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"Restore Thine Image": Structure and Theme in Donne's "Goodfriday"

Patrick F. O'Connell

If Donne's "Goodfriday" poem was indeed, as one group of manuscripts has it, "made as I was Rideing westward, that daye,"[1] he succeeded in composing an intellectually demanding, emotionally intense and structurally complex work under conditions which most people would hardly consider ideal for sustained concentration. This apparent spontaneity becomes somewhat more explicable when we realize that Donne had a model for his new poem readily available. "Goodfriday, 1613. Riding Westward" could almost be subtitled "I am a little world (expanded)": structural, verbal and thematic parallels would seem to indicate that Donne had this sonnet in mind, if not in hand, as he composed the later couplet poem. Both begin with a microcosm-macrocosm analogy, proceed to the speaker's recognition of his own sinfulness, and conclude by addressing the Lord directly, in each case to ask for the purifying action of fire. Moreover, the association of sin with night is given much the same expression in the two poems: "Sinne had eternally benighted all" (l. 14) is reminiscent of the sonnet's "black sinne hath betraid to endlesse night" (l. 3), while this last phrase is in direct contrast to the "endlesse day" (l. 12) of "Goodfriday." Reference to the redemptive death of Christ, indirect but crucial in the final couplet of the sonnet, is developed explicitly and in great detail in the central section of "Goodfriday," as befits its greater length and occasional character.

Yet the most significant result of a comparison is to highlight the ways in which Donne has refashioned his material into a poem in which traditional images and ideas are used in strikingly original ways to examine the mystery of redemption. Such a strategy is evident in the opening lines of the poem, a most unorthodox permutation of that most conventional of Renaissance topoi, man as microcosm :

> Let mans Soule be a Spheare, and then, in this,
> The'intelligence that moves, devotion is,
> And as the other Spheares, by being growne
> Subject to forraigne motions, lose their owne,
> And being by others hurried every day,
> Scarce in a yeare their naturall forme obey:
> Pleasure or businesse, so, our Soules admit
> For their first mover, and are whirld by it. (ll. 1-8)

The analogy initially appears to be a learned and witty but essentially straightforward set of correspondences between the cosmic and human planes. In one respect at least, it seems closer to the norm than was the "little world" sonnet, for here the analogy is not individualized: it is "mans Soule" rather than "my Soule" which is compared to a sphere. When the speaker finally does refer to himself in lines 9-10, he seems to present his own actions as just one example of the universal trait described by the analogy. Thus the key internal conflict of so many of the "Holy Sonnets," the struggle of the speaker to surrender his sense of self-importance and to recognize that his own situation is not unique and unprecedented but a participation in the common human condition, has apparently been resolved before the poem begins. Furthermore the image of the soul as a moving sphere, rather than a little world, does not lend itself to Donne's characteristic picture of the sinner as the immobile center of his own universe, who tries to maneuver God into acting on his behalf.[2]

But despite these indications of a more conventional treatment, the analogy has as its primary term a literally subversive conception of the universe. According to the accepted medieval astronomy inherited from the Greeks,[3] the entire heavens, sun, moon, planets and fixed stars, make a daily revolution from east to west around the earth, a motion imparted by the outermost sphere or first mover. At the same time, each of the planets makes a separate journey in the opposite direction, returning over the course of a month (the moon), a year (the sun, Mercury, Venus) or longer (Mars, Jupiter, Saturn) to its original position relative to the fixed stars. Commentators considered the diurnal east-to-west motion proper and rational, while the independent west-to-east motion, which was further complicated by apparent brief, irregular reversals of direction, was regarded as sensual and irrational.[4] But here in lines 3-6, the slow journey of each planet counter to the daily revolution is considered to be in accord with its "naturall forme,"

while the movement imparted by the primum mobile is accounted "forraigne." While the first takes place "scarce in a yeare," this latter happens "every day," so that unnatural motion predominates heavily. The universe is thus presented not as *cosmos*, harmony, but as an exemplar of systemic disorder. Though such sweeping skepticism about the order of the universe is perhaps not surprising in a poem written shortly after *The Anniversaries*, here it is the *old* philosophy, the traditional cosmology, which calls all in doubt, or at least is made to represent a pervasive lack of coherence.

