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"Some new pleasures"?: Donne's Lyrics and Recent Critical Approaches

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I am pleased—and honored—to be addressing my fellow academics in general and the members of the John Donne Society in particular, gratified not least because over the years I have learned so much from all of you at these meetings.[1] I am also glad to be here because by chance, for two different reasons, 2016 is a singularly apt year for me to be delivering this presidential address. Round numbers can provide a pleasing impression of pattern and order even when we are talking about a poet who delights in evoking patterns only to riff on them—in this and other respects, incidentally, the heterometrical couplet, which seesaws between sameness and difference, resolution and surprise, is Donne's signature. I will get to another round number shortly, but for now let me record the happy coincidences that I will be including Donne's "Epithalamion made at Lincolnes Inne" in today's address—and my first paper at this conference, an exploration of his Somerset epithalamium, was delivered exactly thirty years ago, in 1986, which was also the first official meeting of the John Donne Society. Stimulated intellectually and welcomed warmly, I was grateful to you for making me a palette on your program then and at later conferences as well. Full disclosure: another reason I am happy to be giving this address is that I have a captive audience for a few puns. But I have limited myself to two

[1]I am indebted to the participants at the 31st Annual John Donne Conference in Baton Rouge, where I gave this presidential address, and to my research assistant Carolyn Cargile for valuable help with this essay.

since the earlier versions that included three risked encouraging you to recall Donne's title "The Triple Foole."

I mentioned temporal patterns a few minutes ago, and one involving not thirty but forty years inspired the structure of my address. 1976 was the date my two earliest full-length articles, one on Donne's "The Baite" and the other on the "Epithalamion made at Lincolnes Inne," were published.[2] Although both essays did challenge the conventional wisdom on certain subjects, in other ways they were very much a product of the academic climate in 1976. In this address I will identify the changes that enable us to approach such poems differently, thus offering an analogue and supplement to the invaluable critical histories in our Variorum editions. But we also will look at some continuities—and their importance.

More specifically, I shall focus on the possibilities and, yes, perils offered by first, our current versions of space theory, whose fruits we often encounter at this conference; second, new formalisms; and third, that cousin of new formalisms, revisionist close reading. But in so doing I shall also touch on other and closely related changes since 1976, ranging from new models of periodization to the realized and potential contributions of the Variorum and of digital media. I stress perils because I am not building but rather resisting the self-congratulatory progress models that are too common in the profession today. Not the least of the risks associated with the new approaches on which I focus is neglecting the ways those methods draw, though often in revisionist form, on the achievements of earlier criticism rather than simply displacing and demeaning them. Students of a culture that identified the circle with perfection need to remember that what goes around comes around—though often in different form.

Varied though the questions about space studies, formalisms, and other methods that I will introduce may be, a rhetorical and epistemological model lies behind my approaches to them. When she was president of the MLA, Linda Hutcheon advocated a both/and

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[2]"Donne's 'Epithalamion Made at Lincolnes Inne': An Alternative Interpretation," *SEL* 16 (1976): 131–43; "John Donne's Versions of Pastoral," *The Durham University Journal* 37 (1976): 33–37. Citations from these essays appear in parentheses within my text.

paradigm over the either/or alternative.[3] In exemplifying that approach at several points, I will also tweak it into both/and/plus—that is, when we attempt to connect methods and readings, the result is often not sitting on the fence but leaping beyond to more fertile landscapes.

Donne's "The Baite," one of a series of responses to Marlowe's "Come live with me," adapts the piscatory pastoral developed by Jacobo Sannazaro. Thus Donne evokes what he labels not as his predecessor's "all the pleasures" but rather, tellingly, as "some new pleasures" (2).[4] The speaker invites the lady into the new pastoral and erotic world he fashions, drawing attention to the power she will have over its amorous fish and over the amorous fisherman who is doing the inviting but will himself be caught.

My 1976 essay on "The Baite" proposed a reassessment of Donne's apparently dismissive relationship to pastoral and more broadly to the image of him as "iconoclast, the unrelenting enemy of the golden world of Elizabethan pastoral" (33). Critics have largely abandoned the contrast I was opposing back then between an irenic Elizabethan Golden Age, characterized by widespread consensus on theology and on political ideologies, and a Jacobean period that, shamelessly to adapt Milton, brought death into our literary history, and all our woe.[5] Arguably, however, the traces of that binary model survive in Donne criticism, notably in the surprisingly prevalent tendency to connect the poems that celebrate love to a relationship with his wife. One apparent assumption here is that the poster-boy for Jacobean pessimism required some transformative autobiographical experience to produce such poems. That explanation for the abandonment of

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[3]In several venues Linda Hutcheon has advocated replacing combative approaches with more collegial ones. See, e.g., "Presidential Address 2000: She Do the President in Different Voices," *PMLA* 116 (2001): 518–30.

[4]All citations from Donne's love poetry are to John Donne, *The Elegies and the Songs and Sonnets*, ed. Helen Gardner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965).

