

8-1969

Richard Lovelace a Study in Poetic Design

James Flynn

Western Kentucky University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/theses>



Part of the [Literature in English, British Isles Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Flynn, James, "Richard Lovelace a Study in Poetic Design" (1969). *Masters Theses & Specialist Projects*. Paper 2355.
<https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/theses/2355>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses & Specialist Projects by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.

Flynn,
James S.
1969

RICHARD LOVELACE
A STUDY IN POETIC DESIGN

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of English
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

242714

by
James S. Flynn
August 1969

WEST KY. UNIV.

RICHARD LOVELACE
A STUDY IN POETIC DESIGN

APPROVED August 17, 1969 :
(Date)

George E. McCalvey
Director of Thesis

Addie S. Hilliard

William E. Wood

John Sam Messiter
Dean of the Graduate School

PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to evaluate, and hopefully, to elevate the literary "currency" of Richard Lovelace. To this end, various methods and approaches will be utilized in order to capture a comprehensive, yet coherent view of Lovelace and his poetry. Specifically, these methods and approaches will include: a survey of Lovelace's biography, including clarification of discrepancies among authorities concerning pertinent details of his life; a location of Lovelace in the primary social, philosophical, and poetical movements of the early seventeenth century; an identification of Lovelace as a Cavalier poet, differentiating him from other Cavaliers; an analysis of representative poetry according to theme, imagery, and conflict-structures; and a summation of Lovelace's critical reception since the publication of Lucasta. Recent criticism, while inconclusive and sparse, points to an increased awareness of Lovelace's conscious craftsmanship. This study is an effort at bringing this vision of Lovelace into clearer focus.

I wish to thank Dr. George E. McCelvey, the director of this thesis, for showing me consideration at the expense of his personal convenience. My wife, Lana, has contributed immeasurably to the completion of this study through her willingness to type and her readiness to encourage.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	THE POET	1
	Early Life and Education	
	Civil War and Imprisonment	
	The Last Years	
II.	THE MILIEU	23
	Social and Historical	
	Intellectual and Philosophical	
	Literary	
III.	THE POETRY	50
	Analytic Method	
	Philosophical Design	
	Imagery and Conflict-Structures	
IV.	THE REPUTATION	96
	Seventeenth Century	
	Eighteenth Century	
	Nineteenth Century	
	Twentieth Century	
V.	CONCLUSION	113
	APPENDIX	118
	WORKS CITED	124

CHAPTER I

THE POET

Richard Lovelace represents the culminating personality of an old Kentish family which had produced illustrious soldiers, adventurers, country gentlemen, and noblemen. The same spirit of active involvement which prompted a William Lovelace of Bethersden to take part in the rising of the "Commons of Kent" in 1450 under Cade,¹ and which enabled another of the poet's ancestors to gain a fortune on an expedition with Sir Francis Drake,² underlies and informs Richard Lovelace's commitment to a vigorous and exciting existence. Lovelace's biography bears testimony that he was not only committed to a certain vibrancy of life, but also to varieties of experience. Of course, this particular commitment sprang from the Renaissance ideal of the gentleman whose education prepared him to perform with equal

¹C. H. Wilkinson (ed.), The Poems of Richard Lovelace (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), p. xiii. In view of Richard Lovelace's staunch Royalism it is somewhat ironic that his ancestor William supported a rebellion against Henry VI's ministers. The rebels defeated part of the royal army and for a short while occupied London, but they were driven from that city and dispersed when the government offered a pardon. Cade, however, continued resistance, and was later killed.

²Sir S. E. Brydges, "Remarks on the English Bards," The Gentleman's Magazine, LXI (1791), pt. 2, 1094.

facility in the areas of war, statesmanship, and the arts. In an age which was becoming increasingly modern in its shift to specialization, Lovelace came as near as any of his contemporaries to fulfilling this Renaissance ideal as embodied by Sir Philip Sidney, with whom Lovelace is often compared, and as expressed by Baldassare Castiglione in his Book of the Courtier and by Henry Peacham in the Compleat Gentleman. Like his ancestors before him, Richard Lovelace assumed the roles of soldier, civil official, and country squire, but his accomplishments went far beyond these fields of endeavor, and what small measure of fame he has been accorded by posterity must rest on his role as a "fair pretender to the Title of Poet."³

Richard Lovelace was the eldest son of Sir William Lovelace of Woolwich and his wife Anne Barne. The poet's father, who had been knighted by James I in 1609, was killed at the siege of Groll in 1627 at the age of forty-four, leaving a large family which included Richard's four brothers, Francis, William, Thomas, and Dudley Posthumus,⁴ and his three sisters, Anne, Elizabeth, and Johanna. While no exact date has been determined, 1618 is generally accepted as the year of the poet's birth. The exact place of Lovelace's birth is likewise

³ Edward Philips, Theatrum Poetarum, or a Compleat Collection of the Poets (1675), quoted in Wilkinson, p. lxiii.

⁴ C. H. Hartmann reports that Dudley Posthumus was so named because he was born after his father's death. The Cavalier Spirit and its Influence on the Life and Work of Richard Lovelace (London: G. Routledge & Sons, 1925), p. 8.

uncertain; Thomas Seccombe, writing in the Dictionary of National Biography, naturally assumes that the poet was born in his father's house in Woolwich,⁵ while C. H. Wilkinson asserts that he was probably born in Holland.⁶ Wilkinson supports this claim with three pieces of evidence: (1) his name is not to be found in any church register; however, the Woolwich register does not begin until 1663; (2) his mother spent some time in Holland as attested to by her will in which she leaves to Richard "my best suite of diaper, which I made in the Low Countries"; (3) verses contributed by John Hamar to Lucasta mention the poet's Kentish ancestors but do not connect Lovelace to the county. Thus, Wilkinson's evidence, though based on his intimate familiarity with all phases of Lovelace scholarship, turns out to be little more than interesting speculation and is, therefore, inconclusive.

Of Richard Lovelace's boyhood nothing is known. Undoubtedly in the rural atmosphere of Kent he was an observer of nature as later he was to take some of the more common animals (fly, toad, grasshopper) as subject matter for his poetry. Undoubtedly, too, he was steeped in the lore and tradition of his ancestors which infused him with a martial spirit and shaped his Royalist and Cavalier attitudes.

A year after her husband's death in 1628, Mrs. Lovelace

⁵Eds. Leslie Stephens and Sidney Lee (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), XII, 169.

⁶Wilkinson, p. xiii.

petitioned the King for a nomination of one of her sons to Sutton's Foundation at Charterhouse. In a directive to the Counsels of Sutton's Hospital, the King notes that Sir William Lovelace "left his Lady ritch only in great store of Children" and further orders "that Thomas Lovelace his sone may bee admitted into ye said house in our prime place at ye next elecon."⁷ However, A. E. Waite has argued persuasively in an article in The Gentleman's Magazine, November, 1884, that King Charles' order was actually meant for Richard Lovelace.⁸ His evidence has some merit since he points out that Charterhouse, only twenty years founded at the time, had explicit rules signed by Charles I to "admit none under the age of ten years and above fourteen, else he should answer to the contrary." Thomas, then, who in 1629 was only about six years old, would have been ineligible for attendance at the school, while Richard, who was about eleven, could have attended. After looking in vain for the name of Lovelace in the school records of the period which list those nominated for admission under some program of assistance, Wilkinson surmises that Richard did not enter Charterhouse on Sutton's Foundation but was enabled, through a timely inheritance, to enter as a "Boarder," a title which denoted a somewhat higher social position than that of "scholar."⁹

⁷ Ibid., pp. xvi-xvii.

⁸ "Richard Lovelace," CLIV (November, 1884), pt. 2, 259-262.

⁹ Wilkinson, p. xviii.

That the Lovelaces were indeed enjoying respite from their former financial straits is borne out by the recent discovery of a warrant to swear Lovelace "A Gent Wayter extraordinary" to the King, dated May 5, 1631.¹⁰ This position was an honorary one for which the recipient paid an annual fee; Lovelace appears to have retained the title at least through 1641. The discovery of this warrant also proves that Lovelace had connections with the court much earlier than is recorded by his biographers, who usually mention 1637 as the probable date of his first establishment at court.¹¹

After remaining at Charterhouse some three or four years,¹² Lovelace left for Oxford to receive the education proper for an eldest son. He matriculated June 27, 1634, at Gloucester Hall as a gentleman commoner; his entry is preserved in the University Archives as follows:

Jun: 27 Richus Lovelace: Kant: jus Gul:
Lovelace de Woolwish iu com p'd arm: au:
nat--16.¹³

Even though Lovelace was only a stripling lad of sixteen, Anthony A. Wood in Athenae Oxonienses reports he was "then

¹⁰Herbert Berry and E. K. Timings, "Lovelace at Court and a Version of Part of his 'The Scrutinie,'" MLN, LXIX (June, 1954), 396.

¹¹Wilkinson, pp. xxi-xxii; Hartmann, p. 13.

¹²Nothing is known of Lovelace's school days at Charterhouse, although Wilkinson notes that Richard Crashaw must have been a schoolmate of Lovelace's for about three years, and also that Lovelace probably came under the influence of Robert Brooke, the Headmaster, who was a firm Royalist (p. xviii).

¹³Wilkinson, p. xix.

accounted the most amiable and beautiful person that ever eye beheld, a person also of innate modesty, virtue and courtly deportment, which made him then, but especially after, when he retired to the great city, much admired and adored by the female sex."¹⁴ In addition to possessing so many endearing personal qualities, Lovelace displayed, during his sixteenth year, his literary precociousness by writing a comedy entitled The Scholar which was acted with success at Gloucester Hall and later at the Whitefriars, Salisbury Court. Unfortunately the play was never published, and only the Prologue and Epilogue, written for presentation at the Whitefriars, were included in Lucasta; the rest of the play is lost.

Lovelace's wit and refinement obviously received widespread circulation, for in 1636, upon the occasion of a visit to Oxford by the King and Queen, he, along with some other gentlemen of quality, was created Master of Arts. Wood attributes this amazing event (especially for a supposedly unknown undergraduate who had attended the school for but two years) to be the intercession of "a great Lady belonging to the Queen."¹⁵ However, since it is now known that Lovelace had been "A Gent Wayter extraordinary" to the King as early as 1631, it has been argued that his advancement was due to his own prominence at court rather than to the aid of a

¹⁴ (2nd ed.; London: 1721), II, col. 228 (columns rather than pages in this edition are numbered).

¹⁵ Ibid.

"great Lady."¹⁶ But there is nothing to suggest that Lovelace's prominence at court would necessarily preclude assistance from a lady of that court; indeed, his familiarity with court personages might very well have led to his acquaintance with his mysterious benefactress. Lovelace seems to have been, in all events, a charming and personable young man who possessed several talents, one who quite conceivably might have been elevated to the Master's degree on his own merits.

After taking his degree at Oxford, Lovelace enrolled at Cambridge where his entry in the Book of Subscriptions is dated October 4, 1637. Possibly because he felt discomfited by the prominent Puritan element at Cambridge, Lovelace stayed only a few months. But this was seemingly ample time for him to make friends with a group of Cambridge men (Norreys Jephson, Villiers Harington, and Andrew Marvell) who would write commendatory verses for Lucasta twelve years later.¹⁷

In the center of the English world in 1637, at least for those of Royalist inclinations, was, of course, the Court of Charles I, a gay, frivolous place which was, nevertheless, tempered by the seriousness of the times. Quite unexpectedly, after his brief tenure at Cambridge, Lovelace, according to Wood, "retired in great splendour to the Court," where he

¹⁶Berry and Timings, "Lovelace at Court," p. 397.

¹⁷Wilkinson, p. xxi.

received the admiration of all. At Court, Wood continues, he was "taken into the favor of George, Lord Goring, afterwards Earl of Norwich."¹⁸ This association gave Lovelace the opportunity to reflect the military tradition of his ancestors, for he soon was appointed ensign in the regiment of his patron, Lord Goring, and in this capacity took part in the first Scottish expedition of 1639, which ended with the signing of the Pacification of Berwick, June 17 of that year. Lovelace wrote at this time a poem in honor of his commander (the only poem of his containing a direct reference to the Scottish expeditions) entitled "To Generall Goring, after the pacification of Berwicke." Even though it is perhaps too lavish in praise of a military commander who had engaged in no fighting, it is a delightful drinking song capturing Lovelace's Cavalier exuberance.

Even before his Scottish expedition, Lovelace's poetic aspirations had seen the light of print with the publication of "Princess Katherine borne, christened, buried in one day" which was included in Musarum Oxoniensium Charisteria, 1638. In the same year, Lovelace contributed commendatory verses to Anthony Hodge's translation of The Loves of Clitophon and Leucippe, and in the following year some of his verses were prefixed to Gideon Ashwell's Pallas Armata. Apparently by the age of twenty, Lovelace's literary ambitions were quite serious.

¹⁸Wood, II, col. 228.

In 1640 Lovelace, still in Goring's regiment, took part in a second expedition to the north during which he was awarded a captain's commission. His avid military interests are seen in his choice of a subject for a tragedy he wrote during or shortly after the expedition; it was entitled The Soldier. However, it was "never acted because the stage was soon suppressed,"¹⁹ and it is, as his other play, lost. It is very likely that Lovelace met, at this time, John Suckling, who had raised a troop of a hundred horses for the second Scottish expedition and had outfitted them with elaborate costumes complete with satin sashes and scarlet plumes.²⁰ Supposedly, Suckling addresses Lovelace in his famous "Ballad Upon a Wedding," which begins, "I tell thee Dick where I have been." But, although Harleian MS. 6917 describes the poem as "Upon the Marriage of the Lord Lovelace," both Wilkinson and Hartmann agree that the poem's connection with Lovelace is probably based on an inaccurate guess or false conclusion.²¹

Perhaps a bit disillusioned if he had entertained any hopes of winning glory and fame on the field of battle, Lovelace returned to Kent after the cessation of arms agreed on at Ripon, October 26, 1640, which officially ended the second Scottish expedition. At Kent he took possession of his ancestral property which included a manor house at Bethersden and land at Chart, Halden, Shadoxhurst, and Canterbury, all of

¹⁹Ibid. ²⁰Hartmann, p. 17.

²¹Wilkinson, pp. xxiii-xxiv; Hartmann, p. 17, n. 1.

which earned about five hundred pounds a year, a very respectable income.²² There he interested himself in the local affairs, took on the responsibilities of a country gentleman, and soon became a Justice of the Peace. But peace was to be a thing foreign to Richard Lovelace.

In 1642, Sir Edward Deering assisted by a few more prominent Kentish gentlemen had drawn up and introduced a petition into Parliament demanding among other things "the restoration of the liturgy and the maintenance of the episcopal bench in all its integrity."²³ Both Houses of Parliament met and discussed the document and ordered it burnt by the Common Hangman on April 7. Deering was summoned to appear before Parliament but he chose to disobey the summons, a wise move, for Clarendon reports that the Earl of Bristol and Judge Mallet were imprisoned in the Tower for merely having seen the petition.²⁴ Shortly after these events, a meeting was held at Maidstone in Kent in which the justices argued the merits and faults of the petition. As Wilkinson points out, it was undoubtedly in his official capacity as Justice of the Peace that Lovelace attended the meeting.²⁵ There seems to have been much disagreement about what course of action should be taken, but some of those present produced a new petition to be sent to Parliament which contested and disavowed the first one, sent by Deering. At this point, Lovelace and

²²Hartmann, p. 22. ²³*Ibid.*, p. 36.

²⁴Wilkinson, p. xxv. ²⁵*Ibid.*, p. xxiv.

some of his friends intervened and to show their distaste of the proceedings "clapped on their hatts" in the presence of the magistrates. Lovelace, according to this account, then proceeded to deliver a tirade against the proposed petition and dramatically tore it into pieces before the astonished gathering.²⁶

Undaunted by the disapprobation heaped on his petition in London as well as in his home county, Deering tried once more to bring it before Parliament. Probably because of his spectacular defense of the petition at Maidstone, Lovelace was one of those chosen to deliver it to Westminister. Lovelace was to be accompanied on the ill-fated journey by Sir William Boteler, or Butler, who had just returned from York and was a gentleman pensioner. In fact, a large contingent of signers of the petition assembled on April 29 at Blackheath with the intention of going with Lovelace and Boteler to show their faithful support. Parliament was well aware of their plans, for on the 28th they met and ordered "that none be suffered to come in numbers into the City of London tomorrow, with Arms or Weapons."²⁷ Nevertheless, three to five hundred men accompanied Lovelace and Boteler to London and were duly unarmed before they were allowed to enter the city.²⁸ Hartmann fails to mention that the petitioners were

²⁶Hartmann details the proceedings from Sir Symonds D'Ewes' Journal (Harl MS, 163), p. 38.

²⁷Wilkinson, p. xxviii.

²⁸Wilkinson quotes a contemporary pamphlet entitled Strange News from Kent which contains this information (p. xxx).

not admitted to Parliament that day, but Wilkinson reports that in an attempt to frustrate the petitioners, Parliament rose and refused to accept the petition, a shrewd and eminently successful tactic, for the petitioners "returned to their homes, leaving Sir William Boteler and Captain Lovelace behind."²⁹

The next day, Lovelace and Boteler made their appearance before the House of Commons and presented their petition. They were made to withdraw from the room while the petition was read and discussed. During the ensuing debate, a Captain Leigh, or Lee, who was a justice from Kent and had been present at the Maidstone meeting, narrated the events at that meeting in such a manner as to defame Lovelace's character. Shortly afterwards, Lovelace was called in and questioned, as was Boteler. Lovelace's answers were reported to be straightforward and candid while Boteler was led into contradiction. Finally the House voted to imprison both Lovelace and Boteler, the former being sent to the Gatehouse, the latter to the Fleet.

According to Wood, it was while in the Gatehouse that Lovelace "made the celebrated song called 'Stone Walls do not a prison make.'"³⁰ Indeed, "To Althea. From Prison" has maintained its popularity from the seventeenth century to the present, and is almost singly responsible for Lovelace's

²⁹A communication from Secretary Nicholas to Sir Thomas Roe, Parliament (*Ibid.*, p. xxxi).

³⁰Wood, II, col. 228.

small but unflagging niche in anthology fame.

Boteler shortly petitioned to be set free on bail, and was refused. Both Lovelace and Boteler petitioned again around the first of June; Lovelace's petition is preserved among the Historical Manuscripts of the House of Lords in his own handwriting.³¹ On the 17th of June, the House recommended their release upon good security. Boteler was set free the following day, and Lovelace was released on the 21st on the bail of William Clarke of Rootham in Kent and Thomas Flood of Otton in Kent. Wood's report that Lovelace's bail was forty thousand pounds³² is clearly invalidated by the Common Journal which sets the sum for each party at ten thousand pounds principal and five thousand pounds for sureties.³³ Though Parliament granted Lovelace's plea for liberty, they denied his request to be allowed to join the forces attempting to quell the Irish uprising, which Lovelace described in his petition as the "open Rebellion" which "treads on the late peaceful bosome of his Maiesties Kingdome of Ireland." This Royalist word choice was enough to insure that the Parliamentarians would react unfavorably to his request, and might have had some bearing on their decision to confine Lovelace to London, allowing him to leave only with a pass from the Speaker.

During this stay in London, Lovelace, according to Wood,

³¹Reproduced by Wilkinson, pp. xxxviii-xxxix; and by Hartmann, pp. 47-48.

³²Wood, II, col. 228. ³³Wilkinson, p. xxxvii.

"lived beyond the income of his Estate, either to keep up the credit and reputation of the Kings Cause by furnishing men with Horse and Arms, or by relieving ingenious men in want, whether scholars, musitians, soldiers, etc." Also, he freely gave to his brothers--Colonel Francis Lovelace and Captain William Lovelace--money with which to prosecute the Royalist cause, and supported his brother Dudley Posthumus who was in Holland studying tactics and fortification.³⁴

One of the "ingenious men in want" aided by Lovelace was Henry Glapthorne, a minor dramatist and poet, who was also a member of Lovelace's band of drinking companions in London. He expressed his gratitude for assistance by dedicating "White Hall. A Poem. . .with Elegies. . .," published in 1643, to "my noble Friend and Gossip, Captain Richard Lovelace," a dedication so filled with military metaphors it has led Hartmann to suggest that Lovelace considered himself, and was thought of by his friends, as primarily a soldier:

I have so long beene in your debt, that I was almost desperate in myselfe of making you paiment, till this fancy by ravishing from you a new Curtesie in its patronage, promised me it would satisfie part of my former engagements to you. Wonder not to see it invade you on the sudden; Gratitude is aeriall; and like that Element, nimble in its motion and performance; though I would not have this of mine of a French disposition, to charge hotly and retreat unfortunately: there may appeare something in this, that may maintaine the field courageously against Envy, may come off with honour; if you, Sir, please to rest satisfied, that it marches under your Ensignes, which are the desires of Your true honourer

Hen. Glapthorne.³⁵

³⁴Wood, II, col. 228.

