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Who Was Reading/Writing Donne Verse in the Seventeenth-Century?

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All of us have learned that John Donne greatly influenced poetry written between 1600 and 1660—in fact so greatly that he is universally acclaimed the Dean of the "School" of "Metaphysical" poetry. And we are all familiar with the solemn testimonials to Donne's intellect, recondite obscurity, and verbal pyrotechnics by England's great literary critics of the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries: Ben Jonson's lines "To John Donne" ("Longer a-knowing than most wits do live" [l. 5]); Dryden's comment in *A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire* that Donne "affects the Metaphysicks . . . and perplexes the Minds of the Fair Sex with nice Speculations of Philosophy"; Samuel Johnson's description of the metaphysical poets as learned and analytical in his *Life of Abraham Cowley*; Coleridge's Donne "whose muse on dromedary trots"; and Eliot's praise of Donne's complexity ("poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be *difficult*"). This long tradition of critical comment has shaped our current perception of Donne's audience as persons with extraordinary literary, critical, or intellectual abilities.

The inferences about Donne's readership that one could form from these critical assessments, however, are certainly insufficiently specific to satisfy literary or cultural historians, New Historicists, or even the mildly curious. Recent work on Donne manuscript materials has produced much valuable and specific information about Donne's contemporary readership;[1] however, identifying the original owner(s) of many Donne manuscripts and proving that the owner(s) rather than the copyists read the Donne verse remain problems, and, of course, not all of Donne's contemporary readers encountered his verse in manuscript—as Marotti clearly demonstrates, access to Donne's manuscript verse was limited to a coterie of the cultural elite, the very readers implied by four centuries of Donne literary criticism.

Donne's seventeenth-century, uncollected, printed verse, on the other hand, offers a rather limited but certain and specific identification of Donne's contemporary readership. Interestingly, the audience identified by Donne's uncollected printed verse is broader, less literate, and of a much lower social

station than that identified by literary critics and the study of Donne's manuscript materials. The work of Charles Crawford, Helen Gardner, H. J. C. Grierson, Geoffrey Keynes, L. C. Martin, Wesley Milgate, John Shawcross, and A. J. Smith in identifying some eighty-eight volumes containing 185 seventeenth-century, uncollected, complete or partial printings of Donne verse[2] and my own expansion of their identifications to 275 volumes containing over 750 printings provides evidence for this relatively limited, yet relatively certain, means for establishing Donne's seventeenth-century audience.

Evidence from the uncollected printings of Donne verse yields a significant degree of certainty and specificity to the identification of Donne's literate, seventeenth-century readership: if a person has written a complete line of Donne verse into his or her prose or verse, then that person has read Donne verse. This criterion, applied literally, will essentially reconfirm the received perception of Donne's readership (though with specific names and a new range of dates): poets, dramatists, biographers, musicians, translators, compilers of verse miscellanies—the literate elite. Amusingly, Donne did not care much for such reader/writers:[3]

> And they who write, because all write, have still
> That excuse for writing, and for writing ill;
> But hee is worst, who (beggarly) doth chaw
> Others wits fruits, and in his ravenous maw
> Rankly digested, doth those things out-spue,
> As his owne things; and they'are his owne, 'tis true,
> For if one eate my meate, though it be knowne
> The meat was mine, th'excrement is his owne. (*Satyre* II, 23-30)

Perhaps even more interestingly, extending the criterion of using the writing of Donne verse to identify the readers of Donne verse to an inferential, rather than a literal criterion, discovers a completely unexpected audience for Donne's verse—the functionally illiterate. By definition, this audience would be incapable of publishing Donne verse; thus, the evidence for the existence of this audience requires an inferential extension of the writing requirement. The title pages of seventeenth-century books for the functionally illiterate frequently act as advertisements for the books, carefully identifying their target audience; and the commercial success of these works, as measured by the number of their editions, at least implies the existence of the target audience. Further, these title pages as well as the nature of the works themselves strongly imply that the functionally illiterate audience did in fact speak/write Donne verse and in no small quantity!

The following list names Donne's seventeenth-century reader/writers and the works in which their Donne verse appears in the chronological order of the

first publication of the works. Though tedious, a list best gives an immediate sense of the diversity and startling chronological spread of Donne's reader/writers:

