Clements' Norton Critical Edition of

[17]For a photograph of the Friendship Oak, a symbol of the JDS in its early days, see Hugh Adlington, "Collaboration and the International Scholarly Community," in *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne*, ed. Jeanne Shami, Dennis Flynn, and M. Thomas Hester (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 91.

John Donne's Poetry, described, with perceptive candor, the nature of the burgeoning scholarship on Donne published since the start of the Donne revival in the 1910s. In spite of T. S. Eliot's prediction in 1931 that an interest in Donne would wane in the succeeding years, scholarly attention on Donne steadily increased across the globe.



THE SECOND CONFERENCE
of
THE JOHN DONNE SOCIETY

12-14 February 1987

at
The Gulfpark Campus
of
The University of Southern Mississippi
Gulfport, MS

Hosts:
University of Southern Mississippi
The Pennsylvania State University

Sponsors:
The Donne Variorum
The John Donne Journal

Guest Speakers:
A. J. Smith, University of Southampton
Anthony Low, New York University
John T. Shawcross, University of Kentucky

John R. Roberts - President
John T. Shawcross - First Vice Pres.
M. Thomas Hester - Second Vice Pres.
Eugene R. Cunnar - Executive Director
Edward Sichi, Jr. - Secretary/Treasurer

Executive Committee:
Dennis Flynn
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Diana Benet
Ted-Larry Pebworth
Julia Walker
Albert C. Labriola
Robert Young
Gary Stringer, Local Arrangements

THIS CONFERENCE IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
C. A. PATRIDES.

Fig. 2. The front page of the program for the 2nd Donne Conference.

Despite this growth, however, Jack noted the diffuse nature of the ensuing scholarship and its inability to reach collective agreement. "Although we tend to agree that Donne is a major poet, we tend to disagree on exactly what accounts for this greatness or wherein his greatness lies," he wrote. "Therefore, what we have is a mass of criticism that continues to grow but often seems bewildering and even contradictory."[18] While the "complexity and subtlety of Donne's poetry" most likely never will "generate a highly harmonious chorus of uniformly held conclusions about the meaning of his poetry and about his way of achieving meaning," he nevertheless believed "it is not unreasonable for us to expect to find some generally acceptable, overall conclusions and more dominating patterns emerging from the volume of critical writing that has been produced in recent years."[19] He identified two reasons for this lack of consensus. First, he believed that scholars too exclusively limited their attention to just a portion of Donne's poetry without consistently considering the body of the poetic corpus as a whole. He noted that the scholarship written from 1912–1978, the terminus of his second annotated bibliography on Donne, concentrated primarily on "less than half of Donne's canon, confining itself narrowly to his secular love poems (a dozen or less of the poems in the *Songs and Sonets* and to a much lesser extent the *Elegies*), to his specifically religious poems (almost exclusively the *Holy Sonnets*, 'Goodfriday, 1613,' and the hymns), and more recently, to the *Anniversaries*,"[20] leaving the verse letters, epigrams, epithalamia, funeral elegies, satires, and a significant portion of even the love poems and religious poems underexplored. Because of this selective attention, Donne scholarship developed what Jack called a "synecdochical understanding of and appreciation for Donne's total achievement as a poet: we have, in other words, substituted the part for the whole and then proceeded as if the part were, in fact, the whole."[21] Teachers, scholars, critics, and others tended to repeat generalizations about Donne that were predicated on this incomplete

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[18]"John Donne's Poetry: An Assessment of Modern Criticism," *JDJ* 1 (1982): 59.

[19]Ibid., p. 60.

[20]Ibid., p. 62.

[21]Ibid., pp. 62–63.

understanding, generalizations that emerged from the New Critical fixation on certain (but not all) Donne poems during the 1930s and 1940s.