[5]Might Douglas Bush's influential espousal of this Jekyll-Hyde model relate to his own Golden Age conservatism in upholding literary history against the rival methodologies that were the new kids on the block when he chaired the English Department at Harvard University, as well as to the irenic theological conservatism he finds in Milton? In general, might the model of the Fall have attracted certain theologically oriented critics to the binary model of Elizabethan vs. Jacobean?

cynicism and misogyny also privileges marriage in ways that may reflect more about the values of the critic than the impetus behind these poems. Why not consider the alternative impetus of a relationship with another woman, or no historical woman, or significantly transformed fragments of several biographical experiences? More to my purposes here, should we not also locate some of that drive to celebrate love not only in longstanding traditions of Neoplatonism but also those and other traditions of love poetry associated with the so-called Elizabethan Golden Age? Similarly, the dubious assumption that Petrarchism was Donne's "giovenile errore," soon abandoned for his more mature style, may be impelled by survivals of the contrast between Elizabethan and Jacobean. Nonetheless, more recent alternative models of periodization that replaced that one carry with them their own risks for Donne scholarship, such as downplaying the significance of much shorter temporal units.[6] We might think more, too, about the professional and personal rewards reaped by critics, whether consciously pursued or not, from various models of periodization.

But further to explore these issues about periodization would demand an essay in its own right. Nor is my main aim here to congratulate myself on prescience in rejecting that Elizabethan-Jacobean divide, thus recognizing Donne's negotiations with pastoral traditions. Rather, let's examine three overlapping preoccupations that I neglected or misread when I wrote on "The Baite" forty years ago—spatiality, instrumentality, and materiality. In so doing I will demonstrate how the critical methods I identified above, especially space theory and formalist analyses, can enrich or even enable approaches to those areas.

The first of many reminders that we should not celebrate such approaches as an alternative to a benighted past is that discussions of spatiality are obviously nothing new in the study of pastoral. But more recent theorized approaches to space by figures like Michel de Certeau and Henri Lefebvre, which often focus on its denizens' degree and type of power, now help me to reinterpret Donne's "some

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[6]On that significance, see, e.g., Achsah Guibbory's argument that Donne moves towards Arminianism during the 1620's ("Donne's Religion: Montagu, Arminianism and Donne's Sermons, 1624–1630," *ELR* 31 [2001]: 412–39).

new pleasures" (2).[7] Although both these theorists risk underestimating how unstable power in space may be, the fact remains that their contrasts can gloss the different versions of pastoral we encounter here, each related to a different concept of baiting—the poetic vision with its undertow of erotic invitation resembles what Lefebvre describes as the artist's representational space and also recalls de Certeau's category of tactics (that is, the limited and temporary power in space accessible to those generally disempowered). And the openly erotic control exercised by the woman corresponds roughly to de Certeau's concept of strategies, the province of the empowered in arenas to which they can lay claim, as she clearly can. Although introducing these theorized categories creates problems as well, doing so has the advantage of drawing our attention to how often a given pastoral poem pivots not only or primarily on the relationship between the pastoral world and its alternatives but rather on conflicting versions and visions of worlds within pastoral, a practice reflected structurally in the genre's attraction to dialogue.

My own recent work on spatial deictics (pointing words like "this/that" and "here/there"), which often participate in formalist analyses, directs me to another approach to the spatialities in the poem that I neglected in that article forty years ago. Watching the shepherds and proffering slippers with golden buckles, Marlowe's speaker is clearly in but not completely of the pastoral world, as Kimberly Huth has pointed out in her powerful essay on pastoral invitations.[8] I would add that close attention to language and form demonstrates that Donne's relationship to the pastoral world is even more shifting—and perhaps more shifty as well. Notice the tension between the verb "Come," borrowed from Marlowe in Donne's first line, and the two "there's" that succeed it in the second stanza: "Come live with me and be my love" versus "There will the river whispering runne" (5) and "And there the'inamor'd fish will stay" (7). The linguist Charles J. Fillmore has charted the many and conflicting

[7]See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Blackwell: Oxford, 1991).

[8]Kimberly Huth, "Come Live With Me and Feed My Sheep: Invitation, Ownership, and Belonging in Early Modern Pastoral Literature," *SP* 108 (2011): 44–69.

ways "come," as opposed to "go," can signal places occupied by speakers and addressees, hence ambiguating position.[9] Two significant implications of the word "come" are suggesting that the speaker is already in the place to which he is inviting someone and that it is his so-called home base or the home base of the genre in general. "Come" should, then, generally be paired with the term "here." In contrast, the "there's" in Donne's second stanza suggest that, if testifying before the House Committee on Ungeneric Activities, he would declare that the word "Come" on which he opens is potentially misleading, for he is not now and perhaps has never been a member of the flock of pastoral poets. To put it another way, the poem is contrasting through deictics the home base for the genre, expressed through "Come" (1), and Donne's own base in a different world, thus enacting his resistance to pastoral seductions, which evaporates in the course of the lyric. Yet "come" also allows for further ambiguities about how close he might be to that pastoral tribe. In any event, these distancing "there's" establish a contrast with the conclusion, which confesses that he has indubitably been caught by and caught up into the allure of both the woman and the pastoral landscape she represents.