Thomas Dekker, *A KNIGHTS Coniuring* 1607
Thomas Deloney, *Strange Histories* 1607
Ben Jonson, *BEN: IONSON his VOLPONE Or THE FOXE* 1607
Alfonso Ferrabosco, *AYRES* 1609
Joseph Wybarne, *THE NEW AGE OF OLD NAMES* 1609
Thomas Coryat, *CORYATS CRUDITIES* 1611
THE ODCOMBIAN BANQVET 1611
William Corkine, *THE SECOND BOOKE OF AYRES* 1612
Josuah Sylvester, *Lachrymae Lachrymarum* 1613
Michael Scott, *THE PHILOSOPHERS BANQVET* 1614
Ben Jonson, *THE WORKES OF Beniamin Jonson*, vol. 1, 1616
Henry Fitzgeffrey, *SATYRES: AND SATYRICALL EPIGRAM'S* 1617
CERTAIN ELEGIES, DONE BY SVNDRIE Excellent Wits 1618
William Basse, *A HELPE TO DISCOVRSE* 1619
William Drummond of Hawthornden, *A MIDNIGHTS Trance* 1619
William Basse, *A HELPE TO MEMORIE AND DISCOVRSE* 1621
William Drummond of Hawthornden, *FLOVVRES OF SION* 1623
Henry Holland, *ECCLESIA SANCTI PAVLI ILLVSTRATA* 1633
John Stow, *THE SURVEY OF LONDON* 1633
John Swan, Jr., *SPECVLVM MUNDI* 1635
Stephen Chase in *HORTI CAROLINI ROSA ALTERA* 1640
Ben Jonson, *THE VVORKES OF BENJAMIN JONSON*, vol. 2, 1640
John Mennes, *Wits RECREATIONS* 1640
Izaak Walton, *THE LIFE AND DEATH OF Dr DONNE* 1640
George Rodolf Weckherlin, *Gaistliche und Weltliche Gedichte* 1641
John Gough, *THE ACADEMY OF Complements* 1645
Henry Vaughan, *Silex Scintillans* 1650
Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland, *Discourse of INFALLIBILITY* 1651
Henry Vaughan, *OLOR ISCANUS* 1651
Francis Beaumont, *POEMS* 1653
Samuel Sheppard, *MERLINUS ANONYMUS* 1653
Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler* 1653
Robert Chamberlain, *THE HARMONY OF THE MUSES* 1654
Edmund Gayton, *PLEASANT NOTES UPON Don Quixot* 1654
Izaak Walton, *THE LIFE OF Sir Henry Wotton* in Henry Wotton, *Reliquiae Wottonianae* 1654
Richard Whitlock, *ZWOTOMIA* 1654

John Cotgrave, *WITS INTERPRETER* 1655
Johann Grindal, *Aendachtige BEDENCKINGEN* 1655
Samuel Sheppard, *THE MARROVV OF COMPLEMENTS* 1655
Abraham Cowley, *POEMS* 1656
John Mennes, *WIT AND DROLLERY* 1656
Abraham Wright, *Parnassus Biceps* 1656
Joshua Poole, *The English PARNASSUS* 1657
Henrik Rintjus, *KLIOOS KRAAM* 1657
Aston Cokayne, *A CHAIN OF GOLDEN POEMS* 1658
Small POEMS 1658
William Dugdale, *THE HISTORY OF S^t. PAULS CATHEDRAL IN LONDON* 1658
Constantin Huygens, *KOREN-BLOEMEN* 1658
Henry Stubbs, *DELICIAE Poetarum Anglicanorum IN GRAECVM VERSAE* 1658
John Suckling, *THE LAST REMAINS OF S^r JOHN SVCKLING* 1659
William Winstanley, *England's WORTHIES* 1660
Clement Barksdale, *MEMORIALS OF WORTHY PERSONS* 1661
Thomas Forde, *Virtus Rediviva* 1661
Clement Barksdale, *CHARACTERS, And HISTORICAL MEMORIALS* 1662
Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, *PLAYES* 1662
George Etherege, *THE Comical Revenge* 1663
Thomas Killigrew, *COMEDIES, AND TRAGEDIES* 1664
Abraham Cowley, *WORKS* 1668
Izaak Walton, *THE LIFE OF Mr. GEORGE HERBERT* 1670
THE LIVES Of D^r. John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, M^r. Richard Hooker, M^r. George Herbert 1670
Andrew Marvell, *THE REHEARSALL TRANSPROS'D: The SECOND PART* 1673
William Winstanley, *Poor ROBIN'S VISIONS* 1677
S. N., *THE LOYAL GARLAND* 1678
Nathaniel Lee, *THEODOSIUS* 1680
Anonymous, *A PARADOX against LIFE* 1681
Thomas Barlow, *PAPISMUS Regiae Potestatis Eversor* 1681
John Shirley, *THE Compleat Courtier* 1683
Payne Fisher, *THE Tombes, Monuments, And Sepulchral Inscriptions Lately Visible in St. Pauls Cathedral* 1684
William Winstanley, *THE LIVES Of the most Famous English Poets* 1687
Jane Barker, *POETICAL RECREATIONS* 1688
Henry Playford, *Harmonia Sacra* 1688
John Dryden, *WORKS* 1691
Mary de la Riviere Manley, *LETTERS* 1696