³⁵Hartmann, pp. 63-64.

While this passage seems to support Wood's contention (with which Hartmann and Seccombe concur) that Lovelace stayed some time in London engaging in many philanthropic endeavors, Wilkinson denies that Lovelace remained in London any longer than a few months upon his release from the Gatehouse.³⁶ Instead, Wilkinson asserts that Lovelace was in Holland and France most of the time during the years 1643-1646. Specifically he offers the theory that Lovelace went to Holland in September, 1642, a departure which prompted the composition of "To Lucasta. Going beyond the Seas." Wilkinson bases his conclusion on several pieces of evidence, the most conclusive of which consists of verses addressed to Lovelace by John Tateham, one of Lovelace's London friends, in his 1650 publication, Ostella. The first stanza of the poem, "Upon my Noble friend, Richard Lovelace Esquire, his being in Holland. An invitation. A song," was set to music by William Lawes who was killed at the siege of Chester September, 1645, proving that Lovelace was in Holland before that date. The first, second, and last stanzas are worthy of quotation for what they tell us of Lovelace:

Come Adonis, come again,
 what distast could drive thee hence,
 Where so much delight did reign,
 sateing ev'n the soul of sense?
 And though thou unkind hast prov'd,
 never Youth was more belov'd.
 Then lov'd Adonis come away,
 For Venus brooks not thy delay.

³⁶Wilkinson, p. xi.

Wert thou sated with the Spoil
of so many Virgins Hearts,
And therefore didst change thy Soil,
to seek fresh in other parts:
Dangers wait on forreigne Game,
we have Deer more sound and tame.
Then lov'd Adonis, &c.

By thy sweet Althea's voice
we conjure thee to return;
Orwe'l rob thee of that choice
in whose Flames each Heart would burn:
That inspir'd by her and sack,
such Company we will not lack.
That Poets in the Age to come,
Shall write of our Elizium.³⁷

The first two stanzas are particularly interesting because they indicate that Lovelace was indeed a notorious charmer of the ladies as one might suspect from reading Lucasta. Wilkinson has remarked the importance of the last stanza as showing that around 1644 Lovelace was noted as the poet of Althea, not of Lucasta, a fact which indicates the wide contemporary fame of "To Althea. From Prison."³⁸

Lovelace fled the political imbroglio of his native England, preferring instead to assist the French in their attempt to free the Low Countries from the yoke of Spain. Exactly how much time he spent in Holland and France between 1643 and 1646 is a matter of conjecture, but he must have been in England at least twice because his signature appears on two documents: one concerns transference of land to Richard Hulse, and was signed by Lovelace March 20, 1644; the other relates to the purchase of property at Smarden

³⁷ Ibid., pp. xliii-xliv. ³⁸ Ibid., p. xliv.

August 4, 1645. Seccome refers to another supposed appearance of Richard Lovelace in England in August of 1645 in connection with the capture of Thomas Willys, "a clerk of the crown in chancery . . . by a Captain Lovelace, presumably the poet."³⁹ Wilkinson, however, points out that by this time he would probably have attained the rank of colonel, and that the Captain Lovelace referred to was more than likely Dudley Posthumus.⁴⁰

Wood concurs that about this time Lovelace was a colonel, for he had founded a regiment and fought in the service of the French. Furthermore, Wood states that Lovelace was wounded at Dunkirk, which fell October 11, 1646, and did not return to England until 1648, in the company of his brother Dudley.⁴¹ Wilkinson disagrees, however, reporting that Lovelace returned in the winter of 1646 or in the following year evidenced by the facts that he contributed some verses in 1647 to the first folio edition of Beaumont and Fletcher and that he was admitted to the 'Freedom of the Painters' Company on October 26, 1647.⁴² Lovelace's activities in England after returning from the Continent are understandably shrouded, for a notorious Royalist would doubtlessly attempt to conceal his movements as much as possible; therefore, except for his attention to the arts noted above, his part in the momentous affairs of England in the late 1640's is unknown. Lovelace led such an active life, however, that it is hard to imagine

³⁹Seccombe, p. 170. ⁴⁰Wilkinson, p. xlvi.

⁴¹Wood, II, col. 228. ⁴²Wilkinson, pp. xlix-l.

him sitting idly by as the chief object of his loyalty, the Crown, was swept away by the tide of Puritanism, unless he was engulfed by that fatal complacency of many Royalists, based on the belief that the King, by virtue of his office, was exempt from the fear of any true danger or harm. Hartmann, for one, believes Lovelace was actively involved in the defense of the Royalist garrison at Maidstone, and was one of nine hundred prisoners taken by the Parliamentarians at its capitulation.⁴³ Unfortunately, there is no documentary proof of Hartmann's claim, only circumstantial evidence based on the fact that Lovelace was imprisoned a week after the fall of Maidstone. Whether or not he was directly involved in the events transpiring in his home county, his close links with the Royalists at Maidstone and other Kentish sites would have been enough to warrant his arrest. On June 9, 1648, Lovelace was committed to the Peterhouse Prison.⁴⁴ While there, he escaped some of the burden of confinement by preparing for publication Lucasta: Epodes, Odes, Sonnets, Songs, &c., which appeared the following year.

Lovelace was released from prison on April 10, 1649, and except for the publication of his book of poetry, he slipped quietly into anonymity. Whether this anonymity was

⁴³Hartmann, p. 97.

⁴⁴Secombe (p. 170) agrees with Wood (II, col. 228) that Lovelace's brother, Dudley Posthumus, was imprisoned with him, but neither Hartmann (p. 97) nor Wilkinson (p. li) find any evidence for this supposition.

sought by Lovelace in the interest of his personal security because the Puritans were ascendant, or whether it stemmed from a sudden turn of ill fortune which left him destitute has been debated through the years. The latter view seems to have been preferred shortly after Lovelace's death; John Aubrey's early account has been especially influential on later commentators in its dramatically terse depiction of the broken Cavalier:

Obiit in a Cellar in Long Acre, a little before the Restauration of his Majestie. Mr. Edmund Wyld, etc., have made collections for him, and given him money. George Petty, Haberdasher, in Fleet Street, carried xxs. to him every Monday morning from Sir John Many and Charles Cotton, Esq., for many moneths, but was never repayed.⁴⁵

Wood's summation of Lovelace's last years obviously emulates and expands the pathetic parts of Aubrey's version:

After the murther of Charles I, Lovelace was set at liberty, and having by that time consumed all his estate, grew very melancholy, (which broughthim at length into a consumption) became very poor in body and purse, was the object of charity, went in ragged cloaths (whereas when he was in his glory he wore cloth of gold and silver) and mostly lodged in obscure and dirty places, more befitting the worst of beggars, and poorest of servants, &c.⁴⁶

In the early part of the nineteenth century, an anonymous author writing in Retrospective Review scores both Aubrey and Wood for exaggerating the plight of the poet, a charge which has been reiterated by Wilkinson and Hartmann. The anonymous author's argument that Lovelace's daughter endowed

⁴⁵ Brief Lives and Other Selected Writings (London: Cresset, 1949), p. 65.

⁴⁶ Wood, II, col. 289.

her husband with the family estates is inaccurate since it has never been proven that Lovelace was ever married, but he correctly surmises that Lovelace's brothers would scarcely have suffered him to be reduced to abject poverty.⁴⁷ That Lovelace was in financial straits, however, can be deduced from the fact that he sold the ancestral estate, Lovelace Place, at Bethersden to Richard Hulse in 1649.⁴⁸ There remains the possibility that he sold his land as a precaution in the event the Puritans began confiscating property of Royalists, but this would have been, in any event, a groundless fear, for rather than confiscation, Parliament resorted to taxation in the form of huge fines levied on those "delinquents" who had supported the King.⁴⁹ It seems altogether more likely that the sale of Lovelace Place resulted from Lovelace's inability to pay these fines.

According to Wood, Lovelace "died in a very mean lodging in Gun-powder Alley near Shoe-lane, and was buried at the west end of the Church of S. Bride⁵⁰ alias Bridget in London, near to the body of his kinsman Will. Lovelace of Greys

⁴⁷"Lovelace's Lucasta," Retrospective Review, IV (1821) 118-119.

⁴⁸Wilkinson, p. Iv.

⁴⁹George Macaulay Trevelyan, England Under the Stuarts (19th ed.; London: Methuen & Co., 1947), p. 227.

⁵⁰Seccombe notes that Lovelace's connection with St. Brides suggested to Richardson the name of the hero of Clarissa; through this use, "Lovelace" became in the eighteenth century a synonym for a libertine, a connotation it still bears in France (p. 171).

Inn Esq. in sixteen hundred fifty and eight" ⁵¹ Both Hartmann and Wilkinson hypothesize that Lovelace's unsavory surroundings were brought on more for political rather than financial reasons; Puritan oppression, particularly severe at this time, perhaps drove Lovelace to seek refuge in an area frequented by "indigent refugees, lurking papists and delinquents." Cotton's assistance of twenty shillings a week would certainly indicate an understandable insufficiency of funds experienced by the poet, but Aubrey and Wood apparently misinterpreted and magnified the extent of his poverty.

Wood's pronouncement that Lovelace's death occurred in 1658 had been universally accepted until Wilkinson subjected it to a close scrutiny. Wilkinson surmises that Lovelace could not have died earlier than 1656, because in the summer of that year the poet composed "The Triumphs of Philamore and Amoret" for the wedding of Charles Cotton. Two more examples of his verse appeared in 1657, but it is not known when they were written; these were lines contributed to Hall's Hierocles upon the Golden Verse of Pythagoras and to a translation of Voiture's Letters. But the documentation by which Wilkinson establishes that Lovelace died in 1656 or 1657 is furnished by Eldred Revett's elegy on Lovelace, printed in 1657. This elegy is included in his Poems, dated on the title page 1657, while the dedication is dated October 19, 1647, an obvious misprint for 1657. ⁵²

⁵¹Wood, II, col. 229.

⁵²Wilkinson, p. liv.

After Lovelace's death, his brother Dudley Posthumus, with the aid of Eldred Revett, edited and published Lucasta: Posthume Poems. This edition is dated 1659, though it probably did not appear until 1660, when it was published with Elegies Sacred to the Memory of the Author: By Several of His Friends collected by Dudley. Wilkinson prints a poem of Revett's entitled "To my honoured Friend, Coll. Richard Lovelace, on his second poems"⁵³ which seems to suggest that Lovelace planned, or had started to edit another volume of his poems. If he did intend to edit and publish this second group of poems himself, it is well he did not succeed. For now this second volume, which is generally considered to be much inferior to the first, can be excused on the grounds that the poet himself either felt them unworthy for publication or had not sufficiently revised them.

Lovelace's life would certainly seem to qualify him as the exemplar of the Cavalier spirit. His love of battle (with wits and sabres), his love of women, his love of friendships, his love of travel, his love of the King and England are the motivating forces of his life. He submerged himself in the stormy social milieu which was the lot of England in the early part of the seventeenth century. The next chapter will survey the social, intellectual, and literary upheavals which constitute this milieu, and which had a profound effect on Richard Lovelace.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. lx-lxi.

CHAPTER II

THE MILIEU

A sweeping spirit of insurgency pervaded practically all facets of existence in England during the seventeenth century. Within the religious realm, Anglicanism's "middle way" between Rome and Geneva, coupled with the Anglican attempt to enforce national acceptance of the episcopacy and the Common Prayer Book, only served to inflame the Puritan cause and to hasten the advent of "The Great Rebellion." In the province of politics, controversy raged about the relationship of the king and Parliament, a controversy ignited by the theory of the "Divine Right of Kings" exhumed by James I. As practiced and espoused by James and his successor, Charles I, neither known for his diplomacy or tact, the theory was odious and unacceptable to an age that exalted the individual. In the intellectual arena, scientific empiricism began its ascension and Francis Bacon, champion of "the new philosophy," led the assault on scholasticism. The rebellious attitude is no less noticeable in the literary field where both the extravagant Petrarchan conventions and the glossy, "feminine" verse of the Spenserians were under the violent, dichotomous yet concentrated attack of Ben Jonson and John Donne. These revolts and rebellions are

manifestations of the emergence of the modern world from the medieval, an emergence which produced a "conflict of the secular and the spiritual, the world, the flesh, and the spirit, a conflict which troubled every sphere of life."¹

Momentous conflicts between the spirit and the flesh probably seemed remote to the young Richard Lovelace as he wandered over the fields of the ancestral estate in the rural, still socially and agriculturally oriented, county of Kent. For at this time, English society was still rooted in the land. Vacations from schools and universities would likely concur with the harvest season, and even the sophisticated courts of James and Charles relied on rural foundations. And it was the country life that formed the milieu of most literature before the Civil War.²

Conflicts would have been much more in evidence at the universities. Undergraduates were still inculcated in the scholastic method, that is, by healthy doses of rhetoric based on classical models, logic, and metaphysics.³ By the time Lovelace had entered Oxford in the '30's, theological study and debate raged, especially at Puritan-oriented Cambridge. We see from the example of Lovelace, whose royal favor secured for him a M.A., that the King was vitally interested in the

¹H. J. C. Grierson, Cross Currents in English Literature of the Seventeenth Century (Penguin Paperback ed.; Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 33.

²Marjorie Cox, "The Background to English Literature, 1603-1660," From Donne to Marvell, ed. Boris Ford ("Pelican Guide to English Literature," Vol. III; Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1956), pp. 25-26.

³Ibid., p. 23.

universities. In fact, both Stuart kings interfered in election of Chancellors as well as discipline and curriculum, and considered the schools as "the nurseries of our religion."⁴

From the Universities to the court, then, was a short step and one that Lovelace did not take alone. The court and London in general were the hub of English society and activity. In fact, so many of the landed gentry flocked to the urban frivolities that Charles was forced to issue a proclamation forcing them back to their estates, and in 1632, two hundred fifty persons were prosecuted for disobeying his edict.⁵ Royal monopolies and other corrupt practices persisted from Elizabeth's reign, and these along with more honorable avenues such as foreign trade and industry, insured that "men of energy and parts could advance their fortune."⁶ The court, of course, took its tone from the personality of the ruler. James's interests ran toward the rather unobtrusive pursuits of hunting and scholarship, yet his court is primarily noted for its lavishness and unprecedented expenditures. The more serious Charles I banished much of the lavishness and restored some of the dignity which James lacked; nevertheless, expenditures astonished the visiting Rubens,⁷ and the Court gained little popular appeal. This unpopularity was due not only to

⁴Ibid., p. 22. ⁵Ibid., p. 20.

⁶Helen C. White, The Metaphysical Poets: A Study in Religious Experience (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), pp. 34-35.

⁷Cox, p. 21.

fiscal corruptness already mentioned, but also to links which the Queen, Henrietta Maria, extended to the Continent, especially France, her home, and Rome, which tended to create an aura of Popery about the Court.⁸ The King, for his part, seemingly deemed popular appeal as insignificant anyway, for Charles's court was a private coterie of nobility whose interests lay outside the realms of the bourgeois. Lovelace, for instance, in such lines as

Next the great and powerful hand
Beckens my thoughts unto a stand
Of Titian, Raphael, Georgone
Whose Art ev'n Nature hath out-done . . .
("Amyntor's Grove . . .," p. 72)⁹

reflects the King's and, subsequently, the court's appreciation of the visual arts; Charles was widely criticized for the money he "squandered" on his collection of paintings. This alienation between court and the common man is most graphically manifested in the ever-widening gulf that developed between Charles and Parliament. Through a complex series of events and the mutual inelasticity of both parties, the gulf developed into a chasm that was the Civil War.

Lovelace's haphazard involvement in the war seems fairly typical, especially of the Royalists, who remained, throughout, completely disorganized. In fact, no more than 60,000 or 70,000 on each side were actively engaged in the fighting.¹⁰

⁸ Ibid., p. 22.

⁹ In this study all references to the poetry of Lovelace are based on Wilkinson's edition (see chap. I, n. 1).

¹⁰ Cox, p. 33.

Like many other Royalists, Lovelace contributed funds to the King's cause; nevertheless, Charles was at a serious financial disadvantage because the wealth of his followers (as exemplified by Lovelace) was in their land. In contrast, the Puritan merchants and craftsmen were much more able to produce ready cash for Parliament.¹¹ The King's problems were compounded by his consistent overestimation of the strength of his position which, in turn, led him into rash moves. With the formation of a worthy fighting force in the New Model Army under Cromwell, an ultimate Roundhead victory was virtually assured. The Puritans inflicted a decisive military defeat on the King at Naseby in 1645; after this, most Royalists suffered what Lovelace describes as a "cold Time and frozen Fate."

In the intellectual milieu of the seventeenth century, the juncture of medieval and modern is most evident. Lovelace shared with such literary giants as Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton (and, in fact, with most educated gentlemen of the period) an orderly theocentric view of the universe in which man formed the vital link in the great chain of being.¹² This essentially medieval outlook rested on the conception of order as underlying all facets of existence; so it is not surprising to find Lovelace, after admitting some government

¹¹Trevelyan, England Under the Stuarts, p. 201.

¹²E. M. W. Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Picture (New York: Vintage Books, 196-), pp. 107-108.

reform is needed, describing the Puritan rebellion as dangerous because it is a disruption of natural order:

But not a Reformation so,
As to reforme were to ore'throw;
Like Watches by unskillfull men
Disjoynted, and set ill again.

("To Lucasta. From Prison,
An Epode." p. 50)

According to natural order, every speck of creation was arranged in a hierarchical scale of values pictured as a "chain stretched from the foot of God's throne to the meanest of inanimate objects."¹³ The highest link in the chain was occupied by the angels, for they were spiritual beings who could visit the mutable earth or the immutable spheres (the concentric shells in which, according to the Ptolemaic scheme, the stars, sun, planets, and moon are set). Lovelace uses this commonplace knowledge of angels and of the contrast between the sublunary regions subject to decay and eternal heavens to express Neoplatonic notions of love in his "Song. To Lucasta, Going beyond the Seas":

Though Seas and Land betwixt us both,
Our Faith and Troth,
Like separated soules,
All time and space controules:
Above the highest sphere wee meet
Unseene, unknowne, and greet as Angels greet.
(p. 17)

The orderly progression of the stars and planets, it was generally believed, resulted in celestial harmony called the music of the spheres. In "Gratiana dauncing and singing,"

¹³ Ibid., p. 26.

Lovelace cannot forego the opportunity to compare Gratiana's performance to the heavenly sound and the cosmic dance:

So did she move; so did she sing
Like the Harmonious spheres that bring
Unto their Rounds their musick's ayd.
(p. 26)

In "To a Lady that desired me I would beare my part with her in a Song," Lovelace gives poetic expression to the belief that man in his fallen state cannot hear the music of the spheres:

Then you'l admit that I too can
Musick above dead sounds of Man;
Such as alone doth blesse the Spheres,
Not to be Reacht with humane Eares.
(p. 92)

Another frequently held notion in the early seventeenth century was that of "correspondence," by which was meant the equivalences and relationships which linked the different planes of existence. For example, Lovelace in "To Lucasta. From Prison" alludes to the correspondence between the body politic and the body of man:

I would love a Parliament
As a maine Prop from Heav'n sent;
But ah! Who's he that would be wedded
To th' fairest body that's beheaded?
(p. 49)

The king bears the same relationship to Parliament that the head does to the body; thus Lovelace laments the king's deposal as a destruction of the body politic. An even more persistent comparison is the one between the sun, the ruler of the heavens, and the king, the ruler of the state.¹⁴

¹⁴Ibid., p. 89.

Again in "To Lucasta. From Prison," Lovelace uses the force of this correspondence to apotheosize Charles I:

He who being the whole Ball
 Of Day on Earth, lends it to all;
 When seeking to ecclipse his right,
 Blinded, we stand in our owne light.

.
 Oh from thy glorious Starry Waine
 Dispense on me one sacred Beame
 To light me where I soone may see
 How to serve you, and you trust me.
 (p. 51)

In the bitter tone of "A Mock-Song," Lovelace acknowledges Cavalier defeat through the metaphor of the two pairs of correspondences already described:

Now the Sun is unarm'd,
 And the Moon by us charm'd
 All the Stars dissolv'd to a Jelly;
 Now the Thighs of the Crown,
 And the Arms are lopp'd down,
 And the Body is all but a Belly.
 (p. 155)

The "Sun," the "Moon," and the "Stars" must refer to the King, Queen, and the courtiers, respectively. The "Thighs" and the "Arms" are somewhat more obscure, but Wilkinson correctly notes that after the execution of the King, the Royal Arms were taken down throughout the land.¹⁵ The "Body" that "is all but a Belly" is the body politic, which now consists only of the House of Commons. Lovelace, then, no less than philosophical poets such as Donne and Milton, incorporated into his poetry familiar seventeenth-century

¹⁵Wilkinson, p. 311.

notions of order.

