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Hamlet's Inky Cloak and Donne's *Satyres*

Thomas Fulton

Satyre III has been so often considered in relation to its author's biography that the poem suffers from not being understood within the larger context of Elizabethan satire. John Carey's assertion that "for the most part [*Satyre III*] is not a satire at all"[1] reflects a tradition initiated almost eighty years ago by Grierson, who excluded all but *Satyre III* from his influential anthology of metaphysical poetry.[2] This history of exclusion misrepresents the unity of the original, interdependent conception of the *Satyres*, which were not individually anthologized in the manuscript editions. Indeed, their original order and narrative development suggests a unity that is threatened by the tendency to fit them individually into the various stages of Donne's career.[3] The central problem faced by readers of the

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[1]*John Donne: Life, Mind and Art* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1981), p. 26.

[2]*Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Herbert J. C. Grierson (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1958; originally published 1921). This trend continues in such anthologies as *The Metaphysical Poets*, ed. Helen Gardner (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), but also, significantly, *The Norton Anthology of English Poetry*, ed. M. H. Abrams (New York: Norton, 1986).

[3]For a summary of the manuscripts of the satires, see W. Milgate, *The Satires, Epigrams, and Verse Letters* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), pp. xlvi-xlix. While *Satyre III* still struggles in this often biographically exclusionary legacy, various attempts have been made to read Donne's *Satyres* as a unity and as part of the Elizabethan satiric movement. The most important and extensive attempt is M. Thomas Hester, *Kinde Pitty and Brave Scorn* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1982). Heather Dubrow explores some common idioms of Elizabethan verse satire in "'No man is an island': Donne's Satires and Satiric

Satyres has revolved around the seeming disparity between their trenchant criticism of the court and the realities of Donne's career—that he seemed, at least, to alter his own religious affiliation for the sake of advancement. Arthur Marotti's sharp reading of *Satyre III* as an expression of criticism towards the queen, for example, manages, nonetheless, to fit the poem within his vision of Donne's poetry as serving courtly ambitions. Like Carey, Marotti understands the poem to be working out the problems that Donne's Roman Catholicism placed on his advancement, and thus casts the poem's imperative to "seek true religion" (42)—even with its explicit warnings against ulterior motives—as a kind of "necessary" exercise. He writes accordingly that the satire's "refusal to adopt a stance of faithful Catholicism . . . constitutes a necessary gesture in preparation for the pursuit of a courtly career."[4] Even where qualified, this reading echoes a traditional view established by T. S. Eliot, that "the indignation in Donne's satire is wholly faked," since "Donne loved the court as much as anybody."[5] For one who spent "a large part of his life . . . courting courtiers," Eliot's argument runs, Donne must not have really meant the mordantly anti-court rhetoric.[6]

Traditions," *SEL* 19 (1979), pp. 71-83. For another discussion of the satiric corpus as a whole, see John R. Lauritsen, "Donne's Satyres: The Drama of Self-Discovery," *SEL* 16 (1976): 117-30, and for a useful discussion of scribal culture and the satires, see Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993).

[4]Arthur F. Marotti, *John Donne, Coterie Poet* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1986), p. 41. For Carey's sense of Donne's "necessary" refusal of Catholicism represented in *Satyre III* see esp. pp. 26-30. For some compelling accounts of the Catholic sympathies in the satires, see also Hester, "'Ask thy father': ReReading Donne's *Satyre III*," *BJJ* 1 (1994): 201-18, and *Kinde Pitty*, p. 128. And for more general discussions, see also Dennis Flynn, "Donne's Catholicism: I," *Recusant History*, vol. 13, 1975, pp. 1-17; "Donne's Catholicism: II," *Recusant History*, vol. 13, 1976, pp. 178-95; and *John Donne and the Ancient Catholic Nobility* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1995).

[5]*The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*, ed. Ronald Schuchard (New York, Harcourt Brace, 1993), p. 142.

[6]Eliot, p. 144. David Norbrook discusses the relation of criticism and politics in *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), pp. 1-12; and "The Monarchy of Wit and the Republic of Letters," in *Soliciting Interpretation, Literary Theory and Seventeenth-Century English*

Yet the critical stance of the *Satyres* should not be dismissed by a retrospective glance at Donne's probable career motivations. While career-oriented pressures inevitably influence self-representation, the indignation of Donne's *Satyres* represents a movement in poetic expression that had quite conscious motives, separate from the individual conditions of Donne's biography. Marotti's picture of Donne as a coterie poet does shed light on how Donne's satire should be understood not merely by itself, but in the way it fits into a context-bound coterie project, as a style of poetry created through the exchange of law students. Much of the evidence concerning the precise nature of this exchange is lost, as is presumably much of the poetry (if it is not sitting unknown in manuscript collections). But enough information does exist to reconstruct literary interactions of various sorts between Donne, Everard Guilpin, John Marston, and Joseph Hall, and especially, for the present study, between Donne and Guilpin, whose satires imitate and respond to one another.[7] Donne's imperative to seek true religion in *Satyre III* represents not only a thematic exploration of the problem of maintaining truth in Donne's *Satyres*, but a problem endemic to the genre of Elizabethan satire as a whole. As Richard Strier writes, "Donne's aim (or fantasy) in these poems is to stand clear of the religious, political, and social pressures of his world."[8] The freedom that Donne and his contemporaries seek, even in respect to religion, is primarily from social and especially political pressures, pressures more apparent in the satire that emerged with such intensity in the late 1590s than in any other genre. In Elizabethan satire,

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Poetry, eds. Elizabeth D. Harvey and Katharine Eisaman Maus (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 3-36.

[7]For some literature on the relations of these satirists, see R. E. Bennett, "John Donne and Everard Guilpin," *RES* 15 (1939): 66-72; Philip J. Finkelpearl, "Donne and Everard Gilpin: Additions, Corrections, and Conjectures," *RES* 14 (1963): 164-67, R. E. Brettle, "Everard Guilpin and John Marston (1576-1634)," *RES* 16 (1965): 396-99, and Hester, "'All are players': Guilpin and 'Prester John' Donne," *SAR* 49 (1984): 3-17. On the interactions between Guilpin, Marston and Hall, see also *The Poetry of John Marston*, ed. Arnold Davenport (Liverpool: Univ. of Liverpool Press, 1961), esp. pp. 1-3; and *The Collected Poems of Joseph Hall*, ed. Davenport (Liverpool: Univ. of Liverpool Press, 1949), pp. xxviii-xxxiv.

[8]"Radical Donne: 'Satire III,'" *ELH* 60 (1993): 286.

criticism toward the court and the political structure took a quite sophisticated form, employed by later writers, which sought to show the forces that prevent moral knowledge. *Satyre III* operates within a set of conventions used to articulate the problem of maintaining truth under power, a problem that the satiric mode sought at the same time to confront. While Donne remains the greatest and perhaps the first of the Elizabethan satirists, the full meaning of his *Satyres* cannot be experienced without reconsidering the counter-cultural group to which he belongs.

In its efforts to stand clear of political pressures, Elizabethan satire became preoccupied with the problem of how the distorting pressures of political power shaped inquiry and representation itself. This introspection led, in Donne and Guilpin especially, to an examination of how knowledge—knowledge of the truth, or of "true religion"—was distorted by the conditions of power. Indeed, Donne's formulations develop in part through reflection and criticism of his friend's work. In the present essay, I explore this generic preoccupation and the coterie exchange that gave it shape, focusing on Donne's third and fourth *Satyres*. I then turn to the question of how this element of satiric expression migrates at the turn of the century—when formal satire is banned—into drama, and, in particular, *Hamlet*, which dramatizes the same epistemological problem of the satirist at court as Donne and his contemporaries.

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The arguments for cutting *Satyre III* away from the larger body of Elizabethan satire are influentially formulated by Carey, who justifies his assertion that the bulk of *Satyre III* is not "satire at all" by calling it a deeply personal "self-lacerating record" (Carey, p. 26) of a biographical reality, in which, according to this account, Donne was forced to abandon Catholicism for reasons of advancement. Yet its personal nature, where "I" and "thou" seem to refer to the same person, and the imperatives seem self-applied, carries forward an internal voice created in the earlier satires, particularly *Satyre I*. Horace initiates this tradition of self-reflection in his second satire, creating an internal dia-

logue between a man and his passions or *animus*,[9] and, like Donne's "doubt wisely" or "stand inquiring right" (77-78),[10] Horace adjures that "you" act wisely, or "right": "*tu si modo recte / dispensare*" (Satire I.2, 74-5). Persius's influential first satire is a dialogue of unlabelled voices, which could either be between himself and an imaginary friend, or merely internal.[11] Carey's sense of the uniquely "self-lacerating" qualities of *Satyre III* is challenged by the fact that, quite unlike his other satires, Donne here uses the first person singular only once. Instead, and again in a more public manner than his other satires, he frequently uses the plural "we" or "our" to signify the public realm of Britain. Indeed, beyond the association with more personal satires, there is little internal evidence to distinguish the poem as distinctly autobiographical, and Donne's efforts to maintain this distance

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[9]Horace, *Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica*. Loeb edition, trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1991), 1.2.69 ff. Several components of Horace's second satire may have been influential. Horace uses seemingly invented Roman names to characterize the various extremes he warns against. Donne's borrowing of Roman notions of virtue and of a Stoic middle course are discussed in Joshua Scodel, "The Medium is the Message: Donne's 'Satire 3,' 'To Sir Henry Wotton ('Sir, more then kisses')', and the Ideologies of the Mean," *MP* 91 (1993). See also Norbrook, "The Monarchy of Wit and the Republic of Letters," p. 10.

