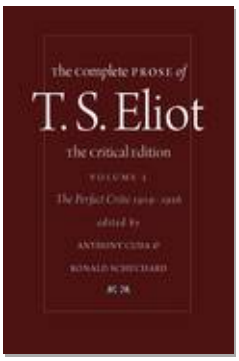
The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition

Schuchard, Ronald

Published by The Johns Hopkins University Press



Lecture II

Donne and the Middle Ages

I propose in this lecture to discuss the studies of Donne and their influence upon his mind and his poetry. For this purpose I shall employ chiefly the work of Miss Mary Ramsay before mentioned. Miss Ramsay conducted her investigation into Donne's reading with the thoroughness only possible to a candidate for a doctor's degree; there is not a single reference or allusion which she has not made indefatigable attempts to track down; and her book will, I expect, remain the standard work on the subject for many generations to come. Miss Ramsay draws certain conclusions regarding Donne's cast of mind; happily, her documentation is so complete that it provides itself the means for us to qualify some of these conclusions.

Miss Ramsay's thesis, as stated in her foreword, is this: that Donne possessed a "very complete" philosophical system and a profound mysticism and that his conception of the universe, and his philosophical technique, are essentially mediaeval. It is these assertions which I propose to examine.[1]

There is no question that Donne's natural inclination of mind bore him toward theological and legal studies. The tendency toward the law, more pronounced than a reader of Miss Ramsay's book might suppose, is of some significance. Donne's reading in civil and canon law was so extensive that at one moment there was a question whether he should not look in this direction for a career: though we are also to infer, from Walton's life, that his studies in law were pursued for many years without any such practical aim.[2] In any case, they indicate some bias toward the more public and disputatious, rather than the more private and speculative attitude toward philosophy. Donne's reading, in law, in theology, in medicine, and in everything which at that time could be subsumed under the genus of philosophy, was immense. Even during his youthful period of dissipation – and we may suspect that Donne, like many other men, was not above the vanity of magnifying his adolescent debaucheries in retrospect – Walton tells us that he always reserved the hours from four until ten in the morning for study – leaving us to believe that after ten o'clock he was ready for the solicitations of whatever pleasure presented itself. When we inspect the dreary index of

his reading which Miss Ramsay most usefully gives us, we recoil.[3] No man of Donne's ability and attainments ever seems to have read a greater amount of positive rubbish. But the lists themselves are interesting reading, and provide a pertinent comment on Miss Ramsay's thesis. For we remark at once, how large a part of this reading is in authors contemporary, or nearly so. True, as a thorough theologian, he was familiar with the fathers of the church, and with the most important of the mediaeval philosophers; but so, as Miss Ramsay herself says, was Hooker, and Miss Ramsay does not go so far as to say that Hooker's conception of the universe was mediaeval.[4*] Donne must have read Aquinas with care; he quotes Bonaventura, and Augustine of course influenced him very strongly.[5] But he was equally at home with later theologians, both Roman and Protestant. Walton tells us that when Donne, at the age of nineteen, betook himself seriously to the study of theology, for the purpose of resolving his hesitation between the Roman and the Reformed Church, he plunged into the study of Bellarmine, so thoroughly that a year later he was able to show the Dean of Gloucester – that dean whose name Walton cannot remember – all of Cardinal Bellarmine's works annotated by his own hand.[6] Bellarmine was no mediaeval philosopher, but a contemporary some thirty years older than Donne, and still living when Donne studied his works. But Donne made himself in time equally familiar [with] the works of all the other contemporaries who distinguished themselves in theology, and of a great many whose distinction is now unintelligible. He knew the works of Luther, of Calvin, of Melanchthon, of Peter Martyr, among Protestant writers;[7] of Cajetan, Valdez and Fra Victoria among the more philosophical of Roman commentators:[8] the controversial literature of the Jesuits was at his finger-tips; finally, he was acquainted with many of those writers of the later Renaissance whose orthodoxy, from either a Roman or a Protestant standpoint, is rather doubtful, such as Nicholas of Cusa and the host of students who exploited the Kabbalah, the hermetic writings and other compilations of the same sort.[9] In the Kabbalah Donne was always interested.[10†] In this connection it is not without significance to refer to Donne's ancestry. His great-grandmother was a sister of Sir Thomas More.[11] More wrote a biography of Pico della Mirandola, which was much admired by Donne.[12] Here is one influence already in the family: that of a man who is often taken as typical of the Renaissance, and who was certainly one of the most successful advertisers of neo-platonism and occultism of his age. More admired Pico, and was also influenced by Colet, who translated that recension of neo-platonic

philosophy known as Dionysius the Areopagite.[13] The great-grandfather of Donne, More's brother-in-law, was active in theological controversy, which led to his conversion to Protestantism.[14] The grandfather of Donne was John Heywood, the author of the Interludes;[15] his uncle, whom he must have known, was Jasper Heywood, the author of the first translation of three of the plays of Seneca, who subsequently became a Jesuit.[16] In literary criticism heredity is not to be overlooked, and the ancestral dispositions behind Donne seem pretty clear. A remarkable family, and one which certainly kept up with the times: the influences that breathed on Donne's nursery do not seem to have been very mediaeval.

What Donne's reading does show is a pronounced taste, a passion, for theology of the more controversial and legal type – theology, in fact as it was practised in his day; and we think that King James was absolutely right when he forced Donne to take orders.[17] What Miss Ramsay does not show, or attempt to show, is that his reading was any more mediaeval than that of any other theologian of his time. What she makes abundantly clear is the partiality, as well as the immensity, of his reading. He had presumably been instructed in the Latin classics, if not in the Greek, by his tutors, but he makes little use of them. One allusion makes us believe that he had read the *Divine Comedy*, or had the opportunity of doing so; but he was certainly very little affected by it.[18] That he should have been indifferent to the poetry of his own age in England – in spite of his acquaintance with Jonson, who most nobly praises him – is more excusable:[19] poets and prose writers too are sometimes very ignorant of the work of their contemporaries – sometimes, I make no doubt, by a self-protective instinct. But this point is of great importance: Donne was a theologian by profession, a poet only by avocation. When we understand this, I think that his mind will appear to us much less mediaeval than at first sight.