Lovelace and his contemporaries possess the rare distinction of being one of the last generations (if not the last) to be inculcated with this sense of order with any degree of unanimity, for the "new philosophie" was already beginning to "put all in doubt." The sensitive and perceptive men of the seventeenth century could not have avoided the notion, conspicuously evident in the observations of the "Tuscan artist," that cosmological coherence was somewhat less than unassailable. Like other educated men of the period, Lovelace was familiar with the Copernican scheme of the universe, and in "The Apostacy of one, and but one Lady" he exercises his wit on the idea of the earth's revolution:

That Frantick Errour I adore,
 And am confirm'd the Earth turns Round;
 Now satisfied O're and o're
 As rowling Waves so flowes the Ground,
 And as her Neighbour reels the shore:
 Finde such a Woman says she loves,
 She's that fixt Heav'n which never moves.
 (p. 94)

Though here he treats the new astronomical discoveries cavalierly, Lovelace clearly recognized the ominous implications for his inherited sense of order. The specter of chaos must have seemed all too real for Lovelace in his last years, after his courtly way of life had been destroyed and his aristocratic glory had departed, for in the Posthumus Poems his "Advice to my best Brother. Coll: Francis Lovelace" contains a stoic admonition prefaced with an almost despairing

realization that the idea of order is no more:

Nor be too confident, fix'd on the shore
 For even that too borrows from the store
 Of her rich Neighbour, since now wisest know,
 (And this to Galileo's judgement ow)
 The palsie Earth it self is every jot
 As frail, inconstant, waveing as that blot
 We lay upon the Deep; That sometimes lies
 Chang'd, you would think, with's botoms properties,
 But this eternal strange Ixions wheel
 Of giddy earth, ne'r whirling leaves to reel
 Till all things inverted, till they are
 Turn'd to that Antick confus'd state they were.
 (p. 175)

Galileo's telescope magnified the stars, but from the distance of three centuries, what is magnified into significance is his empirical method. The scientific insistence on observation and experimentation supplanted with surprising speed the traditional methods of scholasticism, an event that signalled a drastic reorientation of the human intellect.¹⁶

The literary milieu of Lovelace's era was every bit as exciting and vibrant as the social and intellectual currents. Literacy, the publication of books, and the number of professional authors all increased considerably, but more significant is the unrivalled corpus of prestigious literature produced in England in the latter part of the sixteenth and earlier part of the seventeenth centuries. The wealth of literature is perhaps in part attributable to the wealth of traditions from which the poet could draw material for the

¹⁶ Basil Willey, The Seventeenth Century Background (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1953), p. 17.

enrichment of his poetry. Lovelace, whose translations out of French and Latin verify his familiarity with Continental and classical literary influences, displays the effects of both foreign and domestic traditions in his poetry.

Of the lingering Elizabethan traditions, Lovelace was predisposed most noticeably to Petrarchan conceits and sentiments. Often, his mistress's hair is a "spicie Neast," her eyes are stars or suns, and her heart is always marble. The Petrarchan ilk is exemplified in "Lucasta's World," in which the Heroine's mere sigh and glance generate astounding but conventional occurrences:

Cold as the breath of winds that blow
 To silver shot descending snow
 Lucasta sight; when she did close
 The World in frosty chaines!
 And then a frowne to Rubies frose
 And blood boyl'd in our veines:
 Yet cooled not the heat her Sphere
 Of Beauties, first had kindled there.

Then mov'd and with a suddaine Flame
 Impatient to melt all againe,
 Straight from her eyes she lightning hurl'd,
 And Earth in ashes mournes;
 The Sun his blaze denies the world,
 And in her luster burnes:
 Yet warmed not the hearts, her nice
 Disdaine had first congeal'd to Ice
 (p. 89)

The courtly tradition transmitted by Petrarch also included a rather intricate, stylized reaction of suffering, sorrow, and despair on the part of the forlorn lover; in "A La Bourbon" Lovelace strikes the proper abject posture:

Divine Destroyer pittie me no more,
 Or else more pittie me;
 Give me more Love, Ah quickly give me more,
 Or else more Cruelty!

For left thus as I am,
 My heart is Ice and Flame;
 And languishing thus I
 Can neither Live nor Dye!
 (p. 97)

"Love Conquer'd" is unique in that Cupid rather than the poet is inflamed by the lady and, consequently, is reduced to a groveling courtly lover:

Now the Prince of fires burnes!
 Flames in the luster of her eyes;
 Triumphant she, refuses, scornes;
 He submits, adores, and mournes,
 And is his Votresse Sacrifice.
 (p. 32)

Perhaps a less familiar feature of the courtly love tradition is the aube, or dawn poem, in which the lovers are awakened at dawn and voice their grief at the necessity of parting,¹⁷ a situation exploited by Lovelace in "Dialogue, Lucasta, Alexis" (p. 41). Petrarchan conceits and courtly conventions, common, but not excessive, in Lovelace's poetry, constitute the most significant legacy he received from the Age of Elizabeth. The Spenserian tradition of the same era had relatively little specific effect on Lovelace, but generally it seems to have provided an impetus toward the richness of imagery exhibited in his poetry, and perhaps prompted the occasional emergence of the pastoral mode in Caroline lyrics.

The reaction against the poetic superfluities of the Spenserians and the Petrarchans was advanced on one front by

¹⁷R. E. Kaske, "The Aube in Chaucer's Troilus," Chaucer Criticism, Vol. II: Troilus and Criseyde & The Minor Poems, eds. Richard J. Schoeck and Jerome Taylor (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1961), p. 167.

Ben Jonson, who was disenchanted with the ornamental diction and the cloudy idealism of the Elizabethans. Jonson's "plain style," gleaned from an intensive study of classical writers, is an amalgam of related qualities including his epigrammatic conciseness,¹⁸ his striving for classical virtues of clarity, unity, symmetry, and proportion,¹⁹ his "unswerving directness of language and naked dignity of style,"²⁰ his conscious concern for form,²¹ his avowed masculinity, and his contribution in the direction of reason and order.²²

Because he was lionized by his contemporaries, Jonson's precepts received wide currency and were the objects of emulation by many aspiring poets of the earlier seventeenth century.

Though Lovelace was never numbered among the "Sons of Ben," his poetry testifies to his acquaintance with Jonson's style.

"To Lucasta, The Rose" echoes Jonson's famous "Song, To Celia" in theme and simplicity of tone, as illustrated by the first and last stanzas:

Sweet serene skye-like Flower,
Haste to adorn her Bower:
From thy long cloudy bed,
Shoot forth thy damaske head.
.....

¹⁸Robert Lathrop Sharp, From Donne to Dryden: The Revolt Against Metaphysical Poetry (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965) p. 11.

¹⁹Douglas Bush, English Literature of the Earlier Seventeenth Century (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1945), p. 111.

²⁰Ralph S. Walker, "Ben Jonson's Lyric Poetry," Seventeenth-Century Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. William R. Keast (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 184.

²¹Ibid., p. 182. ²²Sharp, p. 11.

But early as she dresses,
 Why fly you her bright Tresses?
 Ah! I have found I feare;
 Because her Cheekes are neere.
 (pp. 23-24)

Jonson's "Still to be Neat" is imitated most successfully by Herrick in "Delight in Disorder," but Lovelace captures some of the Baroque revelry in disarray which inspires those two poems in his "To Amarantha, That she would dishevell her hair":

Amarantha sweet and faire,
 Ah brade no more that shining haire!
 As my curious hand or eye,
 Hovering round thee let it flye.

Ev'ry Tresse must be confest
 But neatly tangled at the best;
 Like a Clue of golden thread,
 Most excellently ravelled.
 (pp. 20-21)

Another poem of Lovelace's approaches the theme of "Still to be Neat" from the opposite direction,²³ but the Jonsonian air of simplicity rapidly fades after the opening lines of this passage:

Strive not, vain Lover, to be fine,
 Thy silk's the Silk-worms, and not thine;
 You lessen to a Fly your Mistris Thought,
 To think it may be in a Cobweb caught.
 What though her thin transparent lawn
 Thy heart in a strong Net hath drawn?
 Not all the Arms of the God of Fire ere made,
 Can the soft Bulwarks of nak'd Love invade.
 (p. 123)

²³ Geoffrey Walton, "The Cavalier Poets," From Donne to Marvell, ed. Boris Ford ("Pelican Guide to English Literature," vol. III; Baltimore: Penguin Books 1956), p. 163.

Jonson also gave rise, in such poems as "To Penhurst," to a stream of poetry of "the gentleman writing as a gentleman about his position and responsibilities, his interests and pleasures," a stream which dried up with the Cavaliers.²⁴

Lovelace's contribution to the stream is "The Falcon," in which he attempts to capture the rural English scene in a civilized tone.²⁵ Lovelace, then, was sensitive to the placid yet steady force which "Noble Ben" exerted on the seventeenth century; and Lovelace, no less than many of his contemporaries, through Jonson received intimations of the power of the classical lyrists.²⁶

The direct influence of the classical poets, as H. J. C. Grierson points out, is relatively small, but many of the Carolines, metaphysical and courtly, owe much, "both of their turn of conceit and care for form to . . . the Latin lyrists, Anacreon, The Greek Anthology, neo-Latin or Humanist poetry so rich in neat and pretty conceits."²⁷ Anacreon, a Greek poet of the sixth century B.C. who wrote love lyrics and drinking songs, enjoyed such phenomenal popularity in the seventeenth century that imitations of his poems, collected

²⁴Geoffrey Walton, "The Tone of Ben Jonson's Poetry," Seventeenth-Century Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. William R. Keast (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 206.

²⁵Ibid., p. 203.

²⁶F. R. Leavis, "The Line of Wit," Seventeenth-Century Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. William R. Keast (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 38.

²⁷H. J. C. Grierson, "Metaphysical Poetry," Seventeenth-Century English Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. William R. Keast (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p.17.

in a volume entitled Anacreontics, were themselves widely imitated. The frequent Anacreontic admonition to drown one's sorrow in drink is readily duplicated by the fallen Cavalier in "A Loose Saraband," though the last three stanzas display a lurking pessimism:

See all the World how't staggers,
 More ugly drunk than we,
 As if far gone in daggers,
 And blood it seem'd to be:
 We drink our glass of Roses,
 Which nought but sweets discloses,
 Then in our Loyal Chamber,
 Refresh us with Loves Amber.

Now tell me, thou fair Cripple,
 That dumb canst scarcely see
 Th' almightinesse of Tipple,
 And th' ods 'twixt thee and thee;
 What of Elizium's missing?
 Still Drinking and still Kissing;
 Adoring plump October;
 Lord! what is Man and Sober?

Now, is there such a Trifle
 As Honour, the fools Gyant?
 What is there left to rifle,
 When Wine makes all parts plyant?
 Let others Glory follow,
 In their false riches wallow,
 And with their grief be merry;
 Leave me but Love and Sherry.

(pp. 140-141)

The pastoral tradition, very much alive in the earlier seventeenth century, originated with Theocritus, a Greek poet of the third century B.C. whose highly favorable, yet realistic, descriptions of rural society became idealized and allegorized in his greatest imitator, Virgil. The stylized conventions of the tradition obviously were incompatible with Lovelace's poetic powers as witnessed by this absurd passage

from "Aramantha. A Pastorall":

A rev'rend Lady Cow drawes neare,
 Bids Aramantha welcome here;
 And from her privy purse lets fall
 A pearle or two, which seeme to call
 This adorn'd adored Fayry
 To the banquet of her Dayry.
 (p. 110)

But the rest of the poem is not consistently as poor as this; in fact, the catalogues of flowers and trees are skillfully handled.

Another classical contribution to seventeenth-century poetry is the carpe diem theme which was transmitted primarily by the Latin poets Catullus, Horace, and Ovid. Catullus's Vivamus, mea Lesbia is copied most successfully by Herrick in "Corrina's Going A-Maying" and "To the Virgins, to make much of Time,"²⁸ and Lovelace echoes the theme in "To Amarantha, That she would dishevell her haire" when he complains, "That joyes so ripe, so little keepe." Horace's advice to enjoy life's fleeting pleasures without delay is tempered by a moral tone which emphasizes restraint and the importance of peace of mind. This Horatian tone, one authority has noticed, permeates Lovelace's "The Grasse-hopper,"²⁹ and is also discernible in his "Advice to my best Brother." In addition to his part in spreading the carpe diem theme, Ovid

²⁸Karl Pomeroy Harrington, Catullus and his Influence (Boston: Marshall Jones Company, 1923), p. 178.

²⁹D. C. Allen, "Richard Lovelace: 'The Grasse-Hopper,'" Seventeenth-Century English Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. William R. Keast (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 282.

must also be credited for initiating many of the principles of courtly love, a waning but nonetheless accepted tradition in Lovelace's time.³⁰ And, of course, Ovid supplied the poets of the seventeenth century with a host of mythological allusions and subjects from his Metamorphoses, which is probably Lovelace's source for his two songs, "Orpheus to Beasts" and "Orpheus to Woods."

An examination of the literary milieu of the earlier seventeenth century would be incomplete without mention of the chief purveyor of the "strong line" and the "metaphysical wit," John Donne. Lack of space prohibits a full description of his work, but his characteristic influences may be deduced from Lovelace's poetry, for Lovelace, as many poets of the era, reflects the toughness and conciseness exuded by Donne's poetry. For example, Donne's abrupt, personal opening inspired Lovelace in "Valiant Love" which begins, "Now fie upon that everlasting Life, I Dye!" Donne's themes and attitudes were widely admired and, thus, subject to imitation; Lovelace in "To Lucasta, Going beyond the Seas" rejects "dull, sublunary" love no less unequivocally than does Donne in "The Ectasy" and "A Valediction, Forbidding Mourning." In such poems as "Woman's Constancy" and "The Indifferent," Donne expresses

³⁰ Lisle Cecil John, in The Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), traces to Ovid the conception of love as a malicious, vindictive little tyrant (p. 49), the conception of love in the breast of a lady or in the heart of the poet (p. 56), and the symptoms of love as "solitariness, alternation of heat and cold, absentmindedness, restlessness in absence, bashfulness, etc." (pp. 81-82).

two of his favorite themes, variety in love and fickleness in love, which are rendered by Lovelace in "The Scrutinie":

Why should you sweare I am forsworn,
 Since thine I vow'd to be?
 Lady it is already Morn,
 And 'twas last night I swore to thee
 That fond impossibility.

.
 Then, if when I have lov'd my round,
 Thou prov'st the pleasant she;
 With spoyles of meaner Beauties crown'd
 I laden will returne to thee,
 Ev'n sated with Varietie.

(pp. 26-27)

These passages also suggest that Lovelace was familiar with Donne's metaphysical method of building poetic arguments in which the poet analyzes his own feelings through unique dialectical logic. Some of this analytic spirit, coupled with Donne's toughness, results in a very metaphysical performance in Lovelace's "Sonnet. When I by thy faire shape did sweare":

When I by thy faire shape did sweare,
 And mingled with each Vowe a teare,
 I lov'd, I lov'd thee best,
 I swore as I profest;
 For all the while you lasted warme and pure,
 My Oathes too did endure;
 But once turn'd faithlesse to thy selfe, and Old,
 They then with thee incessantly grew Cold.

I swore my self thy Sacrifice
 By th' Ebon Bowes that guard thine eyes,
 Which now are alter'd White,
 And by the glorious Light
 Of both those Stars, of which (their Spheres bereft)
 Only the Gellie's left:
 Then changed thus, no more I'm bound to you
 Then swearing to a Saint that proves untrue.

(p. 44)

Finally, Donne's metaphysical wit, generated by a sense of unity of creation, gave rise to striking conceits and images. Lovelace emulates the metaphysical conceit with epigrammatic conciseness--"But shake your head and scatter day" and "green Ice"--and in longer passages:

Not yet looke back, nor yet, must we
Run then like spoakes in wheelles eternally
And never overtake?

("A forsaken Lady. . .," p. 36)

In "Elinda's Glove" Lovelace expands his conceit to fanciful lengths:

Thou snowy Farme with thy five Tenements!
Tell thy white Mistris here was one
That call'd to pay his dayly Rents:
But she a gathering Flowr's and Hearts is gone,
And thou left voyd to rude Possession.

(p. 58)

Donne's intellectual tone and passionate intensity, then, are extremely significant for the student of Lovelace, or for that matter, for the student of any figure or facet of the literary milieu of the earlier seventeenth century. To the Cavaliers, on whom we now focus our attention, Donne bequeathed "the peculiar dash which makes their verse go with such incomparable throb and soar."³¹

The Cavaliers were a group of poets linked by their Royalist political bent and by their penchant for producing light love lyrics and occasional verse. The epithet "elegant court trifler" has been applied to all of them (excepting

³¹George Williamson, The Donne Tradition (New York: The Noonday Press, 1930) p. 202.

Herrick) with nauseous regularity, but it is, for the most part, an entirely adequate and warranted designation. The Cavaliers attempted neither to scale sublime philosophical heights nor to plumb soul-searching depths in their poetry. There is an air of casualness about their work, which does not stem, as is often charged, from a disdain of poetic craftsmanship, but rather from their common cultivation of direct and often colloquial language, the conversational idiom of English aristocratic speech.³² Through this language they project a personality of graceful carelessness, which is deceiving in its very simplicity: Carew's poems no less than Suckling's seem to flow with effortless ease, but there is no reason to doubt Suckling's claim in "A Session of the Poets" that Carew's verse "Was seldom brought forth but with trouble and pain," while Suckling admits that "He lov'd not the Muses so well as his sport." Even the posture of an "elegant court trifler," it would seem, might be a difficult one to assume, for spontaneity is often the result of careful workmanship. On the other hand, a lamentable portion of Cavalier poetry exhibits carelessness that is anything but graceful and amateurish lapses that invade the best and pervade the worst of their lyrics.

The Cavaliers conveniently fall into three groups when classified according to chronology, primacy of influences, and characteristic tone. The first "group" has only one

³²Walton, From Donne to Marvell, p. 161.

member--Robert Herrick. Herrick, the eldest of the Cavaliers, strove for the classical virtues of symmetry and order in his poetry which he found in Ben Jonson, whom he addressed as "Saint Ben." Unlike the other Cavaliers, Herrick was neither courtier nor aristocrat; he was an urbane parson slightly discontented in rural Devon because he was exiled from the select literary circles of the "Sons of Ben." That he became positively affected by the rural culture which he viewed with a stranger's eye is evidenced in his poetry, which captures the underlying rhythm of rustic existence:

I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and bowers:
 Of April, May, of June, and July flowers.
 I sing of May-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
 Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal cakes.
 I write of youth, of love, and have access
 By these, to sing of cleanly wantonness.
 I sing of dews, of rains, and piece by piece
 Of balm, of oil, of spice, and ambergris.
 I sing of times trans-shifting; and I write
 How roses first came red, and lilies white.
 I write of groves, of twilights, and I sing
 The court of Mab, and of the Fairy King.
 I write of hell; I sing (and ever shall) ³³
 Of heaven, and hope to have it after all.

These lines express a direct simplicity and a charming rusticity not found in other Cavaliers.

The second group of Cavaliers includes Carew, Suckling, Cleveland, and Lovelace, who all died at an early age (Carew lived longest, to forty-six), who all died before the Restoration, and who all wrote, or attempted, some verse in the metaphysical vein. Both Carew and Lovelace effect a

³³"The Argument of His Book," Poetical Works, ed. L. C. Martin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 5.

roughly symmetrical reconciliation of the Donnean and Jonsonian poetic modes and influences. Carew's fine critical acumen displayed in "An Elegy Upon the Death of Doctor Donne, Dean of Paul's" plus the conscious poetic craftsmanship and subtle intelligence evident in much of his poetry have brought him recent favorable attention.³⁴ In Suckling, Donne's influence prevails, but it is the young Donne's cynicism which Suckling copies most scrupulously, to which he adds flippancy and, sometimes, brutality (e.g. "T[homas] C[arew] having the P[ox]," and "The Deformed Mistress"). John Cleveland's attempt to emulate Donne results in a parody of the metaphysical wit based on conceits that turn out to be wildly hyperbolic comparisons lacking profundity and passion. Cleveland's positive literary achievement was in the realm of satire, which, unfortunately, had not yet vaulted to the position of popularity it was to hold in the eighteenth century.