[10]Unless otherwise noted, all quotations of Donne's verse are from *The Satires, Epigrams, and Verse Letters, ed.* W. Milgate.

[11]Self-condemning internal dialogues commonly characterize satire, in part because of the indemnity afforded by self-criticism that can readily apply to the general public. For this reason, English verse satirists often providently indict themselves. "Yet myself from vice not free" admits Wither's satyr in a book for which he was nonetheless imprisoned. Erasmus attempts to protect himself against the potential and, as it happened, eventual censorship of the *Praise of Folly*: "But if someone writes a satire on the lives of men without censuring a single person by name, I ask you, can this be considered scurrilous? . . . Besides, I beg you to notice on how many counts I indict my own self." *The Praise of Folly,* ed. and trans. Clarance H. Miller (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1979), p. 4. For Wither, see "Vices Executioner: or the Satyrs Selfe-description of Himselfe," in *The Workes of Master George Wither* (London, 1620), p. 308, quoted from Alvin Kernan, *The Cankered Muse, Satire of the English Renaissance* (New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1959), p. 114. See Kernan, pp. 113-14, for more examples of self-deprecating satire.

and intellectual freedom should not readily be dismissed. The poem operates distinctly as a generic expression, both in style and in its focus on power and knowledge, and Donne is also not alone in writing satirically on religion. Much of Marston's *Scourge of Villianie* is religiously oriented, and Guilpin suggests in his first *Satyre* that he might be as cold "as snow-drownd Athos in his frozen Zeale, / Both to Religion and his Common-weale."[12] But religion is also one of the many subjects that Elizabethan satirists confronted in criticizing their compatriots' false allegiance to the beliefs they professed.

Marston criticizes the shallow adherence to beliefs held not by a free, deliberate act of personal will, but by the imposition of some outward, political force. In the second satire of *The Scourge of Villanie* (1599), Marston directs much attention towards religion, and asserts what seems an early instance of freedom of conscience:

> I should rail upon
> This fustie world, that now dare put in ure
> To make JEHOVA but a coverture,
> To shade ranck filth, *loose conscience is free,*
> *From all conscience, what els hath libertie?*[13]

The world that "puts something in ure" to make religion but a "coverture," is one whose political or legal forces distort what should be the "free" operation of conscience into a mere cover, a belief professed by necessity rather than knowledge. In keeping with the legal diction of these Inns of Court writers, to "put" something "in ure" had a legal sense of having "reference to Statutes"—like Donne's "Statutes curse" (10) in *Satyre IV*, or "th'huge statute lawes" (112) in *Satyre II*—and thus it meant "to put into effect, force, or operation" a statute.[14]

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[12]Everard Guilpin, *Skialetheia, or A Shadowe of Truth, in Certaine Epigrams and Satyres*, ed. by D. Allen Carroll (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1974), pp. 21-22. All citations of Guilpin are to this edition.

[13]*Scourge of Villanie*, Satire II, ll. 12-16, in *The Poems of John Marston*, ed. Davenport, p. 106.

[14]OED, Ic. In Drayton's line, "Lust, puts the most unlawfull things in ure," for example, the phrase evokes a legal register even in its general application. *Matilda* (1594), line 320: *The Works of Michael Drayton*, ed. J. William Hebel (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961), 1: 223. M. Thomas Hester points out

The passage implies a legal force applied to individual conscience causing religious devotion to be a superficial outer covering. Like Marston, Donne's question in *Satyre III*, "wilt thou let thy Soule be ty'd / To mans lawes" (93-4) similarly suggests that religion enforced by law cannot be real faith, since conscience must act freely on its own accord. Marston returns to the subject of religion later in the circuitous course of this poem:

> Hence idle *Cave* [caution], vengeance pricks me on,
> When mart is made of fayre Religion,
> Reform'd bald *Trebus* swore, in Romish quiere
> He sold Gods essence for a poore denier. (70-75.)

A "mart" or market is made of religion, where one of a Reformed faith once sold "Gods essence" for a negligible fee in the Roman church. This idea of the venality of instituted religion follows a string of associative thought that begins in the problem of servility:

> But now, (sad change!) the kennell sinck of slaves,
> Pesant great Lords, and servile service craves.
> Bondslaves sonnes had wont be bought & sold. (58-9)

Though England has evolved from a once "cruel age" (50) in which men were held in "servile villenage" (51) and "marted" (53), it suffers now from a confusion of station that makes even lords servile, recalling Hamlet's complaint that "the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier."[15] For Marston, the condition of being "sold" to servility has more threatening epistemological consequences:

> Oh would to God, this were their worst mischance,
> Were not theyr souls sold to dark ignorance. (66-7)

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that it was the Statute against Recusants that "led to the martyrdom of Donne's younger brother," see "'Ask thy father': ReReading Donne's *Satyre III*," p. 204.

[15]With a curiously topical specificity, Hamlet indicates "this three years" (5.1.139) in G. Blakemore Evans et al., *Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997). Subsequent quotations of Shakespeare will be from this edition unless otherwise noted.

Here the condition of servility is associated with ignorance of the soul. The implication, by comparison to the worship of a fictitious age, is that ignorance is caused by "policie":

> Deride their frenzie, that for policie
> Adore Wheat dough, as reall deitie. (82-3)

Marston uses similar language to attack what Guilpin calls the "slavish state" that brings "mens thoughts" to abandon "Nature's manumission" (Carroll, 1-3)—indeed, Guilpin's repetition of Marston's "bond," "slave," "free," and "born" in these opening lines of *Satyre VI* on opinion suggests a conversation between the two satirists (1-4). Guilpin's "opinion" is characterized as the "coverture" of human belief, a fallacious form of thought that is shaped by pressures of the state. The struggle of maintaining truth against politically legitimated forms of belief is a pervasive interest of Elizabethan satire, for which *Satyre III* on religion is one instance. Donne's exploration of religious "opinion" in this satire continues more generally in those that follow, extending the same epistemological paradigm to issues beyond the sphere of confessional choice.

While the religious tension in *Satyre III* seems particularly suited to Donne's personal struggle, it also reflects a struggle within English society to come to terms with the many philosophical untenabilities and social horrors of the last seventy years of religious history. Lucio's famous phrase in *Measure for Measure*, "grace is grace, despite of all controversy" (1.2.24-25), represents a similar concern for the problems of multiple belief systems, or even "religions"—indeed, Lucio responds to the Gentleman's words "or in any religion" (1.2.23). To accuse Donne of apostasy (as Carey does) ignores the fact that so many families in England contained adherents of more than one faith; it also presumes that at this moment in history it would have been intellectually impossible to make a genuine conversion from one faith to another. Other critics, still confined to the biographical approach, have proposed that Donne was peculiarly able, given his background, to explore various religious positions. Yet Donne's personal history is not unique, either to his generation or to the larger phenomenon of religious conversion that had confronted English households in recent history. To use our knowledge of Donne's future conversion and even

his temporally vague retrospective narratives in *Pseudo-Martyr* (1610) entails the fallacy of intended consequence: we simply do not know where he stood when he wrote *Satyre III*, and where he would stand is inconsequential. Even in *Pseudo-Martyr*, Donne speaks of his former dilemma not merely in terms of family history, but even more in terms of an intellectual freedom that he maintained: "My indulgence to my freedom and libertie, as in *all other indifferent things* [my emphasis], so in my studies also, not to betroth or enthral my self, to any one science, which should possesse or dominate me."[16] These words so prominently placed in this public, even propagandistic piece still assert, like the *Satyres*, the necessity of maintaining a liberty of thought, even towards religion. Indeed, to speak of a choice of religion as under the realm of "indifferent things"—a phrase synonymous with adiaphora—has quite challenging implications. Donne's later religious writing urges what he had asserted in *Satyre III*, the necessity of hard-won knowledge over false allegiance. In *Pseudo-Martyr*, Donne uses Aquinas's concept of conscience as "*an Act by which wee apply our knowledge to some particular thing,*" adding "*Conscience* ever presumes *Knowledge*" (p. 173).

In the 1590s Donne probably was not an "unyielding Catholic" as Bald cogently maintains[17] and as *Satyre III* itself makes clear.[18] While not unyieldingly Catholic, the poem can hardly be read as negotiating or asserting Donne's apostasy, especially in regards to the event which Carey sees as precipitating the occasion of this poem and his conversion: his brother Henry's death in prison and the gruesome disembowelment of Henry's friend William Harrington, a priest. If the poem does respond obscurely to this momentous event, it more likely responds to the wrongful persecution of his brother than it would record

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[16]*Pseudo-martyr*, ed. Anthony Raspa (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 1993), p. 12. A crucial difference lies between "Jesuit" and "Catholic," between the political position that threatens national security and a position merely of personal faith, a distinction Donne carefully maintains.