For some of the characteristics and tastes which seem to us to specify the Renaissance, do so because we are familiar with the works of poets and humanists rather than professional men. For instance, Donne seems to us less modern than Roger Ascham, who lived in an earlier generation. Ascham was indifferent to the thought of the Middle Ages, and was one of the first to develop the modern, or rehabilitate the ancient, standards of criticism of Latin literature – a stout partisan of Cicero.[20] But our ideas, vague as they are, of the Elizabethan mind, are derived mainly from the work of the humanising poets – Wyatt, Surrey, Spenser, with the derivations from French and Italian literature, Fulke Greville and the Senecals – or

from the work of the dramatists.[21] Marlowe, Chapman and Jonson were classical scholars.[22] The dramatists were occupied with a new form; their occupation made them somewhat a special social group; they assimilated those influences which could be most easily turned to account; their communications were sometimes unedifying. Donne, even in his frequentation of "The Mermaid," can hardly more than have touched the fringe of this society.[23]

Nevertheless, it is remarkable that a man of Donne's mental curiosity should appear so little affected by some of the most potent influences of Tudor times. Three great influences of the dramatic age – Montaigne, Machiavelli and Seneca – hardly reach him. Seneca, it is true, he quotes, but it is the conventional "moral Seneca," the prose Seneca, not the dramatist.[24] But this also is accounted for by the speciality of his interests. It is not only the men and the profession, however, but the time. One reason why Donne appears so much more mediaeval than let us say Ben Jonson is that he belongs to a later age. For the early seventeenth century seems to us in some ways more remote than the sixteenth. It is not so: a step had been omitted, and a step which when taken brought the seventeenth century nearer to our own time. Not until the seventeenth century did many important works of the sixteenth century bear their fruit. But the century which was to be more perhaps than any other the century of theological politics was announced by the ascent of a Scottish theologian to the English throne, and this Scottish theologian made Donne his private chaplain.[25]

It is necessary to insist upon the unique character of this century which, just because it experienced the acute crisis of the transition from the old to the new Europe (to the Europe, we might say, of 1914), is the most difficult of all centuries to understand. Every man was a theologian at least to the extent that he lived in a world where questions of theology had become identified with politics, international and domestic. In international affairs, Protestantism had arrived at the point where it was no longer an affair of a few scattered heretical schisms, but had become identified with the rise of powerful nationalisms. England, having been a weak and almost bankrupt nation with a hostile nation on its northern frontier, had become powerful, prosperous and united Britain, in which the Roman element was becoming more and more negligible, and the activity of Protestant schismatics more and more important. Lutheranism had detached Scandinavia and northern Germany from southern Europe, and was making the slow preparations for another world power. Calvinism from Geneva supplied a constant

source of dissension in France. And it was in this world in which theological interests were becoming more and more identified with political interests, that the campaign of the Jesuits, prepared in the previous century and reinforced by the exaltation of Spanish mysticism, spent the greatest force.

That Jesuitism is a phenomenon typically of the Renaissance is a fact upon which I insist. It represents a very important point of disagreement between Mr. Middleton Murry and myself. Mr. Murry holds the opinion that Jesuitism is identical with Christianity, and that Christianity – Roman Christianity – is identical with classicism; therefore, Jesuitism is identical with classicism.[26†] I cannot help thinking that a little study of the history, constitution and practices of the Society of Jesus would show him that it has nothing to do with classicism, but is on the contrary, what I, if not he, would call Romantic.[27†] The fact that the Society of Jesus is of Spanish origin is an indication that it is outside of the Graeco-Roman classical tradition. There is plenty of evidence that its founder St. Ignatius was a romantic, a reader of romances, an admirer of Amadis of Gaul, a sort of Don Quixote.[28] There is some evidence, too, that he drew his inspiration, and the constitution of his order, which differs radically from every other Christian order, not from Christian, but from Mohammedan examples. Its principles are non-Aristotelian, and are surprisingly like those of certain Moslem orders flourishing in Spain in Ignatius' time. I refer to an interesting and rare work, Herrmann Müller: *Les Origines de la société de Jésus*.[29] That the Spanish mystics of the sixteenth century were also romantics, that they and St. Ignatius have a certain affinity with Martin Luther and Rousseau, I hope to indicate at various points.

Now the very intensity of the theological battle in this time was itself a force of destruction to religion itself. This is not immediately evident, nor its bearing upon our subject. But it is my purpose to show that Donne was, as a theologian, very much of his time, and that this time was anything but mediaeval: and second, to lay bare the general aspect of the catabolic tendency, the tendency toward dissolution, which I find in Donne's poetry. Let us therefore consider the spirit which characterises, which had to characterise, the theological controversies of the time, contrasted with those of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Our prejudice about mediaeval philosophy, I think, is this: we conceive of the philosophers as merely playing a game which had a great many strict rules. They were not allowed to question the truth of innumerable dogmas: their thought was crushed by authority; and accordingly they spent their time in dividing hairs and

determining the specific gravity of angels – as a man, having to pass an hour in a country railway station without anything to read, might cast up the figures on the timetable. The belief in the triviality of their occupations, and in the restrictions to their liberty of thought, should be dissipated even by a cursory reading of a little primer, *La Philosophie au moyen âge*, by M. Étienne Gilson, who has done so much to make possible our understanding of this philosophy. I shall not attempt a précis of this book;[30] I shall merely call attention to two positive advantages enjoyed by this philosophy. The philosophers, unlike modern philosophers, held certain beliefs in common; it was therefore possible for them to some extent to understand each other – a feat impossible to our contemporaries. Second, the Church could and did afford them very great liberty. For the Church was one; it was not occupied with polemic or defence against other churches. The systems of the philosophers were hardly of a nature to inflame whole races to heresy. For they were philosophical systems; their inventors were concerned with the discovery of truth, of such truth as was accessible to them; they were men interested in ideas for their own sake. And in whatever degree of truth or error this philosophy issued, I think there is no question that the only hope of finding truth is to seek for it regardless of practical consequences.