Added to the synecdochical understanding of Donne, Jack noted a rough division in Donne studies, beginning to emerge during the 1950s, between the recoverers who reanimated the contexts informing Donne's life and work and thereby sought a clearer understanding of who Donne was, how he thought and worked, and how his contemporaries perceived him, and the discoverers who sought new conclusions and insights into Donne's work, based on their own historical positions as twentieth-century interpreters, empowered by then new theories and methodologies. Both sides tended not to engage each other's work, and both sides increasingly seemed to be speaking more to each other than to any general audience of intelligent people who might have been interested in what they had to say:

> The scholars have weighted down Donne's poems with such a burden of historical and philosophical speculation that even the sophisticated reader is made to feel inadequately prepared to cope with the staggering body of often irrelevant and esoteric information, while the critics, for their part, often speaking in a language that is unintelligible even to their professional colleagues, seem too exclusively concerned with demonstrating the range and complexity of their own critical sophistication or with dazzling their few readers with tricks of critical prestidigitation. Donne is often an occasion for critical debate, but the center of attention is frequently not Donne really but rather abstract, highly theoretical issues that are of little interest to anyone but their exponents. In a word, the critics this time, not the poets, have kidnapped Donne and have turned Donne studies into a self-perpetuating industry that nearly rivals the Milton industry. And in so doing, they have killed genuine interest in Donne's poetry.[22]

Yet despite what may have seemed a dark prediction about the future of Donne studies, Jack saw a promise of light via the then forthcoming

[22]Ibid., p. 66.

Variorum edition: he considered the Variorum commentary an "important first step in sorting out, evaluating and enunciating the important discoveries and recoveries that have been made by any number of excellent critics and scholars."[23]

For the Twentieth John Donne Conference in 2005, Jack was asked to revisit his earlier essay in a plenary address given on the first night.[24] Did his earlier claims and predictions hold up? "Yes—and no," he answered. He described three profound developments he did not foresee: 1) the substantial impact of the Variorum textual editing as responsible for opening new avenues of study in the manuscript transmission of poems and their coterie circulation; 2) the creation of the John Donne Society, itself a spinoff of the Variorum, and its fostering of global scholarly exchanges at the annual conference; and 3) the creation of the *John Donne Journal*, which published essays by "many of the most influential Donne scholars of our time."[25] He noted an explosion of Donne scholarship in the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s and a spike of interest in the epigrams, epitaphs, verse letters, satires, and especially the elegies and sermons. But despite this interest, he noted that proportionally we still tended to treat a handful of poems as representative of the whole. The *Songs and Sonets* "continue to be the most popular of Donne's poems," he concluded.[26] But he speculated that a shift in attention was beginning to occur via an increasing investment in the study of Donne's prose. More and more, Donne's prose, not the love lyrics, were figuring prominently at the annual conference. While acknowledging many reasons for this shift, he believed the most compelling was that "critics are giving much more critical attention these days to 'what Donne thought' and perhaps less attention than in the past to 'how Donne said it.'"[27] As critics in past decades focused on the characteristics of Donne's expression, they "neglected more than half of Donne's canon as somehow not central to an understanding and appreciation of Donne's major poems." But "[m]ore recently, perhaps in part as a result of a

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[23]Ibid., p. 67.

[24]This lecture was published as "John Donne, Never Done: A Reassessment of Modern Criticism," *JDJ* 23 (2004): 1–24.

[25]Ibid., p. 5.

[26]Ibid., p. 17.

[27]Ibid., p. 19.

renewed focus on the historical, political, theological, and social issues embedded in seventeenth-century poetry and prose, scholars are re-examining Donne's prose for its content and for what it tells us about Donne the man and his thought." Such work, not free of controversy, promised a continued robust future for Donne scholarship, as each "new generation of critics, with its own insights, concerns, sensitivities, newly acquired and unrecognized biases and prejudices, will continue to encounter Donne, more or less, on its own terms and will continue to provide us with fresh, controversial, and perhaps even profound insights."[28]

