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The Play of Difference in Donne's "Aire and Angels"

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If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery (as wisdom turned to cliché holds), then the greatest tribute that has been paid to the poetic force of "Aire and Angels" is the imitation of its speaker by a succession of modern interpreters. They have made supreme efforts to have the last word about this text, as Donne makes supreme efforts to have the last word within it.[1] With the advent of feminism and gender theory in literary studies, however, the already obvious has become more obvious still: nothing "will ever bee" said once and for all regarding "womens love, and mens," either in "Aire and Angels" or about "Aire and Angels." Accordingly, in the reading I will be sketching here, one that draws on my teaching of the poem, I want to focus attention on those repeated (but, I think, still under-appreciated) junctures where authoritative assertion is precisely what eludes the speaker of "Aire and Angels."

My particular slant is feasible only because others have already done so much valuable research and expository work on the discursive reservoir (Petrarchan love lyric, angelology, Ptolemaic cosmology, Aristotelian gender theory[2]) which the speaker of this poem taps for differentiations that he can apply in voicing his own preoccupations as a lover—the intensity of his embodied emotions as these combine and cross with sexual difference and the continually felt discreteness of his subjectivity. Feminist criticism and gender theory make it easier to recognize and name the anxiety that besets the speaker of "Aire and Angels": the Self, sexually magnetized toward union with an Other, feels its boundaries loosening and thus comes to fear losing either its own sense of identity or the bliss of union.[3] By playing with and playing out verbal formulations of difference—and whatever difference these can be made to make in his relation with his beloved—this speaker strives to regain self-control. Self-control, in turn, comes to hinge for him on achieving a controlled articulation of what this love means, mainly to him but by extension to his beloved. Very significantly for interpretation, as I think, this speaker's dual bid for control takes the form of a lyric poem in two stanzas, each of which rhymes its lines of varying length in a fourteen-line pattern that takes shape as an upside-down Italian sonnet, with sestet preceding octave.[4] My concern here with the play of difference in "Aire and Angels" thus includes close attention to the nature and strength of the connection between the two inverted sonnets that comprise its text. Combining attention to the lyric design, the implied occasions

and time frame as well as the textualized form that the play in this poem takes, my reading aims to highlight the significance of the gap that widens between asserted control and manifest indeterminacy as the speaker pursues his discursive play with difference.

Donne's own blunt phrase for the elemental difference configured in Renaissance love lyrics is "the Hee and Shee."[5] While the masculine gendering of the speaker of "Aire and Angels" and the feminine gendering of his beloved are explicitly confirmed only as late as the poem's last line, strong predisposition toward this gender assignment comes both from the verse design and from the two discourses of difference that conjoin in the opening lines: angelology (the science of an order of beings differentiated as intermediate between God and human beings) and the hyperbolic address of a Petrarchan lover to his lady. The initial situation of the speaker of "Aire and Angels" is also familiar from a number of Donne's other love lyrics.[6] The onset of love overwhelms the speaker with what he represents as a categorically higher order of experience, an exaltation of emotion that voids the ordinary operation of his mind and senses, breaking the bounds of his self-possession and leaving him dazzled and disoriented. Of intermittent glimpses earlier ("Twice or thrice . . . / Before I knew thy face or name") and of subsequent nearer encounters with his beloved ("Still when, to where thou wert, I came"), this speaker recalls only his sense of rapture and diffused consciousness: "a voice," "a shapelesse flame," "Some lovely glorious nothing," "So . . . Angells affect us oft, and worship'd bee" (1-6). Purporting to reason conjointly by analogy and from effects, the love struck speaker first differentiates his beloved from himself and the rest of humankind, positioning her in the angelic order.[7]