Compare this situation of the thirteenth-century philosopher and theologian, in the freedom of their universities, unhampered, unhurried, unconcerned with wars and dynasties, with that of the Roman Church and of the Reformed Churches at the time of the Counter-Reformation. It is illustrated by the Society of Jesus. Nothing could be more different from the Orders of the Middle Ages. I speak with neither approval, disrespect nor bias, but purely as a detached critic. The Society of Jesus was formed for the purpose of combating heresy. It was military, not meditative or charitable, in its primary purpose. And admirably did it do its work. But though it produced accomplished men of letters, erudite and subtle commentators, though it had perhaps on the whole better brains, and far better organisation than had Protestantism, and though it counted among its numbers pious and devoted men, it produced no great philosopher, no advance in pure thought. Neither, for that matter, did the Protestant Churches. They were all too absorbed in controversy to have time for speculation. Politics cannot wait. It is in such an age that the legal mind, rather than the theoretical mind, flourishes in theology; such a mind, in fact, as that of Donne.

Theology which is bent on political controversy, theology at bay, extinguishes the light of pure ideas, the Greek disinterestedness of mind, which the Middle Ages had revived; but it does not extinguish religious sentiment. On the contrary, the religious fervour of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries burns with a fierce heat which is in itself alarming, as being a rapid combustion in acceleration of nature. And human curiosity, diverted in one direction, turns to another. Religion and theology, abandoning the pursuit of metaphysical truth, develop in the seventeenth century in the direction of psychology; an alteration which Signor Praz has well noted.

We are now able to form a larger generalisation than that which I gave you concerning the position [of] theological philosophy then and in the thirteenth century. Men had lived for centuries under a church which was the incorporated *sensus communis* of Europe.[31] When Europe was broken up by the several great national religions, Rome ceased to be the detached Olympian arbiter of ideas, and became merely one combatant on the field. It no longer controlled the thought of northern Europe, it had no longer the same control over its own thought. It is possible – I hazard the suggestion without sufficient knowledge – that the experiences of St. Theresa and her fellow mystics in Spain would in an earlier and less dangerous period have been subjected to closer scrutiny, and been less quickly accepted by the Church. The schismatic Churches, of course, were in no better position: they also were forced to accept ideas for their immediate polemic value. But expediency was not the only new criterion; a more powerful one still was to arise, and make itself felt in philosophy outside of the Church and in literature: the success of ideas was to come to depend more and more upon the suffrage of a larger and larger semi-literate public. Success meant what pleased or impressed the greatest number of persons at any moment. We are already in full democracy.

I must plead pardon for these tedious generalities, which will not I hope appear so tedious when we come to make particular application of them. I now return to the point which I had introduced before this digression: the diversion of human inquiry from ontology to psychology. Not only a diversion of inquiry; it is rather as if, at certain times, the constitution of the human mind altered to adapt itself to the reception of new categories of truth, and new elements of thought. Often it has been remarked, the state of mind appropriate to a particular science comes into existence before the science itself. Diderot in this sense "anticipated" Darwin;

Dostoevski, it is often said, though the evidence is less satisfactory, anticipated Freud; the fancies of Leonardo, the labours of the alchemists, were vague anticipations. But in Donne we are concerned with a connection closer and less interrupted; though I cannot tell you in detail how it came about. But certainly Donne is in a sense a psychologist. You find it in his verse compared to earlier verse, in his sermons compared to earlier sermons. I am not here concerned with how the change came about, step by step; that would be a very interesting but long and exact study. But dissolution so frequently begins within, that I think that the Jesuits had a great deal to do with it: their fine distinctions and discussions of conduct and casuistry tend in the direction of a certain self-consciousness which had not been conspicuous in the world before. I am here more concerned with defining clearly the difference in point of view, a true Copernican revolution which occurred centuries before Kant was born, a difference which marks the real abyss between the classic scholastic philosophy and all philosophy since.[32] It was impressed upon the world by Descartes, like his own figure, and by his own figure, when he compared the impression of "ideas" on the mind to the impression of the seal on the wax; and when he clearly stated that what we know is not the world of objects, but our own ideas of these objects.[33] The revolution was immense. Instead of ideas as meanings, as references to an outside world, you have suddenly a new world coming into existence, inside your own mind and therefore by the usual implication inside your own head. Mankind suddenly retires inside its several skulls, until you hear Nietzsche – pretty well tormented in his cranial lodging – declaring that "nothing is inside, nothing is outside."[34] And the most brilliant of contemporary critics of criticism, Mr. I. A. Richards, declaring (after Kant and Descartes) that love is a spontaneous emotion bearing no relation to the object of affection.[35]

Descartes: 6th. Meditation (Garnier, 128):[36]

Je conçois, dis-je, aisément que l'imagination se peut faire de cette sorte, s'il est vrai qu'il y ait des corps; et parce que je ne puis rencontrer aucune autre voie pour expliquer comment elle se fait, je conjecture de là probablement qu'il y en a: mais ce n'est que probablement; et quoique j'examine soigneusement toutes choses, je ne trouve pas néanmoins que, de cette idée distincte de la nature corporelle que j'ai en mon imagination, je puisse tirer aucun argument qui conclue avec nécessité l'existence de quelque corps.[37]

This extraordinary crude and stupid piece of reasoning is the sort of thing which gave rise to the whole of the pseudo-science of epistemology which has haunted the nightmares of the last three hundred years.

I. A. Richards: *The Principles of Literary Criticism*. I have been unable to find again the passage alluded to.[38] But I will quote another specimen from this book: page 264: (in describing a view which Mr. Richards opposes in this place and which is similar to the Dantesque view):

> Love not grounded upon knowledge would be described as worthless. We ought not to admire what is not beautiful and if our mistress be not really beautiful when impartially considered we ought, so the doctrine runs, to admire her, if at all, for other reasons. The chief points of interest about such views are the confusions which make them plausible. Beauty as an internal quality of things is usually involved, as well as Good the unanalysable Idea. Both are special twists given to some of our impulses[39]* by habits deriving ultimately from desires. They linger in our minds because to think of a thing as Good or Beautiful gives more *immediate* emotional satisfaction than to *refer* to it as satisfying our impulses in one special fashion or another.