[17]R. C. Bald, *John Donne: A Life* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), p. 70.

[18]As Strier argues, pp. 283-322. Hester and Flynn have argued a more Catholic bias. See Hester, "'Ask thy father': ReReading Donne's *Satyre III*," pp. 201-18; Flynn, "Donne's Catholicism: I," pp. 1-17, "Donne's Catholicism: II," pp. 178-95.

an immolation that Donne underwent, as Carey argues, when the potential for his own persecution became all too clear.[19] Donne's use of "courage" in adopting a religious stance and the antimonarchical language at the end of the poem cannot be made to fit Carey's preemptive account of his compromise. *Satyre III* does not indicate a broken resignation, nor does it express sacrifice to political exigency; indeed, it speaks against such actions.

In fact, *Satyre III*'s aspirations toward intellectual freedom—the freedom to choose a religion regardless of the dictates of power—place it in the heart of the satiric mode of the 1590s. Here we might begin with the first person pronoun in the opening of the poem, so often read outside of the satiric tradition from which it derives its meaning:

> Kinde pitty chokes my spleene; brave scorn forbids
> Those teares to issue which swell my eye-lids;
> I must not laugh, nor weepe sinnes, and be wise,
> Can railing then cure these worne maladies? (1-4)

The conflicting humors of "pitty" and "spleene" may constitute a fashionably melancholic disposition; at the same time there is a particularly satiric valence to the notions of "brave scorn" and "spleen," terms which represent the severe stance of the satirist at battle with emotional inhibitions to his own voice. "Spleen" denotes the specialized language of the satirist, and by using it Donne orients himself in the convention of a satirist defending his voice against conflicting internal and external voices. Persius uses the Latin "splen" in a similar sense in his first satire: "*(nolo . . . sed sum petulanti splene) cachinno*" ("I must not, but I am of a petulant spleen, I laugh.")[20] Besides being the fount of splenetic emotions, the spleen was also thought to be the

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[19]The memory of his brother's trauma may have been three years old at the time of composition, though the *Satyre* is arguably earlier than the traditional date of 1596. (Bald, p. 72). For an account of his brother's crisis, see Bald, pp. 58-59. See also, Flynn, "Donne's Catholicism: I," p. 5.

[20]Juvenal, Satire I, 11-12, in *Juvenal and Persius*, the Loeb edition, trans. G. G. Ramsay (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1993).

source of laughter.[21] The bifurcation between "spleene" and "pitty" or "teares" is disrupted by the lines "I must not laugh" (Persius), "nor weepe sinnes" (Jeremiads, or perhaps elegiac expression) "*and* be wise." Here Donne shifts subtly to a third concern, wisdom, which should have been covered by the self-confident satiric mode ("brave scorn") that he struggles to maintain in the first two lines, but, it seems, is not. Whether wisdom may be found in either state or mode of expression is an uncertainty that continues in the question "can railing [satire, spleen] *then* cure these worn maladies?" By the generic conventions within which Donne tightly operates, "worn maladies" would imply social ailments—worn, as if ineffectually treated by other forms of discourse. These opening lines derive power from the very fact that they undermine the confidence of the satiric mode that gives them expression; they announce a kind of skepticism of and freedom from even this system of thought.

To understand how much Donne's condensed opening derives from language formed through coterie exchange, we might turn to the only other instance where Donne uses the phrase "my spleen," a verse letter to Guilpin. Probably written before *Satyre III*, Donne complains in this letter of a sort of satiric writer's block: "nothing wherat to laugh my spleene espyes / But bearbaitings or Law exercise" ("To Mr. E. G," 11-12). The verse letter suggests a relationship between satirists that deserves further investigation. Guilpin's anonymous *Skialetheia* was published in 1598, and it would share responsibility for the subsequent ban on satires and epigrams in 1599, yet it is probable that some of Guilpin's satires circulated in manuscript as early as 1593.[22] Carroll uses events and literary allusions that occur in *Satyres III*, *V*, and *VI* to date the writing of the entire work to 1596-1598.[23] I doubt this dating,

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[21]Marston writes, "oh hold my sides, that I may break my spleene, / With laughter at the shadowes I have seen": *Certain Satires*, Satire I, 123-4. See also Hall, *Virgidemiarum*, IV, 74.

[22]Edward Arber, *A Transcript of the Registers* (London, 1876), 3: 677-78. Quoted in Carroll, p. 3.

[23]A verse paragraph in *Satyre I* echoes Shakespeare's depiction of Bolingbroke when talking about Essex. *Richard II* was probably performed in 1595, though it is thought by Harrison and others that the description of Bolingbroke as Essex would have been added, like Hamlet's "dozen or sixteen lines," to the published edition of 1597, nearer the play's use to support Es-

since only the later satires point to the later dates, while *Satyres I* and *II* and the *Preludium* suggest an earlier date of composition.

Donne's letter reveals that exchanging satirical verse was a central element of their friendship. He sends Guilpin his "slimy rymes bred in our vale below / bearing with them much of my love and heart" (3-5). "Slimy rymes" refers to some enclosed verse, and probably satire, given the verse letter's satiric allusions and the joint project of the two poets. Guilpin, he imagines, receives his verse in "Parnassus," or the country, where he is on vacation. Donne contrasts Guilpin's rusticity with the less poetically inspiring city:

> Nothing wherat to laugh my spleene espyes
> But bearbaitings or Law exercise.
> Therefore Ile leave'it, and in the Cuntry strive
> Pleasure, now fled from London, to retrive. (11-14)

Given the known facts of Guilpin's visit to his Suffolk home in 1593, the poem's mention of empty theaters and empty streets (8-10), and Donne's presence at Lincoln's Inn suggested in "Law exercise," the poem was probably written in the summer of 1593, though the theaters—the most concrete topical reference in the poem—were closed from June 1592 to June 1594, thereby depriving the satirist of amuse-

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sex's rebellion. Guilpin's lines, "For when great Foelix passing through the street, / vayleth his cap to each one he doth meet, / And when no broome-man that will pray for him, / Shall have less truage then his bonnets brim, / Who would not think him perfect curtesie?" (I.63-67). The lines echo Richard II's description: "How he did seem to dive into their hearts / With humble and familiar courtesy . . . Off goes his bonnet to an oyster-wench"(1.4.25-31). See Carroll, pp. 157-159. See G. B. Harrison, ed., *Skialetheia* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1931), pp. viii-ix, and, G. B. Harrison, *TLS*, 15 Oct. 1931, p. 802. While this reference to *Richard II* suggests a later date of composition for *Satyre I* than the time of Donne's verse letter, it would be early enough to allow for Donne's seeming response in *Satyre IV*. It seems much more likely, however, that a relatively unaccomplished poet such as Guilpin would recycle earlier material, and that the argument that he wrote all of *Skialetheia* within 18 months prior to publication, discarding earier manuscript satiric verse, is implausible. He probably added the verse paragraph on Essex.

ment.[24] The line "nothing wherat to laugh my spleene espies" echoes (or informs) the language of *Satyre III*, as it echoes Guilpin's own satiric work, which employs "spleene" as the visceral spirit of the satiric mode. A satyr's "critticke spleenes," Guilpin writes, are "antidotes to pestilential sinnes" (*Satyre Preludium*, 69-70). Donne's otherwise obscure statement of what his "spleen espies" suggests there had already developed between them a vocabulary for discussing satire. The verse letter challenges the assumption that all Guilpin's satires were written after 1596; his published satires more likely contain material written earlier.[25] Guilpin had almost certainly already written most of his first *Satyre* by the time of Donne's letter, as is indicated by Donne's intimate and obscure use of the satiric "spleen" in the letter, and his address to Guilpin as an active satirist.[26] Moreover, Donne's fourth *Satyre* seems especially to respond to Guilpin's earlier satires, as M. Thomas Hester has shown.[27]

Donne's collaboration with Guilpin and his complaint that "nothing my spleen espies" indicates that the opening "Kinde pitty chokes my spleene" not only connotes a generic mode; it also speaks an insider

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[24]Bald suggests the same, p. 57; see also Carroll, p. 8. "London theatres essentially closed by the plague from June of this year [1592] until June of 1594." *Riverside Shakespeare*, p. 1999.

[25]Donne's use of "my spleen" suggests an earlier date for *Satyre III*—perhaps closer to 1594-1595, as Milgate thought (pp. 139-40). The point of contention for the dating of *Satyre III* is the publication of Bellarmine's *Disputations*, which Donne studied in the midst of religious indecision. Walton relates that "he did shew the then Dean of Gloucester" all the works of Bellarmine "marked with many weighty observations under his own hand" (*Lives*, pp. 25-26, in Milgate, p. 139). Milgate accordingly dates the poem to after the publication of Bellarmine's complete works, which he assumes to be 1593, though the last volume actually came out in 1596. This point of contention relies too heavily on Walton's accuracy, on an unknown number of marked volumes seen, and on their precise relation to the poem.