Or, I should say, first differentiat*ed*. For the opening sestet unit of "Aire and Angels" pointedly narrates the speaker's first enamorment and idealization of his beloved as a sequence of past experiences, occasional at the very start ("Twice or thrice had I lov'd thee"—the pluperfect tense is noteworthy) but, at length, repeated or habitual ("Still when, to where thou wert, I came, / Some lovely glorious nothing I did see"). At this juncture, with the antithetical "But" in line 7, the octave of the first stanza launches a process of reversal. The speaker continues to narrate in the past tense, the topic continues to be his love for his lady, but the phase of worship, of extravagant idealization and immobilizing rapture, has been decisively terminated by the speaker himself. He begins dealing in new discursive differentiations to image the altered relation to his beloved on which he "now" (12)—at the moment of speaking the first sonnet stanza—resolves. The angelology abruptly vanishes, and with it the representation of his love as a numinous visitation which she bestowed on him.

The speaker subjects his love to drastic redescription in the vocabulary of love theory that the Renaissance elaborated out of Plato's *Symposium*, and ancient and contemporary traditions of commentary upon it. Specifically, in the octave of this

first stanza, the female beloved no longer figures as the source and agent of this speaker's love for her; rather he now represents his own love for her as performing these functions. His soul has, all by itself, "given birth and procreated in the presence of the beautiful," in exact keeping with the *Symposium*'s definition of "a love of the beautiful" (206 e).[8] The result is to stand on their heads the biological connotations of sexual difference. While Plato's metaphor and Donne's are equally explicit in arrogating female reproductive capacities to a male lover, the speaker of "Aire and Angels" goes to extra lengths toward naturalizing this arrogation by imaging conception as the taking of "limmes of flesh" by a soul which "else could nothing doe" (7-8). In the abstract terms of this generalization the mother's role is occluded altogether. Next the unilaterally generated love-child of the speaker's, duly named "Love" by his sole "parent" (9; see capitalizations in 10, 12), is subjected, by the standard authority relation in Renaissance patriarchalism, to his father's will.[9] The father-speaker has ordered Love to get familiar with the beloved's social status and name, "and now"—in the present speaking moment—he orders him to get familiar with her body as well: "what thou wert, and who, / I bid Love aske, and now / That it assume thy body, I allow, / And fixe it selfe in thy lip, eye, and brow" (11-14).

As every reader recognizes, the shift from a mode of reverence to a mode of command in this first inverted sonnet stanza of "Aire and Angels" both signals and enacts the speaker's resolve to move from idealization to physical expression of his love. The speaker's alleged motivation for this shift is a refusal to be "more subtle" in love than the embodiedness that makes him what he is, a human male in the throes of sexual desire. For the speaker and anyone else within the range of his words, this is a strong moment, a moment of phenomenological truth—and one that recurs throughout Donne's love poetry. However, this speaker has his own (though highly conventional) formulations for how he proposes to go about attaining physical intimacy with his beloved. The very conventionality of these formulations makes it possible, comparatively, to gauge an excess of verbal and attitudinal aggression in this male's pursuit of his female object of desire. The tropes of Petrarchan love lyric are prominent in this speaker's autogenesis of the child Love and in his injunction to Love to "assume" the beloved's "body . . . And fixe it selfe in [her] lip, eye, and brow." Nancy Vickers has incisively analyzed the psychosexual dynamics of the blazon—the disarticulated catalog of female body parts—regularly employed in Petrarchan poetics. Her description of these dynamics fits closely with what the speaker begins "Aire and Angels" by confessing about the rapturous infusion and the utter disorientation he experienced on first being exposed to his beloved's beauty. In the words of Vickers's generalizing comment on Petrarch's image of Actaeon and Diana in *Rime sparse* 52, "His response to the threat of imminent dismemberment is the neutralization, through descriptive dismemberment, of the threat. He transforms the visible totality into scattered words, the body into signs; his description, at one remove

from his experience, safely permits and perpetuates his fascination."[10] If "the threatened loss of autonomy" is substituted for "the threat of imminent dismemberment," this description immediately becomes applicable to the blazon of "Aire and Angles." It is further significant, I think, that the safety in the safety measure of the Petrarchan blazon is already being converted by the loverspeaker to his actively sought sexual advantage ("I bid . . . and now / . . . I allow") in the concluding lines of this first stanza.