It is to this picture of a deranged world, then, that human conduct is compared. Just as the primum mobile keeps the entire heavens revolving in an east-to-west direction every day and overwhelms the "naturall" movement of the individual spheres in the opposite direction, so the human soul is "whirld" by the "forraigne motions" of "Pleasure or businesse" in spite of the feeble and ineffectual urgings of religious devotion to the contrary. So the usual basis for the analogy of macrocosm and microcosm has in effect been turned inside out: instead of the harmony of the universe being epitomized in man, the geocentric universe of Ptolemy is perceived as corresponding to the moral disorder of man.

If we follow the logic of the comparison one step further, the purpose of the whole analogy begins to emerge: far from being the product of calm, detached speculation, this opening section is a cleverly constructed rationalization, springing from passionate self-interest. For if the analogy holds, then just as the planets cannot depart from the motion imposed on them by external forces, so man's soul is necessarily impelled along a path it would not choose to take. Provided with the seemingly objective framework of cosmic motion, man's indefensible conduct is made to appear inevitable, the product of a disordered system rather than of individual moral decision: consequently personal responsibility for one's actions is effectively minimized. In this context, the couplet which follows can be properly seen not merely as a specific "illustration" of the "general truth" already presented, but as the *raison d'être* behind the entire argument:

> Hence is't, that I am carryed towards the West
> This day, when my Soules forme bends toward the East. (ll. 9-10)

The passivity of "am carryed" is the speaker's implicit denial of any willful consent to the disorder in which he is caught up.[5] Here we discover the real reason behind the dynamic model of the sphere:

despite the illusion of activity, the soul is depicted as completely passive, subject to the control of the ostensibly alien forces, pleasure or business.

Likewise, the presumption of universality in the first eight lines can now be seen as another facet of the speaker's self-serving rhetoric. Though he is primarily interested in justifying his own conduct, not that of mankind in general, his case is strengthened if he can prove, or seem to prove, that he is only conforming to a compulsory pattern of human behavior. Thus by line 7, "mans Soule" has become "our Soules," a subtle invitation to identify with the speaker's perspective. If the reader does uncritically accept this model of deterministic moral disorder as descriptive of his own life, he is in no position to pass judgment on the speaker's actions. Here then is another of Donne's incisive portraits of the deceptive, perhaps above all self-deceptive, reasoning of man the sinner.

Superficially persuasive as it may be, the argument fails to stand up to careful analysis. For the analogy to hold, "Pleasure or businesse" (it scarcely matters which since they are two manifestations of the same basic drive, the power of the flesh) must be accorded the status of a transcendental: no longer tendencies within a person, they are to be considered the prime motive force of the moral universe, and therefore outside the control of the individual. If and only if this dubious premise is granted does the rest of the analogy follow.

Yet while failing to convince as a brief for self-justification, the analogy can serve as a valid description of the sinful soul who, though responsible for his situation, is powerless to break free of it. By reading the verb "admit" in line 7 ("Pleasure or businesse, so, our Soules admit / For their first mover . . .") to mean not "acknowledge" or "recognize" (that which is already a fact) but "allow" or "permit," we discover the speaker's actual dilemma: once he has allowed, by his own free will, the tendencies of the flesh to become his prime mover, man *is* in fact helpless to escape their domination, and he is driven relentlessly counter to his soul's desires. This deliberate ambivalence, by which the speaker acknowledges his own ultimate responsibility even as he seeks to deny it, exemplifies the very state of self-division being described.

There still remains one peculiar feature of this first section to be explained. The self-division of the first eight lines is considered to be between two opposed tendencies of the soul, in Pauline terms the flesh (governed by "Pleasure or businesse") and the spirit

("devotion"), with the conflict represented by the image of contrary motion. But in particularizing the analogy the speaker has introduced a new dimension. When he says, "I am carryed towards the West" he means not only that his soul is driven "West" in a metaphorical sense, but that he is journeying bodily in a westward direction. This may seem to be an appropriate analogy to take into account not only the soul but the whole man, yet in moving from a metaphorical to a physical conception of motion, the speaker seems to have inadvertently undermined the whole impression of inevitability he had tried to create. Since bodily movement westward is not inevitable in any realistic sense, the speaker's present direction seems more coincidence than necessity.