[26]Another example is Guilpin's use "Parnassus," which seems to have invited Donne's allusion in the verse letter. See Guilpin's *Satyre I*, 112-3, where the idealized Parnassus suggests Donne's usage, especially since the word occurs no where else in Donne's poetry.

[27]See Hester, "'All are players': Guilpin and 'Prester Iohn' Donne." See note 7.

language. Donne is struggling with, as well as announcing, the generic habits and internal doubts of satire. He locates himself in the self-conscious convention found in almost every satiric writer—English and Roman alike—of justifying the use of the satiric mode over others, a convention that also involves the disparagement of other genres. In "weep[ing] sinnes," Donne does not seem to have leapt forward to the subject of religion, but remains oriented in the question of representative mode. "Sins" implies "the worn maladies" that he aims to redress, like the "pestilential sinnes" of Guilpin, for which the satyr's "critticke spleenes" provide "antidotes." "Weeping" would have a generic sense to a member of his coterie, such as Guilpin, whose own attempts at the same convention describe "whimpring sonnets" and "puling Elegies" which are "food to sinnes,"[28] though it is probable Donne meant, as Hester points out, to refer to a tradition of combining satire with Jeremiads. Thomas Drant included the *Lamentations* in his 1566 translation of Horace's satires, explaining "That the plaintive prophete Jeremie should wepe at synne: and the pleasant poet Horace should laugh at sinne."[29] Both Donne and Guilpin imitate Juvenal, who begins his book of satires by railing against "comedies" and "love ditties" (*elegos*),[30] though Guilpin's obvious imitation of Juvenal adds a new twist to Juvenal's less justified invectives at these forms. Whereas in Juvenal the intuition of a more effective form of poetry exists in his brash dismissal, he treads on the other poetic forms more for their te-

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[28]Guilpin, *Satyre Preludium*, 10-11. Hall echoes this convention on several occasions, as when he writes of the "love-sicke Poet" who "Then poures he fourth in patched Sonettings . . . / When once he smiles, to laugh: and when he sighs, to grieve" (1.7.9-14). The laughter and grieving comes from the readers.

[29]Thomas Drant included the Lamentations in his 1566 translation of Horace's Satires. See Hester, *Kinde Pitty*, esp. pp. 5-10. Drant explains the combination: "That the plaintive prophete Jeremie should wepe at synne: and the pleasant poet Horace should laugh at sinne." A medicinall moral, that is the two books of Horace his *Satyres Englished: The waylyng of Hieremiah* (London, 1566), sigs. A2 verso – 3, quoted from Hester, p. 10, n41.

[30]Juvenal, Satire I, ll. 3-4, in *Juvenal and Persius*, pp. 2-3. For a discussion of Juvenal's influence on Donne, see Y. Shikany Eddy and Daniel P. Jaeckle, "Donne's 'Satyre I': The Influence of Persius's 'Satire III'," *SEL* 21 (1981): 111-122.

dium than their unsuitability for so vice-ridden an age. In the conventions of formal satire, Donne's opening seems a highly condensed defense of the genre, which designates other poetic modes to be ineffective in combating corruption. If a milder aversion towards the elegiac mode exists in Donne's opening, it would suit the rather sudden jump to "is not our mistress fair religion" (5), which momentarily brings the two genres together. Donne oscillates between all possible modes, none of which produce wisdom.

Donne's *Satyre IV* also suggests how he and Guilpin were engaged in an inquiry of satire's generic powers and limitations. In his defense of satire, Guilpin raised an issue over which Renaissance defenders of poetry had been particularly concerned. Poetry had been banned from Plato's "Commonwealth" because it could not, as Sidney writes, "teach and move" to "virtue,"[31] since its language, being directed towards pleasure or the emotions, caters more to "opinion" than reason. Guilpin considers this problem in greater detail in *Satyre VI* on opinion and reason. In the Preludium to his *Satyres*, Guilpin defends satirists, and argues that satire might be exempted from the Platonic critique:

> The strictest (*Plato*) that for vertues health:
> Will banish Poets forth his common-wealth,
> Will of the two affoord the Satyre grace,
> Before the whyning love-song shall have place. (105-8)

Elizabethan satire concerned itself with a special version of the problem that accompanies Plato's rejection of poetry: not only is poetry ineffectual, even leading people to sin, but, unlike philosophy, it does not bring people to "know the good." Satire combated this challenge to poetry on several levels, one being simply that it eschewed the linguistic "pleasure" normally theorized as the poetic vehicle to virtue, but it also experimented with a form of representation that often mirrored—or nearly mirrored—the very sinfulness it hoped to eradicate.[32] As with so many of the satires, the social sphere that problematizes

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[31]Sir Philip Sidney, *Selected Prose and Poetry*, ed. Robert Kimbrough (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1983), p. 136.

[32]Guilpin writes, "Viewing this sin-drownd world, I purposely, / Phisick'd my *Muse*, that thus unmannerly, / She might beray our folly-soyled age" (Epigram 70, ll. 13-15: Carroll, p. 58).

knowledge of the good in Donne's *Satyre IV* is the court: "if of court life you knew the good," instructs the courtly character (66), and then the line breaks. "You would leave lonenesse" (67). Along with the primary sense that there is good in court life, and you just have to know where to find it, the lines convey a second, philosophical sense, taken up by the lines that follow, that one can know the good *and* be a part of court. The narrator responds to the second sense, and disputes that one cannot know the good by looking for it at court. "I said," he relates,

> Not alone
> My lonenesse is. But Spartanes fashion,
> To teach by painting drunkards, doth not last
> Now; Aretines pictures have made few chaste;
> No more can Princes courts, though there be few
> Better pictures of vice, teach me virtue. (67-72)[33]

As if the courtier comprehends nothing he says, but only hears the word "princes," he replies, "O Sir, / 'Tis sweet to talke of Kings" (73-4). The passage expresses a distrust of mimetic representation in art and poetry; the Spartan's fashion of teaching, which "doth not last now," was to show soldiers pictures of disgustingly inebriated serfs to warn them from drunkenness. The Spartan paintings and the other forms of representation here resemble the discursive mode of satire: of showing the bad, and castigating vice through a churlish depiction of it. The phrase "doth not last now" implies that that form of representation does not work in the current age, or sustain its function; like the generic doubts of *Satyre III*, in which literary remedies do not "last" against resilient, "worn maladies." Donne problematizes the Aristotelian, Renaissance concept of representation evoked, for example, in Hamlet's speech to the players, that a play should hold a "mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image" (3.2.18-19). In the light of Donne's interrogation of the efficacy of representation, the phrase "doth not last now" challenges even the accepted rule of representation expressed by Hamlet. Donne suggests the possibilities of a satiric form of representation that has a clashing,

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[33]"Last" in line 69 is from the 1633 edition; other versions have "tast." "Last" seems to make more sense.

non-mimetic stance, as perhaps the dream in *Satyre IV*, which seems to embody an experimental freedom of expression that results from such skepticism.

It cannot be a coincidence that Guilpin's *Preludium* and his first *Satyre* also refer to Aretino, who, like Rabelais, functions as a test case of whether the arts can be morally instructive. (He also refers to "Aretine" the satirist in his first *Satyre* as a great "whip of fools" (143), playing on Aretino's honorary title, "*Il flagello de principi*," the whip of princes.[34])

> Let *Rablais* with his durtie mouth discourse
> No longer blush, for they'le write ten times worse:
> And *Aretines* great wit be blam'd no more,
> They'le storie forth the errant arrant whore
> And speaking painters excuse *Titian*,
> For his *Ioves* loves; and *Elephanticke* vaine. (51-56)

The "speaking painters" who excuse Titian are themselves poets. Guilpin expresses a more innocent, uncomplicated confidence in mimesis, even the sort of vitriolic mimesis that Donne suggests cannot last. Donne responds to Guilpin's confidence in Aretino and his misplaced apology for erotic painting. Critics usually assume the echoes between Donne's fourth *Satyre* and Guilpin's first suggests the lesser poet's imitation of Donne, as is interestingly the case of Guilpin's imitations of Donne's first and fourth in his fifth *Satyre*.[35] Guilpin's first *Satyre* does bear much in common with Donne's fourth, but in a manner suggesting that Donne is in fact responding to Guilpin here, rather than the other way around. Donne's similar language and imagery seem a distillation and rearrangement of Guilpin. In Guilpin's *Satyre I*,

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[34]"Foure Universities honoured Aretine wyth . . . rich titles," wrote Nashe in *The Unfortunate Traveller*, including "*Il flagello de principi.*" Ronald B. McKerrow, ed., *The Works of Thomas Nashe* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), vol. 2, p. 265. Aretino was so titled in an edition of his works. See McKerrow, vol. 4, p. 279. Here Nashe valorizes the Italian satirist's freedom of speech: "He was no timerous servile flatterer of the commonwealth . . . Princes he spared not, that in the least point transgrest. His life he contemned in comparison of the libertie of speech." ibid. See Carroll, p. 165.