To reach the blazon in the last words of this stanza is not to arrive at an end of Petrarchan connotations; rather it is to discover a striking instance of the manipulation of difference in the speaker's dispatch of Love to "assume" the beloved's "body" and "fixe it selfe" in her "lip, eye, and brow." For readers of English Petrarchan sonnets, the inversion in the conceit that encloses this blazon will be especially conspicuous because both Wyatt and Surrey reworked Petrarch's *Rime sparse* 145, respectively as "The longe love, that in my thought doeth harbar" and as "Love that doth raine and live within my thought." In both of these versions, as in Petrarch's original, the audacity of the speaker-lover's enactment of his desire for his beloved is imaged as an outward disclosure, and this disclosure in turn is imaged as effects of an occupation of his facial features by the Love already reigning in the speaker-lover's thought and heart. "Into my face preseth with bolde pretence, / And therin campeth, spreding his baner," writes Wyatt; "Oft in my face he doth his banner rest," writes Surrey.[11] By double contrast, Love in the final lines of the first stanza of "Aire and Angels" takes possession not of the poet-speaker's face but of the beloved's face, and Love acts not against the poet-speaker's will but on detailed serial orders from him: "I bid Love . . . , and now / That it assume thy body, I allow, / And fixe it selfe in thy lip, eye, and brow." Thus the first stanza of "Aire and Angels" climaxes in verbalizations of invasive and proprietary moves by the male speaker upon the female object of his desire. Playing upon and beyond Petrarchan tropes for representing the differential roles of male and female at the moment of declaring passion, the poet-speaker of this inverted sonnet performs an inversion on his earlier situation: she dispossessed him of himself, his love now possesses him of her. Within these poetic confines, the imperious rhetoric registers a triumph of self-repossession. The speaker renames the lover, but he is no longer incapacitated in this role. He asserts his control and his prerogatives for action.

Although the fact seems to have gone unnoticed until Achsah Guibbory stressed its importance, the verb tenses and time adverbials indicate clearly that a period of unspecified duration elapses between the first and second stanzas of "Aire and Angels."[12] The interval is that between the "now / That [Love] assume thy body, I allow" and the later moment of reflection on that now-past "now": "Whilst thus to ballast love, I thought / . . . / I saw, I had loves pinnace overfraught" (15, 18). The interval, which remains unnarrated (and possibly unnarratable), is itself no mere pause for breath or reflection: it encompasses a love affair between the speaker-lover, and his beloved. This interval, this gap, deserves notice for

several reasons that bear directly on interpreting "Aire and Angels." One is the genre or rhetorical model for the poem which, as Peter Wiggins observes, is always either identified as "a dramatic lyric" or "a meditation or a lecture on love."[13] When, however, the time lapse and the character of the unnarrated experience that fills it are reckoned with, it seems impossible that this text of two stanzas could be read as "a dramatic lyric" (since a continuous utterance and occasion cannot be sustained across so long an experiential "time out" as a love affair). It seems equally impossible that this text could be "a meditation or a lecture on love" (since the poem fails to provide the key terms of a love lecture—"my love" and especially "thy love"—with adequate content but instead substitutes a running commentary on the psychology of one party only).

I want to propose, as an alternative classification, that "Aire and Angels" is a Renaissance sonnet sequence, albeit a minimal instance of a sequence, in containing just two sonnets. In that genre, as practiced by Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare, it is utterly typical not to narrate crucial developments—especially ones of a problematic or negative kind like misunderstandings, mixed signals, rebuffs, or betrayals—and to compose after-the-fact responses to them. Despite the fact that this poet-speaker has achieved a sexual relationship with his beloved—an ostensibly happy development—the second stanza, the second inverted sonnet, of "Aire and Angels" is an after-the-fact response of the problematic kind. At first, he seems merely to have been right and to have done right when he directed his love to assume possession of his beloved's body at the end of the first sonnet, for he did thereby take charge of his love and himself and her. But just here the unnarrated love affair intervenes with a silence more expressive than any words, for into this gap tumbles the very situational inversion by which the poet-speaker claimed dominance at the end of the first sonnet-stanza.

