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Revolution and Restoration: Literature 1620–1690

On the feast of the Epiphany (6 January) 1620, the year in which the Pilgrim Fathers set sail for America, Ben Jonson's masque *News from the New World Discovered in the Moon* was presented at court before King James I. The masque formed the climax to the celebration of the twelve days of Christmas and it offered to the King a fantastically contrived vision of his own greatness. Moon creatures, formed in the image of man, and 'animated, lightned, and heightened' by a rapt contemplation of royal virtues, descended from a frosty stage heaven, shook off their icicles, sang of the King's perfection, and danced to represent the harmony of his rule. Chief amongst the dancers was the King's heir, Charles, Prince of Wales. The contrast between the extravagant courtly theatre of the masque and the determined refugees from James's religious policies who were to establish Plymouth Plantation could not be more extreme. Those extremes characterize both the politics and the literature of the seventeenth century. The masque celebrated an ideal monarch whose merits could be studied, like the Bible, as 'the booke of all perfection'; the narrow Bible-centred Puritanism of the Pilgrims demanded a rejection of a cornerstone of James's idea of kingship, an integrated union of the English state with the English Church through the person of the King himself and the bishops appointed by him.

James's son, who succeeded to the throne as Charles I in 1625, was the first English monarch to have been born into the Church of England; he also proved to be its stoutest, and most extreme, defender. Charles's attempt to extend its ecclesiastical order and its liturgy to his northern Kingdom of Scotland began the long-drawn-out challenge to his authority which ended in his trial and execution and in the abolition of 'the Kingly Office' itself by the English Parliament. In December 1641 Charles had proclaimed the Church of England 'the most pure and agreeable to the Sacred Word of God of any religion now practised in the Christian World' and declared that, if martyrdom were required of him, he would be prepared to seal his profession of faith with his own blood. Charles and the chief instrument of his ecclesiastical policy,

Archbishop Laud, were both to end their lives on the scaffold after the failure of their strenuous attempts to assert the principle of uniformity in the Church. In no period of British history has the disparity between an ideal of political and spiritual order and the reality of dissent and disorder been so destructive of civil life and so productive of an expressive and often partisan literature.

That James I and his son should have so rejoiced in the art of the masque is testimony to their desire to use symbolic theatre in order to celebrate their belief in the divine appointment of earthly kings. For both, the union of the Crowns of England and Scotland under the Stuarts betokened a restoration of the primitive kingdom of the mythical Trojan, Brutus, from whom Britannia had derived its name. For both, a policy of European neutrality, and a reconciliation with the old enemy, Spain, seemed to usher in a new era of peace, prosperity, and concord in which the English court would outshine those of its Habsburg, Bourbon, Gonzaga, and Medici rivals. Its festivals symbolically proclaimed the special providence that had brought Britain to its unique glory. The first of Jonson's masques for James, *The Masque of Blacknesse* of 1605, had proudly announced the distinctive destiny of 'this blest isle' which had 'wonne her ancient dignitie, and stile, | *A world divided from the world*'. For Jonson and his royal patrons the masque form was a complex political statement of the highest order. Long before Wagner conceived of the idea of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* (the total, or all-embracing, work of art) the masque was a fusion of poetry, scene-painting, music, song, dance, stage-machinery, and elaborate costumes. These spectacles, mounted but once, or at most three times, were also awesomely expensive to produce. The court spent the then phenomenal annual sum of £3,000–£4,000 on such entertainments and in 1634 James Shirley's *The Triumph of Peace* cost the Inns of Court no less than £20,000 in an exorbitant attempt to counter Charles I's displeasure at the veiled insult to his Queen published by one of their members.

The special feature of the masque, as opposed to the public theatre, lay in its combination of amateur and professional actors, or, more precisely, in its use of princely or aristocratic participants in the most prominent roles. Not only was the entertainment centred on the monarch, and the audience drawn exclusively from the most favoured members of the court, but the extravagantly costumed appearance of James's consort, Anne of Denmark, or of Charles I and his wife, as dancers or as embodied virtues was viewed as a proper extension of their nobility. The whole was deemed to be a stately, dramatic exercise in ethics. Introducing his *Hymenaei; or the Solemnities of Masque and Barriers at a Marriage* (1606) Jonson insisted that masque 'hath made the most royall Princes, and greatest persons (who are commonly the personators of these actions) not onely studious of riches, and magnificence in the outward celebration, or shew (which rightly becomes them) but curious after the most high, and heartie inventions, to furnish the inward parts'. The splendour of outward representation ideally testified to an instinctive inward virtue. Unmasked, or bereft of a symbolic costume, the courtier-actor emerged with his or her courtly nobility

aggrandized. That the masque demanded relatively little action was integral to its form. The involvement of Inigo Jones, the first British architect and designer to share the sophistication of his Italian counterparts, in the most lavish of the court entertainments meant that the sensational stage effects, such as the opening vistas, the ideal landscapes, or the glimpses of celestial perfection through a representation of sublime architecture, became triumphant visual statements of a mysterious interaction of earth and heaven.

Charles I's last masques—Thomas Carew's *Coelum Britannicum* (1634) and Sir William Davenant's *Britannia Triumphans* (1638), *Luminalia* (1638), and *Salmacida Spolia* (1640)—all offered dense allusions to the developing political storm. In Carew's fantasy the heroes of ancient Britain were joined by the King and Queen in what was both a perfected vision of a glorious future and a lavish attempt to dispel the rising criticism of the reign. *Salmacida Spolia*, contrived jointly by Davenant and Inigo Jones, stretched classical allusion even further. The fountain of Salmacis, supposed to reduce 'the barbarians . . . of fierce and cruel natures' to the 'sweetness of the Grecian customs', was loosely interpreted as an allusion to the King who 'out of his mercy and clemency . . . seekes to reduce tempestuous and turbulent natures into a sweet calm of civil concord'. Charles appeared attired as Philogenes (the 'lover of his people') whose 'secret wisdom' exorcised the forces of Discord. This 'wisdom' also enabled Philogenes to prove that he could govern 'a sullen age, | When it is harder far to cure | The People's folly than resist their rage'. The King—the Earl of Northumberland reported some two weeks before the entertainment was performed—was 'dayly so imployed about the Maske, as till that be over, we shall think of little ellse'. Charles was not necessarily fiddling as London smouldered around him. His fellow-actors included at least five members of the aristocracy who would soon actively support the opposition to his rule. *Salmacida Spolia* was both an expensive attempt to plaster over cracks and a final theatrical assertion of a divinely justified ideal of royal government.

The Advancement of Learning: Francis Bacon and the Authorized Version

Masques and Triumphs, Francis Bacon grudgingly noted in one of his *Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall* of 1625, 'are but Toyes, to come amongst such Serious Observations. But yet, since Princes will have such Things, it is better, they should be Graced with Elegancy, then Daubed with Cost.' The essay suggests that the rational Bacon (1561–1626) did not set much store by allegorical theatre, though he offers a list of practical recommendations designed to save both cost and human energy in its performance. By the 1620s Bacon was both an experienced and an unfortunately disgraced statesman. He no longer had a pressing obligation to flatter his sovereign or to nod honourably to the ceremonies of the court. In dedicating the first book of his

The Advancement of Learning to King James I in 1605, however, he had laid the flattery on with a trowel in comparing the King to 'ancient Hermes', the possessor of a 'triplicity' of command. James, he avowed, had 'the power and fortune of a King, the knowledge and illumination of a Priest, and the learning and universality of a Philosopher'. Bacon's aim in 1605 seems to have been to encourage James to support 'some solid work, fixed memorial and immortal monument' worthy of so gifted a man and so glorious a reign. That 'solid work' would have been the promotion of a methodical enquiry into natural phenomena and a national investment in what we now call scientific research. In the dedication of his *Novum Organum* of 1620 he returned to his plea. 'You who resemble Solomon in so many things', James was told, 'would further follow his example in taking order for the collecting and perfecting of a natural and experimental history, true and severe.' James, a genuine if scarcely generous patron of the varieties of learning that suited his eclectic tastes, remained unmoved. Indeed, he is said to have remarked on receiving his copy of *Novum Organum* that it was like the peace of God, past all understanding.

The Advancement of Learning attempted to draw a distinction between two kinds of Truth, a theological Truth 'drawn from the word and oracles of God' and determined by faith, and a 'scientific' Truth based on the light of nature and the dictates of reason. Both, he freely conceded, possessed an equal intellectual validity. But if Bacon continued to exhibit an abiding concern with natural knowledge and with inductive reasoning, his work was not inconsistent with the pursuit of the occult. Nevertheless, in the first book he offered a defence of proper learning against misleading distortions, 'vanities', 'distempers', and 'peccant humours', before moving on to a critique of what he deemed to be the 'vain affectations' of those Renaissance humanists who had concentrated on rhetoric rather than matter, of the hidebound Aristotelianism of the universities, and of the delusions of alchemy and astrology. Throughout his work, Bacon is a great classifier, a forthright proponent of the innovative power of human reason, and a firm believer in a 'perpetual renovation' of knowledge. The theories of *The Advancement of Learning* were later reworked and expanded in its Latin version, *De Augmentis Scientiarum* of 1623, but both works should properly be seen as preliminaries to the larger overarching argument of the 'true directions concerning the interpretation of nature' contained in *Novum Organum* (the 'New Instrument' by which human understanding would be advanced). Here, in a weighty introductory preface, Bacon presents his 'Great Instauration', the laying of the intellectual foundations 'not of a sect or doctrine, but of human utility and power', and he insists on his own 'utmost endeavours towards restoring or cultivating a just and legitimate familiarity between the mind and things'. The *Novum Organum* argues in Latin for a new method of scientific thinking, free of the prejudices of the past and the received affectations of the present (characterized as the 'Idols' of the Tribe, the Cave, the Market Place, and the Theatre). The engraved title-page to its first part bore the image of two ships confidently sailing through the Pillars of

Hercules and its message was reinforced by a Latin motto from the Book of Daniel: *Multi pertransibunt & augebitur scientia* ('many shall go to and fro and knowledge shall be increased'). Bacon's work marks a decisive rejection of the old ways of syllogistic deduction and a defence of the inductive investigation of nature. He has properly been hailed as the initiator of the modern scientific movement, a factor stressed by the posthumous honour accorded to him by the founders of the Royal Society in 1660.