But changes in tone, so characteristic of Donne, are nowhere more evident than in this poem, which proceeds to give a darker alternative vision of pastoral fishing in its fifth and sixth stanzas: "Let others freeze with angling reeds . . . Let coarse bold hands" (17, 21). These lines draw attention to a materiality that I neglected in my earlier reading, which our discipline's current emphasis on the material, as well as perhaps recent work on affect, can flag for us. Thus the poem contrasts various approaches, sensory and otherwise, to the physical world—including the emphasis on touch, according to Susan Stewart a particularly significant sense because of its connection with propinquity and on visualities.[10] Perhaps these stanzas also redefine the speaker's ambiguous relationship to pastoral space by suggesting

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[9]See esp. Charles J. Fillmore, *Lectures on Deixis,* Lecture Notes, #65 (Stanford: CSLI [Center for the Study of Language and Information] Publications, 1971).

[10]Susan Stewart, *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), esp. pp. 160–78.

that he can exercise some control in it by a kind of cordoning off, introducing a vision of what may happen in a darker pastoral world that may be read as an alternative space or an alternative vision of this one.[11] Thus, paradoxically, cordoning off, an action that seems to deny materiality and presence in its several senses, is associated with tactility.[12]

Thus too stanzas five and six alerted me to another aspect of the poem that contemporary and, indeed, digitalized approaches to formalist criticism may facilitate, the preoccupation with agency and instrumentality. The word "with" appears three times in a single stanza—"with angling reeds" (17), "with shells and weeds" (18), and "With strangling snare" (20)—although the first of these suggests accompaniment and the last two agency. In recognizing this repetition now, I am indebted to a recent article by Daniel Shore and to a paper by Benedict S. Robinson, "Disgust: Digital Philology, Cultural History, and *Measure for Measure*."[13] Both authors focus on Shakespeare and address issues different from mine, but their work is very relevant here inasmuch as they suggest that rather than distinguishing the lexical and grammatical in reading texts intensively, we need to look at what Shore calls "linguistic forms," that is, phrases like the "What . . . I" construction exemplified by Hamlet's "O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!" (3.1.550).[14] These two critics also demonstrate both by precept and example how digital searches, not a gleam in anyone's eye when I wrote about the poem in 1976, make possible certain studies of such linguistic forms that can also be a promising approach to

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[11]On gathering and expelling, cf. my article, "'You may be wondering why I called you all here today': Patterns of Gathering in the Early Modern Print Lyric," *The Work of Form: Poetics and Materiality in Early Modern Culture*, ed. Elizabeth Scott-Baumann and Ben Burton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 23–38.

[12]I am indebted to Adam Rzepka for this point about the paradox and for other useful suggestions about the essay (private correspondence).

[13]Daniel Shore, "Shakespeare's Construction," *SQ* 66 (2015): 113–36; Benedict S. Robinson, "Disgust: Digital Philology, Cultural History, and *Measure for Measure*," Shakespeare Seminar, Columbia University, November 2015.

[14]I cite William Shakespeare, *The Riverside Shakespeare,* ed. G. Blakemore Evans, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

Donne criticism.[15] More immediately, recognizing the repetition of this preposition alerts me to the fact that behind the obvious but significant point that the poem concerns many different types of bait lies this broader preoccupation with agency, instrumentality, and the connections among them—a preoccupation that the study of linguistic forms like these "with" phrases can crystallize. Since the eschatological debates sparked by Calvinism focus on whether man is agent in his own salvation or a passive instrument of God's grace, one wonders whether they contributed to the sort of secularization and reinterpretation of those concerns in Donne's use of "with" here and elsewhere. Similarly, pressing debates in Donne's day about spatial ecclesiology involved issues related to the implications of "with"—where the altar should be placed, when and if the priest should face the congregation, and so on—and inform the appearances of "with" and similar words, demonstrating how relevant digital applications may be not only to Jack Donne but also to Dr. Donne, and of course to the Mobius strip their relationship entails.

When we turn to Donne's "Epithalamion made at Lincolnes Inne" and return to my forty-year-old reading of it in relation to more recent criticism on spatiality and formalisms, some of the agendas behind that early article on "The Baite" return as well. Again challenging the putative divide between Elizabethan and Jacobean that was so firmly instantiated then, my essay took issue with David Novarr's influential contention that the poem is merely a mock-epithalamium, a parody of Spenser's contribution to that genre that Donne created for revels at Lincoln's Inn.[16] Rather, I maintained in 1976, Donne's sporadic, ambivalent, but not insignificant attraction to Spenser's vision challenges the simple contrast between the two poets, with the many odd images in this poem stemming from Donne's ambivalence about imitating Spenser. In the past forty years, changing approaches to periodization have encouraged other critics to illuminate links, not differences, between these two poets—among the many instances are

[15]Pedagogical applications of the digital humanities were discussed in Theresa DiPasquale's presentation on the panel, "Amorous Fish: A Panel Discussion of 'The Baite.'" (John Donne Society Conference, Baton Rouge, LA, February 2016).