At the beginning of the second sonnet-stanza, having struggled to make sexual difference make a difference in his favor, he confesses the failure of his project "thus to ballast love . . . / And so more steddily to have gone" as the Petrarchan pilot or rudder-man of "loves pinnace" (15-16, 18). Taking off from D. C. Allen's transhistorical note on the metaphors of the ship of life and the ship of love, the profuse connotations of genital sexuality and promiscuous activity that critics have come to attach to the metaphor of the "pinnace" seem altogether germane to me.[14] I would emphasize, however, that the ship of life and the ship of love converge in the speaker's metaphor, which represents him not only (with phallic undertones) as a Petrarchan pilot but also as a merchant-adventurer who seeks his profit from the sexual capital—the "wares which would sinke admiration" (17)—of the woman in whom he has made an at once personal and social investment. The wavering rhythmical course of the line "With wares which would sinke admiration" is metrically expressive, calling attention to the difficulties of a masculine social role that the lover-speaker first adumbrates in the pinnace metaphor. His concern with his masculine social role, and the vexed relation of his passionate

affair to it, become increasingly salient in his musings after his initial intimation here of a specific difference that maleness makes: he has an occupation, a livelihood that he must pursue, and he expects, even designs his beloved to be an asset to his social role, to enact hers by materially supplying his. What the feminist theorist Gayle Rubin has termed "the traffic in women" that undergirds male social dominance provides the shipping metaphor of "Aire and Angels" with its profoundest connotative resonance.[15]

However, it is his ever-precarious psychic wholeness that the lover-speaker himself stresses and elaborates in reflecting on the problematic consequences of this love affair. He confesses himself "overfraught," with "much too much" . . . "for love to worke upon" in even a single hair of his beloved's (the safety measure of the Petrarchan blazon significantly reduced here to a near-vanishing point). Erotic abandon has had effects distressingly similar to those of idealization: he feels himself undone and dissipated in his love. "For, nor in nothing, nor in things / Extreme, and scatt'ring bright, can love inhere"; "some fitter must be sought" (21-22, 20), he concludes as he turns from the sestet into the octave of the second inverted sonnet. His proposed solution reverts to the imagery of angelology, not surprisingly in my view, since he has just declared himself to be in much the same state that he found himself in when he first glimpsed and worshipped his beloved "angel." But in the interim of this poetic sequence he has twice declared and occupied his angel's embodiment or embodiedness—once in the blazon, and again in the pinnace metaphor—and each time with heightened imperiousness. He now does so for the third time as he seeks to articulate a way out of the chronic instability and distraction of his love: "Then as an Angell, face, and wings / Of aire, not pure as it, yet pure doth weare, / So thy love may be my loves spheare" (23-25).

This is the first group of notoriously contested lines in the poem. As a plainly declared way out for the poet-speaker, these lines are his greatest rhetorical failure yet, for all of their imaginative beauty and expressive obscurity. I have no stake in sorting out or countering readings that disagree with mine, for I regard the difficulties of these and the final lines of "Aire and Angels" as encoding some of the most fundamental contradictions and oppositions in Renaissance poetic constructions of sexual difference. I construe the syntax of lines 23-25 as a pseudo-analogy ("Then as . . . So") with the force of a conditionalized subjunctive, half-wish, half-exhortation: in paraphrase, "Since a pure angel takes on the comparative impurity of a bodily presence, thus your love may take on the material burden of keeping my love on a stable and even course." My claim that the first clause is a conditional requires identifying the angel with the female beloved, as before, and also imputing to her the same beneficently accommodating nature as before: she takes on materiality for her male lover's sake. This line of assertion and association is orthodox Thomism: "Angels need an assumed body, not for themselves, but on our account, so that . . . the object seen exists outside the person beholding it, and