Bacon's *Essayes*, first published as a group of ten 'religious Meditations' and 'Places of perswasion and disswasion' in 1597, and much augmented in both 1612 and 1625, reveal a similar clarity of thought and a parallel didacticism. They also indulge in the pithy aphoristic style which he had defended in principle in *The Advancement of Learning* as proper for the expression of tentative opinions or 'broken knowledges'. His title, *Essayes or Counsels*, derives from the usage and practice of Michel de Montaigne whose *Essais* had been translated into English by John Florio in 1603. Like the work of Montaigne, the first experiments of 1597 (such as the later much revised 'Of Studies') are best seen as short 'attempts' at presenting 'broken knowledges'. The texts of 1612, and the final fifty-eight essays of 1625, suggest a far greater confidence of expression in their continuous flow of argument, quotation, anecdote, conceit, and demonstration. His famous opening sentences, which immediately take up the subject of each essay, have an arresting drama: 'What is *Truth*; said jesting *Pilate*; And would not stay for an Answer'; '*Revenge* is a kinde of Wilde Justice; which the more Mans Nature runs to, the more ought Law to weed it out'; 'The Joyes of *Parents* are Secret; And so are ther Griefes, and Feares; They cannot utter the one; Nor they will not utter the other'; '*Suspicions* amongst Thoughts, are like Bats amongst Birds, they ever fly by Twilight'; '*Ambition* is like *Choler*; Which is an Humour, that maketh Men Active, Earnest, Full of Alacritie, and Stirring, if it be not stopped'. Bacon's subjects range from statecraft and social theory to personal morality and aesthetics. He offers advice on the construction of an elaborate mansion and its large 'Prince-like' gardens, he states the ideals of early colonialism (to avoid settling 'the Scumme of People, and Wicked Condemned Men' in potentially profitable plantations), and he speculates, with a degree of cynicism and calculation, on the uses of friendship (for confession), celibacy (to save money and to promote social advancement), and cunning (a 'Sinister or Crooked Wisdome' which pays off in politics). The essays are full of instances observed or reported during an active legal career closely associated with the royal court. It is possible that in noting that 'all Rising to *Great Place*, is by a winding Staire' Bacon was recalling something of his own rapid promotion and the murky circumstances of his disgrace amid the social, political, and architectural vagaries of an Elizabethan or Jacobean palace.

If James I had shown no real interest in Bacon's intellectual schemes, which culminated in the utopian proposal for a College of Science, 'Salomon's House', envisaged in *The New Atlantis* of 1624, he was keen enough to prove

himself a sound Defender of the Church of England, one well-versed in the true principles of theology and ecclesiology. Soon after he came to the throne he summoned a conference at Hampton Court of English bishops and their leading Puritan antagonists over which he presided personally. No compromise between the two sides was forthcoming, and James came down firmly on the episcopal side in enunciating the terse summary of his religious policy: 'No bishop, no king'. The one solid achievement of the 1604 Conference resulted from a Puritan proposal, made late in the day and warmly endorsed by the King, that there should be a new and broadly acceptable translation of the Bible into English. The resulting 'Authorized' or 'King James' version of 1611 was to become the single most influential work of English prose, if one whose underlying rhythms and variations are those of Hebrew prophecy and song and of Greek narrative. The dedication of the completed work to the King affirms the double aim of the new version. It was to provide a 'more exact Translation of the holy Scriptures into the *English Tongue*' by freshly considering the Hebrew and Greek originals and by drawing on the international scholarship of 'many worthy men who went before us'. It was also to offer a palpable defence against the criticisms of 'Popish Persons at home or abroad' and of 'selfe-conceited Brethren, who runne their owne wayes, and give liking unto nothing, but what is framed by themselves, and hammered on their Anvile'. The new Bible was intended to draw its English readers together as members of a national Church which was determined to demonstrate its credentials as a middle way between the extremes of Roman Catholicism and Genevan Calvinism. Some fifty-four translators worked in six groups, two centred in London and two each in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The drafts produced by these groups were then circulated and revised by a central committee. It was a remarkable achievement given the diversity of the translators who, with rare exceptions, were men known for their scholarly rather than their 'literary' distinction. The committees were able to draw substantially on the so-called 'Bishops' Bible', first published in 1568 and made compulsory in churches by order of Convocation in 1571, and they consulted its main rival, the popular, beautifully phrased, version known as the 'Geneva Bible' of 1560 (the first English version to introduce verse numeration). Any parallels to the extensive, Calvinistically inclined notes added to the 'Geneva Bible' were, however, excluded by the express command of the King. Substantial reference was also made to the great, but incomplete, translation of William Tyndale and to the supplementary work of Miles Coverdale.

Although the Authorized Version proclaimed itself to be 'Appointed to be read in Churches' no formal authorization was ever given to it. Its consistent dignity of expression, its memorable cadences, its felicitous, if limited, choice of vocabulary, and its general intelligibility meant, however, that it effectively displaced its rivals within the space of a generation. Its translations of certain familiar passages, such as the 40th chapter of Isaiah ('Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God . . .'), the 37th chapter of Ezekiel ('The hand of the

Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones . . .'), the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of the Gospel according to St Matthew (containing the Sermon on the Mount), the opening verses of St John's Gospel ('In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . .'), or St Paul's famous account of Christian Love (I Corinthians 13, 'Though I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal . . .') have often been integral to how English-speaking readers since 1611 have understood the majesty and simplicity of the Word of God. For some three and a half centuries it has formed a vital link between the divided English and Scottish Churches and the linguistically distinct English and Scottish nations. It has also been hallowed, memorized, quarried, cited, and echoed by a whole variety of Christian opinion wherever English came to be spoken. Despite its occasional mistranslations, its awkwardnesses, and its misreadings which have niggled subsequent scholars, it was not substantially revised until 1881–5. The Authorized Version triumphantly managed both to sum up and to embrace the best aspects of all the translations that had preceded it. No modern version has ever approached its richness and its resonance.

Andrewes and Donne

In 1618, as proof of his active interest in the theological basis of the religious divisions of Europe, James I sent a group of English churchmen to the great Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church convened at Dort (Dordrecht) in the Netherlands. Representatives from Lutheran Germany and from the Calvinist Churches of Switzerland and France were also invited. James's decision to send English observers stemmed not simply from his interest in the contentious subject of the Synod—the disruptions caused by the teaching of the unorthodox Dutch theologian Arminius—but also from a long-held desire for reconciliation between the Protestant powers of Europe. In the event, the revisionist doctrines of Arminius were condemned and his followers were dismissed from their official posts. The Synod of Dort had only a limited impact on the affairs of the English Church. For the many Calvinists within its body the reaffirmation of the doctrine of Predestination, which Arminius had questioned, and the return to the asperity of the strict discipline of the Reformed Church were welcome gestures. To certain prominent Anglicans, however, the Synod confirmed a deep-seated distaste for the extremes of Calvin's teaching and for the practice of the Genevan and Dutch Churches. It was against them that the word 'Arminian' was sneeringly, if inaccurately, employed in the increasingly vituperative debate between advocates of continued Reformation in the Church of England and those who tenaciously held to the ideal of the Anglican compromise and to its

twin pillars, both of them anathema to Puritans: episcopal government and liturgical worship.

In 1621, with some reluctance, James I appointed William Laud (1573–1645) to the see of St Davids. 'He hath a restless spirit and cannot see when matters are well', the King is said to have remarked, 'but loves to toss and change and to bring things to a pitch of reformation floating in his own brain'. Laud proved himself a vigorous and forthright defender of the Anglican position, both in written controversy with the Jesuit John Percy (known as 'Fisher the Jesuit') over the nature of 'Catholicity' and in his assaults on the supposed 'indiscipline' of Puritans within his own Church. Under Charles I his promotion was rapid. He became in turn Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1626 and of London in 1628 and in 1633 he was elevated to the archbishopric of Canterbury. As the would-be imposer of liturgical uniformity and as an encourager of a modestly baroque ritual and decoration within churches, he aroused intense hostility among his opponents, alienating both potential friends and convinced foes alike. His sporadic ruthlessness as an administrator and his close association with the King became one of the prime causes of active opposition to the policies of the court voiced within the House of Commons and beyond it. In 1641 he was impeached for high treason by a predominantly Puritan Parliament and imprisoned in the Tower of London. He was belatedly tried in 1644 and executed on Tower Hill in January 1645.

The 'Arminian' Laud's failure to impose an acceptable and lasting degree of uniformity on English and, by unhappy extension, on Scottish Church affairs stemmed from an intolerance of ecclesiastical and liturgical variety and from an underestimation of the popular strength of the extremes of British Protestantism in the first forty years of the seventeenth century. Laud was, however, merely the most visible, active, and consequently expugnable figure in a period when embattled Anglicanism had embarked on a remarkable definition of certain aspects of its churchmanship and its equally distinctive spirituality. The day before his own execution in January 1649 Charles I earnestly recommended the three books that he had been reading in his final imprisonment to his daughter Elizabeth. The Princess was advised that Laud's defence of Anglican Catholicity against the strictures of 'Fisher the Jesuit', Richard Hooker's *Treatise on the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1594–7, 1648, 1662), and the *Sermons* of Lancelot Andrewes would 'ground [her] against Popery'. Richard Hooker (*c.*1554–1600) had provided the Church of England with its most clearly argued theological and philosophical defence, one which justified episcopacy and which elaborated a theory of civil and ecclesiastical law based on a natural law whose 'seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world'. He had also put forward the argument that the Church, though continuous with its primitive apostolic beginnings, was an organic, not a static institution which was bound to develop as times and circumstances changed. The works of Lancelot Andrewes (1555–1626) reveal an equally learned defence of the Catholic claims of the Church of England and a similar

antipathy to Puritan rigidity, particularly in matters concerned with the absolute authority of the Scriptures.

Despite their intricate and meticulous analyses of Scriptural texts, Andrewes's *XCVI Sermons* (1629) generally avoid specific controversy. Most of these sermons were originally delivered at court on the great feast-days of the Christian calendar. They speak to the attentive mind, not to the emotions; to the quiet spirit, not to the troubled one. Andrewes argues exactingly, precisely, unemotionally, and vigorously, never relaxing his concentration on the few words of the text, both in Latin and English, from which he steadily extracts meaning. Few English writers have ever laid such stress on the *Logos*, the word which Andrewes takes both as the literal Word of God and as the central focus of his teaching. In the Christmas Day sermon of 1622, for example, he develops a succession of ideas from St Luke's account of the archangel's message to the shepherds, gradually defining concepts and extending the ramifications of the words 'Saviour', 'Christ', and 'Lord'. He imagines a scene and then systematically establishes its physical and intellectual context. In the Easter Day sermon of 1623, he carefully explores a series of related ideas drawn from the prophet Isaiah's vision of a man in red-stained garments 'like him that treadeth in the winepress'. Having suggested the prophet's hesitant understanding of his vision ('Sees Him; but knowes him not: thinks Him worthy the knowing; so thinking, and not knowing, is desirous to be instructed concerning Him'), he proceeds to establish a pattern of fused metaphors of Christ as the treader of the winepress, Christ as the victim, and Christ as the provider of the sacramental cup. At its simplest, his text becomes a dialogue between Isaiah and Christ, between the prophet and the prophesied. More profoundly, he seeks a kernel of 'spiritual meaning that hath some life in it' in which life and death, suffering and celebration are reconciled: 'He that was trodden on before, gets up againe, and doth here tread upon and tread down . . . The press He was trodden in, was His Cross and Passion. This which he came out of this day, was in His descent and resurrection both proper to this feast: one to Good Friday, the other to Easter-day.' The sermon serves as an enactment of the mystery of the feast itself, passing from a rapt contemplation of the immolation of Christ to a triumphant acclamation of the Resurrection which is affirmed in the act of communion.