Far from me to throw myself into a battle of psychology for which I am not trained. I would only ask whether this is really a "confusion" on the part of the Italians, as Mr. Richards believes, or merely a different and alien point of view. I am not concerned which is right. I am only concerned to know whether the difference here between Guido Cavalcanti and Mr. Richards is not fundamentally a difference between what the late T. E. Hulme – the most fertile mind of my generation, and one of the glories of this University – would call the Categories of the thirteenth century and the Categories of the nineteenth century – a different mode of thought.[40] The difference between what I call ontologism and psychologism – which is perhaps a different [form] of the old difference between realism and nominalism.

Now Donne is not consciously of this way of thinking. In the exact sense Donne had no philosophy at all, but exactly by having no philosophy he prepared himself within for the new state of mind. Miss Ramsay judges by what he read and the terms (scholastic) which he uses, and concludes that his mind was mediaeval. I judge him (apart from the large proportion of his reading which is not mediaeval at all) by the way in which he read, and judge him to be exactly of his own moment of time. What is clear is that

Donne read a great deal without order or valuation, and that he thought in a spasmodic and fragmentary way when he thought at all. Tradition has really little weight with him; he wishes to read everything, and is willing to take something from everywhere, and is not too nice about coherence. A notion of Maimonides or Averroes could exist in the mind of Donne with the same notion as assimilated by Aquinas.[41]

And the notions of the pseudo-Dionysius are revived sometimes *telles quelles*,[42] as they are in the thought of the fifteenth-century Eckhardt.[43] The distinction may be made a very fine one. Miss Ramsay might say that Donne's mind is of the Middle Ages, though his feelings are of the Renaissance. I should say that where the feelings are, there will the mind be also; and that you cannot think with Aquinas unless you can feel with him. It is in the direction of his attention and interest, the direction in which Donne made his real observations, that I seek for his mind; in the examination of his own sensations and ideas and emotions.

I shall have occasion later, in connection with Crashaw, to refer to the Spanish mystics. And in my lecture of next week I shall call your attention to a mysticism of the twelfth century which is different from that of the Spaniards and different from that of the Germans, and which is in the direct classical, Aristotelian tradition, and which is the mysticism of Dante. There are several mysticisms. But it may be as well to make clear that to me the Spanish mystics of the sixteenth century – St. Theresa, St. John of the Cross, Luis of Granada, St. Philip Neri (to whom the church at Arundel is dedicated) and St. Ignatius, are as much psychologists as Descartes, and Donne, and as much romanticists as Rousseau.[44]

And certainly there was here an immense unexplored field, which the following centuries were to exploit, but which Donne was one of the first to devote himself to. From one point of view, to turn the attention to the mind in this way is to create, for the objects alter by being observed. To contemplate an idea, because it is my idea, to observe its emotional infusion, to play with it, instead of using it as a plain and simple meaning, brings often curious and beautiful things to light, though it lends itself, this petting and teasing of one's mental offspring, to extremities of torturing of language, [as] we shall see. But it is not, as with the Elizabethans at their worst excesses (mobled queen),[45] the vocabulary that is the object of torment – it is the idea itself. Let us take the first poem in Professor Grierson's collection.

I wonder by my troth, what thou, and I
Did, till we lov'd? were we not wean'd till then?
But suck'd on countrey pleasures, childishly?
Or snorted we in the seaven sleepers den?
T'was so; But this, all pleasures fancies bee.
If ever any beauty I did see,
Which I desir'd, and got, t'was but a dreame of thee.[46]

This is an example, in Donne's lighter, though still not frivolous mood, of what I have called teasing the idea. Observe that the choice and arrangement of words is simple and chaste and extremely felicitous. There is a startling directness (as often at the beginning of Donne's poems) about the idea, which must have occurred to many lovers, of the abrupt break and alteration of life which such a crisis can make. These *trouvailles* in themselves are enough to set Donne apart from some of his imitators: Cowley never found anything so good. The point is, however, that Donne, instead of pursuing the meaning of the idea, letting it flow into the usual sequence of thought, arrests it, in order to extract every possible ounce of the emotion suspended in it. To such ideas of Donne's, therefore, there is a certain opacity of feeling; they are not simple significances and directions. In thus arresting the idea Donne often succeeds in bringing to light curious aspects and connections which would not otherwise be visible; he infuses, as it were, the dose of bismuth which makes the position of the intestine apparent on the X-ray screen.

Perhaps a parallel will make this point clearer; from another poet of the same century. When Phaedra recalls, at the sight of Hippolytus, the memory of his father in the time when she first knew him, she bursts into the famous passage

Que faisiez-vous alors? Pourquoi, sans Hippolyte
Des héros de la Grèce assembla-t-il l'élite? etc.[47]

Here is a similar thought used in a similar way: Donne's question, What was our life before we loved? and the question of Racine's heroine, Why were you not there, why were you not of proper age, at my proper time for loving you? They are, if you like, rhetorical questions: for Donne does not stay to know the answer; and to Phaedra's question there was indeed no answer. But each question has an intense emotional value; Phaedra's indeed has the very highest tragic value, it is charged with all the content of impossibility and frustration. The violence of the passion, the torrent of the

alexandrines are such that we do not at first realise that Phaedra is being right metaphysical; that she is pursuing the fancy in order to squeeze every drop of agony for herself out of it. But Racine was indeed a psychologist, a far greater one than Donne; he is almost unique in his ability to give such thoughts the maximum of both poetic and dramatic value. For in fact they do not easily lend themselves to dramatic action. It is very different from the operation of Sophocles when he crushed his Oedipus beneath the frightful repetition and variation of every aspect of his crime, in that great speech of his; for that is a straightforward development of every implication of the direct meaning.[48]

It is not so much in the thought, as in the development of the thought, that Donne's metaphysical peculiarity resides. Let us take similar ideas of violent contrast that are developed differently. There is a passage in the *Odyssey* which has been used by someone, I think Matthew Arnold, as an illustration of sublimity; I should like to use it for another purpose. It is when Ulysses, on his visit to Hell, meets the shade of Elpenor, who, you remember, had fallen overboard and been drowned some time before.[49] The meeting is totally a surprise.