The list shows that Donne's readership and possible influence extended far beyond the faculty of the "Metaphysical School of Poetry." All in all, the 275 seventeenth-century editions and issues of works by these fifty-five authors contain over 750 Donne verses, giving Donne a very large seventeenth-century, print, writership/readership indeed. Actually, Donne's vast seventeenth-century presence in print even outside his own writings probably should not be much of a surprise since it roughly parallels his presence in manuscript: the thirty-seven manuscripts containing Donne verse listed in editions of Donne's poems by H. J. C. Grierson, Helen Gardner, and Wesley Milgate have been expanded to 167 by John Shawcross, to 232 by Peter Beal, and to 255 by The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne.

The above list of authors does not much affect our present perception of Donne's seventeenth-century audience as verbally skilled intellectuals; however, the fact that a great many more authors were reading/writing Donne verse a great deal more frequently and over a much greater time span than has been thought forces revision of the current perceptions that Donne had an almost exclusively manuscript (and therefore very restricted) audience during his lifetime and that Donne's audience disappeared in the Restoration.

A. J. Smith summarizes the regnant view that during Donne's lifetime his poems were read almost exclusively in manuscript and very few saw print:

> The faith that Donne was a popular poet in his own day makes a good counter to romantic fairy tales of artists despised by their contemporaries, but hasn't much solid ground. Turning from myth to history we may wonder where the evidence of Donne's popularity is to be found in an age that doesn't seem to have had much to say even of the greatest of all its poets. . . . the peculiar circumstances in which he wrote and was read specifically exclude that possibility [that Donne "had a revolutionary impact while he was still writing"] for his poems were not, and could not have been, widely known in his own day. No more than five of them and some bits of another three were printed in his lifetime and no collected edition appeared until two years after his death, so that his contemporaries could have read most of his work only in manuscript. (*John Donne: The Critical Heritage* [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975], p. 2)

In fact, twelve of the listed reader/writers of Donne's verse published at least one line of Donne's verse in the initial publication of one of their own works during Donne's lifetime; and if one adds Donne's own publication of his poetry before his death to that published by his reader/writers, twenty-three rather than five of his poems were published in their entirety during his lifetime, with another six poems published in part. The fifty-eight volumes containing 118

printings and reprintings of these twenty-nine complete or partial versions prior to Donne's death in 1631 indicate that his poetry had a larger print circulation and readership during his lifetime than presently believed.

The existence of sixty-eight volumes printing 235 complete or partial Donne poems after the last seventeenth-century collected edition in 1669 suggests that the received perception summarized by A. J. Smith of Donne's Restoration demise may also require some modification: "The first signs we have of the turn against Donne appear quite suddenly in the late 1660s. . . . Walton added the 'Valediction: forbidding Mourning' in the final version of his *Life of Donne*, 1675 . . . but his famous celebration of it then rings quite out of key with the times like a last valedictory flourish of the old order in the face of plain indifference or growing distaste. . . . It is plain that by the last three decades of the century Donne's poetry had become a mere curiosity which the amateur might indifferently patronise or discount" (*Heritage*, p. 12). Some of these "amateurs" who wrote Donne's verse into the first published versions of their own post-1670 works would include Andrew Marvell, Nathaniel Lee, Jane Barker, John Dryden, and Mary de la Riviere Manley. It is true, however, that some of these "amateurs" may have been sufficiently embarrassed by their indifferent patronizing of a "mere curiosity" like Donne that they failed to acknowledge their borrowing. In a prefatory letter "To the Right Honourable The Earl of Abingdon," Dryden credits Donne's *Anniversaries* for the design of his poem *Eleonora*: "Doctor *Donn* the greatest Wit, though not the best Poet of our Nation, acknowledges, that he had never seen Mrs. *Drury*, whom he has made immortal in his admirable *Anniversaries*; I have had the same fortune, though I have not succeeded to the same Genius. However, I have follow'd his footsteps in the Design of his Panegyrick. . . ." Then Dryden silently writes lines 5-6 of Donne's *Obsequyes vpon the Lord* Harrington *the last that dyed* (Donne Variorum title) and lines 61-62 of "*Elegie vpon the death of M^rs^* Boulstred" (Donne Variorum title; Shawcross title, *Elegie: Death*) into *Eleonora* (pp. 22-23, 11. 340-58).