In 1625 a week after the King's accession, John Donne (1573–1631), Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, preached the first public sermon before the new King Charles I. Prophetically, as some later thought, he chose as his text a verse from Psalm 11, 'If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?' and he expanded on a reference to Christian martyrdom by noting the fact that 'in the Office and Service of a Martyr, the Church did use this Psalme'. It was also before Charles in February 1631 that Donne so dramatically preached what many of his audience took to be his own Funeral Sermon ('Death's Duell'), having risen from his sick-bed for the purpose. It was, however, upon Andrewes's sermons and not Donne's that Charles ultimately chose to

meditate. Donne, like Andrewes, divides his sermons into three parts: a preliminary explication of the chosen text, a confirmation and an illustration of its meaning, and an application of that meaning to its audience. But where Andrewes dwells scrupulously on explication, Donne stresses illustration and application. The former demands concentration; the latter commands attention.

Donne had no sympathy with the extempore preaching often favoured by Puritans. His first biographer and former parishioner, Izaak Walton (1593–1683), describes how the Dean researched his theme by consulting the works of the Church Fathers and then memorized the words of his sermon, preaching only with the assistance of notes. In preparing individual sermons for publication, or in 'reviewing' and writing out the eighty sermons that he left in fair copy when he died (published in 1640), Donne seems to have taken care to limit obviously rhetorical gestures. Nevertheless, his delight in verbal and stylistic flourish is real enough. In the 'Sermon of Valediction' preached at Lincoln's Inn before his departure for Germany in 1619 he tailored his multiple extrapolations from the text 'Remember now thy Creator in the daies of thy youth' to an audience likely to have been familiar with his own dissolute youth as a member of the Inn. His illustrative metaphors are always striking. In the same sermon he demanded of his audience: 'No man would present a lame horse, a disordered clock, a torn book to the king? . . . thy body is thy beast; and wilt thou present that to God, when it is lam'd and tir'd with excesse of wantonness? when thy clock, (the whole course of thy time) is disordered with passions, and perturbations; when thy book (the history of thy life,) is torn, a thousand sins of thine own torn out of thy memory, wilt thou then present thy self thus defac'd and mangled to almighty God?' In the sermon preached in St Paul's Cathedral in January 1626 he fancifully and rhythmically develops the idea suggested by his text (Psalm 53, verse 7) of the sheltering, brooding power of the wings of God: 'Particular mercies are feathers of his wings, and that prayer, Lord let thy mercy lighten upon us, as our trust is in thee, is our birdlime; particular mercies are that cloud of quails which hovered over the host of Israel, and that prayer, Lord let thy mercy lighten upon us, is our net to catch, our Gomer [container] to fill of those quails.' The final section of the St Paul's sermon is shaped around a modern metaphor, an extraordinary analogy between a flat map of the earth, divided into two hemispheres, and a visionary map of heaven divided into a hemisphere of joy and a hemisphere of glory. The joy of heaven can be known in this life, Donne asserts, much as the limits of the Old World were known before the discovery of America; just as God reserved the treasure of America 'for later discoveries', so, by extension, 'that hemisphere of heaven, which is the glory thereof' will be opened to human eyes by death and resurrection.

In common with most preachers of his time, both Catholic and Protestant, Donne seems to be fired more by a contemplation of sin, death, and judgement than by a prospect of a rejoicing earth imbued with the joys of heaven. His last

sermon, 'Death's Duell, or A Consolation to the Soule, against the Dying Life, and Living Death of the Body' (1631, published 1632), stresses the interconnection of life and death throughout human existence. 'Wee have a winding sheet in our Mothers wombe', he insisted to his courtly audience, 'which growes with us from our conception, and wee come into the world, bound up in that *winding sheet*, for wee come to *seeke a grave*.' Death, as all of Donne's contemporaries readily recognized, was not simply inevitable and all-pervasive, it was a familiar presence in an unstable, unhygienic, and disease-ridden world. The tolling of the passing bell for a dying parishioner was to Donne not simply a stimulus to pray for a troubled soul but a personal *memento mori*. His passionate calls to repentance in his last sermon emerge not simply from an awareness of the imminence of his own demise, but from a pressing sense of shared mortality: 'Our *criticall* day is *not* the *very day* of our *death*: but the whole course of our life. I thanke him that *prayes* for me when the *Bell* tolles, but I thank him much more that *Catechises* mee, or *preaches* mee, or *instructs mee how to live*.' The *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, which Donne had written during a serious illness in 1623, had also dwelt upon the interconnection of the dying and those meditating upon death: 'who bends not his *eare* to any *bell*, which upon any occasion rings? but who can remove it from that *bell*, which is passing a *peece of himselfe* out of this world?' The meditation moves him to the now famous geographical metaphor of co-operant sympathy: 'No man is an *Iland*, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the *Continent*, a part of the *maine*; . . . any mans *death* diminishes *me*, because I am involved in *Mankinde*.'

In 1621, six years after he had been ordained to the priesthood, Donne had been offered the prestigious deanship of St Paul's. All avenues to his civil promotion had been blocked since the time of his secret marriage to the niece of his patron, Sir Thomas Egerton, and his dismissal from Egerton's service in 1601, but in no sense should his priestly vocation be viewed cynically. The intervening years were spent in a professional wilderness, watered by close study, an active involvement in religious controversy, and the composition of much of his devotional poetry. Nothing in Donne's intellectual and religious development can, however, be easily categorized. 'My first breeding and conversation', he remarked of himself in *Biathanatos* (his experimental apology for suicide, published posthumously in 1646), was 'with men of supressed and afflicted Religion, accustomed to the despite of death, and hungry of an imagin'd Martyrdome'. The enforced secrecy and introspection and the dangerous temptation to martyrdom in this Roman Catholic recusant background was probably accentuated in 1593 by the death in prison of his younger brother Henry, arrested for illegally harbouring a priest. Precisely how, when, and why he broke his allegiance to Rome cannot be determined, but though his decision to conform outwardly to the Church of England in the mid-1590s may have been influenced by a desire for an official career, his later Anglican apologetics suggest that his religious affiliation was also shaped by wide reading, by a deep fascination with religious controversy, and by a

profound and consistent perturbation at the thought of death and judgement. Walton remarks of this period that Donne had 'betrothed himself to no Religion that might give him any other denomination than a Christian'. However much the older Donne lacerated himself with memories of a variously misspent youth, he was prepared in 1608 to see his worst and most distracting 'voluptuousness' as a 'Hydroptique immoderate desire of human learning and languages'. From the evidence of his various writings, religion was neither a refuge for him nor an escape from worldly contradictions and confusions; it was the centripetal force in his intellectual and spiritual involvement with mankind. In all his poetry, both amorous and devout, he intermixes orthodox religious imagery and allusions with metaphors derived from a variety of secular learning, both ancient and modern. Mental conflict for Donne was dynamic. The poet who saw himself in the nineteenth of his Holy Sonnets as vexed by the meeting of contraries had in his earlier *Paradoxes and Problemes* (published posthumously in 1633) revealed an intellectual engagement with paradox as a method of analysis. Discord, he noted, had its own creative energy: 'While I . . . feele the contrary repugnances and adverse fightings of the Elements in my body, my body increaseth; and whilst I differ from common opinions, by this discord the number of my Paradoxes encreaseth.' It was from the resolution of paradox in Christian theology that Donne derived a profound intellectual pleasure.

In a letter of *c.*1608 he turned from a discussion of religious controversies to a brief reference to his poetry. 'I doe not condemn in my self', he remarked, 'that I have given my wit such evaporations, as those, if they be free from prophaneness, or obscene provocations.' 'Wit', the free play of intelligence and a delight in intellectual games and cerebral point-scoring, characterizes all his most brilliant verse. Donne forges unities out of oppositions, ostensible contradictions, and imaginative contractions. In the 'Hymn to God My God, in My Sicknesse', for example, he plays with the idea that Adam's tree and Christ's cross might possibly have stood in the same place and that east and west *are* one on a flat map; he makes theological capital out of the homonymic qualities of 'Sun' and 'Son' in the second of the Divine Sonnets and in 'A Hymne to God the Father'; and in the 'Hymne to God' and the eighteenth and nineteenth elegies—'Loves Progress' and 'To His Mistris Going to Bed'—he variously compares the human body to a map, a landscape, or a continent. As his famous image of 'stiffe twin compasses' in 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning' also suggests, he was delighted by the serenity of a circle, an image of eternity, which has neither a beginning nor an end, but whose beginning *is* its end. He was fascinated both by the inheritance of ancient learning and by new advances in science and geography. He nods acknowledgement to the disruption of the old, tidy, intellectual, and theological world order brought about by the discoveries of Copernicus and Columbus, but he refers ambiguously to the imagined four corners of a round world in the seventh of his Holy Sonnets and he finds poetic use for the

redundant Ptolemaic planetary system in his references to the spheres in 'The Extasie', 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning', and 'Goodfriday, 1613. Riding Westward'. The often heterodox and destabilized world of Donne's poetry is held together both by a transcendent and almighty Creator and by a God-like poet who shows his power by enforcing conjunctions and exploring correlatives and analogies.

There is, however, a steady note of scepticism in Donne's erotic verse, one often accentuated by the poet's projection of himself as a narrating, and sometimes dictating voice. The speculative, colloquial, and boisterous early *Satyres* (printed 1633) suggest a narrator caught up in the animated life of the streets and in the secrets of privy chambers (though Satyre III vividly explores the difficulty of discovering a true Church amid the conflicts of human opinion). The fifty-five various poems known as the *Songs and Sonets* (from the title under which they were first published in the edition of 1633) have never been satisfactorily dated. Some, including those that Donne may later have condemned for exhibiting an excess of 'prophaneness' and 'obscene provocation', had clearly achieved a considerable éclat through circulation in manuscript. Many of the poems affront readers with a brusque opening command—'Goe, and catche a falling starre'; 'For Godsake, hold your tongue, and let me love'; 'Stand still, and I will read to thee | A Lecture love, in Loves philosophy'—others have a conversational casualness or give an impression of interrupted business—'I wonder by my troth, what thou, and I | Did till we lov'd?'; 'Sweetest love, I doe not goe, | For wearinesses of thee'; 'So, so, breake off this last lamenting kisse'. The poems suggest a variety of often dramatic situations but they always present a speaker in immediate relation to a listener even though, as Donne puts it in 'The Extasie', the discourse can effectively be a 'dialogue of one'. They can vary in form from a neat, comic demonstration of the folly of resisting seduction (such as 'The Flea') to more sober attempts to justify seizing love's moment (such as 'A Lecture upon the Shadow'). In contrast to the Petrarchan tradition of love-poetry that he had inherited, Donne never attempts to deify or idealize the objects of his passion. In 'The Dreame' he does not try to pretend that his dream is chaste. In 'The Sunne Rising', where he responds to the challenge of Ovid, his celebration of eroticism takes the form of an irreverent address to the Sun who has dared to awake the sleeping lovers. It presents us with two outside worlds, one of petty activity and drudgery and another of wealth and power; but both are outclassed by love. The universe is contracted to the lovers' bed, the epicentre beyond which, in a line of abrupt and triumphant arrogance, we are told that 'Nothing else is'.