> Elpenor! hast thou come faster on foot than we in our black ships?[50]

This question, like those of Donne and Phaedra, is a sort of *Annahme*; it implies something entertained but not precisely believed.[51] Donne, or a supersubtle heroine of one of Racine's tragedies, would have rung every change on this notion. Not so Homer; he deals with it literally, and passes on, for he is interested in the outside world, not in the world of floating ideas. Another parallel, not quite so close, is found in the *Purgatorio*. The shade of Statius suddenly realises that the personage with whom he had been speaking is no less than Virgil; and the one transported falls at the feet of the other. Virgil withdraws from the embrace and says only

> Frate –
> Non far: chè tu sei ombra ed ombra vedi.[52]

The other accepts the admonition with the words

> la quantite
> Puote veder dell'amor che a te mi scalda,
> Quando dismento nostra vanitate
> Trattando l'ombre come cosa salda.[53]

The idea you observe, received rather more development than Homer's; but only in the direction of the external reality which it intends; it is not a fancy, and it is not detached from the external facts.

My intention in this lecture was to present adequate reasons for treating Donne as wholly a man of his own time, and in doing so to define generally his time in its points of contrast with the Middle Ages. I believe that Jesuitism is one of the most significant phenomena of Donne's time, for the purpose of definition: and I tried to show that in Jesuitism the centre of philosophical interest is deflected from what it was for the Middle Ages, and that this marks an important alteration of human attitudes. Donne throughout his life was in contact with Jesuitism; directly in his early family life, later by his studies, and not least by his battle with the Jesuits. For you can hardly fight anyone for very long without employing his weapons and using his methods; and to fight a man with ideas means adapting your ideas to his mind. Conflict is contact. The air which Donne breathed was infused with Jesuitism. I have so far tried only to establish that Donne in his writings illustrates one form of the psychologism which arose with Jesuitism – I do not say solely in Jesuit form, or through the medium of Jesuitism.

My first lecture intended to form a definition, or less strictly to present a view of metaphysical poetry, starting from that of Donne's age and looking for felt resemblances elsewhere, which could include all the kinds of poetry which I myself feel to be metaphysical. In this second lecture I intended to arrive at a definition or view of Donne's peculiar type of metaphysical poetry, and to do this I had to place him in history. We shall have to see how far the connection of Donne's contemporaries can be based on identity under this definition, how far (as I warned you we must be prepared sometimes to find it) the resemblance is verbal or exterior, and how far we must go in framing variant but related definitions. I think we shall find that this general law of the supersession of ontology by psychology holds good everywhere, to the degree in which the various poets are distinct enough to merit definition at all. But before considering some of Donne's contemporaries, when we shall investigate their common tricks in the use of language, I wish next time to contrast the school of Donne with the school of Dante in the particular, but important and illuminating respect of their expressed or implied theories of the nature of human and of divine love.

There is one reservation to be made, in considering the argument of the preceding lecture. In treating Donne's psychological attitude toward ideas

and emotions I have not meant to suggest that he was the direct ancestor, or even the collateral ancestor, of later poets. You must not ask me to apply my remarks on Donne *tel quel* to Browning: and I should prefer you not to ask me, not yet at any rate, where is the psychological element in Collins's "Ode to Evening."[54] I do not say that this new attitude accounts for everything, as I should by no means say that Aquinas accounts for everything in the thirteenth century. But it is surely one of the differences between the new world and the old; and in its various mutations it either accounts for or is related to the causes which account for, a great many of the phenomena even of our own time. The work of Marcel Proust, for instance, could hardly have appeared without it.[55] But we must always be on guard to avoid confusing resemblances with influences. And even influences, we must remember, occur very frequently through misunderstanding; and some writers have exercised a great influence on account of the facility with which they can be misinterpreted. There is some resemblance between the fruit which St. Augustine stole from an orchard in his boyhood, and the cherries which Rousseau flung at Mademoiselle de Graffenried:[56] and these in turn bear some likeness to the forbidden fruit which Mr. Frank Harris has, I am told, recently preserved for posterity in a limited edition, privately printed.[57] But we are not to hold St. Augustine responsible for Mr. Harris.

On the other hand I insist on a general line of descent from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth. It would be traced partly in a history of ideas, in which Locke would play the leading part; and partly in a History of Sensibility. Crashaw, as we shall see, was immensely affected by St. Theresa: Crashaw influenced Pope in a poem in which already are the germs of eighteenth-century sentiment – the "Heloise to Abelard."[58] There was sentimentality before Rousseau, and sentiment reached the nineteenth century through other media as well as through Rousseau. In much English prose, even the finest, of the nineteenth century, I find more than a trace of intellectual psychologism, and just the faintest, undefinable perfume of femininity. I find it in Newman and Francis Bradley as well as in Ruskin and Pater. Or it is as if such prose had been written in a low fever; there is a slight temperature to it.[59] Would it be excessive to attempt to trace the influence of St. Theresa to Mr. Lytton Strachey? I think not. But the point of these remarks is to remind you how useful a stimulant such speculation may be if it is carried on under the control of the *sensus communis*.

NOTES

1. TSE first wrote of his objection to Ramsay's thesis in "An Italian Critic on Donne and Crashaw," his review of Praz's *Secentismo e marinismo in Inghilterra*: "we think that Signor Praz's view is nearer to accuracy: that Donne was medieval in his education and in his taste, but Renaissance in mind and in sensibility" (598).

2. Izaak Walton (1593-1683), Donne's first biographer, states that when Donne was admitted to Lincoln's Inn at age seventeen to study law, "he gave great testimonies of his wit, his learning, and of his improvement in that profession; which never served him for other use than an ornament and self-satisfaction." *The Complete Angler & the Lives*, 190.

3. In five appendices, Ramsay lists the authors cited by Donne in *Bianthanatos* (1646), *Pseudo-Martyr* (1610), *Ignatius his Conclave* (1611), *Sermons* (1634-60), and *Essays in Divinity* (1651).

4*. TSE later penciled a note in the bottom margin: "Though I believe that Hooker's philosophy was much more 'mediaeval' than Donne's; but I shall deal with this elsewhere." While his lectures were in progress, TSE wrote to Herbert Read on 27 Feb about a proposal, later abandoned, to bring out a series of monographs on major critics: "I should rather like to deal with Hooker myself if he were included" (*L3* 89).

5. Donne's Thomistic influences are most apparent in the early prose, but he also quotes Aquinas frequently in *Sermons*. He quotes and refers to Franciscan theologian St. Bonaventure (Giovanni di Fidanza, 1221-74) in *Biathanatos* and in *Sermons* (*Ser* VII, 308; IX, 128). He quotes St. Augustine (354-430) more than any of the Fathers in his sermons and other prose works (*Ser* X, 376-86).