[16]David Novarr, "Donne's 'Epithalamion Made at Lincoln's Inn': Context and Date," *RES* 7 (1956): 250–63.

Raymond-Jean Frontain's argument that Donne and Spenser are connected by their commitment to the power of orality and Tom MacFaul's scholarly note about the influence of Spenser's "Epithalamion" on Donne's love poetry.[17]

Having virtually ignored spatiality in that old article on the "Epithalamion made at Lincolnes Inne," I am grateful to recent work in that field, and again to discussions about spatial deictics in particular, for redirecting my reading, notably by encouraging further observations about enclosure.[18] In commenting on the line about the Temple's "too-leaud gates" (37), one critic rightly draws attention to the bawdy sexual symbolism, though without noting that this implicitly celebrates and privileges the female body in a genre sometimes more concerned with phallic power.[19] But the lines also flag a type of spatiality on which the whole poem focuses: a preoccupation with enclosed and static space rather than the linearity and movement enacted and represented by the wedding processions that figure so prominently in other epithalamia. Those processions are replaced here by a brief command to bring the bridegroom to the temple and by an equally brief reference to the bride "pac[ing]" (33). Representations of energetic movement are relatively rare in this wedding poem, unlike others—one exception, the galloping steeds, involves prancing horses not dancing human beings. Witness, too, how gerundives draw attention to a state of being rather than activity. In lieu of evoking the sun spreading his beams, Donne opens on "The Sun-beames in the East are spred" (1) and later writes, "The amorous euening Star is rose" (61). And enclosure figures explicitly in the rhetorical question, "Why should not then our amorous Star enclose / Herselfe in her wish'd bed" (62–63). (In the latter instance, the adjective "wish'd"

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[17]Raymond-Jean Frontain, "Donne, Spenser, and the Performative Mode of Renaissance Poetry," *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 32 (2006): 76–102; Tom MacFaul, "Donne's 'The Sunne Rising' and Spenser's 'Epithalamion,'" *Notes and Queries*, 54 (2007): 37–38.

[18]Adam Rzepka rightly describes containment within the famous flea as "an almost terrifying privacy" (private correspondence).

[19]Throughout I cite *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne: Vol. 8: The Epigrams, Epithalamions, Epitaphs, Inscriptions, and Miscellaneous Poems*, gen. ed. Gary Stringer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

[63] again resists the energy of verbs while also resisting any indication of who is doing the wishing.)

This preoccupation with containment is also realized formally in his stanzaic pattern of *aa* / *bccb* / *deed* / *ff*. This schema enacts several forms of bounding and binding: the couplets on which the stanza begins and ends are themselves enclosures that also frame the whole poem. And the *b* and *d* rhymes enclose couplets within them: *bccb* and *deed*. Stanzas are both ways of thinking and tropes for those ways, as Jeff Dolven has suggested in relation to the Spenserian stanza.[20] In this instance we find enclosed spaces within the enclosed but permeable space of the stanza.

Some previous readers have noted Donne's references to enclosure. But with a few important exceptions,[21] many manifestations of that preoccupation with the contained, the walled in, have not received the attention they deserve. Notice, for example, how "Hymne to God my God, in my sicknesse" evokes heaven not as boundless open space but as "that Holy roome" (1) (another significant deictic, incidentally); and notice how often the sermons refer to the many mansions in God's house. Observe too the preposition in "We'll build in sonnets pretty roomes" ("The Canonization," 32).

The drive behind such references varies to some extent from one lyric to the next, but certain patterns recur. Arguably enclosure is the opposite to and defense against the fear of invasion that, as I have argued elsewhere, characterizes Donne.[22] (In this way it interacts with a culturally specific form of enclosure, the cordoning off of plague-infested houses to which the *Devotions* refer.) In the "Epithalamion made at Lincolnes Inne" as elsewhere, Donne is, characteristically, privileging through his renditions of space the privacy of the lovers. He does so in a genre that elsewhere, including Donne's other

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[20]Jeff Dolven, "The Method of Spenser's Stanza," *Spenser Studies* 19 (2004): 17–25.

[21]See esp. Laura Elizabeth Yoder, "Posthumous Spaces: Making Room for Absence in the Writing of Donne," John Donne Society Conference, Baton Rouge, LA, February 2016.

[22]"Paradises Lost: Invaded Houses in Donne's Poetry," in *Renaissance Poetry and Drama in Context: Essays for Christopher Wortham,* ed. Andrew Lynch and Anne M. Scott (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), pp. 241–55.

wedding poems, typically devotes considerable attention to the interactions and tensions between the communal activities of the wedding day and the private ones of the wedding night. From another and darker perspective, the threats of sexuality are thus associated with holding in and holding back, activities often connected to space. All of these glosses exemplify the links between formal decisions and cultural pressures that the new formalism encourages us to explore.