[35]See Hester, "'All are players,'" pp. 3-17.

the narrator meets a strange courtly braggart, and must resist the fop's request, as in Donne's *Satyre IV*, to "come to court" (I. 89). As in Donne, the lying, traveling courtier, or "foisting travailer" (123) had been to Guiana, among many other worldly places, like Donne's "stranger than strangers" "stranger than Guiana's rarities" (21-23). The courtier tries with "slie poysonous iuice" (161) to bring the narrator to his own level of hypocrisy. Like Donne's *Satyre IV*, there is talk, too, of kings (IV. 95-97), of "King *Harries* days" (108) and of a dagger the gallant carried, "made of the sword wherwith great *Charles* did swagger" (142). Donne's strange courtier talks vaguely "of all our Harries" (77), suggesting the vaguer outlines of an echo of Guilpin's more defined original. In one of the chambers through which the satire moves, Guilpin describes a ballad-telling tapestry of "painted cloth" (106). Donne comments on this wryly, "why is it hung," he says of the courtly chamber he passes through, "with the seven deadly sinnes?" (231-2), which again evokes the problem of mimetic representation. Indeed, Guilpin's seven satires themselves manifest, as Carroll points out (p. 18), "the latent hold which the Seven Deadly Sins maintained on Guilpin's mind," and thus Donne's "hung" "seven deadly sinnes" captures the "painted histories" Guilpin criticizes with the substance of that critique itself. Donne subtly criticizes Guilpin, then, as he echoes and expands his friend's terms; Guilpin has merely rehung the court with literary tapestries of the Deadly Sins. Just prior to Guilpin's description of the tapestry, allegorical figures such as Dissimulation make a courtly appearance. His use of a native satiric tradition involving the Deadly Sins, like the oddly inappropriate lionization of Aretino as a satirist, stems from Nashe's prose satire, to which Guilpin alludes on several occasions.[36] Donne puts this representational tradition in question.

In Guilpin s conflict between the courtier and the Satyr—both the person and the poetic form—the satirist is somewhat triumphant. The

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[36]Several of the satires thematically address such Sins as Dissimulation (Satyre I), Pride (V), Jealousy (IV). Guilpin seems to be following Nashe's depiction in *Pierce Peniless* (1592) of the medieval allegorical figures. See Carroll, p. 18. For a discussion of Nashe, Pierse Peniless and the medieval heritage, see Kernan, pp. 40-60. For the importance of Aretino as a model of satire also for Nashe, see *The Unfortunate Traveler*, in McKerrow, 2: 264-5; discussed in Kernan, pp. 59-60.

Satyr's lashes, borrowed from Aretino, have exposed the "hypocrite" (145):

> Me thinks I see the pie-bald whoresone tremble
> To heare of *Aretine*: he doth dissemble,
> There is no trust to be had to his quaking,
> To him once more, and rouse him from his shaking
> Feaver of fained feare, hold whip and cord,
> *Muse*, play the Beadle, a lash at every word. (I, 153-8)

Yet then the courtier's "poysonous iuice" seeps through his own "quil" (160), and the poet verges on becoming a courtier himself, in approximating a poetry that fawns for "reward":

> Me thinks already I applaud my selfe,
> For nettle-stinging thus this fayery elfe:
> And though my conscience sayes I merit not
> Such deere reward, dissembling yet (God wot)
> I hunt for praise, and doe the same expect:
> Hence (crafty enchaunter) welcome base neglect,
> Scoffes make me know my selfe, I must erre,
> *Better a wretch then a dissembler.* (163-170)

"Crafty enchaunter" implies a magical potency associated with the rewards of court. In the conventionally disjunctive logic of the narrative, the poet endangers his veracity by coming to court, and by being induced to dissemble for reward. In Guilpin, the tempted satirist ultimately moves away untainted, making his encounter with hypocrisy therapeutic.

Donne's fourth *Satyre*, however, describes a courtly encounter that is less self-confident about the efficacy of this satiric mode—the mode of shocking exposure. In Donne, too much exposure to the bad leads to the satirist's own contamination. Donne modifies the more self-confident satiric persona of Juvenal and Persius in his first *Satyre*, where the morally resistant voice becomes complicit in the hypocrisy of its social surroundings. In *Satyre IV*, he seems to continue the process of modification—and thus self-contamination—to its legal nemesis:

> [I] felt my selfe then
> Becomming Traytor, and mee thought I saw
> One of our Giant Statutes ope his jaw
> To sucke me in; for hearing him, I found
> That as burnt venom'd Lechers doe grow sound
> By giving others their soares, I might growe
> Guilty, and he free. (130-136)

"Venom'd" evokes the "poysonous iuice" of Guilpin, as does the image of one person's contracting evil through poison from another. Again, Donne's echo subtly revises the clumsy, yet more detailed construction in Guilpin. Guilpin's own use of venom, as in the "poysonous juice" of a snake, in Donne comes to mean infected with disease, though retaining a sense of poison. Donne employs the superstition that those afflicted with sexually transmitted diseases can "grow sound" by giving the disease's venom to others. This nightmare restates in stronger terms a fear that Donne had expressed in the less threatening format of metaphor. The monster-like Statute threatens him for his illegal allegiance, yet, unlike the earlier comparison, not unjustly—in the sense that he has become truly a traitor, rather than mistakenly found so. This self-betrayal through legal imposition is carried forward from *Satyre III*: "wilt thou let thy soul be ty'd / to mans lawes" (93-4). Yet his apostasy in entering court is to himself, and thus the statute's bite represents a sort of impossible condition of double jeopardy. "Yet [I] went to court," runs the earlier comparison, as one who goes to Mass without meaning it:

> Yet went to Court; But as Glaze which did goe
> To'a Masse in jest, catch'd, was faine to disburse
> The hundred markes, which is the Statutes curse. (7-10)

Even here, the religious metaphor describing the threat of power to personal freedom reflects revealingly on *Satyre III*; religion becomes another way of describing the control of thought—the vehicle rather than the tenor of metaphor. *Satyre IV* develops the self-betrayal in *Satyre III*, where the "soul" should not be "ty'd to mans lawes," to terms that deal more with the court's power over moral autonomy and vision. The "court" is sometimes treated as "the Presence"—the words are

interchanged in manuscript variations—and the "Queen's Presence,"[37] which conveys a sarcastically mystical quality, as if this presence contained powers imparted from above. The narrator treats allegiance to this presence as if it were "a moschite," or a mosque, a religious affiliation to power that infers the customarily unfavorable comparison to the Turks.[38]

In place of religion, Guilpin's *Satyre VI* on Opinion and Reason casts "Opinion" as a set of intellectual and moral constructs to which men adhere not because they have come to understand these ideas themselves, but because of other political pressures:

> *Opinion is various as light change,*
> *Now speaking Court-like friendly, strait-wayes strange.* (VI. 45-6)

Guilpin's *Satyre VI* opens with a brash statement connecting opinion, or a shallow grasp of received ideas, to the "slavish state":

> Oh that mens thought should so degenerate,
> Being free borne, t'admit a slavish state:
> They disclaime Natures manumission,
> Making themselves bond to opinion. (VI. 1-4)

The satire explores the political implications of this statement much more guardedly, while it speaks openly of the Platonic notion that opinion derives "her pedegree / from bodies durt, and sensualitie" (19-20). Yet the rather strong implications of the "slavish state" are continued in statements such as

> Oh what a slaverie's this? shall a free mind
> Sicke of a Cockneys Ague, feare the wind?
> No, let's be Stoicks, resolute, and spare not
> To tell the proudest Criticke that we care not
> For his wooden censure. (VI. 129-133)

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[37]"Queen's Presence" appears in several manuscripts in place of the suggestively capitalized "Presence." Donne is playing with the connotations of the name of an actual chamber at court. See Milgate, p. 159, and Hester, *Kinde Pitty*, pp. 88-90.

[38]"This is the English, not the Turkish court," argues Shakespeare's Henry IV. *Henry IV*, Part Two, 5.2.4.

The "Cockneys Ague" seems another intentional obscurity; it implies something like a London affliction,[39] an affliction that imposes itself upon the free mind with "fear." The "proudest criticke" should be one who derives "pride" from authority, associated here with London, or the court. The "wooden censure" carries the sense of censor (the two words overlapped in the period); it refers not merely to judgment, but the administration thereof. It is a "wooden" thing that instills "fear" and opinion rather than knowledge. Authority enforces a mental slavery apparent in expression, and slavery in thought. Even where Guilpin demonstrates a willed obscurity caused by censure, he fights ostensibly against it: "we care not for his wooden censure," he goes on,

> nor to mittigate
> The sharp tart verjuice of his snap-haunce hate
> Would change a line, a word, no not a poynt
> For his deepe mouthed scoffes (VI. 133-36).

"Snap-haunce" is the lock released by the trigger of a gun, and verjuice is the acid juice wrung from crab apples.[40] The lines move between the dangerously political imposition on his freedom and a safe, general sense of "censure." Marston seems to echo this wording and contention in the opening of one of his satires:

> I that even now lisp'd like an Amorist,
> Am turn'd into a snaphaunce Satyrist. . . .
> Do farre of[f] honour that Censorian seate.[41]

As it happened, of course, *Skialethia* and *Certaine Satyres* were burned in London in 1599.