But there is a sense in which man, body and soul, *is* forced against his will to travel westward: when perceived in terms of one of the most common metaphorical substitutions, the speaker's ride becomes a journey in time, an image of inexorable passage toward the "declining West"[6] of death and dissolution. "Pleasure or businesse" (i.e., sin) is indeed the "first mover" of this journey westward, since in the biblical view death came into the world through sin (cf. Rom. 6:12): for all men, sin leads to death, as stark an image of disorder as any we have yet seen. So the impression of inevitability is in fact buttressed, rather than weakened, if the speaker's westward journey is interpreted in this way. Transience, mortality, becomes a principal witness to man's helplessness under the power of sin. The certainty of bodily death becomes an emblem of the apparent certainty of spiritual death.

The power of these lines is reinforced by the technical skill in the verse itself. The opposition between the ride westward and the contrary yearnings of the soul is emphasized strongly by the use of the two compass points as the rhyme words of the couplet, so that "toward the East" (l. 10) becomes a weak, dissonant echo of the previous line's "towards the West." In fact the whole of line 10, its tempo retarded by the heavy secondary accents in the first four feet—a string of consonant-encrusted monosyllables—and by the assonance of "when" and "bends," "forme" and "toward," contrasts sharply with the brisk iambics of "Hence is't, that I am carryed towards the West." Even the sound pattern leaves no doubt as to which force is the more powerful.

The reason why the actual journey, of no intrinsic significance, should prompt such a train of thought will be made clear in the next four lines, but it is first suggested by the emphatic placement

of "This day" at the beginning of line 10. Again Donne's meticulous concern for detail repays careful study. The use of enjambment enables the poet both to indicate the grammatical connection of "This day" with "am carryed" so as to give due attention to the literal sense, and also to allow a certain completeness to line 9 by itself, as expressing motion not limited to a given day but corresponding to the habitual movement described in the analogy. At the same time its position relative to the dependent clause which makes up the rest of the verse implies that there is some special reason why devotion should "bend toward the East" on this particular day.

This supposition leads into the two couplets which complete the opening section of the poem:

> There I should see a Sunne, by rising set,
> And by that setting endlesse day beget;
> But that Christ on this Crosse, did rise and fall,
> Sin had eternally benighted all. (ll. 11-14)

In these lines the dynamics of self-division which the speaker has developed are paradoxically both clarified and undermined. Because "This day" is Good Friday, the speaker's westward journey becomes a symbol of his movement, under the influence of the flesh and as a prisoner of time, away from the Christ whom he "should see," but cannot or will not. As so often in the *Divine Poems*, self-division comes to be seen as a function of separation from Christ: the contrary motions are no longer perceived just as they relate to each other, but as they draw the speaker toward or away from the cross.

By implicitly acknowledging this central importance of Christ, the speaker has not merely provided a reference point for his own deviations: without realizing it, he has introduced a sign of contradiction into his model of necessary motion. The elaborate cosmological analogy suddenly breaks down, or undergoes an amazing transformation: according to the Ptolemaic system the sun too must make the daily east-to-west journey, but in lines 11-12 the sun, the most important of the heavenly bodies, contradicts the imposed pattern by rising and setting in the East! The explanation is of course that once again a human soul is being compared to a sphere: the sun is identified with Christ, who at once rises and falls, both realistically and metaphorically, on the cross. Since this Sun does not conform to the motion determined by the supposed "first mover," the earlier presumption of universality is refuted outright,

and the whole analogy with the movement of the heavens is called into question.