can accordingly be seen by all. . . . Moreover, that angels assumed bodies under the Old Law was a figurative indication that the Word of God would take a human body."[16] While certainly glancing toward Aquinas's incarnationalism,[17] lines 23-25 offer no Christological development of this whatever. Instead they proceed to associate the poem's first and much-delayed reference to the female beloved's love ("thy love" [25]) with a possible angelic function—if, as Aquinas's own discussion hypothesizes, such a function were to be assigned by God. This is the angel's power of making its presence manifest in the moving of cosmic spheres. The reply to objections in question 52, article 2, of the *Summa Theologiae* includes these remarks: "Since the angel's power is finite, it does not extend to all things, but to one determined thing. . . . So the entire body to which he is applied by his power, corresponds as one place to him. Neither, if any angel moves the heavens, is it necessary for him to be everywhere. First of all, because his power is applied only to what is first moved by him. . . . Secondly, because philosophers do not hold that one separate substance moves all the spheres immediately. Hence it need not be everywhere."[18]

On appealing to his beloved with this first reference to her love, the speaker of "Aire and Angels" directly undertakes to tell the significance of her love for her and for himself by specifying their respective roles. Her angelic embodiment, her mode of being present and showing power on his behalf, will take the form of a cosmic sphere which serves to assure and regularize a planet's movement; his embodiment is correspondingly figured by a planet whose course is assured and regularized by its attachment to its sphere. The conceit of the sphere assimilates female support to male movement, gendered passivity to gendered activity, in a fashion made perhaps most memorably familiar in the closing lines of "A Valediction: forbidding Mourning": "Thy firmnes makes my circle just, / And makes me end, where I begunne" (35-36). What I find equally ingenious and suspect in this sphere conceit is the specious logic of the conditional subjunctive that represents the beloved's angelic nature as the very reason why she should be—why she actually and truly exists to be—her lover's mainstay. To get circumstantially precise, in just this fashion, about the imputed connotations of sexual difference throughout "Aire and Angels" must have the consequence, I think, of defusing the charges of an abrupt switch from exalting to denigrating women which some commentators have brought against the poem.[19] For all the imagery after its initial angel metaphor—Love's birth and tasks, the blazon, the freighted pinnace, the later angel, the sphere and its planet—shows a consistent rhetorical aim of counterpoising female appropriability or instrumentality with male agency, even though the speaker never registers a sense of having quite succeeded in this aim.

He makes his final attempt in the concluding tercet of the poem, which comprises its second most vexed group of lines: "Just such disparitie / As is 'twixt / Aire and Angells puritie, / 'Twixt womens love, and mens will ever bee" (26-28). Again I have no interest in contesting readings that disagree with mine