The last group of Cavaliers, Davenant, Denham, and Waller, lived on into the Restoration and are mainly remembered for initiative in contributing to the establishment of some aspect of neoclassicism. Although Davenant's literary interests tended toward the Restoration theatre, he wrote a long poem, Gondibert, ostensibly an epic, which is notable for its avoidance of conceits and its proclivity for the balance of the

³⁴ See Leavis, p. 49; and Walton, From Donne to Marvell, p. 165.

closed couplet.³⁵ Denham, even more than Davenant, anticipates the neoclassic style, especially in his "Cooper's Hill" in which there is not just a proclivity, but increasingly an insistence on the closed couplet. Waller completes the bridge to the Augustan Age. Because of his part in the development of the closed couplet, he won universal praise and was hailed as the reformer of "our numbers" by Dryden. Waller's smoothness distinguishes him from the earlier Cavaliers, for his poetry exudes, not the bravado of the amateur, but the assurance of the professional--a poet who writes for public acceptance.³⁶

If the Cavaliers as a group sang of the joys of life, then Richard Lovelace's voice can be heard among the rest, singing sweetly yet manfully, in a voice sometimes indistinct, but always wide in its range and marked by fine tonal patterns, if not consistent control. Lovelace, it should be evident by now, is linked closest to the metaphysical branch of the Cavaliers, particularly Carew and Suckling. Their remarkable proximity is illustrated by the following three passages, one from each poet, which are hardly distinguishable:

- (1) I burn, and cruel you in vain
 Hope to quench me with disdain;
 If from your eyes those sparkles came
 That have kindled all this flame,
 What boots it me, though now you shroud
 Those fierce comets in a cloud?

³⁵ Sharp, p. 124.

³⁶ Robin Skeleton, Cavalier Poets ("Writers and Their Work," ed. Bonamy Dobree; London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1960), p. 36.

Since all the flames that I have felt
 Could your snow yet never melt:
 Nor can your snow, though you should take
 Alps into your bosom, slake
 The heat of my enamour'd heart.

- (2) If thou be'st ice, I do admire
 How thou couldst set my heart on fire;
 Or how thy fire could kindle me,
 Thou being ice, and not melt thee;
 But even my flames, lit at thy own,
 Have hard'ned thee into a stone!
 Wonder of love, that canst fulfil,
 Inverting nature thus, thy will;
 Making ice one another burn,
 Whilst itself doth harder turn!
- (3) But oh, return those fires, too cruel nice!
 For whilst you fear me cinders, see! I'm ice;
 A numbed speaking clod, and mine own show,
 Myself congeal'd, a man cut out in snow.
 Return those living fires, thou who that vast
 Double advantage from one-ey'd heav'n hast;
 Look with one sun, though't but obliquely be,
 And if not shine, vouchsafe to wink on me.³⁷

In these verses, Carew, Suckling, and Lovelace embroider Petrarchan conventions with their metaphysical wit to produce strikingly similar results.

But there are important differences among these poets. Suckling's school-boy obscenity and avowed careless composition, for instance, are avoided or at least muted in Carew and Lovelace. Carew is the most careful poetic craftsman of the three, for in his best poetry he seems always able to unite sound and sense in an admirable structure. Lovelace was just

³⁷ In order to insure standardized spelling, all three passages were taken from Minor Poets of the Seventeenth Century, ed. R. G. Howarth (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1953). (1) Carew, "To My Mistress, I Burning in Love" (p. 91); (2) Suckling, "The Miracle" (p. 236); (3) Lovelace, "The Triumphs of Philamore and Amoret" (p. 345).

as deliberate as Carew in his composition, but his lapses in tone, syntax, and word selection suggest that he lacked the gift of self-criticism. However, Lovelace, as Douglas Bush points out, "has a wider range of theme and tone and image than Carew and Suckling."³⁸ There runs through Lovelace's poetry a deeper strain of seriousness, perhaps resulting from the search for permanence underlying much of his poetry, which imparts a sense of the hidden and eternal. The Neoplatonic resolution of love in "To Lucasta, Going Beyond the Seas" and the noble reliance on honor in "To Lucasta, Going to the Warres" are both expressions of Lovelace's faith in immutable things, a faith somewhat shaken by the time he wrote,

For tell me how they differ, tell me pray,
A cloudy tempest, and a too fair day.

("Advice to my best Brother,"
p. 176)

Lovelace's tone ranged from the earnest moralism of "the Grasse-hopper" to the gay seduction of "Depose your finger of that ring"; from the argumentative wit of "The Scrutinie" to the bitter satire of "A Mock-Song"; it even includes the proud disdain of the haughty female in "A forsaken Lady to her false Servant." Lovelace's poetry accommodates courtly themes and conventional images, which are, nevertheless,

³⁸English Literature of the Earlier Seventeenth Century, p. 123.

often intruded upon by metaphysical flashes. It is this variety, both derivative and original, which contributes much to the vitality of Lovelace's work.

CHAPTER III

THE POETRY

Lovelace's poetry derives part of its strength from the variety of theme, tone, and imagery which springs from the poet's versatility, but a close examination also discloses that his poetry exhibits certain patterns, suggesting, perhaps, that Lovelace's composition was governed by some guiding principles. It will be my purpose in this chapter to demonstrate both the variety and the patterns in Lovelace's poetry. To this end, the analytic techniques of the now aging "New Criticism" will be primarily, but not exclusively, employed.

Lovelace, as indicated in the previous chapter, was strongly influenced by the poetry of Donne and the Metaphysicals, the poetry in which the New Critics have found their standard of greatness. Taking their cue from Eliot, they set about filing their critical tools on the rough verse of the Metaphysicals; the effect was mutually beneficent. Not only were the New Critics successful in establishing their critical procedures, but they also demonstrated the extraordinary power of metaphysical verse. This power stems mainly from the ability of the poet to synthesize within his poetry widely divergent and conflicting elements, in imagery that is

functional rather than decorative, achieving the desired union of emotion and thought. In an attempt to discover the extent to which Lovelace accommodated his admittedly limited poetic genius to this metaphysical virtue, much of this chapter will concern itself with the efficacy of his imagery.

Throughout this chapter, an attempt will also be made to document Lovelace's effective use of conflict-structures, such as wit, irony, paradox, and ambiguity, which have been highly praised by New Critics as fundamental ingredients in meritorious poetry. By "wit," the New Critics understand more than a superficial ingenuity; it is the ability of the poet to perceive the thread of unity in disparate phenomena and situations, and to discover the unexpected in the obvious.¹ Irony has long been accepted as a literary virtue, but some of the New Critics, especially Brooks, emphasize its formative role in good poetry.² Once considered flaws in any kind of writing, paradox and ambiguity have come to be considered positive poetic achievements through the intercession of the New Critics. Brooks has defended paradox as inescapable in good poetry, for the poet "must work by contradiction and qualification."³ William Empson serves in the corresponding

¹This is mainly Cleanth Brooks' definition as reported by William Elton, A Glossary of New Criticism (2nd ed. rev.; Chicago: Modern Poetry Association, 1949), p. 47.

²Ibid., p. 24.

³Cleanth Brooks, "The Language of Paradox," Critiques and Essays in Criticism, ed. Robert W. Stallman (New York: Ronald Press, 1949), p. 70.

role of saviour for ambiguity. In Seven Types of Ambiguity, he examines the richness and heightening of effect produced by this device, which he finds located "among the very roots of poetry."⁴ When the imagery, the conflict-structures, the formal details, and the sense of a poem happily coincide in a coherent whole, the result is an organic unity or what Allen Tate calls "tension," the reconciliation of the abstract and the concrete, of the denotation and the connotation.⁵ To propose that Lovelace's poetry everywhere, or with any consistency, exhibits these poetic virtues is unwarranted, but to suggest that some of his poetry (certainly more than the two inevitable lyrics of anthology fame) may indeed bear a close analysis is substantiated by an examination of representative poems. However, before commencing such an examination, it will be well to depart momentarily from the fold of the New Critics to notice the thematic pattern in Lovelace's poetry.

There is a deeper strain of philosophical awareness in Lovelace's poetry than is found in the other Cavaliers. He treats, of course, many of the same themes (e.g. extravagant compliments to a lady, seduction pleas) common to his contemporaries. But the turbulence in the philosophical sphere brought on by scientific discoveries did not, as suggested

⁴ (2nd ed.; London: Chatto and Windus, 1949), p. 3.

⁵ Allen Tate, "Tension in Poetry," Critiques and Essays in Criticism, ed. Robert W. Stallman (New York: Ronald Press, 1949), p. 60.

in the preceding chapter, fail to impress upon Lovelace the decay of world order as he knew it. Moreover, his own hectic and chaotic life must have served as a microcosmic example of the macrocosmic disintegration. So it is not surprising to find in Lovelace's poetry a reaction against this disintegration, a reaction described by Bruce King as a process in which the poet turns inward in an effort to ward off reality.⁶ This is the process evident in the last stanza of the famous "To Althea, From Prison":

Stone Walls doe not a Prison make,
Nor I'ron bars a Cage;
Mindes innocent and quiet take
That for an Hermitage;
If I have freedome in my Love,
And in my soule am free;
Angels alone that sore above,
Injoy such Liberty.

(p. 79)

Beneath the gay exterior confidence of these lines runs a current of philosophical uneasiness based on the denial of the significance of the external, physical world for "Mindes innocent and quiet." In a sense, King is correct when he claims that in such lines Lovelace is attempting to avoid reality; however, it might be more accurate to characterize Lovelace's philosophical stance as an affirmation of the primacy of subjective reality over objective reality. This affirmation stems from his recognition that external existence does not offer any stability or permanence.

⁶Bruce King, "Green Ice and a Breast of Proof," College English, XXVI (April, 1965), p. 511.

"To Lucasta. From Prison" is a suitable paradigm of Lovelace's dilemma: he rejects peace, war, religion, parliament, liberty, property, reformation, and public faith because they are blighted or perverted, and the only worthy object for his veneration is the King. But, of course, after he was beheaded, Charles I hardly offers a shining example of permanence that the Cavalier might wish for. Lovelace's world has disintegrated into a miserable, unruly, and instable existence:

And now an universall mist
Of Error is spread or'e each breast,
With such a fury edg'd as is
Not found in th' inwards of th' Abyesse.

("To Lucasta. From Prison," p. 51)

Lovelace's position, in fact, is very similar to that of Milton's Satan awakening to find himself in the depths of Hell, so it is not too remarkable that their solutions are the same, for Lovelace, no less than Satan, asserts:

The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.

(Paradise Lost, I, 254-255)

Lovelace's version of this same notion, as he expresses it in "To his Deare Brother Colonel F. L. immoderately mourning my Brothers untimely Death at Carmarthen," sounds chivalric rather than Satanic:

But this way you may gaine the field,
Oppose but sorrow and 'twill yield;
One gallant thorough-made Resolve
Doth Starry Influence dissolve.

(p. 86)

Subjective reality, then, becomes for Lovelace a means for attaining some measure of stability in his life, and it underlies

many poems which might at first glance seem totally dissimilar. In "The Grasse-Hopper," Lovelace openly recommends the subjective approach to reality to his friend, Charles Cotton:

Thou best of Men and Friends! we will create
A genuine Summer in each others breast;
And spite of this cold Time and frosen Fate
Thaw us a warme seate to our rest.

(p. 39)

Even though objective reality dictates a "cold Time and frosen Fate," Lovelace and his friend will be able to surmount this outrageous fortune by establishing a personal (subjective) relationship. The last stanza reiterates the idea explicitly:

Thus richer than untempted Kings are we,
That asking nothing, nothing need;
Though Lord of all what Seas imbrace; yet he
That wants himselfe, is poore indeed.

(p. 40)

Someone who "wants himself" obviously refers to a person who lacks the proper firmness of will necessary to project a stable reality.

The absurd lengths to which Lovelace could carry the idea of subjective reality are evident in "Love made in the first Age: To Chloris," a sly seduction plea covertly contained in a blissful description of "that golden Age" when love was yet unsullied by false prudery and corrupt conventions. In the last stanza the poet suddenly exposes his true intention:

Now, Chloris! miserably crave,
The offer'd blisse you would not have;
Which evermore I must deny,

Whilst ravish'd with these Noble Dreams,
 And crowned with mine own soft Beams,
 Injoying of my self I lye.
 (p. 148)

Here truly is avoidance of reality, for Lovelace's subjective reality has eroded into mere imagined, voluptuous, private revelry. The snail, which Lovelace addresses as

Wise Emblem of our Politick World,
 Sage Snayl, within thine own self curl'd . . . ,
 ("The Snayl," p. 136)

becomes a symbol of the self-sustaining powers of subjective reality:

But banisht, I admire his fate
 Since neither Ostracisme of State,
 Nor a perpetual exile,
 Can force this Virtue change his Soyl;
 For wheresoever he doth go,
 He wanders with his Country too.
 ("Another," p. 138)

After the Puritans came to power, Lovelace must have often felt ostracized and exiled, and as his poetry testifies, he attempted to mold himself psychologically and philosophically into the self-contained shape of the snail. Occasionally his firmness of will seems to have given way under the pressures of objective reality, for in such poems as "A loose Saraband" (pp. 139-141) and "A Mock-Song" (pp. 154-155) Lovelace's tone is unmistakably bitter and disillusioned.

One need not be a psychologist, I think, to recognize that much of Lovelace's poetry represents an attempt on the part of the poet to escape the hostility and turmoil rampant in England during his adult life. Preferring not to emigrate from his native land, as the Puritans had done in the earlier

part of the century, he stayed in England and maintained his sanity through a curious blend of Horatian contentment, Epicurean enjoyment, Platonic transcendence, and an idealistic exaltation of Cavalier values such as honor and nobility in defeat. Lovelace was a cautious libertine, if he were a libertine at all. His passion for liberty does not include a totally detached freedom; he always wants his liberty firmly anchored.

The major rhetorical pattern of Lovelace's poetry is antithesis. Whatever modest success his poems enjoy, individually and as an integrated corpus, is for the most part attributable to Lovelace's handling of antithesis in its several forms. In his imagery and in his use of conflict-structures such as paradox, irony, oxymoron, and wit, Lovelace strives for poetic coherency through contrast. Occasionally he is successful, and the result is a pleasing tension.

The spectrum of Lovelace's imagery includes exquisite metaphysical touches which mark him as the most adept emulator of the school of Donne among the Cavaliers,⁷ but for the most part his choice of imagery is quite as conventional as most of his themes. That is, as a seventeenth-century poet, Lovelace's main concern was not producing imagery of local or specific significance to himself or to his readers, but rather creating "tied" images (those possessing standard meanings

⁷C. V. Wedgwood, Seventeenth-Century English Literature (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 81.

and associational values for most readers) which fulfilled the dictates of decorum,⁸ as, for example, he does in the fourth stanza of "To Amarantha, That she would dishevell her haire":

IV.

Doe not then winde up that light
In Ribands, and o're-cloud in Night;
Like the Sun in's early ray,
But shake your head and scatter day.
(p. 21)

The comparison between light and Amarantha's hair is, of course, a conventional Petrarchanism, and it serves to apotheosize the mistress, or at least raise her above the mundane level of existence, by ascribing to her the power over night and day. The very conventionality of the conceit, therefore, would insure that the seventeenth-century reader would consider the comparison entirely appropriate. More than that, Lovelace, in the preceding stanzas of the poem, subtly infuses Amarantha's hair with an aura of light, so that the light-dark contrast of the quoted stanza seems even more appropriate and organic.

I.

Amarantha sweete and faire,
Ah brade no more that shining haire
As my curious hand or eye,
Hovering round thee let it flye.

II.

Let it flye as unconfin'd
As it's calme Ravisher, the winde;
Who hath left his darling th' East,
To wanton or'e that spicie Neast.

⁸Rosemond Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1947), p. 25.

III.

Ev'ry Tresse must be confest
 But neatly tangled at the best;
 Like a Clue of golden thread,
 Most excellently ravelled.

(pp. 20-21)

The tone of the first stanza is reserved and the imagery is restrained; "shining haire" sets the stream of imagery in motion in what must have been a common phrase long before shampoo commercials. The repetition of "let it flye" at the beginning of the second stanza signals the increased sensuality exuded especially by the oxymoron, "calme Ravisher," which establishes more blatantly the sexual overtone only hinted at by the "curious hand or eye" in the first stanza. There are no direct references to light in the second stanza; nevertheless, by juxtaposing the East with Amarantha's "spicie Neast" Lovelace calls to mind not only the rich opulence of the Orient but also implicitly suggests the rising sun, a suggestion expanded in the fourth stanza into the simile, "Like the sun in's early ray." The imagery of the third stanza consists of the standard comparison between the mistress' hair and a ball of very fine thread. Of significance is that in this case the thread is "golden," a color rich in connotations, not the least of which is its association with the hue of the sun. Thus, in the fourth stanza, having carefully and subtly prepared for the metaphor, Lovelace can with assurance identify Amarantha's hair as sunlight. The spreading rays of the rising sun might well image bright Phoebus for readers as familiar with classical mythology as

Lovelace's contemporaries,⁹ but in any event it symbolizes the vitality and potentialities of life as embodied in Amarantha.

The imagery does more than just add pleasing decorations to the poem, it also propels the argument, for "To Amarantha" is actually a disguised seduction plea. Lovelace, it will be remembered, had established the sexual possibilities as early as the first and second stanzas. In the fourth stanza, the imagery contrasts light and darkness, a contrast universally symbolic of the struggle between good and evil. It would, of course harm Lovelace's seductive intent to allude openly to the morality of the situation he proposes, but by cleverly transferring the image of light to Amarantha's hair the poet reverses the conventional morality, for if Amarantha binds her hair (and her chastity) she causes malefic night, but if she loosens her hair (and her moral scruples) she will "scatter day." Thus, the final line of the stanza ("But shake your head and scatter day.") is not only a startling piece of metaphysical wit, but is also a dramatic request couched in

⁹I must disagree with Miss Tuve (*Ibid.*, p. 298, n. 19) who claims that Lovelace's figure in this passage "would be much more poor and thin if the author could not count upon readers whose minds the picture of many-rayed bright Phoebus could be brought." Lovelace, indeed, expected of his readers a basic familiarity with classical mythology, and undeniably the hidden allusion amplifies the meaning of the passage, but Lovelace's image here (as in most of his poetry) is sufficiently universal to be appreciated even by those readers untutored in Renaissance iconography. It might increase the enjoyment of the passage to have viewed a particularly dazzling dawn, although that too is an optional preparation.

the rhetoric of the imagery.

The poet's restraint is utterly extinguished in the last three stanzas of the poem as his true intent is made clear:

V.

See 'tis broke! Within this Grove
The Bower, and the walkes of Love,
Weary lye we downe and rest,
And fanne each others panting breast.

VI.

Heere wee'l strippe and cool our fire
In Creame below, in milke-baths higher:
And when all Well's are drawn dry,
I'le drink a teare out of thine eye.

VII.

Which our very Joyes shall leave
That sorrowes thus we can deceive;
Or our very sorrowes weepe,
That joyes so ripe, so little keepe.

(p. 21)

That the lady assents to the poet's request is signalled by his ecstatic exclamation, "See 'tis broke!", in which Lovelace plys the reader as well as his mistress with an ironic ambiguity, for what has broken is daybreak and also the lady's resistance. The sun imagery now enables Lovelace to press his seduction even further, by imagining the effect of the sun's heat and dryness on the lovers as rekindling their desires. To escape this heat and dryness they must retreat to the bower (the lady's bedroom) "and fanne each others panting breast," an image reminiscent of the role of the "calme Ravisher, the winde" in stanza two. Lovelace describes this cooling of ardor through sexual fulfillment as already accomplished, as an inducement to the lady to enact his pleasant fiction into fact. The respite from the heat

and dryness sought by the lovers naturally launches a torrent of fluid images, which in stanza six range from the indelicate in the second line to the seemingly mawkish in the last. However, Lovelace's promise to drink a tear out of his lover's eye is actually a master stroke of a seducer par excellence. Not only does it strike the proper attitude of humility before his mistress, but it also gives him an opportunity to anticipate and to assuage any guilt feelings she might experience. The tear, which might spring from the lady's misgivings about the propriety of her actions, is explained by the poet in stanza seven as either left by their joys to deceive sorrow, or else it resulted from their sorrows' recognition "that joyes so ripe, so little keep." By offering the lady a choice of explanations the poet implicitly admits the flimsiness of his interpretation of the tear's significance, and suggests that his main interest is avoiding any moralistic reflection concerning their assignation.