6. Walton writes: "Being to undertake this search, [Donne] believed the Cardinal Bellarmine to be the best defender of the Roman cause, and therefore betook himself to the examination of his reasons." *The Complete Angler & the Lives*, 191. Father Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), an Italian Jesuit and professor of theology at Louvain and Rome, was the author of *Disputations on the Controversies of the Christian Faith* (1586-93). Dr. Anthony Rudd (1549-1615), a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, was the dean of Gloucester from 1584 to 1594.

7. Donne quotes from and refers to the works of Martin Luther (1483-1546), leader of the German Reformation, in *Pseudo-Martyr*, *Essays in Divinity*, and *Sermons*; John Calvin (1509-64), the French Protestant theologian and reformer, is frequently quoted and praised in *Sermons* as an expositor and interpreter of Scripture; Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560), the German scholar and reformer), is frequently cited in the *Sermons* for his *Loci communes rerum theologicarum* (1521); Peter Martyr Vermigli (1500-62), an Italian convert to Protestantism and a Calvinist reformer, published his commentaries and tracts in *Locorum communium theologicorum* (1580-83), which Donne cites in *Biathanatos*, *Essays in Divinity*, and *Sermons*.

8. Cajetan (Tommaso de Vio Gaetani, 1469-1534), head of the Dominican order, worked against Luther in Germany and wrote biblical commentaries to which Donne refers in *Sermons* and *Essays in Divinity*. Jacobus Valdesius (Diego de Valdés), Donne's contemporary, was the author of *De dignitate regum regnorumque Hispaniae* (1602), which Donne read and cited in *Pseudo-Martyr* and in a letter to Robert Cotton. See Edmund Gosse, *The Life and Letters of John Donne*, vol 1 (London: Heinemann, 1899), 123-25. Francisco de Victoria (1480-1546), Dominican leader of the neo-Thomist school, is cited in *Biathanatos*.

9. The German humanist Nicolaus de Cusa ("Cusanus," 1401-64), a Neoplatonist and Cardinal of the Roman Church, demanded reforms, attacked the supremacy of the papacy, and advocated the transcendence of reason by mystical contemplation. He is referred to in *Essays in Divinity*, where Donne expresses further interest in the Cabalistic speculations of the Italian humanist Pico della Mirandola and his followers, Johann Reuchlin and F. Zorgi ("Francis George").

10†. TSE later crossed out the following sentence: "It was the learned equivalent of the cross-word puzzle."

11. Elizabeth Rastell (1482-1538)

12. In 1504-05 More translated into English the Latin biography of Italian humanist Pico della Mirandola (1463-94), written by Pico's nephew ca. 1496, and published it in 1510. Donne alludes parenthetically to the biography in *Essays in Divinity*.

13. John Colet (1467-1519), Oxford reformer and Dean of St. Paul's (1504-19), was the author of two Latin treatises (later translated into English as *Two Treatises on the Hierarchies of Dionysius*, 1869) on the Greek texts the *Celestial Hierarchy* and the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* by Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, known as Pseudo-Dionysius, a sixth-century Syrian Christian writer who used Neoplatonism to interpret theology. His works were once attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite, a first-century Athenian Christian converted by St. Paul (Acts 17:34).

14. John Rastell (1475-1536), a wealthy printer, lawyer, and dramatist, was drawn into religious controversy in 1530 with the publication of his *A Newe Boke of Purgatory*, a defense of Catholic doctrine, but he was answered so persuasively by a young Protestant, John Frith, that he converted to Protestantism.

15. John Heywood (1497-1578), court musician and playwright, was the author of epigrams, songs, poems, and at least six "interludes," or dramatic farces, including *The Play of Love* (1533) and *The Play of the Weather* (1533). He married John Rastell's granddaughter, Elizabeth Rastell, and their daughter, Elizabeth Heywood (1540-1632) married John Donne (d. 1576), father of the poet.

16. Jasper Heywood (1535-98) was Lord of Misrule at Lincoln's Inn when he translated Seneca's *Troas* (1559) and fellow at All Souls College when he translated *Thyestes* (1560) and *Hercules furens* (1561). He then withdrew to Rome, became a Jesuit in 1562, and returned to England in 1581 as Papal Legate when Donne was eight years old.

17. James I, convinced that Donne had a divine calling, determined that he should have a church preferment or none at all, but Donne steadfastly resisted the calling for five or six years until 1612, when he announced his intention of taking holy orders.

18. Edmund Gosse points out in *The Life and Letters of John Donne* that Donne made one of "the very rare Elizabethan references" (1:41) to Dante in his Fourth Satire: "My precious soule began, the wretchednesse / Of suiters at court to mourne, and a trance / Like his, who dreamt he saw hell, did advance / It selfe on mee, Such men as he saw there, / I saw at court" (Grierson 1:164).

19. Jonson praises Donne in *Epigrams* (1616), "XXIII. – To John Donne" and in *Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden* (1619).

20. The English humanist Roger Ascham, a classical scholar and Ciceronian Latinist, wrote *The Scholemaster* (1570). Through a bequest from his aunt in 1919, TSE owned the four-volume

edition (many pages uncut) of *The Whole Works of Roger Ascham* (London: John Russell Smith, 1864/65).

21. Senecals: Elizabethan dramatists who were influenced by Seneca in form, language, or style.

22. Marlowe published verse translations of the first book of Lucan's *Pharsalia* and of Ovid's *Amores*, which TSE praised for the translation's "strength and energy" in "The Local Flavour" (177). Chapman translated Hesiod's *Georgics*, and TSE recommended his translations of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to students of his Extension Lectures in 1918 (1.758). Jonson translated Horace's *Ars poetica*, *Vitae rusticae laudes* and two odes, an epigram of Martial, and a fragment of Petronius Arbiter.