because, in my reading, the extravagance of generalization and the reassigned valences of imagery (the speaker-lover now as the superior angelic being) are precisely what verbally register the instabilities and contradictions that disfigure sexual difference when Renaissance gender roles are read in a Petrarchan poetics. In fact, the poem's last three lines offer nothing new in the way of core propositional content: they affirm a "disparitie" between "womens love, and mens" which works in favor of men. In a personalized rather than a generalized form, however, this has been the poet-speaker's fervent hypothesis throughout "Aire and Angels," even though every bit of his experience in loving this beloved has gravitated toward its disproof—and has done so by his own admission. Now, in a last attempt to redress the imbalance of his own continuing sense of contingency and incompleteness in the face of his beloved's plenitude (her "much too much"), he analogizes to the differential relation between "Aire and Angells puritie" and thus adds for the first time the implication that males are superior as a sex, not just in the role of lover. And he further adds that male superiority not merely is the case but "will ever bee." I read this concluding tercet as an exercise in verbal magic, a would-be making so by saying so, which can occasion no surprise in Donne's highly rhetorical poetics. I also infer the speaker's rationale for attempting this verbal magic to arise from his acculturation to a principle of male dominance in gender roles and relations that systematized Renaissance society no less in Donne's England than it had in Petrarch's Italy. But will this particular differential construction of sex and gender "ever bee," as this speaker holds? The net likelihood of its remaining so for "ever," I would like to believe, is reduced when readers candidly confront the gaps and obfuscations which authoritative utterance, for all its bravado, repeatedly suffers in this poem and then go on to compute the costs of such rhetoric to all of the parties involved. The lover-speaker in the cameo sonnet sequence that comprises "Aire and Angels" finally offers testimony much like that of Sidney's Astrophil, who more lengthily but no more conclusively suffers depletion of a personal and social erotic economy by seeking to operate within a Petrarchan construction of gender roles and sexual difference.

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Notes

[1] Efforts at authoritative readings include those in Joan Bennett's "The Love Poetry of John Donne" and in C. S. Lewis's "Donne and Love Poetry in the Seventeenth Century," both collected in *Seventeenth Century Studies Presented to Sir Herbert Grierson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938); Helen Gardner, *The Business of Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 65-75; A. J. Smith, "New Bearings in Donne: 'Aire and Angels,'" *English* 13 (1960), 49-53; H. M. Richmond, *The School of Love* (Princeton:

Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 32-37; Wesley Milgate, "'Aire and Angels' and the Discrimination of Experience," in *Just So Much Honor*, ed. Peter Amadeus Fiore (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1972), pp. 149-76; Katherine Mauch, "Angel Imagery and Neoplatonic Love in Donne's 'Aire and Angels,'" *Seventeenth-Century News* 35 (1977), 106-11; Peter De Sa Wiggins, "'Aire and Angels': Incarnations of Love," *English Literary Renaissance* 12 (1982), 87-101.

[2] Notable contributions in the form of commentary on "Aire and Angels" are to be found in editions by H. J. C. Grierson, *The Poems of John Donne*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), 2:20-21; by Helen Gardner, *John Donne: The Elegies and the Songs and Sonets* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), pp. 205-06; and by Theodore Redpath, *The Songs and Sonnets of John Donne*, 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's, 1983), pp. 197-200, 318-27. Renaissance articulations of Aristotelian gender theory are the major subject of Thomas Laqueur's *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990).

[3] Simone de Beauvoir's formulation of women as Other, in *The Second Sex*, trans. and abridged by H. M. Parshley (New York: Random House, 1974), was the clearly traceable starting point for extending the (Hegelian) analysis of the Self-Other confrontation to relationships between men and women. See, for discussions from several perspectives, the essays collected in *The Future of Difference*, ed. Hester Eisenstein and Alice Jardine (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980).

[4] The perception, which I consider momentous on the plane of expressive form, was first (so far as I know) registered in passing by Arnold Stein, *John Donne's Lyrics: The Eloquence of Action* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962), p. 141: "The stanza of the poem ['Aire and Angels'] is apparently a free variation of the sonnet; a sestet comes first and then an octave."

[5] "The Undertaking," l. 20. I cite here and elsewhere from Gardner's edition (n. 2), inserting line references for "Aire and Angels" parenthetically in my text.

[6] See Janel Mueller, "Women Among the Metaphysicals—A Case, Mostly, of Being Donne For," *Modern Philology* 87 (1989), 146, combining references to "The Broken Heart," "The Extasie," "Aire and Angels," "The Canonization," and "The Goodmorrow."