But a further paradox in these lines makes the speaker's analogy susceptible to a strange new application. For Christ is said to rise and fall while He is in fact motionless, nailed to the cross: as the source of "endlesse day" the Sun/Son must actually be stationary, the new center of the spiritual universe. Any movement of the rest of this universe should be around this Sun. Here the old and new cosmologies become the ultimate analogues for the two opposed spiritual states of man: from a worldly, earth-centered perspective, the "east-to-west" impulse of the flesh predominates. But just as in a heliocentric system this motion is actually an illusion, produced by the earth's own axial rotation, and the only real planetary movement through the heavens is the revolution around the sun, so by analogy the only true motion for man's soul is that movement around the Son which is the direction of the spirit, the prompting of devotion. Here the full implications of the opening equation of the Ptolemaic system with a lack of harmony become clear: to accept Christ as the center of one's life requires a revolutionary change of vision, as sweeping a transformation as that from a geocentric to a heliocentric universe.[7] The poet's adoption of the Copernican system to represent a Christ-centered cosmos may seem startling in a poem written shortly after *The Anniversaries*, but in fact the heliocentric analogy had been on Donne's mind as early as 1609, when he wrote the following to Goodyer:

> I often compare not you and me, but the sphear in which your resolutions are, and my wheel; both I hope concentrique to God: for me thinks the new Astronomie is thus appliable well, that we which are a little earth, should rather move towards God, than that he which is fulfilling, and can come no whither, should move towards us.[8]

Naturally the figure is not developed in the poem with anything like the explicitness it has in the letter. The measure of Donne's accomplishment thus far is indicated by the fact that the full implications of the analogy are suggested without the loss of dramatic consistency, that is, without intruding on the speaker's own point of view. For the primary thrust of these lines is to underscore the speaker's own absence from the scene he describes, and his consequent failure to share in its effects. "There I should see a Sunne": but the whole point is that he is not there, and so

cannot see. Moving away from the Sun, he is still "benighted," still held by the power of darkness.

But the speaker does not yet directly confront the fact of his own sinfulness; rather, he implicitly maintains that his lack of personal engagement is actually inevitable, since he cannot be physically present at the cross in any case. This is after all "Good-friday, 1613," and carried westward by time he is powerless to turn back the clock. So long as the redemptive moment is relegated to the historical past, the speaker is denied the opportunity, and so freed of the responsibility, to be there. In the series of rhetorical questions which constitutes the second section of the poem, various aspects of the passion are consistently described in the past tense, as though temporal distance alone made them unavailable to him. Yet already in lines 11-14 the terms "endlesse day" and "eternally benighted" have indicated that the drama played out on Calvary is not limited to its own day but transcends the very category of time. The second section, which begins more with a sense of relief than of deprivation that he does not see the crucifixion, concludes with the harrowing yet consoling recognition that this is the one event of human history which no man can avoid.

In the scene as it is described in this section, the idealized metaphor of the sun begetting endless day gives way before the stark awareness that what this image actually represents is a scene of agony and death:

> Yet dare I'almost be glad, I do not see
> That spectacle of too much weight for mee.
> Who sees Gods face, that is selfe life, must dye;
> What a death were it then to see God dye?
> (ll. 15-18)

The contrast is sharpened by the triple repetition of the key verb "see" from line 11, as if to challenge the "visionary" account presented there. The obvious implication is that the soul's direction is not really to be preferred, but even here the speaker's ambivalence is evident as he qualifies his pragmatic rationalizing by a significant "almost." Even as he marshals his reasons in support of his movement west, we sense that he is unable to convince even himself of their cogency.[9] As in Herbert's "The Collar," the very arguments the speaker raises become evidence against the position he seeks to defend.

Extending the Old Testament idea that to look on the face of the living God brings death, the speaker implies that to see God die

would result in an even more terrible death for the beholder, and drives his point home by the use of the identical rhyme "dye . . . dye." But this question can be asked on another level than as a colloquial exclamation of terror and awe. For to see God die will indeed bring death to the beholder, and the relevant question becomes, "What kind of death?" Confronted with the cross, a man must either die to self by repentance, or undergo the spiritual death of those who refuse to repent, those who cry, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" There are no impartial observers at the cross: to see is to participate, one way or the other. Here, we sense, is the root of a more adequate explanation of the reason why the speaker is allowing himself to be carried away from the cross. The spectacle has "too much weight," is too heavy to bear, because it confronts him with his own guilt, his own responsibility for the crucifixion. The contrast between Christ, Himself weighed down by the crushing burden of all men's sins as He carries His cross toward Golgotha, and the speaker, hastening away from Christ and from himself, is only too apparent to us, if not yet to him.[10] But the irony of the situation is that in trying to avoid death through flight, he is actually hurrying headlong toward it. For the source of certain death is also "selfe life," and the journey westward away from the cross can lead only to physical and spiritual destruction.