23. Though Thomas Coryate suggested, in a facetious letter from India of 8 Nov 1615, that Donne was among those poets and playwrights that gathered at the Mermaid Tavern in Bread Street from about 1612 to 1615, Gosse contends that the letter "is the principal, and indeed the only, authority existing for the statement that Donne attended the meetings at the Mermaid." *The Life and Letters of John Donne,* 2:86. Nineteenth-century critics, however, had fostered an improbable tradition that Marlowe, Shakespeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, Jonson, and other Elizabethan-Jacobean dramatists had been members of this thriving "Mermaid Club" and that Shakespeare and Jonson had engaged in their "wit-combats" there. It is likely that the only dramatists whom Donne met at the Mermaid were Jonson and possibly Fletcher.

24. TSE alludes to *Inferno* IV.141, where in the first circle of Hell Dante encounters "Seneca morale" ("Seneca the moralist") (*DC1* 44-45). In his *Sermons* Donne frequently quotes phrases from the philosophical treatises of Seneca, often referring to him as the "Morall man" (*Ser* III, 281) and as "the Patriarch, and Oracle of Morall men" (*Ser* III, 406).

25. Shortly after Donne's ordination in Jan 1615, King James made him his chaplain and commanded him to preach before the court.

26†. TSE later crossed out the following: "and it is on these grounds that he has advised me to take a spiritual director." He alludes to his public controversy with Murry on the nature of Classicism and Romanticism, begun in the pages of the *Adelphi* and the *Criterion* in 1923. TSE likely refers to personal conversation on the matter of Jesuitism and Classicism; in "The 'Classical' Revival," published in the Feb and Mar issues of the *Adelphi* while TSE's lectures were in progress, Murry describes him as an "unregenerate and incomplete romantic" and suggests an unbridgeable division between his classical principles and his romantic sensibility in *TWL*: "To order such an experience on classical principles," Murry continues, "is almost beyond human powers. It might conceivably be done, by an act of violence, by joining the Catholic Church." *Adelphi*, 3 (Feb 1926), 592-93.

27†. TSE later crossed out the following: ", and excessively Romantic."

28. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556; canonized 1622), founder of the Society of Jesus in 1540 and author of *Spiritual Exercises* (1548), confirms in his autobiography that he read only chivalric romances in his youth, particularly *Amadis de Gaula* (1508), a romance about the knightly exploits of Amadis that was popular in France and Spain prior to the appearance of Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605-15).

29. In *Les Origines de la compagnie de Jésus; Ignace et Lainez* [The Origins of the Society of Jesus: Ignatius and Lainez] (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1898), Herrmann Müller explores in detail the similarities of the six steps of a Jesuit novitiate's spiritual progress to specific Mohammedan practices.

30. TSE discussed the two-volume study by French Thomistic philosopher Étienne Gilson (1884-1978) later in 1926 in his review of Maurice de Wulf's *History of Medieval Philosophy* (870).

31. *sensus communis*: "common sense"; in classical rhetoric, the term refers to the set of unstated assumptions and unexamined judgments shared by a culture.

32. TSE alludes to Kant's description of his approach to the intuition of objects as being analogous to a Copernican revolution, in the Preface to the second edition of *Critique of Pure Reason* (1787).

33. Descartes employs the wax metaphor in "Meditation II"; his belief that we know not objects but our ideas of those objects is explicitly argued in "Meditation VI," from which TSE quotes later in the present lecture.

34. TSE thought Nietzsche the source of the unidentified epigraph ("Nichts ist aussen, nichts ist innen, denn was aussen ist, ist innen") for the first chapter of Hermann Hesse's *Blick ins Chaos: Drei Aufsätze* (1920), from which he quoted in the notes to *TWL*; however it was adapted from Goethe's late poem "Epirrhema" (1820).

35. TSE refers to a recent article by I. A. (Ivor Armstrong) Richards (1893-1979), then lecturer at Cambridge and a member of the audience for the Clark Lectures. In "A Background for Contemporary Poetry," Richards praised TSE for having effected "a complete severance between his poetry and *all* beliefs" in *TWL*, a poem that Richards believed to portray a disease of the modern sensibility. The blame for this disease, he argues, "lies with man's habit of expecting the objects of his emotions to be also their justification. We expect the things we love or hate to be in themselves love-worthy or hate-worthy . . . The justification, or the reverse, of any attitude lies, not in the object, but in itself." *Criterion*, 3 (July 1925), 521.

36. TSE evidently made an ad-lib transition to the following quotation from Descartes to illustrate his statements above. In "Donne in our Time," he later prefaced the same quotation with the following remark: "The kind of religious faith expressed in Donne's religious writings is wholly consistent with the employment in his poetry of the many scraps of various philosophies which appear there. His attitude towards philosophic notions in his poetry may be put by saying that he was more interested in *ideas* themselves as objects than in the *truth* of ideas. In an odd way, he almost anticipates the philosopher of the coming age, Descartes, as in his sixth Meditation." In *A Garland for John Donne,* ed. Theodore Spencer (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1931), 11.

37. *Trans*: "I easily understand, I say, that the imagination could be thus constituted if it is true that body exists; and because I can discover no other convenient mode of explaining it, I conjecture with probability that body does exist; but this is only with probability, and although I examine all things with care, I nevertheless do not find that from this distinct idea of corporeal nature, which I have in my imagination, I can derive any argument from which there will necessarily be deduced the existence of the body." From "Meditation VI," *Œuvres choisies de Descartes* (Paris: Garnier, 1865), 128. In *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, vol 1, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross (Cambridge UP, 1931), 186-87.

38. TSE was under the mistaken impression that Richards's assertion in "A Background for Contemporary Poetry" (see above, n.35) was to be found in *Principles of Literary Criticism* (London: Kegan, Paul, Trubner, 1924), from which he quotes (264).

39*. TSE later drew a pencil line from "impulses" to the bottom margin for a holograph notation: "Impulses are special twists given to our potentialities by Beauty, Ugliness etc."

40. TSE ironically alludes to the fact that, as an undergraduate, Hulme had been sent down twice from St. John's College, Cambridge. Hulme held that in the Renaissance the categories of the religious attitude, including Original Sin, were "reversed" by the "pseudo-categories" of the humanist attitude, including belief in the fundamental goodness of man: "I hold . . . that the way of thinking about the world and man, the conception of sin, and the categories which ultimately make up the religious attitude, are the *true* categories and the *right* way of thinking. . . . I hold the religious conception of ultimate values to be right, the humanist wrong." *Speculations*, 70.