Elizabethan satire is fascinated by the question of how to formulate efficacious ways of countering social problems—as suggested, for example, in Guilpin's use of Plato, and the models of mimesis in Donne—but it is also preoccupied with the problem of representing

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[39]Kenneth Muir also gives a number of ideas to the Fool's use of "Cockney" in the Arden edition of *King Lear* (London: Routledge, 1992), 2.4.109; see Carroll, pp. 230-31.

[40]OED; Carroll, pp. 231, 165.

[41]*Certaine Satyres*, II. 1-5.

the "truth" under the all-too-present and dangerous possibility of reprimand. The satirist thus represents the problem of being true to oneself (or of knowing the truth) even while professing to speak the truth against such problems. The interrogation of the effectiveness of representation lends itself to skepticism not only towards Renaissance and classical ideas of mimesis, but of satire itself. This crisis of representation is intensified by the confrontation with forces that legislate against freedom of expression and thought. It is no coincidence that the most radically anti-court satirist, Donne, remained unpublished. The manuscript form of Donne's *Satyres* gave them a level of freedom over the less controlled dissemination of his published contemporaries, though Guilpin was published anonymously.[42] The presence of authority is signified by the prominence of the concept of "fear." Donne's famous statement in a letter that "to my satyrs belongs some feare"[43] employs a term used frequently in his *Satyres* and those of his contemporaries:

> I saw at court, and worse, and more; Low feare
> Becomes the guiltie, not th'accuser; Then,
> Shall I, nones slave, of high-borne, or rais'd men
> Feare frownes? And, my Mistresse Truth, betray thee . . . ?
> (IV, 160-63)

The fear of "frownes" from above endangers his relation to truth. In *Satyre III*, "feare" threatens a relation to "Mistresse faire Religion" (5): to be "humble" to power "is idolatrie" (102). "Shall a free mind," Guilpin asks, "fear" (6.129-30).

A writer's fear and the problems of expression related to it suggest that the obscurity typifying satire results from its oppositional nature. Hall's famous statement that satires should be "riddle-like, obscuring their intent" is shared by his fellow satirists. While Marston's and Guilpin's satires are especially obscure, Donne's too are characterized by an obscurity unlike that of his other poetry. The coterie conditions

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[42]Even when published after his death the satires were edited of some anti-monarchical language: see Norbrook, "The Monarchy of Wit and the Republic of Letters," p. 12.

[43]*Selected Prose*, ed. Evelyn Simpson, Helen Gardner and Timothy Healy (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), p. 111.

under which these satires were formed also makes them primary examples for occult forms of expression such as those described in Frank Kermode's *Genesis of Secrecy, On the Interpretation of Narrative* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1979). Kermode's notion of a narrative secrecy inherent to literary production becomes intensified, in Elizabethan satire, by an occult manner of speaking that is also molded by political pressures.[44] The presence of autocratic power had an effect not only on politically oriented language but on the self-awareness of cultural sub-groups within a given society. Kermode's interpretation of the parables of Jesus, which were told "with the express purpose of concealing a mystery that was to be understood only to insiders" (p. 2)—an interpretation Elizabethans actually shared[45]—applies also to the tightly bound society of coterie poets in late Elizabethan England.

Although Hall may not have had political pressures in mind when he spoke of "riddle-like" obscurity, his contemporaries clearly did.[46] Marston suggestively comments in the preface to his satires, "I will not deny there is a seemely decorum to be observed, and a peculier kinde of speech for a Satyres lips, which I can willinglier conceave, then dare to prescribe; yet let me have the substance rough not the shadow" (p. 10). Inscribed in this unwillingness to "dare" prescribe a "peculier" method of speech is both the fear of authority and a sense of what he intends: some kind of obscurity. Here too he obliquely refers to Guilpin's *Skialetheia*, or "A Shadow of Truth," a title suggesting

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[44]See for example, Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1984), and *Reading Between the Lines* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1993).

[45]Here is the Geneva translation, and its gloss: "To you it is given to know the mysterie of the kingdome of God: but unto them that are without, al things be done in parables, That they seeing, may see, and not discerne: and they hearing, may heare, and not understand" (Mark 4.11,12). For the words "them that are without," the annotators note: "that is to say, to strangers, and such as are none of ours." *The Geneva Bible*, ed. Gerald T. Sheppard (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1989), p. 20a.

[46]Davenport writes convincingly of Hall's politically motivated obscurity, *Hall*, pp. xxiv-xxvii. Arnold Stein, "Donne's Obscurity," *ELH* 13 (1946): 96-118, argues that obscurity is formed out of the danger of speaking freely, and from an effort to speak to a select, "fit audience" such as Kermode suggests. On Hall, see p. 106.

"shadow" in the early modern sense of "image" or likeness. The Greek title seems thus a translation of *imago veritatis,* "shadow/image of the truth," from Evanthius's words on a comedy attributed to Cicero, which Jonson used to describe the objective of satiric drama (Carroll, p. 100). "Image of the truth"—words which again beg the question of Donne's oblique doubts about mimetic representation. But "shadow" also implies obscurity of style. The word is used, as Carroll points out, in Lodge's comment that "Satericall Poetes" can "correct, yet not offend" if certain issues are addressed "covertly in shadowes."[47] Chapman too "Labor[ed] to be shadowed" in "darkness."[48] Marston's prefatory comments speak of how Persius, "being perticularly given to private customs of his day," was "dusky," and Juvenal, "upon the like occasion," "gloomy" (pp. 9-10). Marston's motive "to cloke intent" (I. 17)—suggesting his own inky cloak—indicates both the gloominess and the obscurity of the satirist's pen.

The "dusky" quality of literary expression was part of a larger cultural fashion, represented in the "blacke Cloake" that Donne had reported stolen, and other black clothing of which he seems to have been fond.[49] Such fashion is represented in the "inky cloak" of Hamlet, who is bidden by Gertrude to cast his "nighted colour off" and "look like a friend on Denmark" (1.2.68-9). Beyond the dress of mourning, Hamlet's "nighted colour," like his melancholic condition, represents a trend shared with the satirists, as does the "antic disposition" he has to put on, like the first Brutus, to shield himself from the eye of power.

Critics have long argued that Hamlet represents an embodiment of the Elizabethan satiric mentality.[50] Following Lawrence Babb, Davenport argues that Marstonian "malcontentedness" and "scourger of villainy," are a "forerunner of Hamlet," and "a model on which Hamlet

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[47]Thomas Lodge, *Defence of Poetry*, in *Elizabethan Critical Essays,* ed. George Gregory Smith (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1904), 1: 82.

[48]P. B. Bartlett, ed., *Poems of George Chapman* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), p. 49.

[49]Donne is shown to have worn black not only in paintings but in legal papers concerning the robbery of such garments as a "blacke Cloake," a "laced satten suite" and "one payer of blacke velvet laced hose" (Bald, p. 102).

[50]See Kernan, pp. 220-1.

was fashioned."[51] Hamlet inveighs against forms of corruption common to the satirist; even his almost irrelevant invectives against cosmetics evoke a seemingly obligatory satiric gesture, as does his curious perusal of the "satirical rogue," thought to be Juvenal.[52] *Hamlet* also shares the "deconsecration of sovereignty"[53] that characterizes Donne's last three satires. Yet, perhaps more important than the catalogue of satiric attitudes and affects donned by the hero, the play itself dramatizes the very problem of truth and power that preoccupies satiric expression. Polonius's ridiculous declaration—

> I will find
> Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
> Within the centre (2.2.157-9)

—shares the epistemological problem engaged by the satirists. Polonius cannot find the truth, as it *is* hidden in the center (Claudius), and his allegiance to that power disables his ability to apprehend what the truth might be.

The late sixteenth century was becoming especially conscious of the political and social implications of a ruling elite that was epistemo-

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[51]Davenport, *Marston*, p. 12. See also pp. 27-8. But see also pp. 17 and 24. Davenport makes a very strong case for Shakespeare's stylistic and linguist borrowings of Marston in *Hamlet*. See Lawrence Babb, *The Elizabethan Malady* (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951), pp. 73-101. Hamlet's self-proclaimed role as a "scourge" echoes a pervasive self-description of the satirist. See, for example, Guilpin, Satire I.145. Carroll, p. 67. On Donne and melancholy, see Arnold Stein, "Donne and the Satiric Spirit," *ELH* 11 (1944): 266-82.

[52]As Kernan and Gilbert Highet suggest, Hamlet's lines evoke Juvenal's Satire 10. See Kernan, p. 220; Gilbert Highet, *Juvenal the Satirist* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1954), p. 213.