Some grouping of Donne's reader/writers illustrates the range of Donne's influence as well as uses found for Donne verse by seventeenth-century literati. Predictably, biographers avidly read and selectively wrote Donne verse to characterize and to promote their subjects. Editions of Izaak Walton's "THE LIFE AND DEATH OF D^r^ *DONNE*" variously contain "A Valediction forbidding mourning," "A Hymne to God the Father," "*To Mr.* George Herbert, *with one of my Seales, of the Anchor and Christ*," "A Hymne to God my God in my sicknesse," three previously unnoted Latin verse prayers, and Donne's epitaph. Walton also managed to write Donne's "To Sir *H.W.* at his going Ambassador to *Venice*" into his *THE LIFE OF Sir Henry Wotton* first published in the 1654 second edition of *Reliquiae Wottonianae* as well as lines 1-2 and 23-24 of "The Autumnall" and the entirety of "To the Lady *Magdalen Herbert*, of St. *Mary*

Magdalen" in *THE LIFE OF Mr. GEORGE HERBERT* (1670). William Winstanley wrote Donne verse from Walton into his *England's Worthies* (1660) and *The Lives of the most Famous English Poets* (1687) while Clement Barksdale wrote the second of Donne's Latin verse prayers from Walton into his *Memorials of Worthy Persons* (1661) and *Characters, and Historical Memorials* (1662). Walton's writings of Donne's divine poems are the only seventeenth-century writing of any Donne religious verse (except Barksdale's reprinting of the Latin verse prayer and Constantin Huygens's translation of "Goodfriday, 1613. Riding westward") outside the collected editions; thus, Walton's hagiographical writing of Donne would seem at variance with the typical seventeenth-century reading of Donne.

Musicians and translators extended Donne's influence beyond English literature. Even though Dryden and Samuel Johnson found Donne's verse unmusical, at least three seventeenth-century composers set his verse to music in print. Alfonso Ferrabosco's 1609 *AYRES* contains the earliest printing of, and a musical score for, Donne's "The Expiration" (sig. C2v). William Corkine's *THE SECOND BOOKE OF AYRES* (1612) contains the earliest printing of, and a musical score for, Donne's "Breake of day" (sig. B1v) and the earliest printing of line one, as well as a musical score for, "The Baite" (sig. G2v). Finally, in 1688, Henry Playford's *Harmonia Sacra* included the text of Donne's "A Hymne to God the Father" with a score by Pelham Humphryes (pp. 51-52).

Donne's verse was translated into German, Dutch, and Greek. In 1641, Georg Rodolf Weckherlin published German translations of Donne's "Niobe," "Hero and Leander," "A licentious person," "Antiquary," and "Phryne" in his *Gaistliche und Weltliche Gedichte*. His 1648 second edition added a translation of "A lame begger." Henrik Rintjus's *Klioos Kraam* (1657)[4] published and assigned a 1626 date[5] to Constantin Huygens's translation into Dutch of Donne's "A Valediction of weeping," "Breake of day," "The Legacie," "The triple Foole," "The Blossome," and "Song. 'Goe, and catche a falling starre.'" In his 1658 first and 1672 second editions of *KOREN-BLOEMEN*, Constantin Huygens translated twenty-one Donne poems and printed each with its English first line (except "Elegie: 'Oh, let mee not serve so'" for which the translation begins with line 11): "The Flea," "The Apparition," "Witchcraft by a picture," "Twicknam Garden," "Song. 'Goe, and catche a falling starre,'" "The triple Foole," "A Valediction of weeping," "The Dreame," "The Anagram," "Elegie: 'Oh, let mee not serve so'" (beginning with line 11), "The Extasie," "The Blossome," "Womans Constancy," "A Valediction forbidding mourning," "The Sunne Rising," "Loves Deitie," "The Legacie," and "Goodfriday, 1613. Riding Westward." In his 1658 *DELICIAE Poetarum Anglicanorum IN GRAECVM*, Henry Stubbs published "A Valediction forbidding mourning," "Hero and Leander," and "A licentious person" in English and Greek.

Donne's likely earliest female reader, Katherine Thimelby, wrote line 4 of "The Legacie" into a letter in a manuscript dated 1635 by Geoffrey Keynes, but the letter was not published until 1815 in Arthur Clifford's edition of the *Tixall Letters*; thus, she does not meet my obviously imperfect criterion for Donne verse reading/writing.[5] Jane Barker's inclusion of "The Will" in *Poetical RECREATIONS* (1688), and Mary de la Riviere Manley's quotation of line 51 from "The Will" in her *LETTERS* (1696) are fairly typical reading/writings of Donne; however, in Scene 9 of Act I of *The Second Part of the Lady Contemplation* (*PLAYES*, 1662), Margaret Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle, uses a Donne fragment as a test for insanity and for an early assault by a woman on the traditional literary canon. Nurse Careful fears for the sanity of the witty young heroine, Lady Ward:

> *Nurse Careful.* O my Child, I am told that on a sudden you turned mad!
> *Lady Ward.* Surely Nurse your fear; or what else it may be, you seem to me to be more mad than I can find in my self to be.
> *Nurse Caref.* That shews you are mad. . . .
> *Lady Ward.* Prethee Nurse, lest thou shouldst become mad, goe sleep to settle thy thoughts, and quiet thy mind, for I remember a witty Poet, one Doctor *Don*, saith,
> *Sleep is pains easie salve, and doth fulfil*
> *All Offices, unless it be to kill.* (pp. 218-19)

Lady Ward's recitation of lines 35-36 of "The Storme" leads not only to medical malpractice, but also to an assault on the then traditional literary canon:

> *Nurse* Careful *cries out, as in a great fright.*
> *Nurse Caref.* 0 Heavens, what shall I do, what shall I do!
> *Enter Doctor* Practice.
> *Doctor Pract.* What is the matter Nurse, what is the matter you shreek out so?
> *Nurse Caref.* 0 Doctor, my Child is mad, my Child is mad; for she repeats Verses.
> *Doctor Pract.* That's an ill signe indeed.
> *Lady Ward.* Doctor, did you never repeat Latine Sentences when you have read Lectures, nor Latine Verses, when you did Dispute in Schools?
> *Doctor Pract.* Yes, Sweet Lady, a hundred times.
> *Lady Ward.* Lord, Doctor, have you been mad a hundred times, and recovered so often!
> *Nurse Caref.* Those were Latine Verses, those were Latine Verses Child. . . .

Doctor Pract. Nurse, she is not well, she must be put to a diet.
Lady Ward. But why, Doctor, should you think me mad? I have done no outragious action; and if all those that speak extravagantly should be put to a diet, as being thought mad, many a fat waste would shrink in the doublet, and many a Poetical vein would be dryed up, and the flame quench'd out for want of radical oyl to prolong it; Thus Wit would be starved, for want of vapour to feed it; The truth is, a spare diet may make room in a Scholars head for old dead Authors to lie in; for the emptyer their heads are of wit, the fuller they may be filld with learning; for I do not imagine, old dead, Authors lie in a Scholars head, as they say souls do, none knows where, for a million of souls to lie in as small a compass as the point of a needle.
Doctor Pract. Her brain is hotly distemper'd, and moves with an extraordinary quick motion, as may be perceiv'd by her strange fancy: wherefore Nurse you had best get her to bed, if you can, and I will prescribe some medicine and rules for her. (p. 219)

As one would expect, the compilers of poetical miscellanies made the most use of Donne verse; unexpectedly, at least one compiler wrote Donne verse better than did the Donne of the collected editions and manuscripts! The title page of Robert Chamberlain's *THE HARMONY OF THE MUSES* (1654) promises "transcendent Wit" in "severall excellent Poems" by "Dr. *Joh. Donn* Dr. *Hen. King* Dr. *W. Stroad* Sr. *Kenelm Digby* Mr. *Ben. Johnson*, Mr. *Fra. Beamont J. Cleveland T. Randolph T. Carew.* And others of the most refined Wits of those *TIMES. Never before Published.*" In fact, the volume delivers four, complete, previously published Donne poems ("The Autumnall," "A Valediction forbidding mourning," "Loves diet," and "The Will"), two complete previously unpublished poems ("Elegie: Going to Bed" and "Elegie: Loves Progress"), and lines 29-46 of the previously unpublished "Elegie: Loves Warre." "Elegie: Going to Bed" and "Elegie: Loves Progress" eventually appear in the 1669 collected *Poems*, but no part of "Elegie: Loves Warre" is published until Francis Godolphin Waldron's 1802 *The Shakespearean Miscellany* and his *A Collection of Miscellaneous Poetry*, also published in 1802.

As Gardner points out, a textual crux occurs in line 44 of "Elegie: Loves Warre": "The line is a foot short. Since no variants exist in the manuscripts to suggest emendation, it must be left" (*John Donne: The Elegies and the Songs and Sonnets* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965], p. 130). H. J. C. Grierson and John T. Shawcross who use the Westmoreland manuscript as their copy-

text print the relevant lines (43-46) essentially as does Gardner who uses Cambridge University Library, Add. MS. 5778:

> Shall spring. Thousands we see which travaile not
> To warres, but stay, swords, armes and shot
> To make at home: And shall not I do then
> More glorious service, staying to make men? (p. 14)

THE HARMONY OF THE MUSES prints:

> Shall spring; thousands we see which travell not
> To warres, but stay at home, swords, guns and shot
> Do make for others; Shall not I do then
> More glorious service, staying to make men. (p. 7)

The "at home" in line 44 of *THE HARMONY OF THE MUSES* version not only makes perfect sense, but also exactly restores the pentameter line; and its "for others" where previous editors have "at home" in line 45 also improves overall sense while preserving the pentameter line. Unfortunately, the bibliographical authority of lines 29-46 of "Elegie: Loves Warre" in *THE HARMONY OF THE MUSES* presently remains uncertain because the copy manuscript remains unidentified (and may no longer exist); however, *THE HARMONY OF THE MUSES* readings surely represent the copy manuscript—the chance seems remote that a compositor would notice the missing foot in line 44, read down to line 45 to find the correct reading, go back to repair line 44, and appropriately insert "for others" on his own initiative in line 45. *THE HARMONY OF THE MUSES*, then, shows that a reader/writer can write Donne verse superior to that in any surviving manuscript or collected edition.