Throughout Donne's work, however, the real triumphs are those of Death and Resurrection. Some of the 'Songs and Sonets' ('The Apparition', 'The Will', and 'The Funerall' for example) make an easy, even jesting, play with mortality. Others suggest a far greater earnestness. Potential observers of the rapt lovers in 'The Extasie' might note 'small change' in the two when they will

have 'to bodies gone'. 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning' opens with reference to the 'mild' death-beds of 'virtuous men' and proceeds by means of complex illustration to justify the idea of the enduring power of a rarefied love. In the two funeral elegies known as the 'Anniversaries', Donne contemplates the survival not of love but of virtue, or rather he contrasts an ideal of womanhood spiritualized in his 'Immortal mayd', Elizabeth Drury, against an 'anatomie' of a corrupted, incoherent and untidy world. It is with the darkness of the human condition in this world that the most vivid of Donne's Holy Sonnets are concerned. Most enact a double drama; they evoke a picture—of the end of the world (sonnets 7 and 13), of Death itself (sonnet 10), or of a distressed sinner fearful of his damnation (sonnets 5, 11, and 14)—but they also project the personality of a responsive speaker, one who seems to stand as a vulnerable representative of sinful humanity. Like the love-poems, Donne's religious verse insistently suggests an emotional relationship, that of the sinner to a loving but severe God. The narrator stands defiantly against Death (sonnet 10), but quakes before the prospect of judgement (sonnets 4, 7, and 9). In the extraordinary sonnet 14 ('Batter my heart, three person'd God') he balances a plea for a violent physical stirring of his passion against an evident intellectual pleasure in the display of theologically resolved paradoxes ('Take mee to you, imprison mee, for I | Except you'enthrall mee, never shall be free, | Nor ever chast, except you ravish mee'). A similar drama, matched by an equally energetic pursuit of analogues, is evident in two poems modelled on journeys, 'Goodfriday 1613. Riding Westward' and 'A Hymne to Christ, at the Authors last going into Germany'. The first contrasts the idea of a westerly ride away from a Christ who is crucified in the east with a vivid imaginative recall of Calvary, the site of the humiliation of God's greatness ('Could I behold those hands which span the Poles, | And tune all the spheares at once, peirc'd with those holes?'). The second meditates on the dangers of diplomatic mission in 1619 (the same that had provoked the 'Sermon of Valediction') by seeking parallels to, or 'emblems' for, his sea-voyage, his separation from friends and family, and the relationship between human and divine love. The argument culminates in the juxtaposition of three complementary ideas: 'Churches are best for Prayer, that have least light: | To see God only, I go out of sight: | And to scape stormy dayes, I chuse | An Everlasting night.'

Donne's last poem, 'A Hymne to God the Father', which almost mockingly puns on his name in the penultimate line of each stanza, was, like the sermon 'Death's Duell', to serve its author as a part of the ceremonial acting out of his final drama of self-projection and self-abnegation. This final, seemingly incongruous drama, which included the performance of a musical setting of the hymn by the choristers of St Paul's, centred on the contemplation of a picture of himself dressed in his winding sheet, emerging from a funerary urn as if summoned by the Last Trump. Donne had risen from his sick-bed to pose for the picture, standing, shrouded, on a wooden urn and facing towards the east from whence he expected his ultimate redemption to come. Such intertwining

of humility with glory, of theatre with devotion, of the mortal body with its representation in art, of playfulness and seriousness, of rules and the bending of rules, are characteristic of the kind of international baroque art of which Donne's life and work form part. The suspicion of flamboyance which periodically surfaces in English art can be seen as emanating from the strains of puritanism and pragmatism, conservatism and compromise, which run through the national culture. Despite the contraries of Catholicism and Calvinism which meet in his life and work, such insular strains were largely alien to Donne.

'Metaphysical' Religious Poetry: Herbert, Crashaw, and Vaughan

The picturesque emotionalism of continental baroque art was a central feature of the Counter-Reformation crusade to win back the hearts and souls of those lost to the Roman Church by the fissures of the Reformation. Protestant England remained largely untouched by the more heady pictorial and architectural styles sponsored by the Pope's main agents in the campaign, the Jesuits, but, despite gestures of resistance and disapproval, a degree of Jesuit spirituality left its mark on English literature. The martyred missionary priest, Robert Southwell (?1561–95, canonized in 1970), managed to work secretly for nine perilous years in England before his execution; his books circulated far less secretly. The prose meditation, *Marie Magdalens Funeral Teares*, which was published in 1591, ran through some seven further editions by 1636, and the two collections of verse, *Saint Peters complaynt, with other Poems* and *Moeoniae: or, Certaine excellent Poems and Spiritual Hymnes*, both of which contain poems written during his three-year imprisonment, were printed in London in the year of his death. Southwell's poems were respected both by Roman Catholics and by Anglicans, the extraordinarily contrived Christmas meditation, 'The Burning Babe', being particularly admired by Ben Jonson. Donne, the author of the scurrilous anti-Jesuit tract *Ignatius his Conclave* of 1611 and who eight years later feared for his safety at the hands of 'such adversaries, as I cannot blame for hating me' when he travelled across Germany, was none the less influenced by the kind of meditative religious exercises recommended to the faithful by the founder of the Society of Jesus. St Ignatius Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* had been approved by the Pope in 1548 as a manual of systematic devotion which employed sense impressions, the imagination, and the understanding as a means of prompting the spirit to consider the lapsed human and the glorious divine condition. The Ignatian method was not unique (it drew on late medieval precedents and it was adapted by later Spanish and French churchmen) but its currency was assured by the missionary and educational work undertaken by the Jesuits. The fact that such regulated guides to meditation could be used privately meant that they appealed, with varying

degrees of excision, to secluded Recusants, devout Anglicans, and soul-searching Puritans alike.

A similar spiritual cross-fertilization is evident in the popularity of emblem books in seventeenth-century England. The emblem consisted of three interrelated parts—a motto, a symbolic picture, and an exposition—each of which suggested a different means of considering and apprehending a moral or religious idea. The form had had a certain currency as a learned, and generally secular, educational device in the sixteenth century, but its renewed application to private religious study and its intermixture of Latin motto, biblical quotation, engraved and ostensibly enigmatic picture, and English poem made for a widespread influence which readily cut across confessional barriers. Francis Quarles's *Emblemes, Divine and Morall* (1635) proved to be the most popular book of verse of its age. Quarles (1592–1644) and his engraver took and, where Protestant occasion demanded, adapted plates from Jesuit emblem books; only the disappointingly pedestrian accompanying poems were original. *Emblemes* and its successor *Hieroglyphicks of the Life of Man* (1638) demand that the reader interpret and gradually unwind an idea which is expressed epigrammatically, visually, and poetically. 'The embleme is but a silent parable', Quarles insisted in his address to the user of his books, and he goes on to suggest the importance of the linkage of word and picture: 'Before the knowledge of letters, God was knowne by Hieroglyphicks; And indeed, what are the Heavens, the Earth, nay every Creature, but Hieroglyphicks and Emblemes of his Glory?' The moral message is, however, predominantly one which stresses a conventionally Christian contempt for the world ('O what a crocodilian world is this | Compos'd of treach'ries, and insnaring wiles', 'O whither will this mad-brain world at last | Be driven? Where will her restless wheels arrive?'), and the pictures variously show children confusing a wasps' nest for a beehive in a globe, fools sucking at a huge earth-shaped breast, and a figure of vanity smoking a pipe while perched perilously on a tilting orb.

The intellectual demands made on a reader by an emblem book were paralleled by the wit, the imaginative picturing, the compression, the often cryptic expression, the play of paradoxes, and the juxtapositions of metaphor in the work of Donne and his immediate followers, the so-called 'metaphysical poets'. The use of the term 'metaphysical' in this context was first given critical currency by Samuel Johnson in the eighteenth century and it sprang from an unease, determined by 'classical' canons of taste, with the supposed contortions of the style and imagery of Donne and Cowley. Johnson had a particular distaste for the far-fetched or strained 'conceits' (witty and ingenious ideas) in which Donne's poetry abounds. This prejudice against the distinct 'metaphysical' style had earlier been shared by Quarles, who in 1629 complained of 'the tyranny of *strong lines*, which . . . are the meere itch of wit; under the colour of which many have ventured . . . to write *non-sense*'. The work of Donne's friend, admirer, and fellow-priest, George Herbert (1593–1633), possesses a restrained and contemplative rapture which is paralleled less by

the extravagances of southern European baroque art than by the often enigmatic understatement of the paintings of his French contemporary, Georges de la Tour. Herbert's own 'itch of wit' can none the less find its expression in playing with the shapes and sounds of words: he puns in his title to 'The Collar' and with the name 'Jesu' in the poem of that name; he teases letters in his 'Anagram of the Virgin Marie'; in 'Heaven' he exploits echo-effects as delightedly as did his Venetian musical contemporaries, and he gradually reduces words to form new ones in 'Paradise'. His relationship to the emblem book tradition is evident in his printing of certain of his poems as visual designs (the shapes of 'The Altar' and the sideways printed 'Easter Wings' make patterns which suggest their subjects). If he is a less frenetic and startling poet than Donne, he is a far more searching and inventive one than Quarles. The two poems called 'Jordan' (from the fount of their inspiration) describe the act of writing a sacred poetry which eschews a structural 'winding stair' and the 'curling with metaphors' of a 'plain intention'. As with his most influential models, the parables of Jesus, Herbert's illustrations of the central mysteries of God and his creation take the form of sharply observed but 'plain' stories drawn from, and illuminated by, everyday experience.

The elegance of Herbert's poetry is as much the result of art as it is an expression of a cultivated, but not forced, spiritual humility. He had been born into a distinguished and cultured noble family but his decision to take deacon's orders in 1626, and his ordination to the priesthood and appointment as rector of a country parish in 1630 struck many of his grand contemporaries as a deliberate turning of his back on secular ambition. According to Izaac Walton, Herbert responded to a friend who taxed him with taking 'too mean an employment, and too much below his birth' that 'the Domestick Servants of the King of Heaven, should be of the noblest Families on Earth'. He would, he insisted, make 'Humility lovely in the eyes of all men'. Herbert's work is permeated with reference to service and to Christ as the type of the suffering servant, but his poetry is equally informed by a gentlemanly grasp of the chivalric code of obligation. Society, as we glimpse it in this world and the next, is hierarchical and ordered, and the human response to God's love can be expressed in terms of an almost feudal obligation. In 'The Pearl', for example, the poet insists that he knows 'the wayes of Honour, what maintains | The quick returns of courtesie and wit'. In the first of the poems called 'Affliction' he describes a changing understanding of service to a liege-lord, a service which at first gives rich satisfaction ('Thy glorious household-stuffe did me entwine') and brings rewards ('thou gav'st me milk and sweetness; I had my wish and way'); as a process of disillusion sets in, the poem allows a sense of betrayal to surface, but this in turn is transformed by the final insistence on an obligation shaped not by duty but by the more pressing demands of love ('Ah my deare God! though I am clean forgot, | Let me not love thee, if I love thee not'). 'Redemption' describes a tenant's search for his 'rich Lord' only to find him mortally wounded amid 'a ragged noise and mirth | Of theeves and murderers';

the magnanimity of the Lord is proved in a dying gesture of assent to the tenant's request. In 'The Collar' the remarkable evocation of impatient resistance to service ends as the 'raving' protests subside in response to the steady call of Christ. The call to the '*Child*' (perhaps here both the disciple and a youth of gentle birth) evokes the willing reply '*My Lord*'.