[53]See Franco Moretti, "'A Huge Eclipse': Tragic Form and the Deconsecration of Sovereignty," *Genre* 15 (1982) 7-40. On the ideological implications of Hamlet's situation, see also Roland Frye, *The Renaissance Hamlet* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1984), pp. 11-75. More general studies of Shakespearean deconsecrations of sovereignty include *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, eds. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1985).

logically disabled by the very power structure it hoped to serve. Montaigne wrote,

> The judgment of a man who is hired and bought is either less whole and less free, or tainted with imprudence and ingratitude. A courtier can have neither the right nor the will to speak and think otherwise than favorably of a master[.] This favor and advantage corrupt his freedom, not without some reason, and dazzle him. Therefore we generally find the language of those people different from any other language in a state, and little to be trusted in such matters.[54]

Polonius simply cannot "hunt" the real "trail of policy" (2.2.47) since he has not the will, in Montaigne's terms, "to think otherwise than favorably" of his master. Montaigne's notion of a false language created out of a dependent's relation to power describes an essential tension of satire, especially dramatized in Donne's fourth *Satyre*, in which the contrast is between one who, like Hamlet and Horatio, has a better grasp of the truth against those who cannot see; who, indeed, speak a false language because of their proximity to court. Rankins' clumsy lines, "To these stragling humor-pleased mates / I speak, and know that truth the lyar hates,"[55] suggest not merely a kind of satiric coterie of "mates," but also what separates this coterie from others: lies, a bogus language. The false language of the courtier is especially emphasized in Hamlet's relations with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, at whom Hamlet finally explodes in the scene with the recorder after the play-within-the-play: "It is as easy as lying" (3.2.357). The courtiers' inherent language of dishonesty is announced when they meet Hamlet, telling him ironically that the "world's grown honest" (2.2.237).

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[54]Donald M. Frame, trans., *The Complete Essays of Montaigne* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1965), p. 114. For a discussion of Montaigne and the relationship of Montaigne's and others' scepticism with the development of new forms of political criticism, see Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government 1572-1651* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), pp. 45-64.

[55]William Rankins, *Seven Satires* (1598), ed. A. Davenport (Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 1948), p. 8.

Hamlet's disillusionment with the "honesty" of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and even with Ophelia, reenacts the disenchantment of the satyr at the hypocrisy of those who dwell near the source of power. *Hamlet* dramatizes the satirist moving, as in Donne's fourth *Satyre*, through a morally corrupt and unseeing court. Shakespeare's interest is not with the villainy of these characters; indeed, he modifies the source material to create a dangerously unknowing, passive criminality that comes merely as a consequence of proximity to power. As in Donne, the play probes the extent to which it is possible to "know the good" at court. Shakespeare appropriately altered the source characters of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Gertrude, Polonius, and Ophelia from knowing accomplices to mis-perceiving "friends." The interest of the play turns accordingly from a problem of inherent evil, to a problem of not knowing and not being able to know. Whereas in Saxo and Belleforest the two courtiers were knowing accomplices of the king, in *Hamlet* the point is that they do not have to know, for their very proximity to power makes them unwitting agents of criminality.[56] Indeed, this point is strengthened by the alterations to the Quarto in the Folio edition, where the remaining vestiges of early versions are excised. In the Second Quarto, Hamlet somehow became privy to Claudius's plan and, in speaking to his mother in the closet scene, he reveals that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are far more complicit than their interactions with the king would have suggested. Here, following Belleforest, Hamlet tells Gertrude that "he must to England":

> There's letters sealed, and my two schoolfellows,
> Whom I trust as adders fanged,
> They bear the mandate. They must sweep my way
> And marshal me to knavery. (3.4.199-205)

In removing from the Folio this revealing but logistically awkward suggestion of their complicity, the playwright put nothing in place to support the two courtiers' involvement. An important line is also

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[56]The alterations to the quarto are discussed in Philip Edwards, *Hamlet* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985), pp. 14-17. The Quarto version follows Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques*. See Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 7, 102.

added, much later in the play, to Hamlet's defense of Horatio's remonstrative "So Rosencrantz and Guildenstern go to't." To the Second Quarto's "they are not near my conscience," the Folio adds "Why man, they did make love to this employment" (5.2.56-7), suggesting that Hamlet understands them to be guilty only by blind obsequiousness, and not by the inherent criminality suggested in the now excised "adder's fanged" passage. Saxo's *Historiae Danicae* casts the two courtiers as knowing accomplices, a characterization adopted by the Belleforest rendition. The same is true of Ophelia, who in the source material is merely a hired spy, an "invention to intrap him."[57] Shakespeare retells the story to emphasize her unwitting betrayal of their friendship through obedience to Polonius's mistranslation of the royal will.

After Claudius has seen the play, he bids Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to take Hamlet to England, and thus they become agents of the king's will to destroy Hamlet. This final transgression against Hamlet follows a series of scenes which progressively affiliate Rosencrantz and Guildenstern with the corruption of Claudius, and is of particular significance for the way it associates the moral ineptitude of the two courtiers—even their agency in crime—with their adherence to dominant political discourse. Thus, their unknowing agency is associated not only with the reality of the power structure itself, but with the ideology used to rationalize it. In the powerful scene in which the courtiers commit their services to the king, they present long political speeches when accepting—though without showing knowledge—the duty of bearing Hamlet to his death. The courtiers' speeches mirror core elements of Renaissance political discourse: the necessity of obedience to a divinely sanctioned authority, and the necessity of preserving the order of the monarchy above all costs. Guildenstern begins,

> Most holy and religious fear it is
> To keep those many many bodies safe
> That live and feed upon your majesty (3.3.8-10)

Like the ironic criticism of *Satyre III* and *IV*, Guildenstern's "holy and religious fear" suggests that fear itself is holy, as it also suggests the general idea that duty towards majesty, as the divinely appointed head

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[57]These words are from Belleforest's anonymous translator, in the *Hystorie of Hamblet* (London, 1608). Bullough, pp. 7, 91.

of the state, should evoke a "religious" fear. Guildenstern's vague construction expresses the condition he as an obedient subject feels, and it addresses the fear that the king himself embraces—contentions that both work tacitly to vindicate the intended destruction of the prince.

The connection of fear and holiness recalls the most frequently used passage of scripture in Elizabethan political ideology, Romans 13, where Paul discusses obedience to the "powers that be": "For Magistrates are not to be feared for good works, but for evil. Wilt thou then be without fear of the power? . . . Wherefore ye must be subject, not because of wrath only, but also for conscience sake" (13.3-5).[58] The rather unexplained "conscience sake" constitutes the "holy and religious" element of civil obedience, and in "fear" Paul suggests a more pragmatic motive for obedience—that the magistrate, especially as backed by God, threatens severe punishment to the disobedient. The passage pervades Elizabethan political ideology, as in this excerpt from the *Homilies*: "all rulers are appointed of God, for a godly order to be kept in the world [and] all subjects are bounden to obey them as God's Ministers, yea, although they be evil, not only for fear, but also for conscience sake."[59] Guildenstern's "holy and religious fear" evokes this combination of conscience and fear which dominated Renaissance political rhetoric—ironically, of course, since it is their very fear that keeps them from seeing or caring about the truth. The courtiers dramatize the epistemological problem faced by the satirist at court, as when Donne observes his own justified inclination to "fear frownes" and "betray" his "mistresse Truth" (IV. 160). The play suggests that this dangerously unquestioning obedience and "fear" of power is not

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[58]*The Geneva Bible.* The notes in the Geneva Bible actually moderate the more uncritical view of Paul, which might lead one not to question the morality of a civil commandment. The Geneva Bible annotations work to reinforce the importance of conscience over what in Paul seems coercive and threatening, as if Paul's injunctions reflect too crude a basis for civil disobedience. The gloss to 13:5 emphasizes the "conscience sake" while adding an important qualifier: "The conclusion: We must obey the Magistrate, not only for fear of punishment, but *much more because that* (although the Magistrate hath no power over the conscience of man, yet seeing he is Gods minister) he cannot be resisted by any good conscience."

[59]*The Two Books of Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches* (Oxford, 1859), p. 100.

just endemic to the structure itself, but officially and religiously sanctioned. Indeed, with his wickedness now fully unveiled, Claudius defends himself with just such an idea: "there's such divinity doth hedge a king" (4.5.124), which is a criticism of divine right like Donne's sentiment, in the third *Satyre*, that "mens unjust / Power from God claym'd" (109-10).

Like other of Hamlet's courtly "friends"—in contrast to his scholarly friend—the courtiers' moral incapacity, rather than their villainy, is stressed. They are unable to discern or suspect even the possibility of iniquity "within the centre," and even unable to know their own participation in crime. Hamlet's observation on the "strange" fluctuations of people's estimation of his uncle reflects a problem of human understanding central to the narrative itself. He remarks how "those that would make mouths" (or grimace) at his uncle while his father ruled now "give twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred ducats apiece for his picture in little" (2.2.364-6), which suggests that Claudius's mere change in fortune suddenly shifts the world's perception of him. Hamlet's statement that "there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out" (2.2.367-8) reflects, I think, the very question which concerned Shakespeare, that there might be some cultural construct which reinforces moral blindness, beyond whatever blindness might be "natural." The political system promotes a model of authority that deprives the individual of the autonomy necessary for moral apprehension, creating citizens who are unable to minister to the ills which afflict that body.