Lovelace, then, in "To Amarantha, That she would dishevell her haire" advances his argument through most commonplace imagery, imagery which he nevertheless handles with skill and artistry. Lovelace's performance in "To Amarantha" is fairly typical of his better poems, though it is by no means his best performance. His oxymoron and ambiguity heighten the effect of the poetry by pointing up the latent sexual possibilities; as in many of his poems Lovelace elevates the dramatic intensity by including a change or reaction on the part of a character, a change usually signalled

by the poet's exclamation, "see!"; the imagery, usually contrasting imagery, charts the development and logical progression of the poem. In this case the imagery is especially significant because the light-dark contrast is the predominating image pattern in his poetry, which is understandable and indeed appropriate since the name of his most consistently praised mistress, Lucasta, is derived from the Latin lux casta --chaste light:

Then dart on me (Chast Light) one ray
 By which I may discry
 Thy Joy cleare through this cloudy Day
 To dresse my sorrow by.

("Lucasta paying her
 Obsequies," p. 78)

The concept of light, apart from its universal acceptance as a symbol, seems to have had a special personal significance for Lovelace. It will now be well to notice other of the main image patterns of Lovelace's poetry.

The imagery which contrasts conditions of heat and cold was standard in much Petrarchan poetry, and it is undoubtedly through this avenue that Lovelace received the impetus to make wide use of it in his poetry. Most of the time Lovelace handles the heat-cold contrast in the conventional manner; that is, the poet is either hot or cold according to the degree of felicity exhibited by his mistress toward him, or, indeed, often he experiences both of these sensations simultaneously. However, Lovelace's manipulation of the images in "A forsaken Lady to her false Servant that is disdained by his new Mistress" is unique enough to warrant our attention.

"A forsaken Lady . . ." is one of two poems Lovelace wrote in the form of the dramatic monologue, the other being "Against the Love of Great Ones."¹⁰ That these fine dramatic monologues have received, to my knowledge, no evaluation or commentary is indicative of the critical stagnation which engulfs much of Lovelace's work. The personae in both poems are female, a fact which makes Lovelace's exquisite maintenance of tonal equilibrium even more remarkable.

"A forsaken Lady . . ." is basically about the power of the mind to change or shape reality. In rhetorical flourishes (e.g. the paradox and parallelism of ". . . to be/ So truely blest, to be so curst by thee," and oxymoron-- "gladly sad") the forsaken lady claims she can endure her former lover's disfavor but not his derision, a derision all the more callous since he suffers rejection from his new mistress:

Thou most unjust, that really dost know,
And feelst thy selfe the flames I burne in, Oh!
How can you beg to be set loose from that
Consuming stake, you binde another at?
(p. 35)

The heat imagery, as Lovelace applies it here, is entirely within the Petrarchan convention; however, the "consuming stake" emphasizes a love that is both confining and passionately destructive. The lady then expresses the futility of their respective desires in one of Lovelace's finest conceits:

¹⁰The text of "A forsaken Lady . . ." is reproduced in the appendix, pp. 118-119.

. . . must we
Run then like spoakes in wheeles eternally
And never overtake?

(p. 36)

She then answers her own query:

No, I will turne
And with my goodnes boldly meete your scorn.

The "turn" is a fine touch of ambiguity because the reader's association with the "turning wheel" conceit deceives him into believing, for an instant, that she will continue the hopeless turning; but actually she promises to reverse and rebuke his scorn with what she vaguely describes as "my goodnes." The lady's good intentions, however, are short-lived, for she experiences a sudden transformation of will:

But I am chang'd! bright reason that did give
My soule a noble quicknes, made me live
One breath yet longer, and to will, and see,
Hath reacht me pow'r to scorne as well as thee.

The celerity of the lady's transformation is certainly a bit too abrupt to suit the modern taste for psychological accuracy, but then Lovelace was not attempting to satisfy modern taste. In any case, the lady's earnest conversational tone is constantly tempered by the complexity and precision of her ratiocinative powers (exhibited in her rhetorical sallies in paradox, oxymoron, and repetition) which suggest that she had already reined in her emotions and only wanted to announce her disdain for her former lover in a dramatic context. In the final lines of the poem the full impact of the lady's transformation is brought home in the contrasting heat-cold imagery; even the tone is altered to capture an

incantatory rhythm:

Hayle holy cold! chaste temper hayle! the fire
 Rav'd o're my purer thoughts I feele t' expire,
 And I am candied Ice; yee pow'rs! If e're
 I shall be forc't unto my Sepulcher;
 Or violently hurled into my Urne,
 Oh make me choose rather to freeze, then burne.

The imagery clearly indicates the plight of the lady and her solution. Obviously embroiled in a destructive relationship with a scornful lover, a relationship that could very well force her "unto my Sepulcher," or more likely (since their affair is a "Consuming stake") would cause her ashes to be "violently hurl's into my Urne," the lady decides to escape by turning inward, thus avoiding the harshness of reality. This is, of course, a recasting of Lovelace's favorite theme, the primacy of subjective reality. By coupling "bright reason" with the ordered control of a "chaste temper" the lady extinguishes the fire of her emotions and desires. "I am candied Ice" is an extraordinarily fine image which teases the reader with its ambiguity: if "candied" is taken as an adjective, then the line means that the lady displays a beguiling, tempting exterior of sweetness while inside she is only ice; if "candied" is read as a verb, the lady is pictured as being encrusted in ice in the manner that confections are coated in crystallized sugar. Is the lady ice throughout, or has she merely withdrawn into a shell of ice? Both images amplify and add power to the other, and both hint at the notion, made explicit in the references to the "Sepulcher" and "Urne," that the process of turning inward is

itself a destructive process. Such a suggestion marks a departure from Lovelace's usual treatment of the efficacy of the withdrawal theme in which he finds solace in subjective reality, and would seem to indicate that the lady's withdrawal is considered by Lovelace to be a decadent subjectivism, or else that Lovelace was fully aware of the flaws in his philosophical stance of stoical alienation from the vicissitudes of objective reality. When the lady chooses to freeze rather than to burn, she is nonetheless choosing death, even though it is a less painful death. Of course, we should hasten to add, the death in either case is metaphorical. Burning and freezing represent, in the poem, two different approaches to life--a warm and candid openness or a cool, detached withdrawal--of which the forsaken lady makes the proper "Lovelacian" choice.

Lovelace, as I have pointed out in Chapter II, shared the orthodox world view concerning the immutability of the heavens as contrasted with the mutability of the earth, a belief which appears in the imagery of his poetry lending credence to his themes by virtue of its wide acceptance. In the elegies, especially, frequent references are made to "the rough passe through craggy Earth to Ay'r," as in *Princesse Katherine borne, christened, buried in one day*:

Or in your journey towards Heav'n, say,
 Tooke you the World a little in your way?
 Saw'st and dislik'st its vaine pompe, then didst flye
 Up for eternall glories to the skye?

Like a Religious Ambitious one
 Aspiredst for the everlasting Crowne?
 (p. 30)

The casual tone marks this as a Cavalier document, but the sentiments might just as easily have come from Ecclesiastes. The heaven-earth contrast is also quite amenable to Lovelace's expression of Neoplatonic love as in these last two stanzas of "To Lucasta, Going beyond the Seas":

III.
 Though Seas and Land betwixt us both,
 Our Faith and Troth,
 Like separated soules,
 All time and space controules:
 Above the highest sphere wee meet
 Unseene, unknowne, and greet as Angels greet.

IV.
 So then we doe anticipate
 Our after-fate,
 And are alive i' th' skies,
 If thus our lips and eyes
 Can speake like spirits unconfin'd
 In Heav'n, their earthy bodies left behind.
 (pp. 17-18)

The lovers will be able to control "all time and space" because they will rendezvous "above the highest sphere," that is, in the primum mobile, which, according to seventeenth-century cosmology, lies beyond the fixed stars and commands those spheres beneath it.¹¹ The Neoplatonic ascension and union of the lovers is admirably captured by the rhythm of the poem. In stanza three, for instance, Lovelace inserts pauses after each verse except the fifth one, which he allows to run into the final verse creating a crescendo effect dignified by the stately parallelism of "Unseene,

¹¹Tillyard, Elizabethan World Picture, p. 38.

unknowne." The metrical pattern also illustrates the movement of the lovers: The stanza opens with a verse of iambic tetrameter which provides the earthly norm; then the separation is signalled by the abrupt cut to the following line of iambic dimeter, which in turn is superseded by four verses of ascending length--two of iambic trimeter, one of iambic tetrameter, and the climactic last line of iambic pentameter. This strategy, particularly effective in the third stanza where the metric propels the reader from the mundane level of "Seas and Land" to the transcendent heights "Above the highest sphere," operates efficiently in all of the stanzas. In addition, stanza four receives an extra dividend of meaning through Lovelace's repetition of the "i" sound in assonance and end-rime, a repetition which reinforces the notion of the lovers' height. Thus Lovelace is able to adapt not only the imagery, but also the sound and rhythm to the sense of the poem.

Lovelace displays these same talents in "A Paradox,"¹² a meditation on the pleasure afforded by contrast and variety, in which the theme is advanced through light-dark and earth-air image groups. In the beginning of the second stanza the poet, in an alliterative statement highly reminiscent of the paradoxical chant of the witches in Macbeth, generalizes about man's need of contrast for identification:

¹²The entire poem may be found in the appendix, p. 119.

Through foule, we follow faire,
 For had the World one face
 And Earth been bright as Ayre,
 We had knowne neither place.

(p. 19)

The implied foulness of the earth is based on the Ptolemaic conception of the earth as the "cesspool of the universe,"¹³ but Lovelace hints at his Cavalier concern and appreciation for the mundane in his lament that without contrast we would have "knowne neither place." The third stanza emphasizes the almost perverse nature of man which causes him to avoid the "glorious Sunne" and "runne/To some black Cave or Grot," or which causes "Heav'nly Sydney" to forego his Arcadia in favor of reading "Some odde Romance, so new." The last stanza continues the downward movement of the imagery, from the sky to the earth, but switches to a mythological frame of reference:

The God that constant keeps
 Unto his Dieties,
 Is poore in Joyes, and sleeps
 Imprison'd in the skies:

This knew the wisest, who
 From Juno stole, below
 To love a Beare, or Cow

(p. 20)

Lovelace points up the contrast between earth and air more vividly by juxtaposing the ethereal "God" with the mundane "Beare, or Cow," an effect he obviously strove to achieve, for he certainly knew that Callisto and Io were turned into animals only after they had consorted with Zeus. As in the last stanza of "To Lucasta, Going beyond the Seas," Lovelace wield assonance and end-rime to echo the sense; however, in

¹³Tillyard, p. 39.

this case, the repetition of the "o" sound (who, from, Juno, stole, below, To, love, Cow) accentuates the lowliness of the situation. Perhaps it is only a witty stunt on Lovelace's part, but by composing a poem in praise of variety in the unvarying, monotonous iambic trimeter metric pattern, he must certainly have been aware, and expected his readers to be aware, of the irony involved. However, through a generous use of enjambment, Lovelace does not allow the monotony of the metric to intrude upon the rhythm of the poem.

The final important contrasting-image group appearing in Lovelace's poetry which remains to be identified is the freedom-imprisonment cluster. Like all other of Lovelace's image groups, this one stems from his deep-seated dissatisfaction with the hostile world into which he was born, a dissatisfaction which tended to polarize his feelings and attitudes and, thus, his imagery. For example, in "Night. To Lucasta," Lovelace fuses his almost fanatical abhorrence of the dark with his understandable distaste for prisons:

Night! loathed Jaylor of the lock'd up Sun,
 And Tyrant-turnkey on committed day;
 Bright eyes lye fettered in thy Dungeon,
 And Heaven it self doth thy dark Wards obey:
 Thou dost arise our living Hell,
 With thee grones, terrors, furies dwell,
 Untill Lucasta doth awake,
 And with her Beams these heavy chains off shake.
(p. 126)

The rest of the poem continues the prison motif, making it one of Lovelace's longest, sustained conceits. Prison, then, takes its proper place among the other malignant images such

as darkness, coldness, and earth, in Lovelace's repertoire of standard symbols. Assuredly, Lovelace can sport with the notion also, as he does in "A Guiltlesse Lady imprisoned: after penanced":

See! that which chaynes you, you chaine here;
 The Prison is thy Prisoner;
 How much thy Jaylors Keeper art,
 He binds your hands, but you his Heart.
 (p. 84)

The idea that the lady has power to imprison her admirer is Petrarchan; the situation is derived from an Italian source;¹⁴ but the flaunting of paradox and the underlying conception that objective reality is of no significance are pure Lovelace. In his pastoral, Lovelace uses prison imagery to contrast Aramantha's simple attire with

. . . Loves Martyrs of the Towne,
 All day imprison'd in a Gown,
 Who rackt in Silke 'stead of a Dresse,
 Are cloathed in a Frame or Presse,
 And with that liberty and room,
 The dead expatiate in a Tombe.
 (p. 107)

The confining habiliment of his courtly lady friends rankled Lovelace into comparing their finery to a tomb, a favorite image of his because it compresses into one word the notions of death and eternal imprisonment. Especially in some of his Posthumus Poems which reflect his later desperate attitude, he refers to the earth as a tomb, or as "this whole World's narrow Room." However, Lovelace most often seized upon the

¹⁴Mario Praz "Review of C. H. Wilkinson's edition of Lovelace," MLR, XXI (July, 1926), 321.

freedom-imprisonment imagery as a means of presenting his speculation about the true nature of reality, as in "The Vintage to the Dungeon":

I.
 Sing out pent Soules, sing cheerfully!
 Care Shackles you in Liberty,
 Mirth frees you in Captivity:
 Would you double fetters adde?
 Else why so sadde?

Chorus.

Besides your pinion'd armes you'l finde
 Griefe too can manakell the minde.

II.
 Live then Pris'ners uncontrol'd;
 Drinke oth' strong, the Rich, the Old,
 Till Wine too hath your Wits in hold;
 Then if still your Jollitie,
 And Throats are free;

Chorus.

Tryumph in your Bonds and Paines,
 And daunce to th' Musick of your Chaines.
 (p. 46)

This Bacchanalian transcendence of objective reality pales to mere crudeness when compared with Lovelace's culminating expression of his faith in the power of the mind in his justifiably famous "To Althea, from Prison," a poem which deserves, and will receive, our close attention.

"To Althea, from Prison" has always enjoyed a preeminent position among Lovelace's poetry. The poem, as noted in Chapter I, was widely known by Lovelace's contemporaries, for even before its publication in Lucasta Lovelace was praised as the poet of "Althea." Its popularity in the seventeenth century is indicated by the fact that no less than

six manuscript copies of the poem remain extant, and that it was reprinted in several poetry and song collections.¹⁵ Since the poem was printed by Bishop Percy in his Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, 1765, it has rarely failed to be included in anthologies of seventeenth-century verse. The poem has been universally acclaimed by readers for three centuries simply on the basis of what in the nineteenth century was termed its "beauty and nobleness of thoughts," and what in the twentieth century is called "exalted idealism." The poem is indeed a stirring expression of the Cavalier spirit, or at least Lovelace's interpretation of that spirit, but it also contains other important virtues which should be delineated.

The prison was for Lovelace a symbol of all the oppressive facets of existence, up to and including the earth itself, "this whole World's narrow Room." The poem, then, is basically a blueprint detailing methods of escape from the prison. The guiding principle of the plan is the concept of the primacy of the human mind which if firmly directed may shape its own reality regardless of external events. The objects toward which the mind is directed in the poem are the love of Althea, the warmth of friendship, and loyalty to the king; through service to these, the poet achieves a freedom equalled only by the angels.

¹⁵Wilkinson, pp. 286, 350.

"To Althea" is architectonically constructed; the first three stanzas exhibit corresponding development, while the last stanza subsumes the disparate details of the preceding stanzas and ends in a climactic affirmation.

I.

When Love with unconfined wings
 Hovers within my Gates;
 And my divine Althea brings
 To whisper at the Grates:
 When I lye tangled in her haire,
 And fetterd to her eye;
 The Gods that wanton in the Aire,
 Know no such Liberty.

(p. 78)

Stanza I may serve as a paradigm of the poet's strategy in the first three stanzas. The poet describes the effect of Althea's love as paradoxically confining and yet liberating; then the poet compares his freedom, achieved through Althea's love, to that of the mythological gods, and naturally finds his to exceed theirs. Lovelace sustains the integrity of his theme (one which could have easily devolved into gross hyperbole or flippant insincerity) by his careful modulation of tone, imagery, and diction; it is his success in controlling these poetic tools that accounts for the widespread praise of the "nobility" of the verse. In the first two lines of stanza I, love is imaged as a bird-like creature, but Lovelace is careful not to identify it with any particular bird, lest its spirituality should dissolve through association with an earthly being. The presiding imagery, the freedom-imprisonment contrast, is established immediately by the reference to the "unconfined wings" of Love, and more

subtly by "Hovers," which impresses upon the reader a sense of Love's transient nature and the possibility of its momentary departure from the poet's "Gates." Love brings Althea "to whisper," a delicate verb, suggestive of the furtiveness of their meeting, containing a breathless sibilant which collides with the harsh guttural sound of "Grates." In the following two lines, the poet's infatuation with Althea becomes itself a kind of imprisonment; he lies "tangled" in her hair, and "fettered to her eye." With a fine ambiguity, "tangled" not only advances the notion that the poet is ensnared by Althea, but also insinuates a latent sexual interest.

An important editorial crux occurring in line seven concerns the validity of "Gods," which is often replaced by "birds," considered by some to be more poetically "correct." The substitution of "birds" is by no means an arbitrary emendation; it is based on the fact that of the six seventeenth-century manuscripts extant, all but one reads "birds." In the face of this evidence Wilkinson demurs, explaining that the one manuscript and the printed version, both of which read "Gods," must be "accepted as the correct reading and as that which was finally approved by the poet."¹⁶ But even Wilkinson speaks wistfully of establishing "the very obvious Birds" as Lovelace's original word choice. However, it is just possible, contrary to what Wilkinson would lead us to believe, that Lovelace was striving for something aside from

¹⁶Wilkinson, p. 284.

the "very obvious." In each of the four stanzas, Lovelace introduces in the seventh line some entity whose state of freedom is compared (unfavorably in the first three stanzas) to Lovelace's freedom. These entities in the second and third stanzas are natural phenomena (fish and winds); thus, one might suppose that the entity in stanza one would also be drawn from nature (i.e. "birds"). While this type of reasoning is "very obvious," it completely ignores the internal evidence of the stanza. Lovelace does not choose the entities for comparison on an arbitrary basis; he attempts to establish a meaningful correspondence between his situation and the situation of the entity. Under this criterion "Gods" must retain its authenticity, for it is the mythological gods of classical antiquity, renowned for their amorous antics, that best mirror the poet's erotic entanglement with "divine Althea." By expanding and exploring the potential of the correspondence between himself and the gods, between, for instance, their celestial wantoning and his dallying with the divinity, Althea, Lovelace imbues his poem with the tension which distinguishes great poetry.

II.

When flowing Cups run swiftly round
 With no allaying Thames,
 Our carelesse heads with Roses bound,
 Our hearts with Loyall Flames;
 When thirsty grieffe in Wine we steepe,
 When Healths and draughts go free,
 Fishes that tippie in the Deepe,
 Know no such Libertie.

Stanza two begins in a flurry of movement, which is halted somewhat by the phonetic qualities of "allaying"; even though

to decelerate in order to avoid completely slurring and slighting the "-ing" ending. Again the poet is imprisoned by that which frees him, for he and his comrades are "bound" by "Roses" and "Loyall Flames." The imagery of the flames, the roses, and the wine invokes the proper spirit of conviviality, especially because each of the images is associated with the color red, which is richly suggestive of the warmth of true fellowship. The correspondence between the friends enjoying the coziness of a drinking bout and the "Fishes that tipple in the Deepe" bears a paradoxical relationship because the warmth generated by the poet and his companions contrasts to the proverbial coolness of the fish.

III.

When (like committed Linnets) I
 With shriller throat shall sing
 The sweetness, Mercy, Majesty,
 And glories of my King;
 When I shall voyce aloud, how Good
 He is, how great should be;
 Inlarged Winds that curle the Flood,
 Know no such Liberty.

(p. 79)

The correspondence between the poet praising the King and the "Inlarged Winds" curling the flood is based primarily on the association of the singer's breath with the gust of the wind. Lovelace's puffery of the King is defined somewhat by the action of the wind; "curle" suggests an ornate and decorous encomium, but in connection with the flood it also hints at the possibility of waves, certainly from the human viewpoint the most awe-inspiring facet of the ocean and

potentially the most destructive. If the correspondence patterns of the previous stanzas hold true in this one, then the "Flood," the object of the wind's puff, must to some degree represent the King, the object of the poet's flattery. The comparison cannot be taken too literally, of course, but to a loyal Cavalier the King might well image the majesty of the sea, and in 1642 the hopeful Lovelace could very easily have fancied the King poised as an impending deluge, ready to inundate the rising anarchy, thus clearing the way for the reemergence of order and peace.