Herbert's vocation as a priest of the Church of England, and his loyalty to its rituals, calendar, and discipline is central both to his prose study of the ideal country parson, *A Priest to the Temple* (published in *The Remaines of that Sweet Singer of the Temple George Herbert* in 1652), and to his Latin sequence *Musae Responsariae* (1633) (poems which assert the propriety of Anglican ceremonial and orders in the face of Puritan criticism). It is, however, in *The Temple*, the influential collection of his English poems published posthumously in 1633, that Herbert most fully expresses his aspirations, failures, and triumphs as a priest and as a believer. Sections of *The Temple* are shaped according to the spiritual rhythms and the ups and downs of religious experience. More significantly, the volume as a whole possesses both an architectonic and a ritual patterning which derives from the shape of an English parish church and from the festivals and fasts celebrated within its walls. The whole work is prefaced by a gnomic poetic expression of conventional moral advice to a young man. The title of this preliminary poem, 'The Church-Porch', serves as a reminder not only of a preparatory exercise before worship but also of the physical importance of the porch itself (once the setting of important sections of certain church services). The titles of poems in the body of the volume ('The Church') imply both a movement through the building noting its features ('The Altar', 'Church-Monuments', 'Church-lock and key', 'The Church-floore', 'The Windows') and the significance of its liturgical commemorations ('Good Friday', 'Easter', 'H. Baptisme', 'The H. Communion', 'Whitsunday', 'Sunday', 'Christmas'). Interspersed are meditations on Christian belief and the varied experience of the Christian life. The 'sacramental' poems have a particular importance. By means of repeated words and phrases 'Aaron' establishes a balanced contrast between the ceremonially vested Jewish priest and his spiritually defective modern Christian counterpart. The poem's debate is determined by an exploration of the import of the words 'Holiness to the Lord' engraved on Aaron's ceremonial mitre. It is only when Christ himself is recognized as the true sanctifier of the parish priest that all unworthiness falls away and the vested minister can properly present himself to his congregation, ready to celebrate the Holy Communion: 'Come people; Aaron's drest'. The theology and typology of eucharistic celebration are also explored in 'The Agonie' and the concluding poem of the volume, 'Love III'. 'The Agonie' takes as its central issue the human study of Sin and Love. The effect of Sin is revealed in an agonized Christ 'so wrung with pains, that all his hair, | His skinne, his garments bloudie be'. The very hyperbole here allows for the conceit on which the poem turns; Sin is a wine-press painfully proving the worth of Love and when in the concluding stanza the crucified Christ's blood

flows from his side it is mystically perceived as sacramental wine: 'Love is that liquour sweet and most divine, | Which my God feels as bloud; but I, as wine'. Bitterness is transubstantiated into sweetness. 'Love' takes the form of a colloquy in which the Lord, personified as Love, welcomes the sinner to his feast, insistently answering each protest of unworthiness with a gentle assertion of his grace:

> And know you not, sayes Love, who bore the blame?
> My deare, then I will serve.
> You must sit downe, sayes Love, and taste my meat:
> So I did sit and eat.

The uneasy guest and the would-be servant are entertained as equals.

Throughout *The Temple* the quakings of fear, the doubts, and the attempts at rebellion are subsumed in a quiet loyalty inspired by the love of a generous God. Restlessness, as seen in the deftly argued parable of free will, 'The Pulley', prompts the soul to seek heavenly comfort. In 'Affliction III' the very utterance of the heaved sigh '*O God!*' is interpreted as a barely recognized sign of redemption and as an admission of shared sorrow ('Thy life on earth was grief, and thou art still | Constant unto it'). Even the figure of Death, in the poem of that name, loses its skeletal terrors by being transformed by the sacrifice of Christ into something 'fair and full of grace, | Much in request, much sought for as a good'. Herbert's 'Prayer before Sermon', appended to *A Priest to the Temple*, addresses a God who embodies 'patience, and pity, and sweetness, and love', one who has exalted his mercy above all things and who has made salvation, not punishment, his glory.

According to Izaac Walton's account, the dying Herbert entrusted the manuscript of his poems to his pious friend Nicholas Ferrar (1592–1637) who in 1625 had retired to his estate at Little Gidding in Huntingdonshire to establish a 'Little Colledge', or religious community of men and women, dedicated to the 'constant and methodical service of God'. Ferrar was instructed that he would find in *The Temple* 'a picture of the many Conflicts that have past betwixt God and my Soul' and he was allowed to choose whether to publish or burn the manuscript. As his short preface of 1633 indicates, he clearly recognized both the quality of the poems and their significance to the increasingly beleaguered discipline of the Church of England. Although his community impressed Charles I, it steadily provoked the hostility of those Puritans who criticized it as an 'Arminian Nunnery' and who in 1646 finally succeeded in breaking it up.

Richard Crashaw (1613–49) was, through his friendship with Ferrar, a regular visitor to and keeper of vigils at Little Gidding. He was the son of a particularly zealous Puritan 'Preacher of Gods worde' who had made himself conspicuous as an anti-Papist. Crashaw's own religious pilgrimage was to take him in an opposite direction to his father. As a student at Cambridge and later as a fellow of Peterhouse he closely associated himself with the extreme Laudian party in the University. Deprived of his fellowship after the college

chapel, to which he had contributed fittings, was desecrated by Parliamentary Commissioners in 1643 he travelled abroad, eked out a precarious existence on the fringes of Queen Henrietta Maria's court in exile, became a convert to Roman Catholicism, and ended his short life as the holder of a small benefice at the Holy House at Loreto in Italy. His English poetry—collected as *Steps to the Temple: Sacred Poems, with other Delights of the Muses* (1646, considerably expanded 1648) and later as *Carmen Deo Nostro* (published in Paris in 1652)—clearly shows the nature of his religious inclinations, both Anglican and Roman. The Preface to his earlier volumes proclaims his allegiance to the English Church through reference to Lancelot Andrewes and through the claim that the poems were written as '*Stepps* for happy soules to climbe heaven by' under a 'roofe of Angels' at Little St Mary's Church in Cambridge; the 1652 volume more assiduously advertises the Catholic piety which had been only implicit before, and offers an apology, probably not Crashaw's own, for the 'Hymn to Saint Teresa' as 'having been writt when the author was yet among the protestants'. The frontispiece to the 1648 volume showed the faithful mounting steps to a chastely decorous English church; the 1652 edition is decorated throughout with lushly Catholic devotional images.

Although the title *Steps to the Temple* nods back to Herbert, and though the volume contains a particularly fulsome tribute to 'the Temple of Sacred Poems, sent to a Gentlewoman', Crashaw's stylistic and structural debt to his model is limited. Crashaw is the most decoratively baroque of the English seventeenth-century poets, both in the extravagance of his subject-matter and in his choice of metaphor. Where Donne is ingenious and paradoxical, or Herbert delicately and aptly novel, Crashaw propels traditional Christian images until they soar and explode like sky-rockets or inflates them until they burst like plump confections. His verse exhibits a fixation with the human body and with bodily fluids: tears gush from eyes, milk from breasts, blood from wounds, and at times the emissions become intermixed expressions of passionate emotion. The series of 'Divine Epigrams' suggests a particular fondness for miraculous or alchemical changes of substance: not only does water become wine, or wine blood, but tears are pearls and drops of blood rubies; the water of Christ's baptism 'is washt it selfe, in washing him'; the water with which Pilate washes his hands is 'Nothing but Teares; Each drop's a teare that weeps for her own wast'; the naked Lord on the cross is clothed by 'opening the purple wardrobe of thy side'; and the blood of the Holy Innocents is both blended with milk and translated heavenwards. A similar, surreal vision informs the triumphantly hyperbolic meditation on the Magdalen, 'The Weeper'. The tears of the penitent flow unceasingly; transformed into stars they form not simply a Milky Way in the heavens but a stream of cream from which 'a briske Cherub something sips | Whose soft influence | Adds sweetnesse to his sweetest lips'.

Crashaw's attraction to the history and the writings of the great Spanish mystic, Teresa of Avila, who was canonized in 1622, is a further reflection of his

interest in highly charged religious emotion. In her spiritual autobiography Teresa had described the climax of her most celebrated vision of union with God in which she had become aware of the presence of an angel bearing a great golden spear tipped with fire; this he plunged several times into her heart. Teresa's amorous language in expressing her awareness of a 'gentle . . . wooing which takes place between God and the soul' clearly had its effect on Crashaw's luxuriant meditation first entitled 'In Memory of the Vertuous and Learned Lady Madre de Teresa that sought an early Martyrdome' and now generally known as 'A Hymn to Saint Teresa' from the abbreviation of its more explicitly Catholic title of 1652. The poem returns repeatedly to the idea of divine love as the wooer and arouser of the faithful soul; the 6-year-old seeking martyrdom is glimpsed as 'her weake breast heaves with strong desire', while the adult nun willingly opens herself as 'Loves victim' pierced not simply by a single seraphic dart, but exposed to a whole troop of armed Angels, 'Loves souldiers' who 'exercise their Archerie'. Teresa's vision of the spear reappears in a new guise in Crashaw's address to the Countess of Denbigh 'perswading her to Resolution in Religion' (in fact a plea to resolve herself into the Roman communion). The Countess is instructed to unfold herself like a flower in order to receive 'love's shower' which will fall like 'the wholesome dart', a 'healing shaft which heavn till now | Hath in love's quiver hid for you'. The most florid poetic expression of Crashaw's earlier Laudian ideal of worshipping the Lord in the beauty and dignity of holiness is the 'Hymn to the Name of Jesus'. This ceremonious paean to the 'Fair KING of NAMES' draws its impulses from a long tradition of devotion to the incarnate Word, both biblical and mystical. The poem insists on the daily renewal of worship through the reawakening of the mind and the senses, and it particularly stresses the importance of music, the 'household stuffe of Heavn on earth', as an accompaniment to praise. Crashaw's sensitivity to music, also evident in his richly adjectival representation of instrumental sound and bird-song in 'Musicks Duell' (an elaboration of a Latin poem by the Jesuit, Strada), is here expressed in his deliberate echoes of musical phrasing. The 'Hymn to the Name of Jesus' recognizes an interrelationship between natural and musical harmony in which the vocal human heart plays its part in an 'unbounded All-imbracing SONG', but it also requires the heart to open itself, even in agony, to the promptings of divine love. The martyr's love-death no longer requires a seraphic dart, for the 'Rackes & Torments' of the earthly persecutors of true religion force open the human breast and cleave the heart ready for the reception of the Heavenly fire. Pleasure and pain, orgasm and martyrdom, rape and resolution are yoked together by a lexical violence which seeks to express ultimate spiritual fulfilment.