An additional source and icon of that emphasis on enclosure in our epithalamium and elsewhere deserves more attention than it has received, and the branch of material criticism that focuses on objects can help us here about rooms in general and the material book in particular as representations of unstable and variable space.[23] Without denying the obvious erotic significance of beds, we should explore other resonances of the four-postered curtained bed within a room, an enclosure within another enclosure as Donne's famous reference to "Through windowes, and through curtaines" ("The Sunne Rising," 3) demonstrates. Such beds, themselves a type of room, were surely extraordinary symbols and enactments of space in the period, connecting it to both illness and sexuality (themselves often paired in Donne's worlds), suggesting spaces within spaces, and returning us to agency by introducing the agency of closing the curtains as opposed to the powerlessness of having them opened or penetrated against one's will. Donne and his contemporary audience may well have been particularly aware of such resonances because of parallels between the beds and the curtained areas of stages, notably the issues of spaces containing other spaces and the agency manifest in pulling back the curtain.[24] And for Donne himself the four-postered bed may well have also represented a subject that preoccupied him in his poetry and prose and his secular and spiritual writings, the relationship of public and private worlds.

Spatial theories can also help us navigate the stormy waters of gender in this epithalamium, especially a particularly disturbing image

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[23]Compare the observations about rooms in general and the material book in particular as representations of unstable and variable space in Yoder, "Posthumous Spaces."

[24]I thank Sean McDowell for drawing my attention to the connection with theatrical practices.

of the bride: "Like an appointed Lambe, when tenderly / The Priest comes on his knees to'embowell her" (89–90). In that 1976 essay and other writings on the poem during the same era, I stressed the uneasy interplay between male aggression, willing female participation in it, and religious ritual; in a scholarly note I also argued that the indubitably disturbing associations of "embowell" (90) are at least moderated by a reference to pregnancy.[25] I would counter that latter point now with the reminder that viewing grisly executions surely made the image more unsettling despite John Carey's attempts to distinguish embowelling and disembowelling and despite more recent critics' efforts to tame the image by relating it to theological paradigms of marriage.[26]

Further expanding my earlier reading, I suggest that the image also serves to redefine space and power relations within it. First of all, the marriage bed becomes at once secular and sacralized, a common approach to it in the marriage manuals of the period, though all comments on that literature should acknowledge the divergences and contradictions it manifests. Describing the bride with the adjective "appointed"—"Like an appointed Lambe" (89)—also implies that she is in the correct place both spatially and culturally, with de Certeau's association of place with what is *propre* in many senses, and especially with the relational and stable, aptly glossing the control of female sexuality that is surely one of the poem's agendas. But why is the groom on his knees, a reference that would have been especially resonant to a culture roiled by recurrent debates about the appropriate physical positions of the bodies of both priest and congregation and the significance of kneeling in particular? Introduced with the splendid title, "Knees and Elephants: John Donne Preaches on

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[25]The argument about "embowell" appears in an essay published under the name of Heather Dubrow Ousby, "Donne's 'Epithalamion made at Lincolnes Inne,'" 90, *The Explicator* 32 (1974), #49.

[26]John Carey, *John Donne: Life, Mind and Art* (London: Faber and Faber, 1981), p. 143; he does note that the image remains disturbing. On the religious background, see Allen Ramsey, "Donne's 'Epithalamion made at Lincolnes Inne': The Religious and Literary Context," in *John Donne's Religious Imagination: Essays in Honor of John T. Shawcross,* ed. Raymond-Jean Frontain and Frances M. Malpezzi (Conway, AR: University of Central Arkansas Press, 1995), pp. 96–112.

Ceremonial Conformity," Emma Rhatigan's article traces the significance of kneeling in churches and courts throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[27] Donne's image may well gesture towards those debates—but more to my purposes here, it complicates the gendering to which I refer above by playing down the authority of the bridegroom and arguably even suggesting spatially his humility in relation to the bride: he is not mapping space or striding through it, models theorists have associated with spatial control, but rather moving within it in a kneeling, deferential position. Yet he is moving when kneeling, and any diminishment of his power obviously conflicts with the power of the priest's knife and the male organ it disturbingly represents—arguably, that conflict also spatially registers the tension between the poet's drive to emphasize male power and agency and some ambivalence about doing so at the expense of the bride. Such tensions may also recall the association of movement with instability in many studies of space.