Though the speaker's intent in citing the consequences of Christ's death on the natural world—the earthquake, the solar eclipse—is evidently to legitimate his own sense of relief at having been spared such a devastating sight, this couplet has the contrary effect of making the speaker's attempts to remain uninvolved appear futile, even ludicrous:

> It made his owne Lieutenant Nature shrinke,
> It made his footstoole crack, and the Sunne winke.
> (ll. 19-20)

If earth, sun and nature in general have been so profoundly affected by the crucifixion, the idea that distance in space or time could shield a man from its influence seems more and more illusory. Beneath the surface of the argument we can already detect a recognition, albeit unacknowledged, of the truth expressed in Psalm 139:

> Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the

> morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. (vv. 7-10)

Strong support for such an interpretation is provided by the questions which follow, the true significance of which again underlies, and undermines, the surface meaning:

> Could I behold those hands which span the Poles,
> And turne all spheares at once pierc'd with those holes?
> Could I behold that endlesse height which is
> Zenith to us, and to'our Antipodes,
> Humbled below us? . . . (ll. 21-25)

Most immediately noteworthy is the fact that the cosmology of the opening lines has been tacitly but completely abandoned. Christ is now considered the first mover of the spheres, so that the assumption of universal disorder has been discarded.[11] Whether the correct reading of line 22 be "turne all spheares" or "tune all spheares,"[12] the picture is definitely one of cosmic harmony. Once again the astronomical imagery suggests an implicit parallel: in the light of the original analogy, the question naturally arises whether Christ will replace "Pleasure or businesse" as the speaker's own first mover.

While the speaker himself is not prepared to deal with this question yet, those which he does ask are quite as revealing. The repeated "Could I behold . . ." is intended to elicit a negative response, yet if Christ is in fact the zenith at any point on the earth, if His pierced hands "span the Poles," there is no way to avoid coming in contact with His suffering, His humiliation.[13] Once again, the verb of seeing, which provides the structural and thematic continuity of this middle section, is of crucial importance, but here the logic of the question points to the impossibility of not seeing.

If the previous questions have proven damaging to the speaker's case, those which follow are even more so. With the references to flesh and blood the focus shifts from Christ's divinity to his humanity, a reminder of the intimacy of man's relationship to God:

> [Could I behold] . . . that blood which is
> The seat of all our Soules, if not of his,
> Make durt of dust, or that flesh which was worne
> By God, for his apparell, rag'd, and torne? (ll. 25-28)

In these lines the question about Christ's influence on the microcosm is indirectly answered: "our Soules" are no longer depicted as whirled away from Christ, but as being truly at rest in His blood. Yet it is precisely in being shed that this blood becomes "The seat" of man's soul, since Christ's death is the source of a new creation: to "Make durt of dust," another instance of Christ's humiliation and ignominy, is at the same time a reminder of the scene in Genesis when Adam ("red earth") is formed out of the dust.[14] Thus even as he strives more and more intensely to pull himself away, the speaker anchors himself more securely to the scene. Note too that his own attitude is changing: the original anxiety to explain himself has gradually given way to an anguished consciousness of Christ's own suffering. Preoccupation with self has diminished as an awareness of the figure on the cross, despite the speaker's disclaimers, grows ever more vivid in his mind and in the reader's. The very fact that he returns to the plural form "our Soules"—this time with no ulterior motive—and relates it to the figure on the cross, foreshadows an end to the alienation he has chosen yet bitterly resents.