Where Crashaw yearns to represent an interior mystical passion through sensual metaphors drawn from the exterior human world, Henry Vaughan (1621–95) returns to the chaster and more private world of George Herbert as a means of articulating an inner sense of wonder. The subtitle of Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans* (1650, enlarged 1655), 'Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations', is an exact echo of that of *The Temple*, and the Preface, dated 1654, refers to 'the blessed man, Mr *George Herbert*, whose holy *life* and *verse* gained many pious *converts*' (amongst whom Vaughan counted himself). Above all, one of the most Herbertian poems in the collection, 'The Match', represents a personal submission, artistically to a model poet and spiritually to that poet's God:

> Dear friend! whose holy, ever-living lines,
> Have done much good
> To many, and have checkt my blood,
> My fierce, wild blood that still heaves, and inclines,
> But still is tam'd
> By those bright fires which thee inflam'd;
> Here I joyn hands, and thrust my stubborn heart
> Into thy *deed*.

Vaughan most differs from Herbert, however, in his consistent rather than incidental use of natural imagery and in his steady exploration of the revelation of God in his creation. As a loyal royalist and Anglican writing at the time of the triumph of republican arms and the imposition of an alien church order, he retired to rural seclusion in Wales. That this retirement was sympathetic to him is suggested by his translations from the Latin of the stoic meditations on the flux of worldly affairs of Boethius and the Polish Jesuit, Casimir Sarbiewski (published in *Olor Iscanus*, 'the Swan of Usk', in 1651). Vaughan's finest devotional poetry, contained in the two volumes of *Silex Scintillans*, does, however, suggest a quite individual vision of a pastoral paradise which had been glimpsed in childhood, but which once lost to the adult could be regained only through contemplation and revelation.

Despite its dominant mood of serenity, *Silex Scintillans* is periodically charged with a subversive energy directed against the new political and religious status quo imposed by Parliament. The poem 'Abel's Blood' ostensibly protests at the blood shed by the first murderer and, by implication, at the crucifixion of Christ, but the complaint 'What thunders shall those men arraign | Who cannot count those they have slain, | Who bathe not in a shallow flood, | But in a deep, wide sea of blood' seems also likely to be a barbed reference to a parliamentary army which had not only waged a civil war but then proceeded to execute the King, the earthly governor of the Church. In 'The World' the 'darksome States-man' who feeds on churches and altars may equally be a reference to Cromwell, and in 'The British Church' the soldiers who 'here | Cast in their lots again' seem to be rending the seamless robe that once was the Church. The references in the titles of poems to the major feast-days of the Prayer Book Calendar ('Christ's Nativity', 'Easter-day', 'Ascension-day', 'White Sunday', 'Trinity Sunday') are also an Anglican assertion of the propriety of marking particular festivals in opposition to an official ban. The uncertainties, insecurities, and redefinitions of the political world seem to have

driven Vaughan in on himself and to an expression of an alternative spirituality. He looks less to a temple built with human hands than to open-air sanctuaries such as the tabernacles of the patriarchs of Israel. God is evident in numinous landscapes where angels discourse with men in sacred groves (in the poem 'Religion' the 'leaves thy spirit doth fan' are also the pages of the Bible). The true worship of God is expressed in a sense of harmony with observed Nature, the 'great *Chime* | And *Symphony* of nature' of 'The Morning-watch'. When in 'The Search' Christ is sought for at the sites associated with his earthly life, the pilgrim is bidden to look beyond the 'old elements or dust' and to find him in 'another world'. Vaughan seems to have responded particularly to the story of the patriarch Jacob, who had dreamed of an angelic ladder while resting on a stone pillow at Bethel, who had wrestled with an angel at Peniel, and at whose well at Sychar Jesus had spoken to the Samaritan woman of the water of life. Jacob's attributes—wells, fountains, stones, and angel-haunted groves—figure throughout his religious verse, notably in the extraordinary poem 'Regeneration', which Vaughan placed early in the first part of *Silex*. The poem traces an interrelationship of natural, biblical, and internal landscapes, the exploration of one leading inexorably to another as the spiritual pilgrim probes the mysterious workings of grace. The divine breath called for in the poem's last lines takes up yet another biblical reference, one that is explained by the quotation from the Song of Solomon appended to it: 'Arise O north, and come thou south-wind, and blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.' The secluded garden of the soul is stirred and quickened by the spirit of life itself.

Silex Scintillans ('the sparkling flint') bears on its title-page an emblem of a flashing flint struck by a thunderbolt from the hand of God; the flint is shaped like a weeping or a bleeding heart and it flames as the lightning falls. Vaughan's emblem is variously explained; a Latin poem which prefaces the volume draws out Ezekiel's prophecy that God will 'take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh', but the personal application of the idea to the poet is twofold. His own comment that 'Certaine Divine Raies breake out of the Soul in adversity, like sparks of fire out of the afflicted flint' illuminates the dominant idea, but the actual choice of a flint was determined by a Latin pun on 'silex' and on the name of the ancient British tribe from which Vaughan claimed descent, the Silures. 'The Silurist', as the poet habitually styled himself, sees himself as made vocal by adversity. His Church and his political cause are devastated, and, as the nine untitled poems interspersed in his two volumes suggest, the death of friends has disturbed his peace of mind. These elegiac verses often suggest the dragging movement of time and the painful counting of its passage ('Each day is grown a dozen year, | And each houre, one'; 'Silence, and stealth of dayes! 'tis now | Since thou art gone, | Twelve hundred houres'), but their mourning mood is variously checked; internal qualifications bring consolation and individual poems relate not only to each other but to the titled poems which surround them. The 'pearl' discovered in

'Silence and stealth of dayes' is Christ's 'pearl of great price' which outweighs all other value; the roots that sleep in the wintry soil of 'I walkt the other day' are to bring forth new life in an eternal spring; the sense of lonely exile in 'They are all gone into the world of light!' is transformed by the investigation of a series of conceits (death as a jewel shining in the night, an empty bird's nest, a dream of angels, a star confined in a tomb) which serve to 'disperse these mists, which blot and fill | My perspective'. The dispersal of gloom is elsewhere taken as a central metaphor for revelation: 'The Morning-watch' welcomes the floods of light as a foretaste of heaven; 'The Dawning' recognizes that dawn is 'the only time | That with thy glory doth best chime' and therefore the fittest time to meditate on the Second Coming; Eternity ostensibly glimpsed with such wonderful casualness in 'The World' is like 'a great *Ring* of pure and endless light' in which 'the world | And all her train were hurl'd'. When in 'The Night' Vaughan describes the nocturnal visit of Nicodemus to Jesus, he plays with a series of contrasts between light and darkness, waking and sleeping, education and oblivion. The poem centres on a pun and a paradox: at midnight Nicodemus sees both the Son and the Sun and his enlightenment consists of an insight into the mystery of God's 'deep, but dazling darkness'. It is a night into which Vaughan's poetry consistently peers.

Henry King's meditations on mortality and eternity lack the often electrifying originality of Vaughan's. As Dean of Rochester Cathedral in 1642, King (1592–1669) had had his library destroyed and his church pillaged by a rampaging gang of Puritan iconoclasts; in the same year he was appointed Bishop of Chichester only to be ejected from his see in 1643 (he was restored to it in 1660). As his somewhat florid 'Elegy upon the most Incomparable King Charles the First' of 1649 demonstrates, the nature of his political and religious loyalties was never in doubt. The 'Elegy' unequivocally sees Charles as a martyr enthroned in heaven while below him his former subjects are sundered from each other by 'that Bloody Cloud, | whose purple Mists Thy Murther'd Body Shroud'. Vengeance, King solemnly reminds his readers, is a prime prerogative of God, a factor which 'bids us our Sorrow by our Hope confine, | And reconcile our *Reason* to our *Faith*'. Much of King's verse is, however, secular in subject and unspecifically Christian in its imagery, though even his amorous poetry is haunted by a vague melancholy and an awareness of transience. Both the 'Midnight Meditation' and the much imitated stanza 'Sic Vita' (generally ascribed to him) stress the frailty of human life and human aspiration. Amongst his many elegies the tribute to his dead wife, 'The Exequy. To his Matchlesse never to be forgotten Freind', quite transcends the rest of his poetry in quality and poignancy. Although the poem scarcely sets out to forbid mourning, its interplay of images of books and libraries, of suns, stars, and seasons, and finally of battle ('My pulse like a soft Drum | Beats my approach, tells *Thee* I come') suggests something of King's debt to the 'valedictions' of John Donne.

Secular Verse: Courtiers and Cavaliers

In his poetic tribute to his 'worthy friend' George Sandys, Thomas Carew (1594/5–1640) contrasted his own 'unwasht Muse' to the hallowed temple frequented by Sandys's. Sandys (1578–1644), the author of a verse *Paraphrase upon the Psalmes of David* (1636), the translator of Hugo Grotius's sombre Latin tragedy, *Christ's Passion* (1640) and, somewhat less devoutly, of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1621–6), seemed to Carew to have set a standard against which his own secular poetry was impiously wanting. Carew's aspirations to turn to religious verse are, however, only modestly voiced in his poem: his 'restlesse Soule' may, perhaps, find itself tired with the pursuit of mortal beauty, and the same 'perhaps' conditions the idea that his soul may neither quench her thirst nor satisfy her appetite for things spiritual by contemplating the earthly. Prompted by Sandys's example he proposes that he may at some future point cease adoring God 'in moulds of Clay' and may turn instead to writing 'what his blest Sp'rt, not fond Love shall indite'. These remained largely unfulfilled ambitions. When Carew's *Poems* appeared in print in 1640 they were on the whole elegantly turned, witty, gentlemanlike love-lyrics. Some, such as the epitaphs to Lady Mary Wentworth and to Lady Mary Villiers, develop conceits appropriate to a meditation on untimely death; others, such as 'To my Friend G.N. from Wrest' and 'To Saxham', celebrate country-house hospitality in the manner of Jonson's 'To Penshurst', but the real substance of the volume lies in its variety of amorous addresses to, and reflections on, a fictional mistress known as Celia. These verses play with the supposed power of the poet to make and unmake a reputation for beauty; they neatly exploit a simple metaphor (such as the idea of excommunication in 'To my inconstant Mistris' or a parallel with an armed rebellion in the state in 'A deposition from Love'); or, as in the smooth 'Song', 'Ask me no more', they establish an indulgently erotic mood through a series of sensual images (roses, sun-rays, nightingales, stars, and, finally, the Phoenix in her 'spicy nest'). Carew's direct debt to the divergent examples of Jonson and Donne is evident more in the poems he addressed to both masters than in his own love-poetry. The 'Elegie upon the Death of the Deane of Pauls, Dr John Donne' is eloquent in its appreciation of the innovatory power of a poet whose 'brave Soule' had committed 'holy Rapes upon our Will' and it is enterprising in its own trawling for striking images. The poem, published in the edition of Donne's verse of 1633, darts between ideas of a quickening Promethean breath, a purging of the 'Muse's Garden' of its 'Pedantique weedes', a paying of the debts of a poetically bankrupt age, and a girding of 'Giant phansie' with the 'tough-thick-rib'd hoopes' of the 'stub-borne' English language. It ends by proclaiming Donne's posthumous title to a 'universall Monarchy of wit'.