Let me just gesture now towards another peculiarity in the poem, its configuration of social status, also related to space through the verticality of hierarchy. Whereas Spenser had celebrated merchants' daughters, Donne's emphasis on their wealth—"You which are Angels, yet still bring with you / Thousands of Angels on your mariage dayes" (15–16)—may reflect the condescension of someone who lived on the verge of social classes and statuses as well as so many other borders. I still agree with my suggestion forty years ago that these references may be the fruit of attempting to assert his own status as a gentleman. Impelled by my own experience as a poet, however, I also want to argue here, more controversially, that we should always bear in mind the common practice of cannibalizing earlier and never completed or never successfully completed poems one has drafted for some lines for a new one. This supplements without denying the recent emphasis in many critical circles on cannibalizing the works of other writers. It is possible—though I admit this is speculation—that some of the satire in the "Epithalamion made at Lincolnes Inne" was originally drafted for another poem, perhaps indeed a formal verse satire, a genre Donne was exploring at roughly the same time. Admittedly, we do not have

[27]Emma Rhatigan, "Knees and Elephants: John Donne Preaches on Ceremonial Conformity," *John Donne Journal* 23 (2004): 185–213.

evidence of this, not surprisingly given how little work in the author's own hand survives from the early modern period. But the manuscripts of poets in our own era do demonstrate exactly this sort of process (I am thinking, for example, of the development of Robert Lowell's "Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket," which can be effectively traced through his surviving papers in Harvard's Houghton Library). Too often neglected by critics, the significance of rewriting, revising in the etymological sense of "seeing again," is trenchantly discussed from perspectives different from my own in William J. Kennedy's most recent study of Petrarch and can illuminate so many Donne poems as well.[28]

What, then, do my readings of these two poems suggest about the relevance of space studies and types of formal analysis, as well as some related approaches, for the future of Donne criticism and, indeed, the future of our profession? First, and perhaps most important, the interplay of older and newer methods on which I have drawn exemplifies the advantages of catholicism over the drive to embrace one approach while demonizing others that is all too common in some reaches of our field today. Smaller professional societies, such as ones centered on a particular author or method, always confront the risk of espousing a particular party line and welcoming only its disciples, but this meeting demonstrates how the John Donne Society is gathering together critics, scholars, and editors, and indeed the many people who wear two or three of those hats, and practice a range of methodologies. And given that papers at this society have frequently analyzed sermons, I hope I may offer one of my own here (to be repeated in somewhat different form as the recessional of this service). We need to remain alert to the danger of replacing discriminating evaluations of critical methods with a self-serving demonization of some of them—to paraphrase my ACLU mug, the price of intellectual liberty is continual vigilance.

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[28]William J. Kennedy, *Petrarchism at Work: Contextual Economics in the Age of Shakespeare* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016). Also cf. the observations about revision in Colin Burrow's "Introduction" in William Shakespeare, *The Complete Sonnets and Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), The Oxford Shakespeare, pp. 106–08.

In particular, one welcome consequence of respecting a range of critical approaches is challenging the self-serving contrasts between older and contemporary methods often instantiated to their own apparent advantage by people on both sides of that putative divide. This is not to deny the likelihood of unbridgeable differences on certain subjects, like the extent to which texts achieve closure. But as I have often stressed, what is celebrated as new in some quarters in fact builds on or even echoes something much older, and vice versa. For example, the distinguished editors who attended this address and have contributed so much to the John Donne Society were demonstrating how many agents besides the author contribute to creating meaning and how significant scribal practices were long before those became central tenets of new historicism and of materialist criticism. Often, though not invariably, the old and new can collaborate as well as, or rather than, quarreling. Thus in my discussion of stanza forms and four-postered beds, I have attempted to dovetail formalist and materialist approaches, and I have indicated how digitalized criticism can facilitate a type of close reading practiced by earlier Donne scholars who obviously didn't and couldn't know from digital.[29]

How about the contributions specific to space studies and the new formalisms, including their sibling close reading? Recent theoretical work on space and the fruits of intellectual history exemplified by the study of Donne's cartography are indeed symbiotic.[30] The plus that

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[29]On the relationship of the digital to close reading, see esp. N. Katherine Hayles, "How We Read: Close, Hyper, Machine," *ADE Bulletin* 150 (2010): 62–79, and John Guillory's rebuttal in "Close Reading: Prologue and Epilogue," *ADE Bulletin* 149 (2010): 8–14. Also cf. the celebration of the putative advantages of the digital humanities over other types of criticism in Andrew Kopec, "The Digital Humanities, Inc.: Literary Criticism and the Fate of a Profession," *PMLA* 131 (2016): 324–39; and my letter responding to that article, "Digital versus Literature? The Digital Humanities and Literary Studies," *PMLA* 131 (2016): 1557–60.

[30]A valuable overview—and evaluation—of Donne's approaches to cartography may be found in Jeanne Shami, "John Donne: Geography as Metaphor," in *Geography and Literature: A Meeting of the Disciplines*, ed. William E. Mallory and Paul Simpson-Housley (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1987), pp. 161–67. Funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and directed by Kirsten Anne Stirling, a project at the University of Lausanne

issues from "both" intellectual history on maps "and" theorized discussions of space could perhaps be, for example, thinking about how de Certeau's model of walking relates to reading a map. This type of bridging is especially welcome because the emphasis on maps in Donne studies and other quarters may have led certain other types of spatiality to get short shrift on occasion.[31] In the future let us look at these sometimes neglected forms of spatiality in Donne, encompassing, for example, the stanzaic patterns to which I've been referring and the distinctive ways genres like formal verse satire and the epithalamium configure space.