IV.

Stone Walls doe not a Prison make,
 Nor I'ron bars a Cage;
 Mindes innocent and quiet take
 That for an Hermitage;
 If I have freedome in my Love,
 And in my soule am free;
 Angels alone that sore above,
 Injoy such Liberty.

(p. 79)

This stanza, memorized by generations of school children, suffers from the same over-exposure which has engendered in some of Shakespeare's greatest lines an aura of triteness. That the aura is ill-deserved becomes quickly apparent when the passage is given a justifiably close reading, such as William Empson obligingly includes in his Seven Types of Ambiguity.¹⁷ The paradoxical, negative statements of the first two lines are defined by the next two verses, though in an ambiguous manner which exhibits a "fundamental division

¹⁷ Empson, p. 210.

in the writer's mind."¹⁸ The ambiguity is the result, first of all, of the vagueness of "that." If "that" refers to the fact that "Stone Walls" and "I'ron bars" do not constitute a prison, then it is through the aegis of this notion that the mind is able to withdraw from the hostilities of the world; this idea brings at once, refuge and freedom. However, the syntax of the sentence indicates "that" is the "Prison" or "Cage," in which case it is admitted that even composed minds must accept the stone and iron reality of prisons and cages. There is an added ambiguity involved in "take," an usually active verb, though here the rhetoric of the verse argues for a passive interpretation. The surface meaning seems to be that "Mindes innocent and quiet" accept imprisonment philosophically and are able to turn it into good advantage, but the implication of "take" as an active verb is that such minds willingly embrace prison as a means of escape from life. This latter, perhaps slightly disreputable meaning, is muted by "quiet," immediately preceding "take," because it implies a philosophical resignation stemming from a tacit, sublime sensibility rather than from a pseudo-stoic pusillanimity. Empson is able to squeeze even another shade of meaning from "take," which is "mistake"; such innocent minds are so credulous as to draw no distinction between a prison and a hermitage, or else they pretend not to know the

¹⁸This is the distinguishing mark of Empson's seventh type of ambiguity, the most complex and poetically the richest of the seven types.

difference. In any event, the poet ironically includes himself among the either sublime or simple group of "Minds innocent and quiet."

The "Angels" correspond to the poet's soul, that part of man which most nearly resembles the pure spirituality of those celestial creatures; they alone possess the same capability of the poet to transcend the material world. The refrain applied to the pagan gods and the natural phenomena ("Know no such Liberty") is harsh and discordant because of the missing syllable in the first foot and because of the startling proximity of the two homophones. In the final stanza the refrain has been transmuted into a mellifluous exultation ("Injoy such Liberty") which adds tonal saliency to the organic unity of the poem. Lovelace does indeed achieve a "nobility of tone" in "To Althea, from Prison," not by a lucky coincidence, but by wielding considerable poetic powers.

The contrasting image patterns I have rehearsed at some length do not by any means exhaust the repertoire of Lovelace's images, but they do constitute the core of his poetic practice. In addition to these contrasting clusters, Lovelace often drew upon warfare, religion or astronomy for striking images. One of his last poetic productions, the occasional piece entitled "An Anniversary: On the Hymeneal of my noble Kinsman Tho. Stanley Esquire,"¹⁹ relies mainly upon the image of the circle to supply the thrust of the

¹⁹The full text of the poem is reproduced in the appendix, p. 120.

encomium. The choice of the circle is a happy one, for its reappearance throughout the poem serves to reiterate constantly the significance of the anniversary as a cyclic landmark of a continuing relationship. The first two verses immediately establish the completion of the temporal cycle:

The day is curl'd about agen
 To view the splendor she was in.
 (p. 177)

According to the etymology of the word, "bands" in the fourth line ("The holy man knit the mysterious bands.") would not have referred to a wedding ring in the seventeenth century, although bands were sometimes exchanged; but Lovelace is plying ambiguity because he could expect his readers to be familiar with round metal bands which would invoke the image of the circle, as well as with the usual meaning of the word--bonds.

By apostrophizing to the "self-reviving Sun," in the opening of the second stanza, Lovelace sustains a double emphasis on the circle image through the spherical shape of the sun itself and through its "self-reviving qualities: its cyclic reappearance each day and the spherical path of its "Perigrination." Tacitly comparing the eyes of Thomas Stanley and his wife to suns, Lovelace notes the circular motion made by their glances as they "Twist their soft beams" As the couple intertwine their gaze

And change their fertile Eyes with the new morn,
 A beauteous Offspring is shot forth, not born.
 (p. 177)

The morn, the beginning of a new cycle of day, is compared with the procreation of children, the beginning of a new life cycle. The "Off-spring is shot forth" as rays of dawn shoot forth into the eastern sky.

The third stanza includes an apostrophe not only to the sun, but also to the night, a move which establishes the light-darkness cycle of a full day. The sun is addressed as,

Old Spy, thou that thy race hast run,
In full five thousand Rings.

Five thousand seems a puny figure by twentieth-century standards, but Lovelace is attempting to reinforce the cosmic dimensions of his kinsman's anniversary. The final stanza contains no such overt references to the image of the circle, unless the roses are considered as geometrical designs. A nice touch is effected by the assonance in the opening lines of the stanza; the repetition of the "o" sound (Roses, strow, Io's, go, snowy, oxe) creates the notion of circularity by stressing the circular letter of the alphabet. The latter part of the stanza again describes the creative power of the eyes; the "chast" eyes of the virgins ". . . shall stamp by Sympathies, / Thousands of new-born-loves" The continuity of the life cycle ("New-born") is identified with the eternity of love, which sprouts from the eye, symbolic of the sun and eternity.

"An Anniversary" is actually an exultant paean to the cycle of existence. As the "self-reviving sun" travels its

pilgrimage around the sky creating day, so man travels through the cycle of life leaving only "un-understanding issue." The eyes of men are "fertile Eyes" yet "chast eyes" for in the cycle of existence, fertility is chastity; it is the greatest good. The sun from its vantage point is "all-seeing"; it encompasses the existence of man. The circles become chains in the links of existence--the sun over all (the deity symbol), the Seraphim and Cherubim, humans in marriage bliss and in the blessed virginal state, the "snowy Oxe," and the roses--and in a flash the theory of correspondence is expounded by illustration. The chain changes into a never-ending circular procession: Virgins strow roses, Io is transformed from nymph to heifer and back again, the white heifer is sacrificed, and the pews of the temple are "with pros'lite Lads and Lasses fill'd." They sit (or kneel) there, male and female, eager for their conversion to the sacred scheme of life, eager to form the next links in the spiral of existence.

The imagery contributes to the success of the poem because it does more than add decoration; indeed, it informs the poem with a coherency and perspective which are greater than its parts. Through the imagery the poet shows us the macrocosm in a microcosmic glimpse.

The examination of Lovelace's poetry thus far has, in an attempt to isolate the principle features of his work, unavoidably tended to fragment the poems. As a slight corrective, two of Lovelace's poems will be analyzed in the

context of their total poetic achievements rather than approached strictly through the avenue of their imagery. The first poem to be treated is the recently acclaimed "The Grasse-hopper."²⁰

The element of contrast upon which the poem turns is furtively manifested in the complete title, "The Grasse-hopper. To my Noble Friend, Mr. Charles Cotton. Ode," which naturally divides itself into three distinct parts: the first two point up the contrast between the animal world of the "Grasse-hopper" and the human level of existence of "my Noble Friend, Mr. Charles Cotton"; the last part, "Ode," establishes a tone of seriousness, by which the poet hints that this is more than just another light-hearted drinking song, a hint which has gone unnoticed by most earlier critics.²¹

Much of the tension possessed by the poem is excited by the poet's skillful balancing of comparison and contrast between the insect and man. The grasshopper is personified in the cavalier mold as "Drunke ev'ry night" and as a playboy who "Sportst in the guilt-plats of his [the sun's] Beames." The grasshopper may delight in "The Joyes of Earth and Ayre" stemming from his ability to both "hop and flye"; this exceptional versatility is actually an implicit comparison with the

²⁰The text of the poem is reproduced in the appendix, pp. 121-122.

²¹And even later ones as evidenced by Geoffrey Walton, who in his essay "The Cavalier Poets" in A Guide to English Literature: From Donne to Marvell, describes the poem as "an invitation to conviviality of which the insect is supposed to set an example," pp. 170-171.

"amphibian," man, whose unique position in the chain of being marked him as a curious blend of the sensual and the spiritual. Furthermore, D. C. Allen has shown that the imaginative identification of the grasshopper with the Greeks, from whom Lovelace borrows heavily in the first half of his poem, was with "a king, an aristocrat, a badge of royalty, a poet; and that it was identified with men in political disfavor."²² There stems from this identification an urge to read the poem as sheer fable, with the woes of the grasshopper an object-lesson for distraught Cavaliers, fraught with the oppression of Puritanism. Obviously the fable of the ant and the grasshopper exerted no little influence on the poem. The grasshopper leads a debauched life, and after his nocturnal carousing he "dost retire/To thy Carv'd Acron-bed to lye." Lovelace employs ironic ambiguity in "lye," for the insect reclines in his bed, but the grasshopper also sings from his perch, and his song is a lie--a false hope, a hollow promise--for soon his transitory joys will pass away. But to read the poem as a fable is to notice only the comparisons between the grasshopper and the Cavalier, overlooking the important contrasts which insure that the grasshopper's life "is not used to symbolize a type of human experience to be avoided."²³ Lovelace is not out to reform anyone, Cavaliers or grasshoppers.

²²Allen, p. 284.

²³Cleanth Brooks, "Literary Criticism: Poet, Poem, and Reader," Varieties of Literary Experience, ed. Stanley Burnshaw (New York: New York University Press, 1962), p. 108.

Before switching to the province of man, Lovelace describes the grasshopper's comeuppance in a display of metaphysical wit:

IV.

But ah the Sickle! Golden Eares are Cropt;
Ceres and Bacchus bid good night;
Sharpe frosty fingers all your Flowr's have topt,
And what sithes spar'd, Winds shave off quite.

V.

Poore verdant foole! and now green Ice! thy Joys
Large and as lasting, as thy Peirch of Grasse,
Bid us lay in 'gainst Winter, Raine, and poize
Their flouds, with an o'reflowing glasse.

(p. 39)

The juxtaposition of the "Golden Eares" of stanza four with the "green Ice" of the following stanza defines the dilemma of the grasshopper. The grain, on whose "Oaten Beard" the grasshopper has swung, has reached the ripe maturity associated with the "Golden" hue. But, as Brooks points out, the verdancy of the grasshopper implies that it is doomed to remain in a state of puerile immaturity because it is incapable of undergoing the natural process of change and development.²⁴ The capriciousness of the insect's plight is driven home in an ironical appraisal of the grasshopper's joys ("Large and as lasting, as thy Peirch of Grasse") which subtly reminds us that it once possessed "The Joyes of Earth and Ayre."

The first line of the sixth stanza could logically begin with "but," for while the first five stanzas implicitly

²⁴ Ibid., p. 109.

compare the plight of man and insect, the last five contrast them in the light of an important difference. The first five stanzas were addressed to "Thou that swing'st upon the waving haire," but beginning in stanza six the poet speaks to "Thou best of men and Friends," with the metrical as well as logical emphasis on men, men who are not defeated by "sharpe frosty fingers" of winter, men who can "create/A Genuine Summer in each others breast." Man, then, rises above the animal by the power of his mind and imagination which allows him to ward off "the North-wind" that

Shall strike his frost-stretch'd Winges, dissolve and flye
This Aetna in Epitome.

The image of the volcano is an apt one, for it captures the enclosed nature and also the warmth of their friendship; "Epitome" qualifies the claim of the image, thus making it more acceptable to the reader.

In the eighth stanza, "Dropping December" which bewails "th' usurping of his Raigne" has been established as a topical reference to the abolishment of Christmas ceremonies by the Puritans,²⁵ but the royal associations with "Raigne" and "Crowne" hearken back to the "Golden Eares" which were cropped in Stanza four, and pave the way for the culmination of the royal images in the last stanza. The friends reestablish December to its rightful throne "in show'rs of old Greeke" wine, and also by a more Hellenistic attitude.

In contrasting light-dark images, stanza nine expresses

²⁵ Ibid., p. 112; Allen, "The Grasse-Hopper," p. 286.

the poet's hope of dispelling the gloom, though he modestly compares the taper of their friendship to the light of Hesper, one twinkling star in the night.²⁶ In the last line Lovelace alludes to the perpetuity of the friends' joys as they

. . . the darke Hagge from her black mantle strip,
And sticke there everlasting Day.

In the final stanza Lovelace resolves the man-animal conflict which lies restlessly beneath the surface of the poem:

X.
Thus richer then untempted Kings are we,
That asking nothing, nothing need:
Though Lord of all what Seas imbrace; yet he
That wants himselfe, is poore indeed.
(p. 40)

The startling phrase "untempted Kings" approaches oxymoron, because kings are in reality the most tempted of men. It is more probable, as Brooks discloses, that the phrase refers to the grasshopper, the ancient symbol of royalty and the king, who is untempted by material wealth.²⁷ Nevertheless, man is richer than this untempted king because if he has mastered himself (i.e. his mind and imagination), his joys will not end with the coldness of winter but will "burne eternally/As Vestall Flames."

"The Grasse-hopper" stands at the very pinnacle of Lovelace's poetic achievement. Through the maintenance of contrast--between the imaginative capabilities of man and the lack of those abilities in animals, between the temporal vicissitudes of a cold winter and the eternal "sacred hartes"

²⁶ Brooks, "Literary Criticism," p. 111. ²⁷ Ibid., p. 110.

of human friendship, between the contrasting images of light and dark, green and gold--the poem sustains considerable tension.

The final poem offered for critical consideration, "To Lucasta. Ode Lyrick," has received no recognition; in fact, it is usually even omitted from anthology samplings of Lovelace's work.²⁸ As he does many times, Lovelace mimics the metaphysical poetic formula of centering the poem about an argument between poet and mistress. Overtly, the argument seems little more than a pretext for a seduction plea: he lauds her virtues but protests that she should reveal those virtues to him. However, the bitterness of the poet's tone, elicited by her rejection of him, which dominates the latter portion of the poem leads one to suspect greater intensity than was at first evident.

The first four stanzas exhibit a similarity of form and eclectic imagery. The first stanza shows well the poet's strategy:

I.

Ah Lucasta, why so Bright!
 Spread with early streaked light!
 If still veiled from our sight,
 What is't but eternall night?
 (p. 55)

Lucasta's brightness is seen only as "early streaked light," the first few rays of dawn which express a certain promise and unfulfilled potential. "Eternall night" is, of course,

²⁸The poem is reproduced in the appendix, pp. 122-123.

a conventional symbol of death; thus, the last line contains ominous forebodings. The following stanzas continue the same technique by listing other of Lucasta's virtues (chastity, greatness, goodness), and successively arguing for their manifestation. The fourth stanza is particularly notable for its correlation of images:

IV.

Ah Lucasta, why so Good!
 Blest with an unstained flood
 Flowing both through soule and blood;
 If it be not understood,
 'Tis a Diamond in mud.

(p. 56)

The negative progression from "flood" to "mud" imparts the full meaning of Lucasta's plight; her goodness is suggested by the purity of the "unstained flood," but if she fails to understand her goodness then the pure flood will suddenly ossify into the "Diamond," a carefully chosen image which covertly contains the poet's pledge of faith in the permanence of his lady's chastity, and also a distinct implication about her insensitive callousness. When the flood resides it will naturally leave a residue of mud, symbolic of the opaqueness of misunderstanding which besmears Lucasta's "Diamond." Lovelace's full extension of his imagery, as in this passage, constitutes a sensual embodiment of the meaning.

In the fifth stanza the drama tightens as Lucasta prepares to leave:

V.

Lucasta! stay! why dost thou flye?
 Thou art not Bright, but to the eye,
 Nor Chaste, but in the Mariage-tye.

Nor Great, but in this Treasurie,
Nor Good, but in that sanctitie.

(p. 56)

The rhetorical flourishes in the last three verses emphasize the tone of urgency in which the poet attempts to reason with Lucasta. In spite of all of his extravagant and artificial compliments, the speaker reveals in this stanza what he has hinted at previously, that he is a realistic relativist; he affirms that Lucasta's virtues take on significance only in certain defined contexts. Lucasta, however, has been blinded into believing that the poet's flatteries are not flatteries at all, but undeniable facts.

In stanza six the poet's previous sense of urgency is replaced by a tone of icy disdain and subdued disgust:

IV.

Harder then the Orient stone,
Like an Apparition,
Or as a pale shadow gone
Dumbe and deafe she hence is flowne.

(p. 56)

This curious catalogue of unfavorable comparisons parallels Lucasta's good qualities of the preceding stanzas. Her "early streaked light" which, in the first stanza, seemed to herald her radiant dawning in the east suddenly becomes "Harder then the Orient Stone." Instead of the ripe vigor and warmth for which the poet praised her in stanzas two and three, she is now "like an Apparition" or "a pale shadow." The ambiguity of "flowne" in the last verse is a subtle touch of wit; overtly, as the past participle of "fly," it refers to Lucasta's flight from the poet, but "flowne" is also the past participle of "flow," a verb which triggers the reader's

remembrance of Lucasta's "unstained flood/Flowing both through soule and blood," in the fourth stanza. The water is pure, but it is also mute; Lucasta flows away like a flood "Dumbe and deafe" because she has misunderstood her virtues. Thus, in stanza six, Lovelace offers an odd recapitulation of a sorts of the first four stanzas. He achieves it not by hard and fast (and consequently static) comparisons and contrasts, but rather through subtle hints and intimations which arouse a coherence of feeling and propel the poem toward an organic unity.

The tone of stanza seven is commanding and bitter as if a satanic incantation were being delivered:

VII.

Then receive this equall dombe,
Virgins strow no teare or bloome,
No one dig the Parian Wombe;
Raise her marble heart ith' roome,
And tis both her Coarse and Tombe.

(p. 56)

As in all of Lovelace's better poems, the meaning is conveyed in the imagery. Lucasta's predicament is revealed most obviously in the references to the "virgins" and the "Parian wombe" both of which communicate sexual repressiveness: the former represents innocence and abstention; the latter, stony sterility. Significantly, the virgins are instructed to "strow no teare or bloome," because these intimate human emotions on the one hand, and burgeoning productivity on the other, qualities repudiated by Lucasta, for she has fled the sphere of human interaction and has rejected her female role.

Furthermore, Lucasta, no less than the "Parian womb" of white marble, has become solidified in her insensitivity, because now she ironically possesses a "marble heart." The irony is compounded in the last verse where we learn that instead of fine Parian marble, Lucasta's tomb will be constructed of her own "Marble heart." Not only irony but also paradox comes into play, because her marble heart is to be "both her Coarse and Tombe." Her heart, symbolic of human compassion, becomes her corpse because she lacks that quality; and since her heart is marble, impenetrable, it has enveloped her and sealed her off, tomb-like, from the rest of humanity. The poet's affirmation of Lucasta's symbolic death and self-entombment extends no hope for her redemption; she is no longer even a "Diamond in mud," only marble in marble.

The poem is a success for several reasons. The poet's strategy is beguiling, yet rewarding: the first four stanzas lull the reader into a false sense of security through repetition, gaiety of tone, and a leisurely pace, while the last three shock the reader through bitterness of tone, urgent pace, and considerable excitement. Lovelace's handling of irony, ambiguity, and paradox helps sustain the unity of the poem, which is, however, principally effected through the imagery and architectonic structure. These diverse elements coalesce to produce tension of the highest order in one

of Lovelace's finest poetic performances.

It would be presumptuous to make any final sweeping claim for Lovelace's poetry. By focusing on some of the means by which Lovelace achieves the modest success that might be attributed to several of his poems, his many failures and shortcomings have necessarily been avoided. However, his positive poetic accomplishments overshadow his flaws to some extent, and should entitle him to a somewhat more elevated status in English literary history than most critics have been willing to grant him.

CHAPTER IV

THE REPUTATION

The range of three hundred years of Lovelace criticism is remarkably narrow, and the verdicts are neatly homogeneous. In fact, practically all commentators have arrived at one of two decisions concerning Lovelace's poetic achievement: first, he was a hopeless improvisator who accidentally produced two lyrics of any worth; second, he was an inconsistent, often careless, poet whose work, nevertheless, includes several instances of true poetic skill. Off-hand dismissal or faint praise, these are the poles about which Lovelace criticism may be said to revolve.