Throughout this period of productivity, Jack received numerous awards. In 1988, the Donne Society gave him the Distinguished Donne Scholar Award in "Special Recognition and Honor" for "His Work on Behalf of the John Donne Society and for his Lifelong Contributions to Donne Studies." His essay, "'Just such disparitie': The Critical Debate about 'Aire and Angels,'" was part of the special issue of *JDJ* on "Interpreting 'Aire and Angels'" that received the Distinguished Publication Award in 1993. He received another Distinguished Publication Award in 2004 for his third Donne bibliography, *John Donne: An Annotated Bibliography of Modern Criticism, 1979–1995*, and another one—published online by the Variorum project—in 2013 for the fourth annotated bibliography, which extended his coverage of Donne criticism from 1996–2008. After being named Professor Emeritus at the University of Missouri in 2000, Jack did not entirely twitch his "Mantle blue" and move on to "fresh Woods, and Pastures new," but he did relish the idea that he would never have to attend a department meeting again. Instead, he maintained his weekly work schedule of annotating Donne and Crashaw scholarship, corresponding with friends, and traveling to Europe when he and Lorraine could. His goal all along, since the 1970s, had been to annotate fully one hundred years of Donne scholarship, from the publication of H. J. C. Grierson's monumental 1912 edition of Donne to 2012, the year the Donne Society held its annual conference in Leiden at the Scaliger Institute. A few months before he died, he accomplished this task, the conclusion of his life's work. The last of his bibliographies is available as an e-book through

[28]Ibid., p. 24.

DigitalDonne: The Online Variorum (http://donnevariorum.tamu.edu/toolsandresources/).

Lorraine M. Roberts (1933–2018)

Lorraine met Jack while they were both students at Indiana State University. The two fell in love, began a shared life together, and were married for 62 years. Throughout the first part of their marriage, Lorraine spent much of her time attending to their growing family and teaching English at various high schools. The Robertses had six children—Stephanie, Mary, Claire, Milissa, Lisa, and John, Jr. ("Bo")—and seven grandchildren: Eric, Marty, Elise, Milissa, Sarah, Brian, and John ("Trey"). After raising the children, Lorraine earned her Ph.D. in English literature at the University of Missouri. She was fifty years old at the time. After a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Kansas, she spent the next thirteen years at St. Mary's University in Winona, Minnesota, and commuted every term from her home in Columbia, Missouri. During this period, the Robertses would make special holidays together to compensate for time apart, either in Minnesota or in St. Louis, or in summer during their extensive travels in Europe.

Lorraine's scholarly career focused primarily on the critical recovery of Crashaw and, to a lesser extent, Southwell. In a series of astute, landmark essays, she became one of the foremost interpreters of Crashaw of the past fifty years. Each of her essays implicitly addressed an area of misconception that has dogged Crashaw's critical reception from the eighteenth through the twenty-first centuries. In 1990, she collaborated with her husband on the edited collection, *New Perspectives on the Life and Art of Richard Crashaw*,[29] a gathering of new essays on this "neglected poet." The volume included an essay the Robertses co-wrote on "Crashavian Criticism: A Brief Interpretive History," as well as contributions by R. V. Young, Thomas F. Healy, Stella P. Revard, Eugene R. Cunnar, Paul A. Parrish, Diana Treviño Benet, A. B. Chambers, Elsie Elizabeth Duncan-Jones, Hilton Kelliher, and Lorraine's own analysis of "Crashaw's Sacred Voice." In a

[29]Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1990.

sense, "Crashavian Criticism: A Brief Interpretive History" established a context for Lorraine's subsequent essays by identifying those areas most in need of reconsideration. The Robertses began their interpretive history by drawing attention to the pronounced influence of personal bias in Crashaw's reception:

> Most critics of Richard Crashaw's poetry throughout the past three hundred fifty years have judged its craft, its music, and its sincerity favorably. They have not, however, been as kind about its subject matter, its rhetoric, its wit, and its imagery, or about the poet's psychological health and religious beliefs. Often these judgments reflect religious prejudice or an individual taste that refuses to take seriously the principles of Crashaw's style, such as his use of profane language to speak of sacred subjects. To read the whole of Crashavian criticism makes manifest, indeed, not only the degree to which critics are influenced by trends of their own age, but also the degree to which they often settle for the popular cliché.... An awareness of the history of these critical vagaries might serve to liberate the contemporary reader of Crashaw who would like to approach the poet without apology and without prejudice, but often feels oppressed by the weight of past critical opinion.[30]