Even though Vaughan is the only "Metaphysical" poet present, the fifty-five reader/writers discussed so far pretty much fit the traditional perception of Donne's audience. There are more reader/writers than had been identified, and they are active sooner and longer than had been believed, but they all possess the expected intellectual and verbal skills.

On the other hand, some authors read and wrote Donne verse for the avowed purpose of helping a functionally illiterate audience speak/write Donne verse. The fact that the title pages of many of these works imply that the audience would first read and then speak/write Donne verse provides some insight into the social and economic value of verse even for barely literate members of seventeenth-century society.

Joshua Poole's 1657 *The English PARNASSUS: OR, A HELPE TO English Poesie* was, as he points out in the heading of his dedicatory poem, originally conceived for the benefit of "the hopeful young Gentlemen, his Scholars in that

private School at *Hadley*, Kept in the house of Mr. *Francis Atkinson*" (sig. A5). Its title page accurately describes *The English PARNASSUS* as a seventeenth-century verse erector set: "*A COLLECTION* Of all Rhyming Monosyllables, The choicest Epithets, and Phrases: With some General Forms upon all Occasions, Subjects, and Theams, Alphabetically digested." The volume provides anonymous units of verse arranged by topic which aspirants to the "School of Metaphysical Poetry" could then assemble to produce poems for their classes, much as Dryden had done for his *Eleonora*. Two samples of the twenty-three fragments from Donne include: lines 435-39 from *The First Anniversarie* under the topic "*Forms of breaking off*" for future Leatherfaces ("But as in cutting up a man that's dead, / The body will not last out to have read / On every part, and therefore men direct / Their speech to parts that are of most effect" [sig. 2S7]) and lines 381-83 of *Metempsychosis* under "*Elephant*" as recently quoted by *Time* magazine ("The stiff-knee'd carry castle. Nature's great Masterpiece. The only harmless great thing. Gyant of beasts" [sig. X6]). Donne is the poet of choice for topics as diverse as "*Brain* " (sig. S5v) and "*Noah's Ark* " (sig. 2H6). One suspects that a relatively low percentage of the readers of *The English PARNASSUS* actually published the line of Donne verse required to be named in this article (although lines 35-36 of "The Storme" used by the Duchess of Newcastle in 1662 appear under the topic "*Sleepe*" [sig. 2M3]). Its readers, however, certainly were expected to write Donne verse, and the fact that *The English PARNASSUS* came out in a second edition in 1677 with a second issue in 1678 suggests that the work may very well have produced some writing of Donne's verse.

For those more in need of social than academic help, seventeenth-century reader/writers of Donne developed the "how to pick up significant others" book. Where better to get one's opening line than from the Monarch of Wit! Many of these volumes can still be found in their plain, brown, bindings in limited-access libraries. Again, the title pages of my two examples suggest the illiterate nature of the expected audience as well as the expectation that this audience would first read and then speak/write Donne verse.

Consider the level of verbal skills and education of the expected audience implied by the title page of John Gough's 1645 "THE ACADEMY OF Complements. Wherein *Ladies, Gentlewomen, Schollers*, and *Strangers* may accommodate their Courtly practice with gentile Ceremonies, Complementall amorous high expressions, and formes of speaking or writing of Letters most in fashion. A worke perused, exactly perfected, every where corrected and inriched, by the Author, with additions of witty Poems, and pleasant Songs. The sixth Edition, with two Tables, the one expounding the most hard English words, the other resolving the most delightfull fictions of the Heathen Poets."

In this handbook with its own *Cliff's Notes* and dictionary, one finds lines 1-2, 4-3, and 5-6 of Donne's "Breake of day" emended slightly and inserted as the second stanza in another poem:

A Song.
Lye still my dear, why do'st thou rise?
The Light that shines comes from thine eies.
The day breaks not, it is my heart
To thinke that you and I must part.
Oh stay! or else my joyes will dye:
Or perish in their infancie.

'Tis time, 'tis day, what if it be?
Wilt thou therefore arise from me?
Did we lye down because of night,
And shall we rise for feare of light.
No, since in darknesse we came hither,
In spight of light wee'l lye together.