Lovelace's popularity, even in his own day, was never great. His contemporary fame rests almost exclusively on "To Althea, from Prison," widely reprinted and imitated,¹ and one or two other poems, notably "The Scrutinie," which which was reprinted in four different anthologies between 1671 and 1724.² Commendatory verse is an unreliable guide to a poet's reputation, but Andrew Marvell's verses prefixed to the 1649 Lucasta (far superior to the rest of the

¹Wilkinson, pp. lxii, 285, 350.

²Ibid., pp. 348-349.

commendatory poems, which are for the most part self-conscious efforts by military men) contain the following interesting passage:

The Ayre's already tainted with the swarms
Of Insects which against you rise in arms.
Word-peckers, Paper-rats, Book-Scorpions,
Of wit corrupted, the unfashion'd Sons.
The barbed Censurers begin to looke
Like the grim consistory on thy Booke;
And on each line cast a reforming eye,
Severer than the yong Presbytery.
Till when in vaine they have thee all perus'd,
You shall for being faultlesse be accus'd.

(p. 8)

Lovelace, unfortunately, has never stood accused of being "faultless," but Marvell's attention to the possibility of an imminent attack on Lovelace's poetry may have stemmed from his insight into Lovelace's insecure literary status. Francis Lenton's commendatory verse also contains a passage notable for its implication about Lovelace's attitude toward his poetry:

Thus if thy careles draughts are cal'd the best,
What would thy lines have been, had'st thou profest
That faculty (infus'd) of Poetry,
Which adds such honour unto thy Chivalry?
Doubtles thy verse had all as far transcended
As Sydneys Prose, who poets once defended.

(p. 11)

That Lovelace accepts this as praise seems to indicate he took his poetic endeavours lightly; however, as suggested before, the Cavaliers affected casualness in their poetry, and indeed, in all facets of their lives, because this made them appear easy and graceful in every undertaking.

Lovelace's "careles draughts," no less than Carew's, may

have been "brought forth but with trouble and pain"; on the other hand, poetry can only have been a pleasing avocaton for Lovelace, just one of the many areas in which the "complete gentleman" was to excel.

Lovelace received little critical recognition of any sort in the seventeenth century. Aubrey in his Brief Lives and Wood in Athenae Oxonienses offer biographical sketches but no critical reaction. Of course that they include him in their works at all implies a favorable attitude toward the poet; just as Thomas Fuller's omission of him from The Worthies of England (1662) implies the opposite. The first attempt to evaluate Lovelace's work was made by Edward Phillips in his Theatrum Poetarum in which he recognizes Lovelace as "a fair pretender to the Title of Poet." Phillips' critical comments are often cited as reflecting or coinciding with the opinion of his famous uncle, John Milton; in any case, his observation concerning Lovelace is particularly perceptive. ". . . besides the acute and not unpleasant stile of his Verses, a Man may discern therein sometimes those sparks of a Poetic fire, which had they been the main design, and not Parergon, in some work of Heroic argument, might happily have blaz'd out into the perfection of sublime Poesy."³ William Winstanley, in his The Lives of the Most Famous English Poets (1687), echoes Phillips, but

³Ibid., p. lxiii.

he is less reserved in his recommendation as he compares Lovelace to Sir Philip Sidney on the basis of their biographical similarities and also because "both of them were endowed with transcendent Sparks of Poetick Fire."⁴

Winstanley's final comment is hardly less ecstatic: "To conclude, Mr. Lovelace's Poems did, do, and still live in good Esteem with all knowing true Lovers of Ingenuity."

Lovelace's reputation suffered a dramatic eclipse in the earlier part of the eighteenth century, an eclipse shared by all of those poets associated with what would shortly come to be known as the Metaphysical school of Poetry.⁵ Just as he had been ignored by Dryden, Lovelace was also shunned by Pope, although certainly Pope would have included Lovelace in "The Mob of Gentlemen who wrote with Ease" of whom he speaks so disparagingly. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Lovelace's obscurity had become so acute that he was omitted from Cibber's comprehensive Lives of the Poets (1753), but by reprinting "To Althea" and "To Lucasta, Going to the Warres" in Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, Bishop Percy rescued Lovelace from complete oblivion. By the latter part of the eighteenth century, accounts of Lovelace's life, selections from his poetry, and criticisms began to appear with some frequency.⁶ The

⁴ (Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1963), p. 170.

⁵ Arthur H. Nethercot, "The Reputation of the 'Metaphysical Poets' during the Age of Pope," PQ, IV (April, 1925), 176.

⁶ Wilkinson, p. lxxv.

criticisms were not altogether flattering as witnessed by the following passage from Headley's Select Beauties of Ancient English Poetry: "His pieces, which are light and easy, had been models in their way were their simplicity but equal to their spirit: they were the offering of gallantry and amusement, and, as such, are not to be reduced to the test of serious criticism."⁷ A more congenial attitude is exhibited by Sir Egerton Brydges, who, in 1791 and 1792, wrote a series of articles on Lovelace in The Gentleman's Magazine in which he examines Lovelace's biography, comments on some of his poems, and complains that Lovelace was not included in the recent edition of Biographia Britannica.⁸ In the opening article of the series, Brydges claims that "Richard Lovelace deserves a better fate than to be forgotten," and in his concluding article, after censuring the posthumous poems, he affirms: "But, in the volume published by himself, there is, though much carelessness, a poetical spirit truly elegant."

The increased interest in Lovelace in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, again part of a general trend in which many of the Metaphysical poets shared,⁹

⁷Cited by S. Austin Allibone, A Critical Dictionary of English Literature, I (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Company, 1872), 1135.

⁸Vol. LXI (1791), pt. 2, 1094-1095; vol. LXII (1792), pt. 1, 99, 135, 166-167, 320-321; vol. LXII (1792), pt. 2, 604-605, 971-972. (See chapter I, n. 2).

⁹Arthur H. Nethercot, "The Reputation of the 'Metaphysical Poets' during the Age of Johnson and the 'Romantic Revival,'" SP, XXII (January, 1925), 81-132.

resulted in the publication by S. W. Singer of Lucasta in 1817 and Lucasta. Posthume Poems the following year, editions limited somewhat, by the fact that all passages thought to be obscene or improper were deleted.¹⁰ In 1821, an anonymous commentator gave Lovelace's poetry considerable coverage in the Retrospective Review. His praise of Lovelace seems to stem mainly from his appreciation of the "gallant high-thoughted cavalier," but his closing remarks belie an interest in Lovelace's technical excellences:

In the songs, and in the other happy offspring of Lovelace's muse, it will have been observed, that his verse is commonly smooth and harmonious. This character, however, by no means applies to the whole of his poems, the greater part of which are written in a very crabbed and obscure style. It is to be remarked, that the smoothness and felicity of his verse almost always accompanies a proportionate happiness of imagery and thought.¹¹

Other references to Lovelace in the earlier part of the nineteenth century run the gamut from a discussion of his merits in a chapter on "Neglected Poets" in John Galt's The Bachelor's Wife to Scott's erroneous attribution of the last stanza of "To Lucasta. Going to the Warres" (which he used as a chapter heading in The Talisman) to Montrose.¹²

The latter part of the nineteenth century saw the publication of another edition of Lovelace's poems, this one by W. Carew Hazlitt in the Library of Old Authors first

¹⁰Wilkinson, p. lxxxiv.

¹¹"Lovelace's Lucasta," pp. 129-130.

¹²Wilkinson, p. 347.

published in 1864 and reprinted in 1897.¹³ A review of Hazlitt's edition in the North American Review is noteworthy because it is one of the earliest acknowledgments of Lovelace's existence by an American writer and because of its particular virulence: "Take out the four pages on which they ["To Althea, from Prison" and "To Lucasta. Going to the Warres," of course] are printed, and we have two hundred and eighty-nine left of the sorriest stuff that ever spoiled paper."¹⁴ The American critic James Russell Lowell is slightly less virulent, but hardly less castigating in his one sentence dismissal of Lovelace: "It is worth while, perhaps, to reprint Lovelace, if only to show what dull verses may be written by a man who has made one lucky hit."¹⁵ The extreme hostility of the American critics toward Lovelace is rather puzzling, unless it may be attributed to a latent Puritan bias in these New England writers. Toward the close of the century Edmund W. Gosse merely repeats the standard Lovelace formula: "Lovelace was an improvisator who wrote two of the best songs in the language by accident, and whose other work is of much inferior quality."¹⁶ A lady critic writing at the same time in Harpers

¹³ Ibid., p. lxxxiv.

¹⁴ "Hazlitt's Poems of Richard Lovelace," North American Review, XCIX (July, 1864), 310.

¹⁵ "Library of Old Authors," Literary Essays, I (Boston: Riverside Press, 1864), 254.

¹⁶ "Richard Lovelace," The English Poets, ed. T. H. Ward (New York: Macmillan Co., 1890), II, 181.

treats Lovelace more tenderly; she allows that his "versification is generally hasty and heedless," for which she readily excuses him on the inaccurate grounds that he didn't live to supervise his printed book.¹⁷ That Lovelace was not suffering universal disapprobation in the waning years of the nineteenth century may be inferred from the fact that there existed in England a Lovelace Club, an active group, which on the occasion of its 200th meeting was presented by Dr. C. H. O. Daniel, late Provost of Worcester College, a small volume containing Wood's account of Lovelace, to which was to have been prefixed an "Imaginary Portrait" of Lovelace by Walter Pater.¹⁸ Although he had expressed his willingness to contribute to the work, Pater was unable to prepare the "Portrait" in the time available.

The reputation which pursued Lovelace into the twentieth century still bore the same marks which it had received in the preceding century, as demonstrated by F. W. Moorman writing in the Cambridge History of English Literature:

"He left us two or three songs which are included in almost every anthology of English verse, and which deserve enduring fame; in addition to these, he wrote a considerable number of lyric, descriptive and complimentary poems, of which it may, without rancour, be said that it would have been better

¹⁷Louise Imogene Guiney, "English Lyrics Under the First Charles," Harpers, LXXX (May, 1890), 955.

¹⁸Wilkinson, p. 344.

if they had remained in manuscript and perished with his two plays."¹⁹ H. J. C. Grierson's message is much the same, although he shows a willingness to accentuate Lovelace's positive achievement: "The text of Richard Lovelace's Lucasta (1649) is frequently corrupt, and the majority of his poems are careless and extravagant, but the few good things are the finest expression of honour and chivalry in all the Cavalier poetry of the century" ²⁰ Douglas Bush's pronouncement, aside from the vagueness of "handful," is a recasting of the same theme: "With much that is simply dull, Lovelace offers some miscellaneous and incidental attractions, but his achievement remains a handful of poems."²¹ These comments by Moorman, Grierson, and Bush represent the "accepted" twentieth-century view of Lovelace's poetic work with which the student of Lovelace must contend.

The fact that three separate editions of Lucasta were published in the first quarter of the century suggests that Lovelace was indeed receiving attention, if only as an antique curiosity. In 1906, H. Child edited the two Lucastas for the "Unit Library" series; later, the edition was

¹⁹"Cavalier Lyrists," Cambridge History of English Literature, eds. A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1911), VII, 28.

²⁰Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), p. xxxvi.

²¹Earlier Seventeenth Century, p. 123 (See chapter II, n. 19).

incorporated into "Hutchinson's Popular Classics." In 1921, Lovelace's only American edition appeared in two volumes prepared for the members of the Caxton Club, Chicago. Although the edition was nominally edited by W. L. Phelps, Wilkinson notes that it is actually "a reprint of Hazlitt's edition of Lovelace rather than of Lovelace."²² Wilkinson's definitive edition was first published in 1925 as a limited deluxe edition in two volumes by the Clarendon Press at Oxford; it was reissued in 1930 as a single volume. With the establishment of a reliable text, an earnest study of the corpus of Lovelace's work became feasible.

Coinciding with the appearance of Wilkinson's edition in 1925, there was also published the first and only book-length study of Lovelace--C. H. Hartmann's The Cavalier Spirit and its Influence on the Life and Work of Richard Lovelace.²³ It is a very readable, entertaining account of Lovelace's life in the context of the social upheavals of the seventeenth century; however, it adds little new to our knowledge of Lovelace's biography, and its treatment of the poetry is cursory and uncritical.

Also in 1925, in a Modern Philology article, Alexander C. Judson attempted to answer one of the biographical cruxes of Lovelace's biography--"Who was Lucasta?"²⁴ Most earlier

²²Wilkinson, p. lxxxv.

²³See chapter I, n. 4.

²⁴"Who Was Lucasta?" MP, XXIII (August, 1925), 77-82.

Lovelace scholars had been content to accept Wood's identification of her as "Lucy Sacheverall whom he [Lovelace] called Lux casta. She married someone else on report that he died at Dunkirk."²⁵ Indeed, even Hartmann stoutly defends Wood's identification on the grounds that a Lucy Sacheverall of the proper age and social rank did, in fact, exist in the seventeenth century.²⁶ However, Wilkinson, who always expresses strong reservations about the accuracy of Wood's account, points out that Lucy Sacheverall's father, Ferdinando, was the illegitimate son of Henry Sacheverall, a fact which would have made Lovelace's verses in "To Lucasta. Ode Lyrick" in unbelievably poor taste:

Ah Lucasta, why so Good!
 Blest with an unstained flood
 Flowing both through soule and blood.
 (p. 56)

Wilkinson further conjectures that Lucasta was a member of the family of Lucas, but he reaches no conclusion about the problem.²⁷ In his article Judson argues that Lucasta was actually an imaginary person, a theory he supports with five pieces of evidence: (1) Lovelace's love poems are devoid of emotion; (2) the poems concerning Lucasta in no way individualize her; (3) in the commendatory poems and in the elegies, there is no indication the authors felt Lucasta to

²⁵Wood, II, col. 228.

²⁶Hartmann, pp. 74-76.

²⁷Wilkinson, p. xlviiii.

have any real identity; (4) "A Paradox" argues against identifying Lucasta with any real woman; (5) Lovelace was following one of the conventions of the time by composing love verses with no particular woman in mind. Judson's theory may bear some merit, but his evidence does little to further it. His first piece of "evidence" is actually his personal opinion, which seems based on the mistaken notion that a Cavalier lyric should present an overflow of emotion comparable to that of a Romantic lyric. The second point fails to account for the fact that Lovelace was strongly influenced by Petrarchan conventions, in which all mistresses shared common traits, such as rosy cheeks and starry eyes. The third point is inconclusive at best, and Thomas Rawlins' references to the "Name" and "memory" of Lucasta raise some doubts about its validity:

Chast as Creation meant us, and more bright
 Then the first day in's uneclipsed light,
 Is thy Lucasta, and thou offerest heere
 Lines to her Name as undefil'd and cleere:
 Such as the first indeed more happy dayes,
 (When Vertue, Wit, and Learning, wore the bayes;
 Now Vice assumes) would to her memory give
 A vestall Flame, that should for ever live
 Plac'd in a Christal Temple, rear'd to be
 The Embleme of her thoughts integrity.

("To his Honoured and Ingenious
 Friend, Col. Richard Lovelace,"
 pp. 12-13)

In view of the fact that Lucasta is not mentioned in "A Paradox," the logic of Judson's fourth point escapes me. Judson's final point of argument may just as easily be turned against him, for while it is true that some poets

celebrated imaginary ladies under fictitious names, it is also true that some poets celebrated real ladies under fictitious names (e.g. Habington's Castara and Waller's Sacharissa).²⁸ The matter of Lucasta's identity or non-identity is far from settled, and it may very well never be, unless some other documentation is discovered. But the pedestrian situations pictured in such verses as "Lucasta, taking the waters at Tunbridge" and "Lucasta paying her Obsequies to the Chast memory of my dearest Cosin Mrs. Bowes Barne" seem hardly reconcilable with the theory that Lovelace's mistress is merely imaginary.

As the twentieth century has progressed, Lovelace's "accepted" reputation has persisted, even in the face of discoveries which challenge old prejudices. Judson was one of the first to run upon a manuscript containing an early variant of one of Lovelace's poems. After closely comparing the British Museum manuscript with the printed version of "To Althea, from Prison," Judson admits: "We can hardly avoid the conclusion that the slovenly Lovelace for once applied the Jonsonian file."²⁹ Judson's apologetic tone indicates his failure to grasp the full implication of his findings, for, at a stroke, his discovery disarms the monotonous old pronouncement that Lovelace accidentally

²⁸Hartmann, p. 73.

²⁹A. C. Judson, "A Forgotten Lovelace Manuscript," MLN, XXXVII (November, 1922), 410.

composed one of the most famous and widely acclaimed poems of the seventeenth century. In short, Judson's findings raise the possibility that Lovelace was not always as hasty and careless in his composition as many critics would lead us to believe. It remained for Willa McClung Evans to demonstrate that Lovelace was, indeed, a revisor of his poems. While searching through the manuscripts of musical settings composed by such famous seventeenth-century musicians as John Gamble, John Wilson, and William and Henry Lawes, all of whom set some of Lovelace's lyrics to music, she discovered early texts of several of Lovelace's poems. In a series of articles published between 1945 and 1948, Miss McClung compares the early versions of "A Mock-Song,"³⁰ "Vintage to the Dungeon,"³¹ "Sonnet. 'When I by thy faire shape,'"³² and "Ode. The Rose"³³ to the published versions, and finds, in every case, that the poems underwent an effective revision before they were printed. The evidence of revision does not, of course, prove the success of the poems, but it does prove that "until further evidence can be offered to the contrary, the accusation that Lovelace never

³⁰"Richard Lovelace's 'Mock-Song,'" PQ, XXIV (October, 1945), 317-328.

³¹"Lovelace's Concept of Prison Life in 'The Vintage to the Dungeon,'" PQ, XXVI (January, 1947), 62-68.

³²"An Early Lovelace Text," PMLA, LX (June, 1945), 382-385.

³³"'The Rose': A Song by Wilson and Lovelace," MLO, VII (September, 1946), 269-278.

revised cannot be considered as valid criticism."³⁴ Still another manuscript version of "Ode. The Rose" has been discovered, in the Bodleian Library, and its minor but significant variants from the printed version confirm that Lovelace more than once "applied the Jonsonian file."³⁵

With the old critical barrier to Lovelace's poetry somewhat demolished, some critics have been willing to do what was once considered unthinkable and futile; that is, they have subjected poems of Lovelace to the test of serious criticism. Perceptive readings of "To Lucasta, Going to the Warres" have established that the success of the poem stems not from the luck of the poet, but from his skill. Norman H. Pearson rails at those who esteem the poem only for "the epigrammatic quality of its last two lines"; he then indicates in detail "the integrated structure of this Lucasta poem, for something of the same benefit which has come from the realization that Donne's poems have more than brilliant opening lines."³⁶ Mark Van Doren also gives "To Lucasta, Going to the Warres" a close analysis, even commenting on the efficacy of Lovelace's choice and placement of syllables, and concludes the poem is "one of the briefest

³⁴ Evans, *PQ*, XXIV (October, 1945), 325.

³⁵ John P. Cutts, "John Wilson and Lovelace's 'The Rose,'" *N&Q*, CXCVIII (April, 1953), 153-154.

³⁶ "Lovelace's 'To Lucasta, Going to the Warres,'" *Explicator*, VII (June, 1949), item 58.

masterpieces in the world."³⁷ William Empson, as noticed in the preceding chapter, expands the potential of meaning of the final stanza of the highly regarded "To Althea, from Prison," as he delineates the richness imparted to the verse by the poet's handling of ambiguity.

Critical attention has also been focused on some of Lovelace's lesser known works; for example "La Bella Bona Roba," is scrutinized by Marius Bewley, who finds it to be "unusual and beautiful," and praises its organic development.³⁸ More recently, a leading exponent of the "New Criticism," Cleanth Brooks, and one of the most eminent seventeenth-century scholars, Don Cameron Allen, have separately brought to bear their immense critical acumen on Lovelace's "The Grasse-hopper," with great success in illuminating a poem which had previously enjoyed little recommendation. Brooks characterizes the poem as "a little masterpiece in the management of tone";³⁹ Allen extols the complexity of the poem against those who would dismiss it as a trifle: "the poem is richer than it seems on first reading, and an examination of the tradition, of the

³⁷ Introduction to Poetry (New York: William Sloane, 1951), p. 25.

³⁸ "The Colloquial Mode of Byron," Scrutiny, XVI (1949), 12-14. But also see A. Alvarez, The School of Donne (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961), pp. 72-73.