The lines on the Virgin which conclude this second section seem at first to be somewhat digressive, even anticlimactic, as our attention is diverted from the dying Christ. But structurally they make an extremely effective finale to the series of tableaux, since the figure of Mary at the cross serves as a perfect contrast to the speaker, who like the apostles has fled for his life:

> *If on these things I durst not looke, durst I*
> Upon his miserable mother cast mine eye,
> Who was Gods partner here, and furnish'd thus
> Half of that Sacrifice, which ransom'd us? (ll. 29-32)

Far from showing a slackening of tension, this scene wrings from the speaker an admission of his own complicity in the events described:[15] the original statement of fact ("I do not see," l. 15), which became a question ("Could I behold," ll. 21, 23), has now become a manifestation of the will, an expression of responsibility for turning away ("I *durst* not looke," l. 29). In averting his eyes from Mary, whose selfless fidelity exposes his own faithlessness, he shows he has moved from fear through sorrow to shame, which finally prompts him, almost without realizing it, to acknowledge his own involvement in the crucifixion, a confession that paradoxically makes him its beneficiary as well: Christ's death, he

admits, was not for his own sake, but was "that Sacrifice, which ransom'd us."

The changes rung on the verbs of seeing now culminate in the speaker's realization that he does see all he has described, not with his eyes but with his mind:

> Though these things, as I ride, be from mine eye,
> They'are present yet unto my memory,
> For that looks towards them. . . . (ll. 33-35)

In its discovery that the redemptive events are "present yet," the memory reveals that Christ's death is not limited to the historical past and so unavailable to the speaker. At the same time, as one of the powers of the soul, memory represents the direction of devotion as opposed to that of appetite: the power of the flesh to isolate and alienate is no longer supreme as memory draws the soul "toward the East," according to "naturall" rather than "forraigne motions."

In spite of these encouraging developments, however, the sense of separation has still not been entirely eliminated: references to Christ's passion and death as "these things," "they" and "them" sound rather distant and impersonal, particularly when juxtaposed to the first-person pronouns, which receive special emphasis from the patterns of assonance in which they are found: "I ride," "mine eye," "my memory." The self continues to be more concrete, more "real" to the speaker than "these things." There remains a certain diffidence, a note of hesitancy about the proper way of responding to what he sees, and about what, exactly, he is responding to. After all the act of remembering, while a sign of good faith, is no magic ritual which can summon forth the divine presence. Memory can make "these things" present, but cannot make Christ present. Man cannot compel God to act, he can only allow Him to act: and so, poised on the brink of surrender, the speaker waits.

Then suddenly, in an epiphany all the more luminous for its simplicity, "that looks towards them" has become "thou look'st towards mee" (l. 35): the very world of the poem is utterly changed, transfigured by the presence of Another. It is no longer "Goodfriday, 1613. Riding Westward" but the first Good Friday, "as thou hang'st upon the tree" (l. 36) at Calvary, and the central, shaping consciousness of the poem is now not the speaker's but that of Christ himself, who reveals that salvation depends not primarily on *seeing, but on being seen.* The speaker was never, could never be

absent from the scene of the crucifixion, despite all his earlier mingled hopes and fears, because he had been present to the mind and heart of the suffering Christ, who "look'st towards" him not only in the sense of seeing, across the centuries, the very bondage to sin shown earlier in the poem, which made the crucifixion necessary, but in the consoling sense of watching over and caring for him in his need.

Though the apparent direction of the middle section of the poem had been away from the cross, the true movement was that of devotion, which has carried the soul right back to see what it "should see": this moment of surrender vindicates the initial "visionary" presentation of the scene, in which the speaker now finds himself included. In yielding to Christ his proper place as the central figure of this poem on Good Friday, the speaker is admitting that the Sun/Son is and must be the center of the spiritual universe. By allowing the present time to be Christ's rather than his own, he is able to experience the reality of the "endlesse day," that saving moment which transcends time. In renouncing the illusion of autonomy and affirming the presence of "thou" as "Saviour," he has passed over into prayer.