Carew served his struggling, temporal monarch, Charles I, in the military campaign against Scotland, the so-called first Bishops' War of 1639. His death

in the following year prevented any further involvement in the increasingly polarized manœuvres of the King and of those in both England and Scotland determined to stand their ground against royal influence. Carew's younger acquaintances—fellow-courtiers and fellow-poets, Sir John Suckling (1609–42) and Richard Lovelace (1618–56/57)—were drawn to the King's party by ties of old loyalty and by a patrician relish for military adventure. Both men's verse exhibits the gentlemanly lightness of touch and the equally lax morality typical of 'Cavalier' poetry. Their politics (sexual as much as national) render both equally representative of the easy, confident, flirtatious, essentially unearnest world of courtly manners. Suckling's poetry, collected posthumously with his plays and letters as *Fragmenta Aurea* (1646), suggests an almost cynical impatience with ideals. 'Loving and Beloved', for example, even dares to equate kings with lovers, not for their glory, but because 'their chief art in reigne dissembling is'. The song 'Why so pale and wan fond lover?' dismissively concludes with the thought 'If of her self she will not love, | Nothing can make her: | The divil take her'. 'Sonnet ii' (though not a sonnet in the strict sense of the term) professes an indifference to defined ideas of female beauty; love is a sport, specific attractions are arbitrary, and it is appetite, not meat, which 'makes eating a delight'. When in 'Sonnet iii' an afterworld is imagined, it is a pagan Elysium where star-crossed lovers find their proper partners; even so, the risk of not achieving ultimate fulfilment prompts the poet to opt for a more immediate satisfaction with 'the Woman here'. Even the delightfully relaxed account of the ceremonies accompanying an aristocratic wedding, which purports to be told from the point of view of a country bumpkin ('A Ballad upon a Wedding'), ends with the commonsensical observation that the real pleasures of copulation are classless ('All that they had not done, they do't: | What that is, who can tell? | But I believe it was no more | Than thou and I have done before | With *Bridget*, and with *Nell*').

Richard Lovelace's lyrics, the majority of which were published in 1649 as *Lucasta; Epodes, Odes, Sonnets, Songs etc.*, convey a similar impression of smug male assurance in dallying with love and the emotions of women, but through them there echoes the alternative, but also exclusively male, martial urgency of the 1640s. The subdued tribute to Donne's 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning'—'To Lucasta going beyond the Seas'—has none of the sharp intellectual energy of the original, but 'To Lucasta, Going to the Warres' suggests a new valedictory exigency as it balances peace-time flattery against the summons of that 'new Mistresse', military honour. Lovelace can jest about male inconstancy in 'The Scrutinie' ('Have I not lov'd thee much and long, | A tedious twelve houres space?') and he can lovingly indulge in describing the feminine gestures that arouse him (Amarantha dishevelling her hair, Lucasta manipulating her fan, Gratiana dancing on a floor 'pav'd with broken hearts'), yet when, in his most famous lyric, he purports to write 'To Althea from Prison' he can blend and contrast ideas of love and loyalty, mental freedom and physical restriction, private victory and public defeat. Imprisoned by

Parliament for presenting a petition from Kentish royalists demanding the restoration of the army to Charles I, Lovelace casts himself as a caged linnet singing of the 'sweetnes, Mercy, Majesty, | And glories of my KING'. His sublimity is conditioned by a sense of an interrelation of divine and human love:

> Stone Walls doe not a Prison make,
> Nor Iron bars a Cage;
> Minds innocent and quiet take
> That for an Hermitage;
> If I have freedom in my Love,
> And in my soul am free;
> Angels alone that sore above
> Injoy such Liberty.

The prison bursts when confronted by an inner conviction, much as in 'The Grasshopper' the winter of adversity, following the defeat of the royal cause, is reversed by a retreat into a private world warmed by an eternal summer of cultivated Cavalier friendships and loyalties.

To many eighteenth-century critics the work of Edmund Waller (1606–87) seemed to embody the metrical and verbal smoothness which ushered in the triumph of classical principles in English verse. Later in the seventeenth century John Dryden praised Waller's poetry for its model 'Excellence and Dignity'; it was Waller, he claimed, who 'first made Writing easily an Art' and who 'first shew'd us to conclude the Sense, most commonly in Distichs; which in the Verse of those before him, runs on for so many Lines together, that the Reader is out of Breath to overtake it'. This is something of an exaggeration, but the 'sweetness' of Waller's lyricism (notably in his famous 'Song', 'Goe Lovely Rose', and in his hyperbolically gallant 'On a Girdle'), and the shapeliness of his couplets were clearly aspects of his art which most pleased his immediate literary successors. Such praise of his easy art, and particularly of his limpid verses to Sacharissa, tend to blot out the political contortions of a literary career which stretched from the 1630s to the 1660s. The proposed dedication of the poems in his first volume to the Queen was tactfully dropped for its publication in 1645, though the volume contains effusive public reflections on such subjects proper to a loyal courtier as 'The Danger His Majesty (being Prince) Escaped in the Road at Saint Andero' (probably written as early as 1625), 'To the King on his Navy', and 'Upon his Majesty's repairing of St Paul's', as well as two addresses to the Queen which stress both her beauty and her fecundity. Waller joined the Queen in exile in 1643 following the failure of his botched plot to seize parliamentarian London in the name of the King (he was briefly imprisoned and heavily fined for his part in the plot, but seems to have bought his life by naming his accomplices to his captors). His return to republican England in 1651, as the result of an official pardon, was marked by an astutely tuned couplet celebration of Cromwell, 'A Panegyrick to my Lord Protector' (1655), in which Cromwell is praised for his political wisdom and for

his military prowess and the new Commonwealth hailed as a pattern for Europe. Further timely, if less distinguished, essays in panegyric mark the new editions of the *Poems* published after the restoration of Charles II in 1660. 'To the King, upon his Majesty's happy Return' is a distinctly less enterprising piece of work than the eulogy of Cromwell, but Waller was able to defend himself against the King's expression of disappointment by replying, 'poets, Sire, succeed better in fiction than in truth'. His later loyal and royal addresses are singularly flabby. 'On St James's Park, as lately improv'd by his Majesty' sees the park as an Elysium whose beauty blots out the memories associated with the nearby House of Commons 'where all our ills were shap'd'; a birthday ode to the new Queen recalls her 'happy recovery from a dangerous sickness', and her praise of tea provided the occasion for a short sycophantic verse on the pleasure of the new beverage ('The Muse's friend, Tea, does our fancy aid').

The poetry of Abraham Cowley (1618–67), against which Dr Johnson directed much of his criticism of 'metaphysical' poetry, possesses little of the intellectual and verbal muscularity of Donne's verse and even less of its opposite, the empty, if much admired, musicality of Waller's. Cowley was a precocious poet, having written a verse romance on the subject of Pyramus and Thisbe at the age of 10 (published in his *Poetical Blossoms* of 1633), but it was with the outbreak of the Civil War and with his moves first to the King's headquarters in Oxford and, in 1644, to the Queen's court in Paris that he found a proper expression for his talent and an audience to appreciate it. The love-poems collected as *The Mistress* in 1647 suggest less of a pursuit of a particular beloved than a series of general attempts to amuse disconsolate lovers or to excuse unrequited or absent love. 'The Spring', which in many ways seems to prefigure wittily Andrew Marvell's preference for trees over human fellowship in 'The Garden', in fact steadily insists on the emptiness of nature without a loving companion to share in its pleasures. 'The Change', too, meditates on an exclusion of love which can be remedied only by the radical shift exemplified by a literal exchange of hearts. 'The Wish', however, seeks for a retreat from 'this busie world' to 'a *small House* and *large Garden*' accompanied by true friends, true books, and a '*Mistress* moderately fair'; this modest suburban dream is finally conditioned not by the ideal of separation from ambition but by the unspecific '*She* who is all the world, and can exclude | In *desarts Solitude*'. During his sojourn at Oxford, Cowley began his grand but ultimately unfinished project of an epic treatment of the dominant national subject of the times, *The Civil War* (Book I was published in 1679; Books II and III, once presumed lost, were edited and published only in 1973). It is a dutiful rather than an inspired work which extravagantly associates all heroic virtue with the royalist cause, all undoing with Parliament and the proliferating Puritan sects. Of necessity, *The Civil War* broke down as the King's cause and, with it, the ambitious fabric of the poem collapsed. A second uncompleted epic, 'Davideis', which awkwardly recognizes a shadowy reflection of the biblical struggles of Saul and David in those of Charles I and Cromwell, was published

in the *Poems* of 1656. In the Preface to these *Poems* Cowley, who had returned to England in somewhat dubious circumstances in 1654, acknowledged both a submission to the conditions of 'the conqueror' and, with it, a need to 'lay down our pens as well as our arms'. Despite its opening claim that it will avoid a recall of 'those times and actions for which we have received a general amnesty as a favour from the victor', the volume contains some contentious material, notably the series of intellectually and lexically clumsy 'Pindaric Odes' (amongst which the address to 'Brutus' manages to fudge the issue of both Roman politics and Cromwellian parallels). The 1656 volume also contains Cowley's contrasting tributes to dead friends: the diffuse and rambling 'On the Death of Mr William Hervey' and the tenser, lusher, and more expressive appreciation of Crashaw ('*Poet* and *Saint*! To thee alone are given | The two most sacred *Names* of *Earth* and *Heaven*'). To a distinctly non-ecumenical age this latter poem proclaims both a need for a continuing reformation of English poetry by purging its pagan elements according to Christian principles and a tolerant admiration for Crashaw's example ('For even in *Error* sure no *Danger* is | When joyn'd with so much *Piety* as *His*').

Hesperides: or the Works both Humane & Divine of Robert Herrick Esq. of 1648 is divided into two: the first part, *Hesperides* proper, contains some of the most titillatingly erotic and overtly pagan verse in English; its second part, *His Noble Numbers*, has its own title-page and is separately paginated in order to mark off a series of religious poems from the 'unbaptized Rhimes' of the secular body of the volume. Despite their baptism, the poems in *His Noble Numbers* suggest that their author's imaginative engagement in expressions of literary piety was occasional rather than consistent. Herrick (1591–1674) was a well-educated parish priest from rural Devonshire who was ejected from his living in 1647 as a man assertively loyal to the old order in Church and State. Although, as far as we know, he had neither sought nor been offered the opportunity of serving his King as either a courtier or a soldier, his verse proves him to be the most expressively 'cavalier' of the seventeenth-century love-poets. He woos and flatters, philanders and warns, observes and compares, with little cerebration and even rarer earnestness. As a whole, *Hesperides* side-steps the confessional and political divisions of contemporary England. Its opening 'Argument' proclaims that its poet will 'sing' of brooks and blossoms, of spring and summer, of wooing and wedding; his court will be that of the Fairy King and Queen and his creed will be based on a somewhat indistinct hope of heaven. Its most weighty 'political' statement lies in its generous, tolerant, and profoundly anti-Puritan, treatment of sexuality.