41. The Jewish philosopher Maimonides attempted a synthesis of Aristotelian philosophy and the biblical texts of Hebrew theology. Donne's direct allusion to the Muslim philosopher Averroes, known for his commentaries on Aristotle and Plato's *Republic*, appears in his letter of 1612 to Sir Henry Goodyere. See Gosse, *The Life and Letters of John Donne*, 2:8.

42. *telles quelles*: as they are, without modification.

43. TSE likens Donne's frequent recourse to the authority of the Pseudo-Dionysius to that of German Dominican philosopher and mystic Johannes Eckhardt ("Meister Eckhart," ca. 1260-ca. 1328), who also drew heavily upon the mystical theologian's works.

44. Luis de Granada (1504-88) was best known as a Spanish devotional writer and author of numerous mystical treatises. St. Philip Neri (1515-95), Italian priest and mystic, founded the Congregation of the Oratorians in Rome in 1575. The Church of St. Philip Neri in Arundel was commissioned by the Duke of Norfolk in 1868. TSE drew a pencil line from Neri's name to the margin, where he wrote "also Brompton Oratory," London's second-largest Roman Catholic Church, in which a chapel is named for him. Praz asked doubtfully in his letter of 31 Jan 1927: "Are you right in including S. Philip Neri among the Spanish mystics?" The erroneous association may have come from TSE's reading of Donne's *Ignatius his Conclave*, in which Ignatius treats his old friend Neri with contempt; Neri is the final adversary that Ignatius must confront in a satire in which Donne identifies the Jesuits generally with Spanish policy.

45. *Hamlet* II.ii.503. The First Player uses the unusual phrase, which provokes responses from both Hamlet and Polonius, to describe Queen Hecuba: "But who – ah, woe! – had seen the mobled queen . . ."; "mobled": muffled.

46. "The Good-Morrow," ll. 1-7 (*MLP* 1).

47. Racine, *Phèdre* II.v.645-48. *Trans*: "What were you doing then? Why did he gather / The flow'r of Greece, and leave Hippolytus?" *The Dramatic Works of Jean Racine*, vol 2, trans. R. B. Boswell (London: George Bell, 1897), 231. TSE referred to the same passage in "Marivaux," where he claimed that its "analysis of love . . . is marginal comedy" (5).

48. TSE alludes to Oedipus's speech after having blinded himself in guilt over parricide and incest in *King Oedipus* (ll.1369-1415).

49. Arnold bases the setting for his "The Strayed Reveller" on Circe's Palace in Book X of the *Odyssey*. In the typescript, the phrase "overboard and been drowned" has been underlined in pencil, with a marginal note in Herbert Read's hand, "Wrong death!" At the end of Book X, the drunken Elpenor toppled to his death from the roof of Circe's palace, whereupon his soul went down to Hades. Odysseus then encounters the shade of Elpenor in Book XI, The Book of the Dead (ll. 52-80). TSE confuses Elpenor with Palinurus, who in the *Aeneid* is lulled to sleep and pushed overboard by Phorbas. Palinurus woke and swam for four days, only to be murdered by natives when he reached shore, and Aeneas met his shade when he visited the Underworld.

50. TSE evidently cites the line from memory or translates from the Greek text of his signed but unmarked copy (King's) of *The Odyssey of Homer*, ed. John B. Owen (New York: American Book Company, 1859).

51. TSE discusses the nature and relationship of Meinong's *Annahme* (literally "assumption") and Bradley's "floating ideas" in his dissertation (1.343).

52. *Purgatorio* XXI.131-32. *Trans*: "'Brother, do not so, for thou art a shade, and a shade thou seest'" (*DC2* 267). *Read*: "'Frate, / non far, chè tu se' ombra, ed ombra vedi.'"

53. *Purgatorio* XXI.133-36. *Trans*: "Now canst thou comprehend the measure of the love which warms me toward thee, when I forget our nothingness, and treat shades as a solid thing.") (*DC2* 266-67). *Read*: "'Or puoi la quantitate / comprender dell'amor ch'a te mi scalda, / quando dismento nostra vanitate, / trattando l'ombre come cosa salda.'" TSE accurately quoted these lines when he used them as the epigraph for *Ara Vos Prec* (1919) but consistently misquoted them ("Puote veder") when he made it the dedication passage for Jean Verdenal in *Poems 1909-1925* and *Collected Poems 1909-1935*, corrected in subsequent editions.

54. "Ode to Evening" (1746, 1748) by William Collins; TSE may allude to the fact that after Collins became insane, there was a critical tendency to search for psychological signs of madness in his odes.

55. William Empson, then a first-year student at Magdalene College, Cambridge recalls TSE discussing at length Scott Moncrieff's translation of Proust at the second of the weekly morning coffee-circles that he held with undergraduates throughout the Clark Lectures. "The Style of the Master," *T. S. Eliot: A Symposium*, eds. Richard March and Tambimuttu (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1949), 36-37. Later in 1926, in "Mr. Read and M. Fernandez," TSE concurred with both Herbert Read and Ramon Fernandez about the lack of moral value or hierarchy in the work of Proust, "or more exactly, to his value simply as a milestone, as a point of demarcation" (835).

56. St. Augustine describes his theft in the *Confessions*, Book II, chapter 4, confessing that he stole pears from a tree not out of need but for sheer enjoyment of the theft and sin. Rousseau describes his mischievousness with sexual overtones in Book Four of his *Confessions*, though he drops the cherries not on Mademoiselle de Graffenried but on her companion, Mademoiselle Galley.

57. Frank Harris (1856-1931), Welsh novelist, journalist, biographer, and pornographer, had published two volumes of his four-volume *My Life and Loves* (Paris: privately printed, 1922-27), in which he traces his sexual awakening and early sexual encounters.

58. In Pope's "Eloisa to Abelard" (1717), Eloisa contrasts her own distracted state to that of the "blameless" brides of Christ, borrowing directly from Crashaw's "Description of a Religious House" to characterize their untroubled religious life.

59. TSE similarly diagnosed the disequilibrium of English prose after Thomas Carlyle – "there is usually some exaggeration, some peculiar emotional limitation, as it were a slightly feverish temperature" – in his 1923 *Vanity Fair* essay, "Contemporary English Prose" (449).