Yet the insight which prompted the speaker's desire to flee, expressed in the question "What a death were it then to see God dye?" loses none of its urgency or its validity in this new encounter, becomes in fact more urgent now that the hypothetical situation has, in a spiritual sense, come true. So the speaker's concluding prayer becomes a confrontation with and acceptance of death, both dying to self and physical mortality:

> I turne my backe to thee, but to receive
> Corrections, till thy mercies bid thee leave.
> O thinke mee worth thine anger, punish mee,
> Burne off my rusts, and my deformity,
> Restore thine Image, so much, by thy grace,
> That thou may'st know mee, and I'll turne my face.
> (ll. 37-42)

Even though the soul "looks towards" Christ, physically the speaker continues in a "westward" movement toward death, but now this movement "away" from Christ becomes an act of submission, a consciousness of his own guilt.[16] These anguished feelings of unworthiness, which cause him to ask for God's anger and punishment and which seem almost exaggerated and incongruous after the quiet serenity with which he first addresses Christ, are

only the initial stage of his response to the crucifixion. He goes on to ask not merely to be punished but to be purified and transformed. What the speaker is actually describing in these last lines is the very process of dying to self which is a participation in the death of Christ. Even the act of turning his back to receive correction is on one level an imitation of Christ's scourging. Thus the speaker no longer fears his own death, but looks forward to it as the culmination of this process. His prayer echoes St. Paul: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image" (2 Cor. 3:18). The poem ends not with death, with Good Friday, but with the promise of everlasting intimacy with God which is true life. Once again the speaker makes a key Pauline text his own: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. 13:12).

Thus it is in being known, as in being seen, that redemption becomes effective. The death of the false self who dominated the early part of the poem means true life, the restoration of real identity, which is to be "thine Image," one who participates in the death of Christ so as to share his glory (cf. Rom. 8:17). But this identification with Christ which defines the speaker's true self also has the effect of universalizing the poem: it makes the final prayer available to all who share this identity.[17] By letting go of his self-centered individualism, the speaker is united both to Christ and to members of the community of faith. His passage from *cupiditas* to *caritas* becomes exemplary. Thus Donne succeeds in giving his speaker a representative role, in which the reader is invited to participate, since he too is, or is called to be, "thine image."

Saint Anselm College

Notes

[1] This is the title in the so-called Group II mss. See John Donne, *The Divine Poems*, ed. Helen Gardner, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1952, 1971), p. 98. All quotations of the poem are taken from this edition. The manuscript of "Goodfriday," discovered in 1974 by R. S. Thomson and David McKitterick and originally thought by them to be an earlier version of the poem, transcribed by Donne himself, has as its title "Meditation vpon a Good friday, ryding from London towards Exceter, westward" (*TLS*, August 16, 1974, pp. 670-73). Subsequent investigation by Nicholas Barker (*TLS*, Sept. 20, 1974, pp. 996-97) proved that the hand was not Donne's, and the transcriber of this and another version of the poem, owned by Robert Taylor (Princeton), from the same collection of mss. was later identified by R. E. Alton and P. J. Croft (*TLS*, Sept. 27, 1974, pp. 1042-43) as Sir Nathanael Rich, an acquaintance of Donne. While some of

the variants of these versions may represent authentic earlier readings, these two mss. seem to give no reason to depart from the accepted text, or the traditional date.

2 See for example the Holy Sonnets "As due by many titles," "Thou hast made me," and particularly the celebrated "Batter my heart."

3 James A. Coleman provides a clear introduction to these matters in his *Early Theories of the Universe* (New York: Signet, 1967), while Francis R. Johnson's *Astronomical Thought in Renaissance England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1937) is a thorough and readable investigation of the subject in Donne's time.

4 "[M]otus irrationalis sive sensualis": Sacrobosco, *De Sphaera*, quoted by Gardner, *Divine Poems*, p. 99.

5 Donald M. Friedman makes the same point in an excellent reading of the poem: "Memory and the Art of Salvation in Donne's Good Friday Poem," *ELR*, 3 (1973), 425.

6 "The Good-morrow," l. 18.