Oh let me dye on thy sweet breast!
Far sweeter then the Phenix neast. (p. 166)

The 1646 edition of *THE ACADEMY OF Complements* adds "a new Schoole of Love, and a Present of excellent Similitudes, Comparisons Fancies, and Devices." The "new Schoole" retains the previous excerpt from "Breake of day" and adds another, lines 15-18, under the topic "*No businesse like that of Love*" (p. 136). Finding success with Donne, Gough retained the previous borrowings and added "The Indifferent" in its entirety as the anonymous "*A song*" for his editions of 1650, 1654, 1658, 1663, and 1670.

By 1684, however, the anticipated audience of *THE Academy OF COMPLEMENTS* had undergone a change from "Ladies, Gentlewomen, Scholars," and uneducated males to exclusively fashion-conscious, refined, females as shown in the completely new title page: "THE Academy OF COMPLEMENTS WITH Many New Additions OF Songs and Catches *A-la-mode*. STORED With Variety of Complemental and Elegant Expressions, of LOVE and COURTSHIP. Also witty and Ingenious Dialogues and Discourses, *Amorous and Jovial*. With Significant LETTERS upon Several Occasions. Composed for the use of *Ladies* and *Gentlewomen*. *By the most refined* Wits *of this Age*." The "Expressions" are now "Elegant"; the "Wits," "*refined*." Thus, the somewhat suggestive lines from "Breake of day" and the generally risque "The Indifferent" disappear. On the other hand, the admonishing words of Donne's female speaker of "Breake of day" (ll. 15-18) remain under the

topic heading "No business like that of Love": "The fair, the false love can / Admit all but the busie man: / He that hath business, and makes love, does do / Such wrong as if a married man should woo" (p. 94). Note that even though the audience will now consist of sophisticated females, the anticipated use of *THE Academy OF COMPLEMENTS* as a guide to writing remains ("With Significant LETTERS upon Several Occasions. Composed for the use of *Ladies* and *Gentlewomen*") and that Donne's verse, voiced as it is by a female speaker in the excerpt from "Breake of day," could easily and appropriately be written in such letters.

Indeed, Samuel Sheppard's 1655 *THE MARROVV OF COMPLEMENTS* shows exactly how Donne verse might be written as a prose letter. Its title page advertises a guide for everyone from noblemen to artisans in the writing of love letters to significant others: "THE MARROVV OF COMPLEMENTS. *OR*, A most Methodicall and accurate forme of Instructions for all Variety of Love-Letters, Amorous Discourses, and Complementall Entertainements. Fitted for the use of all sorts of persons from the Noblemans Palace to the Artizans Shop. *With many delightfull Songs, Sonnetts, Odes, Dialogues, &c.* Never before published." The example letters are keyed to likely amorous situations. Sheppard wrote lines 1-11, 13-21, 27-30, 39, and 42-44 of Donne's "Elegie: The Expostulation"[6] as a sample letter that doubles as a critical reading of the dramatic circumstances of the poem, "*The Lover finding himself abus' d by her who promis' d him Marriage (she deserting him and electing another) may thus vent himselfe.*" Sheppard has emended the letter slightly; however, one can easily enough compare the relevant lines from the Shawcross text of the poem (below) to the text of the letter (following the poem text):

Elegie: The Expostulation.

To make the doubt cleare, that no woman's true
 Was it my fate to prove it strong in you?
Thought I, but one had breathed purest aire,
 And must she needs be false because she's faire?
Is it your beauties marke, or of your youth,
 Or your perfection, not to study truth?
Or thinke you heaven is deafe, or hath no eyes?
 Or those it hath, smile at your perjuries?
Are vowes so cheape with women, or the matter
 Whereof they'are made, that they are writ in water,
And blowne away with winde?
. . . . . .
Who could have thought so many accents sweet
 Form'd into words, so many sighs should meete
As from our hearts, so many oathes, and teares

Sprinkled among, (all sweeter by our feares
And the divine impression of stolne kisses,
That seal'd the rest) should now prove empty blisses?
Did you draw bonds to forfet? signe to breake?
Or must we reade you quite from what you speake,
And finde the truth out the wrong way? . . .
. . . . . .
Sooner I'll thinke the Sunne will cease to cheare
The teeming earth, and *that* forget to beare,
Sooner that rivers will runne back, or Thames
With ribs of Ice in June would bind his streames;
. . . . . .

Curst may hee be, that so our love hath slaine,
. . . . . .
In plaguing him, let misery be witty;
Let all eyes shunne him, and hee shunne each eye,
Till hee be noysome as his infamie. (pp. 71-72)

. . . .

The Lover finding himself abus'd by her who promis'd him Marriage (she deserting him and electing another) may thus vent himselfe.