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Donne's criticism, like Shakespeare's and Montaigne's, is systemic: the power structure inevitably produces a stratum of epistemologically disabled citizens that have, as Montaigne writes, "neither the right nor the will to speak and think otherwise than favorably of a master." While none of these authors offer a coherent alternative to this structure, the arguments correlating knowledge and power would be used to undergird the alternative structures of such figures as Milton, Spinoza, and Locke. Indeed, in keeping with *Satyre III*, the arguments concerning the kind of knowledge possible in a free state are most

prominent in their works on toleration.[60] This is not to suggest a lineage of influence so much as to emphasize that the complicated mode of criticism found in satire is not an isolated instance. The linkage of the monarchical power structure to the sociological conditions of knowledge had a major place in subsequent political criticism.

The picture of power and knowledge at the end of *Satyre III* epitomizes the genre's preoccupation with the problem of maintaining, let alone representing, truth under power. The last part of *Satyre III* is hortatory:

> Keep the truth which thou'hast found; men do not stand
> In so'ill case here, that God hath with his hand
> Sign'd Kings blanck-charters to kill whom they hate,
> Nor are they Vicars, but hangmen to Fate. (89-92)

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[60]This is to follow Empson's and Strier's ideas of this poem as an early instance of "liberalism," as Empson puts it. William Empson, "Donne the Spaceman," *Kenyon Review* 19 (1957): 341; Strier, p. 284. While the satirists and these other late sixteenth-century writers comment on the problem of maintaining knowledge under the power structure of the monarchy, and on the inability to seek true religion and to have free expression, later writers used this epistemological problem as an argument—at times, the chief argument—for toleration and liberal government. Spinoza, for example, puts freedom of thought at the center of his theory, because rational freedom makes individual citizens more capable of knowing right and wrong: "It is imperative that freedom of judgment should be granted, so that men may live together in harmony, however diverse, or even openly contradictory their opinions may be." Spinoza, *The Chief works of Benedict De Spinoza, A Theologico-political Treatise and A Political Treatise.* trans by, R. H. M. Elwes (New York: Dover, 1951), p. 263. A necessary aspect of this freedom is the ability to interpret religion on one's own: "Therefore, as the supreme right of free thinking, even on religion, is in every man's power, and as it is inconceivable that such power could be alienated, it is also in every man's power to wield the supreme right and authority of free judgement in this behalf, and to explain and interpret religion for himself" (118). Thus, "the true aim of government is liberty" (259). In *Areopagitica*, Milton's theory of knowledge, that humans must have been left free to come to their own understanding, is used to buttress claims of political freedom. See my forthcoming article, "*Areopagitica* and the Rise of Liberal Epistemology," *ELR.*

Strier has pointed out that Donne's seeming reference to Luther's "hangmen" indicates how Donne shares with Luther a sense of the danger of the "tendency of the individual to allow external authorities to dictate to the conscience" (p. 307). While these lines may share some ideas with Luther, Donne's lines "nor are they Vicars" takes issue with a fundamental tenet of Continental and especially Anglican Protestantism, which, not unlike Catholicism, preaches that Kings are God's vicegerents on earth. Catholics would not have used "Vicar" to designate a king, because it was used formally to apply to the Pope, and indeed, the English designation of the king as vicar was clearly an effort to shift from the old vicar (the pope) to the new, the monarch. In a sermon before the court, for example, Hugh Latimer preached, "consider . . . the presence of the King's Majesty, God's high *Vicar* [my emphasis] in earth. Having a respect to his personage, ye ought to have reverence to it and consider that he is God's high minister."[61] While Donne's words dismiss the Protestant formulation that "they" (the "Kings") are "Vicars," the stress lies on the falseness of the claim in general. Unlike Strier, I would argue for a fundamental rejection of both Protestant and Catholic views on secular authority—or at least, the more orthodox views that monarchs are invested with a divine, even infallible authority. The danger of the imposition of power is continued through the rest of the poem, and taken up in the vision of the stream, which I would suggest to be a stream of secular rather than divine power, as it is often read.

The crux of the end of the poem lies in the complex vision of the "blest flowers" that dwell at the "rough streames calme head." The words "calme head" and "blest" have led many readers to read the power in the stream—from the line "as streames are, Power is" (103)—to have divine rather than political origins. Yet Donne has just been speaking about political power: "that thou may'st rightly'obey power, her bounds know" (100), and he has sought to put in question

[61] *Selected Sermons of Hugh Latimer*, ed. Allan G. Chester (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1968), p. 101. In another sermon preached before King Edward's court, he writes of Edward's leadership as having a deeply religious significance: "let us learn to convert, to repent, and amend our lives. If we do not, I fear, I fear lest for sins and unthankfulness an hypocrite shall reign over us. Long we have been servants and in bondage, serving the Pope in Egypt. God hath given us a deliverer, a natural king" (p. 58).

the standard appropriation of Romans 13—her bounds are not divine. My sense is that we are to read "calme head" here precisely as Donne uses it in *Satyre V*, as the source of the monarch's power (V. 29). "Blessed" is then to be read as the flowers' seeming, rather than true condition, since they thrive near the source of power, but, as Donne writes, they have left their roots. The description of these flowers indicates *some* sort of sanctified condition, but then their fate turns: "but having left their roots," the poem continues, "and themselves given / To the streames tyrannous rage, alas, are driven / Through mills" (104-7). Strier argues that these lines describe another group of flowers that have become victims of the tyrannous rage.[62] Yet the poem does not seem to admit this transfer: the flowers "prove well, / *But* having left their roots" suggests the same set of flowers, and that their proximity to the calm head has caused them to leave their roots, "blest" though the condition at the head may have seemed. This sense is affirmed by the last couplet: "So perish Soules, which more chuse mens unjust / Power from God claym'd than God himselfe to trust" (109-10). The flowers have chosen a power unjustly claimed, and as a consequence lose their souls. "Unjust" belongs not simply to power, implying there could be just power claimed from God, but rather that "Power from God" as the poem has argued, is unjustly claimed. "Blessed" describes a superficial condition of thriving like Guilpin's "enchaunter" (1. 168) or Chapman's use of the same word to describe the court in a remarkably similar metaphor, so similar, in fact, that one wonders if Chapman had read Donne. In the opening of *Bussy D'Ambois* (1607) Monsieur tries to convince the stoic Bussy to come to court: *Bussy*: "What would you wish me do?" *Monsieur*: "Leave the troubled streams, / And live as thrivers do at the well-head." *Bussy*: "At the well-head? Alas what should I do / With that enchanted glass? See devils there?"[63] The ironic sense of "thrivers," that live at the "well head" of court, away from the "troubled streams" recalls Donne's image of the flowers which "thrive" (104) at the "calme head," away from the tyrannous

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[62]Strier, p. 310. For a still different reading, see Ronald Corthell, *Ideology and Desire in Renaissance Poetry: The Subject of John Donne* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1997), pp. 44-6.

[63]George Chapman, *Bussy D'Ambois* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965), 1.1.82-84.

stream, as his "enchanted glass"—an image which looks enchanted but is devilish—evokes the double sense of "blest" to describe the atmosphere of court.

The sense of the stream as secular power is aided not only by the thematic question of maintaining truth under power, but also by Donne's use of the same imagery in *Satyre V*:

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

While the address begins flatteringly, the lines suggest a serious disjuncture between royal prerogative and its unwitting consequences. Donne takes up the image again fifteen lines later:

> Where wilt thou'appeale? Powre of the Courts below
> Flow from the first maine head, and these can throw
> Thee, if they sucke thee in, to misery . . .
> . . . Alas thou go'st
> Against the stream[.] (45-50)

This later use of the stream reflects powerfully on the earlier construction. The river begins as a metaphor that merely drowns meads, and then becomes entwined with the actual conditions, as the "maine head," formerly not directly implicated, becomes the source of the problem. Thus, against the argument that "Donne's worry in this poem is not about the tyranny of kings" (Strier, p. 307), I mean to assert that this anxiety exists in the poem profoundly. The "tyrannous rage" of the stream represents, I think, just such a concern, and its source in the unjust claim of divine right. The poem, like many other satires, is about the pressures that prevent the pursuit of truth.

When one looks into the context-bound poetry of these law students, and into what we can recreate as a coterie exchange—especially Donne's fourth *Satyre* in relation to Guilpin—it becomes hard to read Donne's third *Satyre* as a "gesture in preparation for the pursuit of a courtly career" (Marotti, p. 41). The Inns of Court cannot adequately be described as the proving ground for would-be courtiers whose literature expresses part of that inherent ambition. And the refusal toward simple religious affiliation in *Satyre III* is the refusal of a larger

intellectual movement whose other members pursued different careers. The *Satyre*'s treatment of the problem of obtaining religious knowledge under political pressure is part of a wider satiric criticism of socially and politically legitimated systems of belief.[64]

Yale University

[64]I am especially indebted to Annabel Patterson for many criticisms and suggestions. Conversations with Susanne Wofford contributed to the section on *Hamlet*. A reader at the *John Donne Journal* also provided invaluable criticisms and remarks.