If such approaches to space and place could enrich Donne criticism, in turn that criticism could also provide a significantly revisionist perspective on space studies, as I have already begun to suggest. With the partial but very limited exception of some allusions to Neoplatonism, too many discussions of spatiality, driven by phenomenological models, have posited embodiment as a *sine qua non* of space studies. Donne's devotional poetry enables and encourages us to consider how spatiality functions in spiritual realms where the body is potentially or largely or entirely absent—consider "Since I am comming to that Holy roome" ("Hymne to God my God, in my sicknesse" [1]).[32] Thus religious lyrics may offer a distinctive but compatible instance of Stephanie Burt's argument that lyric in general

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entitled "Space, Place and Image in the Poetry and Prose of John Donne" involves important work on space from theoretical and other perspectives.

[31]The dangers of a limited approach to spatiality that neglects precise locations were also suggested in the paper Kader Hegedüs delivered at the 2016 John Donne Society meeting in Baton Rouge. A revised version appears in article form: "'Love, let me Some senseless piece of this place be': landscape, body, and the 'creature of place' in Donne's 'Songs and Sonnets,'" *English* 65.251 (2016): 295–309. doi: 10.1093/english/efw036.

[32]Although she does not refer specifically to embodiment, the astute observations about space in devotional poetry in Mahlika Hopwood's unpublished thesis, *God, Self, and Fellow: Community in the Religious Literature of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, would support and extend this argument. Also relevant to the issue of embodiment are Yoder's observations at this conference about the room as absent ("Posthumous Spaces").

"disembodies and . . . tries to construct a new, acoustic or verbal, body."[33]

Similarly, examining Donne can lead us to qualify the assumption, recurrent in both de Certeau and Lefebve, that spatial interactions both express and intensify preexisting social hierarchies. De Certeau typically assumes that whether an individual can effect spatial interactions through strategies or merely and temporarily affect those interactions through tactics depends on their prior status, but in fact that status may be shifted in many ways, not least through the very acts de Certeau describes. As my analyses of "The Baite" and the "Epithalamion made at Lincolnes Inne" have demonstrated, de Certeau's model is problematical inasmuch as those who are disempowered and relegated to the realm of tactics in some arenas may be masters of and through strategies in others.

Whereas formalist approaches were indisputably significant in earlier Donne criticism back in 1976, Donne is also fertile ground now for so-called new formalist approaches. If we accept the common though controversial assertion that the workings of power should be central to new formalism, it would be hard to identify an author more preoccupied with that subject.[34] Whether or not they privilege power, purveyors of new formalism often distinguish it from its earlier incarnation through its embrace of historical and cultural influences on form. What better example than the ways Donne's stanza forms echo culturally specific concerns about enclosure?

But at the same time Donne provides a caveat for the development of new formalism. I myself see that marriage of the formal and historical as a likely and promising characteristic of new formalist studies—but I would be hesitant to enshrine it as a *sine qua non*, as most other critics have done, often with a nervous insistence born of that fear of being affiliated with the bad old days of New Criticism. For we need to remember that some important formal decisions are not primarily or even necessarily in dialogue with a particular historical

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[33]Stephanie (Stephen) Burt, "What Is This Thing Called Lyric?" *Modern Philology* 113 (2016): 439.

[34]On that definition of new formalism, see esp. Fredric V. Bogel, *New Formalist Criticism: Theory and Practice* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

moment. Witness, for example, my observations about Donne's delight in heterometrical couplets.

I have temporarily separated close analyses of texts from new formalism, partly because some people practicing each of them have little commitment to the other but also because each poses distinctive challenges in terms of professional practices. Given Donne's centrality to that problematical but potent earlier version of close reading American New Criticism, Donne critics are in a singularly good position to participate in the current interest in revisionist versions of close reading. The attacks on it that we need to negotiate are not merely a remnant of the professional turn to theory in the 70s; they are also alive and well in, for example, Franco Moretti's celebration of so-called distant reading, based on his dismissal of close reading as "a theological exercise—very solemn treatment of very few texts taken very seriously."[35] Resisting the temptation to generalize about New Critics, one repeatedly finds that close attention to texts does not necessarily involve all the approaches and values associated with it in conveniently oversimplified versions of American New Criticism. For example, within the subfield of Donne studies, Clay Hunt's work irrefutably demonstrates that many members of that movement in fact dovetailed close readings with several forms of history, including but by no means confined to literary history.[36] Nor need contemporary versions of close reading subscribe to principles that were common but by no means universal in earlier manifestations of it. We need not privilege paradox and irony above all else; we need not focus on the individual, isolated text, as I will suggest in a moment in relation to paratexts; we need not endorse the conservative political positions of certain New Critics; we need not assume that tensions are part of a well-wrought urn, a harmonious whole.

Indeed, I would argue—here comes another sermon, though this one probably preached to the choir—that we have a particular obligation at this historical moment to train our students in these revisionist versions of close reading. For all their intellectual and social contributions—witness my suggestions about how the digital

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[35]Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading* (London: Verso, 2013), p. 48.