Mistresse,
TO make the doubt clear that no Woman can be constant, was it my fate to prove it fully in you? did I think there was but one woman that breathed pure ayre, and must she needs be as perfidious, as she is beautious? is it the mark of your youth, or splendor, or your perfection, to bid defiance to realitie? or think you Heaven is deaf, or cannot see, or having eyes winks at your perjur'd instabilitie? are vows so cheap with women? or is the matter so liquid whereof they are made, being written in water, and blown away with every wind? who would have thought so many sweet accents, tun'd to our so many sighes, should meet blown from our hearts, sprinkled with so many oaths and tears with the divine impression of stoll'n kisses, that sealed all, should now prove but emptie nothings? did you draw bonds (Mistresse) with a mental reservation, having a full intent to forfeit? did you sign to breake, or must we take all truths that we receive from you, by the contrarie to that you speak, and find the truth out the wrong way? I sooner should have thought the Sun would have ceased to chear the earth with his beams, that Rivers would runne backward, or the

> *Thames* frozen all o're in *June*. May he be curst that thus hath murthered our Love, let misery in plaguing him use her utmost Art, let all eyes shunne him, and he shunne all Society, till his body become as noysome as his infamy. But my passion too much transports me, it is you (Mistresse) whom I rather ought to rail on, which (though you deserve it) because I will not do, I here conclude, committing you as a convict to the horrour of your owne conscience.
>
> *R. L.* (pp. 41-42)

The subscription to "*R. L.*" does not quite give Donne the appropriate credit! Presumably the illiterate purchaser would copy out the letter with relevant revisions and send it to his former significant other.

What, then, is learned by attempting to identify Donne's audience by who was writing his verse? The fifty-five persons who actually publish Donne's verse in or as their own works are essentially the expected audience—the highly literate. More of this audience can now be identified more certainly, and many more of them were reading/writing more Donne verse (275 volumes publishing more than 750 verses) both earlier (58 volumes printing 118 verses during Donne's lifetime) and later (68 volumes printing 235 Donne verses between 1669 and 1700) in the seventeenth century than previously thought. Equally interesting is a popular audience for Donne inferred through the existence of works designed to help their functionally illiterate audience speak/write Donne verse. Joshua Poole's *The English PARNASSUS*, John Gough's *THE ACADEMY OF Complements*, and Samuel Sheppard's *THE MARROVV OF COMPLEMENTS* do not merely pirate Donne's verse as had many of the works published by and for Donne's more literate audience; they treat Donne's verse more pragmatically, as a commodity—something to be sold and re-used like so many bricks. Obviously, we will never be able to identify specifically many of Donne's unpublished seventeenth-century reader/writers; however, the likelihood of their existence suggests that Donne's verse had commercial and social value for lower levels of Renaissance society than presently believed.

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Notes

This article expands a paper read at the 1990 John Donne Society Conference and forms part of the introduction to *John Donne: The Uncollected Seventeenth-Century Printed Verse*, forthcoming from the University of Missouri Press.

[1] For example, see Alan MacColl's "The Circulation of Donne's Poems in Manuscript" in A. J. Smith, ed., *John Donne: Essays in Celebration* (London: Methuen, 1972), Arthur F. Marotti's *John Donne, Coterie Poet* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), and, most importantly, Peter Beal's introduction to the Donne manuscript listings in volume I, part 1 of his *Index of English Literary Manuscripts* (London: Mansell Publishing Ltd., 1980).

[2] Credit for the initial citation of the majority of these items goes to Geoffrey Keynes for his *A Bibliography of Dr. John Donne*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pp. 280-302.

[3] Citations of Donne's verse and the titles of Donne poems are from John T. Shawcross, *The Complete Poetry of John Donne* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967) unless otherwise noted.

[4] The 1656 edition of *Klioos Kraam* contains no Donne verse.

[5] Daley (p. 131) has discovered another possible female Donne reader/writer: Maria Tesselschade Visscher directly quotes line nine of Constantin Huygens's Dutch translation of line ten from Donne's "The triple Foole" for line thirteen in a sonnet she sent to Huygens in 1637. As yet, I am unable to confirm that Visscher published her sonnet in the seventeenth century.

[6] Keynes (p. 293) and Smith (*Heritage*, p. 54) locate only an adaptation of lines 1-2 in this letter. For a summary of the extensive debate over whether Donne or Ben Jonson authored "Elegy: The Expostulation," see D. Heywood Brock's "Jonson and Donne: Structural Fingerprinting and the Attribution of Elegies XXXVIII-XLI," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 72 (1978), 519-27. Beal's *Index* and my *The First and Second Dalhousie Manuscripts: Poems and Prose by John Donne and Others* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1988), p. 11, have strengthened the manuscript evidence first used by Evelyn Simpson ("Jonson and Donne: A Problem in Authorship," *Review of English Studies* 15 [1939], 274-82) to assign the poem to Donne.