[7] I differ from perhaps a majority of Donne critics, who infer from lines 1-2, "Twice or thrice had I loved thee, / Before I knew thy face or name," an allusion to the speaker's previous amours, like that in "The good-morrow" (6-7). But the utter stupefaction that attended Dante's early sight of Beatrice and Petrarch's of Laura will suggest the gratuitousness of the inference, as an importation of the reader and not of the poet. Among the expressive conventions of the stilnovistic repertory, incapacity to tell her "face or name" figures the affective valence of the beloved lady, even when glimpsed from afar. In "Angel Imagery and Neoplatonic Love in Donne's 'Air and Angels,'" *Seventeenth-Century News* 35 (1977), 107-08, Katherine Mauch maintains the position I take—that the poet-speaker refers throughout to a single beloved—but she reaches it by a route that I cannot find plausible. Mauch reads the poet-speaker's state in the opening lines as being at the highest point of contemplative spiritual ascent enabled by love of the beautiful, in accordance with the stages set out by Diotima in Plato's *Symposium* and elaborated in treatises on love theory (like Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*, which Mauch cites). But the Platonic heights of spiritual ascent are scaled only through long preparation and sublimation in love; the experience cannot have the episodic and adventitious character that Donne's lover-speaker in "Aire and Angels" evokes.

[8] The Greek reads "*esti gar . . . tou kalou ho erôs . . . tês gennêseôs kai tou tokou en tôi kalôi.*" I cite Suzy Q. Groden's translation, *The Symposium of Plato*, ed. John A. Brentlinger (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1970), p. 86.

[9] On Renaissance patriarchalism, see Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800*, abridged ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), chap. 1.

[10] Nancy J. Vickers, "Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme," *Critical Inquiry* 8.1 (1981), 273. This special issue, edited by Elizabeth Abel, is appositely titled *Writing and Sexual Difference*.

[11] I cite the texts of Sir Thomas Wyatt and of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey from *The Anchor Anthology of English Sixteenth-Century Verse*, ed. Richard J. Sylvester (New York:Doubleday, 1974), pp. 130, 185.

[12] Guibbory presented her insight in the "Aire and Angels" panel discussion which she chaired at the John Donne Society Conference held in Gulfport, Mississippi, in February 1990. This insight becomes crucial in the argument of her essay, "Donne, the Idea of Woman, and the Experience of Love," in this issue.

[13] Wiggins, "'Aire and Angels': Incarnations of Love," p. 87 n.

[14] See Don Cameron Allen, "Donne and the Ship Metaphor," *Modern Language Notes* 76 (1961), 312; John M. Couper and William D. McGaw, "Aire and Angels," *American Notes and Queries* 15 (1977), 104-06; and Albert C. Labriola's essay in this issue.

[15] See the now-classic essay by Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), pp. 156-210.

[16] The relevant Latin of q. 51, art. 2, res. obj. 1, reads as follows: "Dicendum quod angeli non indigent corpore assumpto propter seipsos, sed propter nos; ut . . . videtur id quod positum est extra videntem, unde ab omnibus videri potest. . . . Hoc etiam quod angeli corpora assumpserunt in Veteri Testamento, fuit quoddam figurale indicium quod Verbum Dei assumpturum esset corpus humanum." I cite from the English of St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, literally translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger, 1947) 1:265.

[17] For discussion, see "'Aire and Angels': Incarnations of Love," pp. 95-97.

[18] The relevant Latin reads: "Virtus autem angeli, quia finita est, non se extendit ad omnia, sed ad aliquid unum determinatum. . . . Et sic totum corpus cui per suam virtutem applicatur, correspondet ei ut unus locus. Nec tamen oportet quod si aliquis angelus movet caelum, quod sit ubique. Primo quidem, quia non applicatur virtus eius nisi ad id quod primo ab ipso movetur . . . . Secundo, quia non ponitur a philosophis quod una substantia separata moveat omnes orbes immediate. Unde non oportet quod sa ubique." I again cite the English from Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1:268.

[19] Redpath comments on some of the most persistent of these in *The Songs and Sonets of John Donne* (see n. 2), pp. 197-200, 318-22.