The first of the "critical vagaries" Lorraine addressed later in this same volume centered on the tendency among some critics to compare Crashaw to Donne or Herbert, only to find him wanting because his poetry did not resemble theirs. She explicitly highlighted the central problem:

> One cannot argue with the cultural preferences of a given age or with personal tastes. But one can expect that critical judgments be based as much as possible not on what an age prefers, but on an objective and adequate understanding of the aesthetic background and creative intent of the poet. To chastise Crashaw because his poetry is not psychological drama, or because it is not self-conscious, or because it expresses no rebellion against God's will, or because it is

[30]Ibid., p. 1.

> "disappointingly uncomplicated"[31] is to demand that he choose a subject matter—namely himself—that he eschewed.[32]

She went on to demonstrate Crashaw's creation of an "impersonal voice" in lieu of a personal or confessional one throughout *Carmen Deo Nostro* (1652), the posthumous volume of new and revised poems expressly patterned on the liturgical year of the Roman Catholic Church. Though Crashaw uses the personal pronoun "I" in some of the poems, and though he relies heavily on present tense, both of these choices serve merely to lend an immediacy to the work rather than disclose the secrets of the poet's spiritual life. Rather, in keeping with Counter-Reformation aesthetic principles, Crashaw enacts the "communal voice of any participant in the commemoration of Christ's death and its meaning."[33] In this sense, Crashaw's sacred poems bore a resemblance to the devotional paintings of Caravaggio or Annibale Carracci, which also strove to bring charged moments of the sacred past into the present.[34]

In "The 'Truewit' of Crashaw's Poetry," Lorraine countered another modern charge against Crashaw's poetry—that his poetry evinces a mental instability in the poet—by drawing our attention to shifts in the meaning of "wit" over time. While "wit" formally meant "wisdom" or "understanding" in Crashaw's day, its meaning "degenerate[ed]" over time to denote "mere 'fancy', or even speciousness."[35] In modern critical discourse, its meaning had further narrowed to a direct

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[31]This quoted phrase comes from Leah S. Marcus, *Childhood and Despair: A Theme and Variations in Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1978), p. 95.

[32]Lorraine M. Roberts, "Crashaw's Sacred Voice: 'A Commerce of Contrary Powers,'" in *New Perspectives on the Life and Art of Richard Crashaw* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1990), pp. 67–68.

[33]Ibid., p. 77.

[34]To illustrate similarities of approach, the essay includes black-and-white reproductions of Caravaggio's *Supper at Emmaus* (circa 1600), *Conversion of St. Paul* (1600–1601), and *Madonna di Loreto* (1604–1605), along with Carracci's *Pietà with Saints* (1585).

[35]"The 'Truewit' of Crashaw's Poetry," in *The Wit of Seventeenth-Century Poetry*, ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995), p. 172.

equation of "wit" with "conceit," thereby centering on local poetic effects. But for Crashaw, Lorraine explained, the wit of a poem appeared "not just in its surface images but in its structure as well, in its subtle unveiling of a theme."[36] By comparing Crashaw's "The Flaming Heart" and Bernini's *Ecstasy of St. Teresa* in Santa Maria della Vittoria in Rome, she demonstrated how the local effects of Crashaw's poems depend on the guiding control of their overriding structure, a microcosmic representation of the "Truewit" of God in his love of humanity.[37]

One last criticism of Crashaw's poetry—that it is excessively feminine—became the focus of another of Lorraine's corrective essays.[38] This time, Lorraine noted how the advent of feminist criticism had benefited Crashaw's poetry by exposing the masculine bias against Crashaw's supposed femininity as a bias unsuitable for addressing Crashaw's major poems on the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, St. Teresa of Avila, Queen Henrietta Maria, and other major and minor women. Building on the work of Paul Parrish, Janel Mueller, Maureen Sabine, and Anthony Low, who "suggest that Crashaw had a heightened sensitivity to women that is not present in the work of most other contemporary male poets," Lorraine analyzed one of Crashaw's lesser-studied poems, "Alexias. The Complaint of the Forsaken Wife of Sainte *Alexis*."[39] Alexis, the hermit saint who forsook his wife before they consummated their marriage vows and abandoned her for thirty-four years, was canonized by the early Church. Yet Crashaw's response to this legend focuses not on the saintly Alexis but on his largely unknown abandoned wife. The poem voices her point of view, further suggestive of Crashaw's "special sensitivity to the affections of women"; but it is also possible that Crashaw found in this voice a means for decrying the sense of isolation precipitated by the loss of his fellowship at Peterhouse and his connections with Mary Collett at Little Gidding that had resulted from his exile and subsequent conversion.[40] As with her other writings