7 This key point has not to my knowledge been previously noticed, though in "John Donne and the Emblematic Practice," *Review of English Studies*, 22 (1946), Josef Lederer used the analogy in another context: "Donne has journeyed far from the self-centeredness of the Renaissance man to the renewed God-centeredness akin to the heliocentric system of Copernicus" (p. 199). A. B. Chambers, in "Goodfriday, 1613. Riding Westward: The Poem and the Tradition," *ELH*, 28 (1961), 31-53, does not notice this cosmological shift, and thus he denies that the description of the motions of the soul in the opening lines are accurate: "he rides westward through the world . . . and on the other side of death he returns to *Oriens* and the life everlasting. In the final analysis, rational, uniform, direct, and natural motion moves westward through Donne's universe also. If this is true, then that reinterpretation of spherical analogy which began the poem must have been mistaken. . . . The divine contemplation of Good Friday's Passion creates in Donne the irrational desire to move eastward at once, to avoid that longer and harder eastward path" (p. 52). Yet in fact there is no indication in the poem that he will make a circuit from West to East (as in "Hymne to God my God"): rather he will "turne [his] face," begin the proper west to east revolution about the Sun/Son, when he dies and rises. The switch to a heliocentric universe is begun by the reversal of direction in the soul (ll. 33-35) but will be completed only at the resurrection, when he will see God face to face.

8 John Donne, *Complete Poetry and Selected Prose*, ed. Charles M. Coffin (New York: Modern Library, 1952), p. 379.

9 In "Donne's Discoveries," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 11 (1971), Carol Marks Sicherman says in reference to these lines, "Self-deception continues in the increasingly obvious appeals that follow" (p. 73), though I cannot agree that "the process appears to be less a fully deliberate plan of the poet than a partly subconscious development issuing from within Donne's private mind" (p. 74). The use of pseudo-logic is quite intentional and dramatically justifiable.

10 Friedman makes a slightly different point: "it is precisely the weight of Christ's torn body hanging from the Cross that is to become the focus of the speaker's gradual conversion to truth" (p. 431). I am not sure this can be concluded from the text itself.

11 In "'Little Worlds Made Cunningly': Significant Form in Donne's Holy Sonnets and 'Goodfriday, 1613,'" *Studies in Philology*, 72 (1975), Antony F. Bellette notes that these "two lines, placed at the exact midpoint of the poem, confront us with the actual figure of Christ" (p. 344): I am more inclined to see the significance of the lines in their cosmological reference, since Christ is still imagined rather than actual, but the comment about the midpoint, part of the author's interesting hypothesis of a chiasmic structure in "Goodfriday," is valuable.

12 For the variants, see Gardner, *Divine Poems*, p. 99. The references to spheres is not at all inconsistent with the implied heliocentrism of ll. 11-14, since Copernicus retained this terminology from the Ptolemaic system.

13 Chambers' suggestion that "the position in these lines of 'pierc'd' syntactically demands that it modify not 'hands' but either 'spheres' or 'I'" (p. 50) seems to me very unlikely: "hands" is modified successively by the clause "which . . . at once" and the phrase "pierc'd . . . holes." But the point he is trying to make, that in "the whole series

of questions . . . the apparent answer is no, but in actual fact the answer must be yes" is quite true.

14 See "A Litanie," l. 7, and John Donne, *Sermons*, 10 vols., ed. G. R. Potter and Evelyn Simpson (Riverside: Univ. of California Press, 1953-62), I:78-79, IX:64-65.

15 Friedman also recognizes the function of this passage: "The acknowledgement of sin and culpability is given, then, simultaneously with the recognition of the meaning of Christ's sacrifice" (p. 434).

16 I disagree with Friedman's final conclusion, influenced by Chambers, that "the speaker has been riding in the right direction after all . . . because all man's paths lead to Christ, and because although man can be misled by the eye of the flesh, the inner eye of memory can never be blurred" (p. 442). Is not this to say precisely that he *has* turned around, spiritually, and that the physical turn is to come at death?

17 In "Donne's Journey East: Aspects of a Seventeenth-Century Trope," *Studies in Philology*, 68 (1971), 473, Jonathan Goldberg rightly emphasizes, "the poem presents a typological allegory of the self in which experiential data is treated figurally." See also Friedman's characterization of the poem as "a vehicle of conversion for Donne's audience" (p. 424).