[36]See Clay Hunt, *Donne's Poetry: Essays in Literary Analysis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954).

humanities could enable formal and other approaches to Donne—too often the new media encourage in our students the most rapid and superficial of reading. Thumbing down in a text is often a version of dumbing down responses, and the thumbnail summary, however valuable in some arenas, does not get us very far with a Donne poem. Because Donne demands and rewards slow reading, teaching him is a wonderful opportunity to show our students that all that twitters is not gold. Celebrating close reading can also enrich graduate teaching since too often students feel obliged to generate proposals with apparently powerful but actually premature arguments because they have not looked closely enough at their texts.

Donne critics and our counterparts in other fields are well-positioned not merely to defend certain versions of close reading but also to expand its reach. We might, for example, look at how paratexts affect not only interpretation in general but close reading in particular; for example, whether or not it is authorial, what are the effects of the subtitle affixed to "Goodfriday, 1613. Riding Westward" in certain manuscripts? We could also enrich close reading by directing more attention to what Lynne Magnusson has called small words, which arguably are especially important in Donne—for example, the problematical distinction between "shall" and "will" or the deictics that I study here and elsewhere.[37]

I have been demonstrating throughout, then, that space studies and recent versions of formalism, supplemented by new models like revisionist periodization and by tools ranging from the Variorum to digital searches, can enrich and be enriched by Donne studies. Such perspectives also gesture towards promising future intersections between our author and space studies, new formalisms, and close reading. I have already suggested some possibilities, such as diminishing the emphasis on embodiment in phenomenologically oriented assumptions about space. The methodologies I have discussed could also contribute to future work in areas that, though prominent in professional discourses today, have not yet figured in this presentation: authorship and the connections among types of queering in the several senses of that term. Thus the emphasis on craft

[37]See, e.g., Lynne Magnusson, "A Play of Modals: Grammar and Potential Action in Early Shakespeare," *Shakespeare Survey* 62 (2009): 69–80.

encouraged by older and newer formalisms could help us to develop a revisionist approach to authorship that both acknowledges and participates in important work on collaboration among writers and the consequences of decisions by publishers and printers and also fully recognizes and on occasion even celebrates what authors like Donne themselves contribute. Admittedly, as a poet myself I have more reasons than one to oppose paradigms that virtually deny the author's achievements by transferring almost all agency to the culture, the publisher, the reader and so on, but even if I do have a horse in this race, we would do well to listen to its neigh-saying. My hypotheses about cannibalization in the epithalamium were tentative, but recognizing that poems are often a palimpsest of earlier versions, sometimes imperfectly integrated, is one of many rewards of focusing on craft. More broadly, that focus, which can shift attention from finished results to process, can reconcile conflicting concepts of authorship by incorporating both a recognition that the author may sometimes fail and deep respect for what she or he may achieve. And might the branch of space studies that explores queering—space as aslant, disorienting orientations, and so on—be adduced when we consider the queering of gender in lines like, "So, to one neutrall thing both sexes fit" ("The Canonization," 25)—or, above all, when we interpret "The Exstasie," which not coincidentally is very much concerned with space?[38] In particular, as Chelsea Spata has suggested, we could explore how issues of "fit"—encompassing de Certeau's sense of place and the *propre*, categorization, orientation—link queering as it is practiced in spatialities and sexualities.[39]

To supplement these suggestions about the potentialities of space studies, close reading, and formalisms, let me add parenthetically that Donne scholars are positioned to offer a singularly valuable perspective on a long-standing methodology, biographical criticism. The increasing proportion of courses devoted to literature recent enough for extensive

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[38]Carla Freccero emphasizes queer space as aslant in her title and elsewhere in *Queer/Early/Modern* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), esp. p. 5. Also see Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

[39]I thank Chelsea Spata for suggesting that "fit" connects spatial and sexual queerings; I am also grateful to other members of my English 6101 seminar for developing this and related points.

biographical material to be readily available, the emphasis on identity politics in the academy—and arguably the not unrelated delight in snapping selfies in the culture at large—have all contributed to a resurgence of biographical approaches. (I was both intrigued and startled when, having introduced a question about the advantages and perils of biographical criticism in an upper-level undergraduate class, I found that virtually every member of the group uncritically embraced that approach.) Donne studies is clearly a fertile field for exploring such issues because biography is imbricated in complex and debatable ways in so many central issues: the Real Presence—or Absent Presence—of Catholicism in his writings, his attitudes to monarchical power, and so on. Witness, too, my earlier rebuttal of the linkage between certain love poems and Donne's marriage.

Having opened this address on events decades ago, I shall close by suggesting that during the next few decades the enterprising mission of our own Donnean starship should indeed be to explore new worlds and newer methods. But, as I have argued during this address, our crew should include some of our predecessors—we must replace the kneejerk predisposition, too often encouraged in our profession, towards dismissal and disdain for earlier methodologies and earlier generations of academics with more judicious determinations of when simply to move in different directions from those fathers and mothers, and when to adopt or adapt their work.

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