³⁹ "Literary Criticism," p. 108 (see chapter III, n. 23).

metaphoric history of the insect that is the subject, will suggest that the theme has emotional possibilities that have not been understood."⁴⁰ Critics, then, who have been willing to ignore the old "accepted" manner of dealing with Lovelace (i.e. dismiss him with a few patronizing phrases) have found that his poetry may be successfully subjected to serious criticism. That this criticism, for the most part, has amounted to favorable acceptance indicates a discernible shift toward a new awareness of Lovelace's total poetic achievement. The implications of this shift will be discussed in the final chapter.

⁴⁰Allen, p. 280 (see chapter II, n: 29).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Richard Lovelace does not, in the final analysis, yield to the tidy scheme in which many critics and commentators have placed him, or more accurately, disposed of him. His life as well as his poetry is too full of paradox and ambiguity to be dismissed in a convenient classification: he was a libertine bound to his ideals and to the king; he was a sophisticated courtier linked to the soil of rural England; he was an ebullient soldier of fortune who advocated conservative withdrawal from the turmoil of life; he was, in his poetry at least, a persuasive seducer who exalted Neoplatonic love. Of course, part of the paradox of his life and poetry is the direct result of the delicate seventeenth-century balance of medieval and modern, a balance which, by Lovelace's time, was woefully upset. This realization of cosmic disarray, coupled with what Lovelace viewed as rising social anarchy in the guise of Puritanism, subtly invades Lovelace's poetry with a sense of tautness, underlying nervous excitement, and depth of philosophical reflection.

Lovelace's work, too, is full of the diversity

abundantly available to a poet of his era. His poetry most noticeably reflects the light of Donne, but to attribute to all of his poetry the metaphysical style, or to attempt to judge all of his poetry in terms of that style is a mistake, for Lovelace was very conscious of the various traditions of the seventeenth century from which he could draw. Lovelace felt the ebbing current of the Elizabethans and, through Jonson, the strong tide of neoclassicism which was to engulf the literary scene after the Restoration. By immersing himself in these, often conflicting, traditions, Lovelace enriches his work and establishes his own contribution to the whole stream of English poetry.

That Lovelace's poetic achievement is marred by the inconsistency of his performance is a completely justifiable charge. Even in Lucasta, in which Lovelace unwisely included a number of vapid occasional pieces, the reader is forced to thresh much chaff to extract the worthy poems; the problem is proportionately increased in Lucasta, Posthume Poems, which, it is only fair to point out, was not published under Lovelace's supervision. Indeed, the following lines from one of the posthumous poems, "To a Lady with child that ask'd an Old Shirt," hint strongly that Lovelace recognized that his later poems were inferior:

To the nine Sempstresses, my former friends,
I su'd, but they had nought but shreds and ends.
(p. 49)

The reference to the 'nine Sempstresses' would seem to be an allusion to the nine muses, who, according to classical mythology, control the arts. If this identification is correct, then Lovelace's designation of them as "my former friends" may indicate the poet felt the effects of the poetic drought he suffered in later years. But even the posthumous collection contains enough good material (e.g. "Song. Strive not, vain Lover," "The Ant," "A loose Sara-band," "An Anniversary") to justify its publication.

Although Lovelace's poems do not exhibit the fine consistency of execution attained by some of his contemporaries, Carew for instance, his flights of genius are the highest, his successes, most spectacular. These successes are, for the most part, predicated on his adroit wielding of quite conventional but appropriate imagery, not appropriate in the sense of pleasing exterior decoration, but appropriate to the meaning, in fact often the vehicle of the meaning itself. Lovelace's handling of imagery is but one facet of his wit, the experience-consuming, all encompassing capacity peculiar to the seventeenth century, which enabled him to produce such lines as these from "Against the Love of Great Ones":

Shal we then mingle with the base,
 And bring a silver-tinsell race?
 Whilst th' issue Noble wil not passe,
 The Gold allayd (almost halfe brasse)
 And the' blood in each veine doth appeare,
 Part thick Booreinn, part Lady Cleare:

Like to the sordid Insects sprung
 From Father Sun, and Mother Dung.
 (p. 76)

The passage is a little tour de force in the management of wit, with pleasing results. Lovelace's wit also accounts for his skillful manipulation of the conflict-structures, irony, paradox, ambiguity, and oxymoron, imparting to his poetry a complexity and rich suggestiveness which vault his better poems above the sphere of mere light love lyrics. Lovelace is admittedly a minor poet, but he is one of the best minor poets in an age in which even to be considered a good minor poet was no mean accomplishment. George Saintsbury's general observation about this age may be applied, I think, to Lovelace's poetic achievement:

For passionate sense of the good things of earth, and at the same time for mystical feeling of their insecurity, for exquisite style without the frigidity and the over-correctness which the more deliberate stylists frequently display, for a blending of Nature and Art that seems as if it must have been as simply instinctive in all as it certainly was in some, the poets of the tribe of Ben, and of the tribe of Donne, who illustrated the period before Puritanism and Republicanism combined had changed England from merriment to sadness, stand alone in letters. We have had as good since, but never the same--never any such blending of classical frankness, of mediaeval simplicity and chivalry, of modern reflection and thought.¹

But, while Lovelace is, in many respects, representative of his age, many of his critics have ignored, in their attempts to comprehend an entire period of English literature,

¹A History of Elizabethan Literature (London: Macmillan, 1896), p. 393.

the depth and complexity of his individual achievement. For the sake of convenience, they have dismissed him as a hasty versifier who was fortunate in writing two lyrics of unassailable quality; however, the discoveries of recent scholarship--early inferior versions of several of Lovelace's poems, which verify that he did revise, and was a conscious craftsman--have proven this to be an untenable critical position. These discoveries, combined with the willingness of recent critics to analyze and to isolate the merits of Lovelace's verse, carry the clear implication that a complete review of the corpus of Lovelace's work is warranted and needed. Such a review, of which this study is hopefully a first step, might well establish Lovelace's claim to a more respectable place in the literary tradition.

APPENDIX

A forsaken Lady to her false Servant
that is disdained by his new Mistris

Were it that you so shun me 'cause you wish
(Cruel'est) a fellow in your wretchednesse,
Or that you take some small ease in your owne
Torments, to heare another sadly groane,
I were most happy in my paines, to be
So truely blest, to be so curst by thee:
But Oh! my cries to that doe rather adde,
Of which too much already thou hast had,
And thou art gladly sad to heare my moane;
Yet sadly hearst me with derision.

Thou most unjust, that really dost know,
And feelst thy selfe the flames I burne in, Oh!
How can you beg to be set loose from that
Consuming stake, you bind another at?

Uncharitablest both wayes, to denie
That pity me, for which your selfe must dye,
To love not her loves you, yet know the paine
What 'tis to love, and not be lov'd againe.

Flye on, flye on swift Racer, untill she
Whom thou of all ador'st shall learne of thee,
The pace to'outfly thee, and shall teach thee groan,
What terrour 'tis t' outgo, and be outgon.

Not yet looke backe, nor yet, must we
Run then like spoakes in sheeles eternally
And never overtake? Be dragg'd on still
By the weake Cordage of your untwin'd will,
Round without hope of rest? No, I will turne
And with my goodnes boldly meete your scorne;
Made you hate love, and fall in love with hate.

But I am chang'd! bright reason that did give
My soule a noble quicknes, made me live
One breath yet longer, and to will, and see,
Hath reacht me pow'r to scorne as well as thee:
That thou which proudly tramplest on my grave,
Thy selfe mightst fall, conquered my double slave,
That thou mightst sinking in thy triumphs moan,
And I triumph in my destruction.

Hayle holy cold! chaste temper hayle! the fire
 Rav'd o're my purer thoughts I feele t' expire,
 And I am candied Ice; yee pow'rs! If e're
 I shall be forc't unto my Sepulcher;
 Or violently hurl'd into my Urne,
 Oh make me choose rather to freeze, then burne.
 (pp. 35-36)

A Paradox

I.

Tis true the beauteous Starre
 To which I first did bow
 Burnt quicker, brighter far
 Then that which leads me now;
 Which shines with more delight;
 For gazing on that light
 So long, neere lost my sight.

II.

Through foule, we follow faire,
 For had the World one face
 And Earth been bright as Ayre,
 We had knowne neither place;
 Indians smell not their Neast;
 A Swisse or Finne tastes best,
 The Spices of the East.

III.

So from the glorious Sunne,
 Who to his height hath got,
 With what delight we runne
 To some black Cave, or Grot?
 And Heav'nly Sydney you
 Twice read, had rather view
 Some odde Romance, so new.

IV.

The God that constant keepes
 Unto his Dieties,
 Is poore in Joyes, and sleepes
 Imprison'd in the skies:
 This knew the wisest, who
 From Juno stole, below
 To love a Beare, or Cow.
 (pp. 19-20)

An Anniversary
 On the Hymeneals of my noble Kinsman
 Tho. Stanley Esquire

1.

The day is curl'd about agen
 To view the splendor she was in;
 When first with hallow'd hands
 The holy man knit the mysterious bands;
 When you two your contracted Souls did move,
 Like Cherubims above,
 And did make Love;
 As your un-understanding issue now
 In a glad sigh, a smile, a tear, a Vow.

2.

Tell me O self-reviving Sun,
 In thy Peregrination,
 Hast thou beheld a pair
 Twist their soft beams like these in their chaste air;
 As from bright numberlesse embracing rayes
 Are sprung th' industrious dayes;
 So when they gaze,
 And change their fertile Eyes with the new morn,
 A beauteous Offspring is shot forth, not born.

3.

Be witness then, all-seeing Sun,
 Old Spy, thou that thy race has run,
 In full five thousand Rings;
 To thee were ever purer Offerings
 Sent on the Wings of Faith? and thou, oh Night!
 Curtain of their delight,
 By these made bright.
 Have you not marked their Coelestial play.
 And no more peek'd the gayeties of day?

4.

Come then pale Virgins, Roses strow,
 Mingled with Io's as you go;
 The snowy Oxe is kill'd,
 The Fane with pros'lite Lads and Lasses fill'd,
 You too may hope the same Seraphick joy.
 Old time cannot destroy,
 Nor fulnesse cloy,
 When like these, you shall stamp by Sympathies,
 Thousands of new-born-loves with your chaste eyes.

(pp. 177-178)

The Grasse-hopper.
To my Noble Friend, Mr. Charles Cotton.
Ode.

I.

Oh thou that swing'st upon the waving haire
Of some well-filled Oaten Beard,
Drunke e'vry night with a Delicious teare
Dropt thee from Heav'n, where now th' art reard.

II.

The Joyes of Earth and Ayre are thine intire,
That with thy feet and wings doest hop and flye;
And when thy Poppy workes thou dost retire
To thy Carv'd Acron-bed to lye.

III.

Up with the Day, the Sun thou welcomst then,
Sportst in the guilt-plats of his Beames,
And all these merry dayes mak'st merry men,
Thy selfe, and Melancholy streames.

IV.

But ah the Sickle! Golden Eares are Cropt;
Ceres and Bacchus bid good night;
Sharpe frosty fingers all your Flowr's have topt,
And what sithes spar'd, Winds shave off quite.

V.

Poore verdant foole! and now green Ice! thy Joys
Large and as lasting as thy Peirch of Grasse,
Bid us lay in 'gainst Winter, Raine, and poize
Their flouds, with an o'reflowing glasse.

VI.

Thou best of Men and Friends! we will create
A Genuine Summer in each others breast;
And spite of this cold Time and frosen Fate
Thaw us a warme seate to our rest.

VII.

Our sacred harthes shall burne eternally
As Vestall Flames, the North-wind, he
Shall strike his frost-stretched Winges, dissolve and flye
This Aetna in Epitome.

VIII.

Dropping December shall come weeping in,
Bewayle th' usurping of his Raigne;
But when in show'rs of old Greeke we beginne,
Shall crie, he hath his Crowne againe!

IX.

Night as cleare Hesper shall our Tapers whip
 From the light Casements where we play,
 And the darke Hagge from her black mantle strip,
 And sticke there everlasting Day.

X.

Thus richer then untempted Kings are we,
 That asking nothing, nothing need:
 Though Lord of all what Seas imbrace; yet he
 That wants himselfe, is poore indeed.

(pp. 38-40)

To Lucasta.
 Ode Lyrick.

I.

Ah Lucasta, why so Bright!
 Spread with early streaked light!
 If still veiled from our sight,
 What is't but eternall night?

II.

Ah Lucasta, why so Chaste!
 With that vigour, ripenes grac't:
 Not to be by Man imbrac't
 Makes that Royall coyne imbrace't,
 And this golden Orchard Waste.

III.

Ah Lucasta, why so Great:
 That thy crammed coffers sweat;
 Yet not owner of a seat
 May shelter you from Natures heat,
 And your earthly joyes compleat.

IV.

Ah Lucasta, why so Good:
 Blest with an unstained flood
 Flowing both through soule and blood;
 If it be not understood,
 'Tis a Diamond in mud.

V.

Lucasta! stay! why dost thou flye?
 Thou art not Bright, but to the eye,
 Nor Chaste, but in the Mariage-tye,
 Nor Great, but in this Treasurie,
 Nor Good, but in that sanctitie.

VI.

Harder than the Orient stone,
Like an Apparition,
Or as a pale shadow gone
Dumbe and deafe she hence is flowne.

VII.

Then receive this equall dombe,
Virgins strow no teare or bloome,
No one dig the Parian wombe;
Raise her marble heart ith' roome,
And tis both her Coarse and Tombe.

(pp. 55-56)

WORKS CITED

Books

- Allen, Don Cameron. "Richard Lovelace: 'The Grasse-Hopper.'" Seventeenth-Century Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism. Edited by William R. Keast. New York: Oxford University Press, 1962.
- Allibone, S. Austin. A Critical Dictionary of English Literature. Vol. I. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Company, 1872.
- Alvarez, A. The School of Donne. New York: Pantheon Books, 1961.
- Aubrey, John. Brief Lives and Other Selected Writings. London: Cresset, 1949.
- Brooks, Cleanth. "The Language of Paradox." Critiques and Essays in Criticism. Edited by Robert W. Stallman. New York: Ronald Press, 1949.
- _____. "Literary Criticism: Poet, Poem, and Reader." Varieties of Literary Experience. Edited by Stanley Burnshaw. New York: New York University Press, 1962.
- Bush, Douglas. English Literature of the Earlier Seventeenth Century. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945.
- Cox, Marjorie. "The Background to English Literature, 1603-1660." From Donne to Marvell. The Pelican Guide to English Literature, Vol. III. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1956.
- Elton, William. A Glossary of New Criticism. 2nd ed. rev. Chicago: Modern Poetry Association, 1949.
- Empson, William. Seven Types of Ambiguity. 2nd ed. rev. London: Chatto and Windus, 1949.
- Gosse, Edmund W. "Richard Lovelace." The English Poets. Edited by T. H. Ward. Vol. II. New York: MacMillan, 1890.

- Grierson, H. J. C. Cross Currents in English Literature of the Seventeenth Century. Peregrine Books. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966.
- _____. Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921.
- _____. "Metaphysical Poetry." Seventeenth-Century English Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism. Edited by William R. Keast. New York: Oxford University Press, 1962.
- Harrington, Karl Pomeroy. Catullus and his Influence. Boston: Marshall Jones Company, 1923.
- Hartmann, C. H. The Cavalier Spirit and its Influence on the Life and Work of Richard Lovelace. London: G. Routledge and Sons, 1925.
- Howarth, R. G., ed. Minor Poets of the Seventeenth Century. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1953.
- John, Lisle Cecil. The Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences. New York: Russell and Russell, 1964.
- Kaske, R. E. "The Aube in Chaucer's Troilus." Troilus and Criseyde and the Minor Poems. Edited by Richard J. Schoeck and Jerome Taylor. Chaucer Criticism, Vol. II. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1961.
- Leavis, F. R. "The Line of Wit." Seventeenth-Century Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism. Edited by William R. Keast. New York: Oxford University Press, 1962.
- Lowell, James Russell. "Library of Old Authors." Literary Essays. Vol. I. Boston: Riverside Press, 1864.
- Moorman, F. W. "Cavalier Lyrists." Cambridge History of English Literature. Edited by A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller. Vol. VII. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1911.
- Saintsbury, George. A History of Elizabethan Literature. London: Macmillan, 1896.
- Seccombe, Thomas. "Richard Lovelace." Dictionary of National Biography. Edited by Leslie Stephens and Sidney Lee. Vol. XII. London: Oxford University Press, 1921.

- Sharp, Robert Lathrop. From Donne to Dryden: The Revolt Against Metaphysical Poetry. Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965.
- Skelton, Robin. Cavalier Poets. Writers and Their Work. Edited by Bonamy Dobree. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1960.
- Tate, Allen. "Tension in Poetry." Critiques and Essays in Criticism. Edited by Robert W. Stallman. New York: Ronald Press, 1949.
- Tillyard, E. M. W. The Elizabethan World Picture. New York: Vintage Press, 196-.
- Trevelyan, George Macaulay. England Under the Stuarts. 19th ed. London: Methuen and Company, 1947.
- Tuve, Rosemond. Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947.
- Van Doren, Mark. Introduction to Poetry. New York: William Sloane, 1951.
- Walker, Ralph S. "Ben Jonson's Lyric Poetry." Seventeenth-Century Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism. Edited by William R. Keast. New York: Oxford University Press, 1962.
- Walton, Geoffrey. "The Cavalier Poets." From Donne to Marvell. Edited by Boris Ford. The Pelican Guide to English Literature, Vol. III. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1956.
- _____. "The Tone of Ben Jonson's Poetry." Seventeenth-Century Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism. Edited by William R. Keast. New York: Oxford University Press, 1962.
- Wedgwood, C. V. Seventeenth-Century English Literature. New York: Oxford University Press, 1950.
- White, Helen C. The Metaphysical Poets: A Study in Religious Experience. New York: Macmillan, 1955.
- Wilkinson, C. H., ed. The Poems of Richard Lovelace. London: Oxford University Press, 1930.
- Willey, Basil. The Seventeenth-Century Background. Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1953.

Williamson, George. The Donne Tradition. New York: Noontday Press, 1930.

Winstanley, William. Lives of the Most Famous English Poets. Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1963.

Wood, Anthony A. Athenae Oxonienses. Vol. II. 2nd ed. London: 1721.

Periodicals

Berry, Herbert and Timings, E. K. "Lovelace at Court and a Version of Part of his 'The Scrutinies.'" Modern Language Notes, LXIX (June, 1954), 396-398.

Bewley, Marius. "The Colloquial Mode of Byron." Scrutiny, XVI (1949), 8-32.

Brydges, Sir S. E. "Remarks on English Bards." The Gentleman's Magazine, LXI (1791), pt. 2, 1094-1095; LXII (1792), pt. 1, 99, 135, 166-167, 320-321; LXII (1792), pt. 2, 605-605, 971-972.

Cutts, John P. "John Wilson and Lovelace's 'The Rose.'" Notes and Queries, CXCVIII (April, 1953), 153-154.

Evans, Willa McClung. "An Early Lovelace Text." PMLA, LX (June, 1945), 382-385.

_____. "Lovelace's Concept of Prison Life in 'The Vintage to the Dungeon.'" Philological Quarterly, XXVI (January, 1947), 62-68.

_____. "Richard Lovelace's 'Mock-Song.'" Philological Quarterly, XXIV (October, 1945), 317-328.

_____. "'The Rose' A Song by Wilson and Lovelace." Modern Language Quarterly, VII (September, 1946), 269-278.

Guiney, Louise Imogene. "English Lyrics under the First Charles." Harpers, LXXX (May, 1890), 954-955.

"Hazlitt's Poems of Richard Lovelace." North American Review, XCIX (July, 1864), 310-317.

- Judson, Alexander C. "A Forgotten Lovelace Manuscript." Modern Language Notes, XXXVII (November, 1922), 407-411.
- _____. "Who was Lucasta?" Modern Philology, XXIII (August, 1925), 77-82.
- King, Bruce. "Green Ice and a Breast of Proof." College English, XXVI (April, 1965), 511-515.
- "Lovelace's Lucasta." Retrospective Review, IV (1821), 116-130.
- Nethercot, Arthur H. "The Reputation of the 'Metaphysical Poets' during the Age of Johnson and the 'Romantic Revival.'" Studies in Philology, XXII (January, 1925), 81-132.
- _____. "The Reputation of the 'Metaphysical Poets' during the Age of Pope." Philological Quarterly, IV (April, 1925), 161-179.
- Pearson, Norman H. "Lovelace's 'To Lucasta, Going to the Warres.'" Explicator, VII (June, 1949), item 58.
- Praz, Mario. "Review of C. H. Wilkinson's edition of Lovelace." Modern Language Review, XXI (July, 1926), 319-322.
- Waite, A. E. "Richard Lovelace." The Gentleman's Magazine, CLIV (November, 1884), pt. 2, 259-262.