[36]Ibid., p. 174.

[37]Ibid., p. 182.

[38]"Representing a Forsaken Woman: Crashaw's 'Alexias,'" *JDJ* 23 (2004): 347–62.

[39]Ibid., pp. 347–48.

[40]Ibid., pp. 359–60.

on Crashaw, this analysis illustrated the depth and complexity of Crashaw's work as a counter-argument to the adverse clichés about it that still creep up from time to time in the introductions of various anthologies for students.

The European emphasis of much of Lorraine's scholarship made sense to anyone who knew the Robertses personally. Though they made their home in central Missouri, Jack and Lorraine spent considerable time in Europe every year. Beginning in 1973, they made annual sojourns to Italy and often visited France, England, and other European countries for extended periods as well. They loved European culture, steeped as it is in history and a multitude of traditions. They relished visiting the Brigittine Convent in Assisi, or staying at an apartment in Palazzo Velabro overlooking the Palatine Hill in Rome, or listening to "Once Upon Royal David's City" at St. Paul's Cathedral in London at Christmastime, or dining together at Le Tastevin, one of their favorite restaurants on Île St. Louis in Paris. Rome especially held an important place in the Robertses' affections. For many years, from the late 1980s through the 1990s, Jack led a tour he called "Rome: Biography of a City" for tourists, alumni, and students interested in earning additional credits—a tour taken by many readers of this journal. He and Lorraine loved just about everything about being in Rome. "I know that if I were blindfolded I could tell I was in Rome by the smells, the feel of the breeze, the sounds," Jack said once. "They have more church bells in Rome than days of the year, so you can imagine what it's like on Sunday."[41] Lorraine was famous among friends and colleagues for her gourmet Italian cooking. In 1998, she retired as a full professor at St. Mary's. She was greatly missed by students and colleagues alike. Throughout her retirement, she devoted her time to cooking, gardening, voracious reading, and the Roberts' annual trips to Europe and elsewhere.

The Roberts leave behind a legacy of friendships, memories, and astute scholarship. Thanks to the efforts of Gary Stringer, the Roberts family, myself, and Anne K. Barker, Research and Instruction Librarian at the University of Missouri's Ellis Library, the Roberts' extensive collection of books and papers on Donne, Herbert, and Crashaw will be preserved in special collections at three different universities. The

[41]"A Gentleman and Scholar," p. 1.

John R. Roberts Collection at Ellis Library contains materials, broadsides, and books on Donne that were gathered over the course of more than fifty years. The John R. Roberts Papers on George Herbert will join the Amy M. Charles Papers in the George Herbert Collection in Special Collections at the Walter Clinton Jackson Library of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). This gift was made possible through the additional efforts of Christopher Hodgkins, Director of the George Herbert Society, in cooperation with Keith Gorman, UNCG Director of Special Collections and University Archives; Carolyn Shankle, Special Collections Specialist; and Jennifer Motszko, Manuscripts Curator. Finally, the Roberts' papers and books on Crashaw will be preserved as the John R. and Lorraine M. Roberts Collection of Richard Crashaw at the Lemieux Library on the Seattle University campus, thanks to the efforts of Mary Linden Sepulveda, Associate Librarian and Coordinator of Collection Development. Our hope is that these special collections not only will preserve the legacy of the Roberts' life work but also will further the future research of new generations of early modern scholars for decades to come.

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A Chronological Bibliography of the Work Of John R. And Lorraine M. Roberts

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