Herrick's most effective religious verse expresses a childlike acceptance of faith and divine providence, though its innocence is quite distinct from the wondering mysticism of Vaughan. His 'A Thanksgiving to God, for his House' gratefully lists the simple comforts and rural blessings of a retired life, but it never attempts, as Herbert might have done, to move from the everyday to the theological. When Herrick speaks of heaven in 'The White Island: or place of the Blest', he imagines it as a floating island of happy blankness free of the 'teares and terrors' of this life, but neither here nor in his prayers for comfort in the 'Letanie, to the Holy Spirit' is there any suggestion of a quivering fear of judgement akin to Donne's. His evident delight in a white vision of a heaven characterized by candour and sincerity is, however, reflected in the air of innocent celebration that haunts much of his secular verse. The pleasures of the flesh as they are both spelled out and lovingly alluded to in *Hesperides* are threatened not by prurience or moral disapproval but by the cold winds of time and death. Young lovers, like the transient blossoms, the rosebuds, the tulips, or the daffodils of his best-known lyrics, need to 'make much of Time' in order to seize the brief moment of pleasure. The only immortality available on this side of heaven lies in the survival of poetry, as Herrick persistently reminds the Antheas and Julias to whom individual poems are addressed. Despite his resentment of a 'long and irksome banishment' in the 'dull confines of the drooping West', Herrick particularly relishes describing those rural ceremonies, such as May Day and Harvest Home, that uncomplicatedly link human and natural fertility, procreation, and fulfilment. This is not simply because he recognizes their pagan roots, or because he sees them as reflections of Greek and Roman pastorals, but because he allows them to be 'country matters' in the truest sense of the term. When Corinna goes a-Maying in the poem of that name, when the village girls dance 'like a Spring, | with Honysuckles crown'd' in 'To Meddows', or when the Earl of Westmorland is reminded of his obligation to extend hospitality to his harvesters in 'The Hock-Cart', Herrick celebrates expressions of unity which are part innocent ceremony, part knowing physical enactment. In his richly allusive marriage poem, 'A Nuptiall Song, or Epithalamie, on Sir Clipseby Crew and his Lady', he brings 'the youthfull Bridegroom, and the fragrant Bride' together at their 'proud | Plumpe Bed'

> . . . swelling like a cloud
> Tempting the too too modest; can
> You see it brusle like a Swan,
> And you be cold
> To meet it, when it woo's and seemes to fold
> The Armes to hugge you? throw, throw
> Your selves into the mighty over-flow
> Of that white Pride, and Drowne
> The night, with you, in floods of Downe.

It is a consummation which is devoutly, ceremonially, and sensuously to be wished.

When Herrick speaks of himself as a poet he either clings desperately to the traditional idea of verse outliving its maker or he evokes a picture of the pleasurable dissipation of male conviviality as a proper stimulus to poetry and an ideal setting for its recitation. In 'When he would have his verses read' he

insists on the fitness of a time 'when that men have both well drunke, and fed'. This feeling for relaxed, alcohol-enhanced fellowship re-emerges in one of his tributes to his adored Ben Jonson ('An Ode for Him') where he imaginatively links himself to the metropolitan tavern-centred culture in which 'each Verse of thine | Out-did the meate, out-did the frolick wine'. These literary bacchanals rise to their peak in the poem entitled 'To live merrily, and to trust to Good Verses' where, amid a 'golden pomp', Herrick purports to drink the health of the classical poets for whom he feels an especial sympathy and to whose literary company he aspires. The classical literary allusions of the poem partly reinforce the idea suggested by the volume's engraved title-page where the poet is represented as a hirsute bust, casually draped in the antique manner, and set in the midst of a cheerful pagan landscape. It is at once an Arcady where cupids play ring-a-roses, a Parnassus in which Hippocrene gushes, and the mythical western garden of the Hesperides where the plump golden apples of life are tended by nymphs.

Anatomies: Burton, Browne, and Hobbes

Despite the breadth of his own classical learning, reference, and allusion, Herrick appears to have had a frequent and creative recourse to Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621, reissued, enlarged and revised 1624, 1628, 1632, 1638, and 1651). For Herrick, as much as for Lawrence Sterne in the eighteenth century and John Keats in the nineteenth, Burton's encyclopaedic treatise on psychology proved to be a mine of reworkable details, phrases, images, and anecdotes. Burton (1577–1640), a somewhat awkward, retiring, and donnish Oxford clergyman, drew on a mass of ancient and modern authority to produce what is part medical treatise and part vast commonplace book. Apart from the Bible and other anonymous sources, Burton cites some 1,250 named authors, and his compendious argument evolves by means of an interlarding of science, philosophy, poetry, history, and divinity. Each page is, to many modern readers, disruptively littered with Latin quotations, some of considerable length. Within individual sentences opinions are established, qualified, or shaped by strings of complementary and suggestive words. The book's organizational principles, which have eluded many casual readers, are emphasized both by the full title of the work (*The Anatomy of Melancholy. What it is, With all the kinds, causes, symptomes, prognostickes, & severall cures of it. In three Partitions, with their severall Sections, members & subsections, Philosophically, Medicinally, Historically opened & cut up*) and by yet another of the complex iconographical title-pages in which the early seventeenth century excelled. If the work is not always exactly coherent, it achieves what unity it possesses by an involved process of inclusion and through a multiplicity of demonstration and definition. The title-page, which is explained in an accompanying poem, is divided into ten panels, each of which emblematically represents the symptoms or attributes of melancholy. A picture of the Greek philosopher Democritus, seated under the sign of Saturn (the 'Lord of Melancholy'), is balanced on either side by representations of aspects of 'Zelotopia' (jealousy) and by 'Solitudo' (solitariness). Beneath these stand effigies of a young lovesick melancholic, an older and emaciated hypochondriac, a superstitious monk, and a shackled madman in rags. The page is completed by pictures of 'sovereign plants to purge the veins of melancholy, and cheer the heart' and by a portrait of the author himself as 'Democritus Junior'. It is 'Democritus Junior' who addresses the reader in a substantial Preface and who offers glancing, self-deprecatory insights into his own temperament ('I have lived a silent, sedentary, private life') and into the nature of his mind ('This roving humour . . . I have ever had, and like a ranging spaniel, that barks at every bird he sees, leaving his game, I have followed all saving that which I should . . . I have read many books, but to little purpose, for want of good method'). It is precisely this disorganized learning, methodized into a treatise which forms part of a larger historically based discourse on mania and madness, that gives *The Anatomy of Melancholy* its continuing fascination. In stressing the lapsed state of humankind, Burton equally recognizes the entangled and disordered nature of the human condition and the susceptibility of the human mind to the unbalancing disease of melancholia. His book is an attempt to distinguish and define the components of this confusion and constipation in human affairs, but a tidy scientific logic, Burton sometimes manages to persuade us, cannot always be applied effectively to an untidy subject.

'In our study of Anatomy', Sir Thomas Browne noted in a digression on the elusive nature of the soul in *Religio Medici*, 'there is a mass of mysterious Philosophy, and such as reduced the very Heathens to Divinity'. Browne (1605–82) writes as a well-informed and experimental physician who found his religious faith confirmed by his scientific awe. *Religio Medici* ('the Religion of a Doctor') was composed in the mid-1630s but was first published, without Browne's authorization, in 1642; a revised edition, corrected by its author, appeared in the following year. His lenient *apologia* for his belief and for his allegiance to the Church of England had a particular currency in the 1640s, but his book is notable more for its stylistic effects than for the originality of its thought or the stringency and urgency of its argument. The devout doctor poses more as a moralist than as a diagnostician, more as the man of common sense than as the anatomist of the body or the soul. Browne, who had pursued his medical studies in both Catholic and Protestant Europe, proves to be a pragmatist in his attitude to the formularies of religion and he demonstrates an exemplary tolerance of both Christian dissent and Christian diversity. He admits to being 'of that Reformed new-cast Religion, wherein I dislike nothing but the Name' because he sees Anglicanism as rooted in an apostolic tradition; he admits having been moved to tears by continental Catholic devotion 'while my consorts, blind with opposition and prejudice, have fallen into an excess of scorn and laughter'; he can proclaim that 'there is no man more Paradoxical

than my self', but he can later formulate the principle that 'no man can justly censure or condemn another, because indeed no man truly knows another'.

Browne's profession of open-mindedness is linked to the very nature of his discourse, one which both draws on a variety of received fact and opinion and echoes a Baconian insistence on the 'perpetual renovation' of knowledge. *Pseudodoxia Epidemica: or, Enquiries into Very many Received Tenents, And Commonly Presumed Truths* (1646, revised and augmented 1650, 1658, 1672), Browne's longest and most intellectually experimental work took its cue directly from Bacon's distinction between 'truths' determined by the exercise of human reason, and the 'vanities' and 'distempers' of pseudo-science and uninformed credulity (the book is sometimes known by the title *Vulgar Errors*). The treatise moves steadily, but never ponderously, from human to natural history, from theology to physiology, from the superstitious distortions of logic to the radiance of beliefs erected on 'the surer base of reason'. Browne's works of the 1650s, *Hydriotaphia, Urne Buriall; or, A Discourse of the Sepulchrall Urnes Lately found in Norfolk* and *The Garden of Cyrus; or, The Quincunciall Lozenge or Net-work Plantations of the Ancients, Artificially, Naturally, Mystically Considered* (both 1658), are essentially loose, archaeological studies which interrelate ancient custom, symbolism, a fascination with form and development, and a pervasive awareness of transience and mortality. *Hydriotaphia*, like Browne's post-humously published *To A Friend, Upon the Occasion of the Death of his Intimate Friend* (1690), suggests a particular concern with the phenomena of decay, death, and disposal in the ancient and modern worlds and with the significance of religious rites and religious comfort. The Christian weight of Browne's argument lies in his stress on the promise of a hereafter which eclipses the need for earthly commemoration or exposes the vanity of monumental masonry: '*Pyramids, Arches, Obelisks*, were but the irregularities of vain-glory, and wilde enormities of ancient magnanimity. But the most magnanimous resolution rests in Christian Religion, which trampleth upon pride, and sits on the neck of ambition, humbly pursuing that infallible perpetuity, unto which all others must diminish their diameters, and be poorly seen in Angles of contingency.' Such architectural and geometrical metaphors are typical of the consistent tendency of Browne's mind to lose itself in a 'wingy' mystery, or, as he memorably puts it in *Religio Medici* 'to pursue my Reason to an *O altitudo*'.

The intellectual architecture of Thomas Hobbes's great philosophical tract *Leviathan, or The Matter, Forme, and Power of A Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil* (1651) is, in an important sense, based on the passion for geometry that he discovered at the age of 40. 'Geometry', Hobbes (1588–1679) noted in the fourth chapter of the first part of his book, 'is the only science that it hath pleased God hitherto to bestow on mankind' and this 'only science' serves as an abstract model for the shaping of the other significations, or 'definitions', on which he bases his complex argument. As the impressive structure of his thesis steadily rises, a reader grasps that it is built on a series of proved, packaged, and sealed logical propositions. Dissent, let alone qualification, is not encouraged.

Hobbes divides *Leviathan* into four parts; the first, 'Of Man', attempts to define the nature and quality of human reasoning (as opposed to 'reason') largely in reaction to the contortions of the 'Aristotelity' which had continued to dominate the English universities. When he extends his survey to an exploration of human motivation, he consistently observes a rational animal whose action is determined by aggression rather than by love, by acquisitive-ness rather than by generosity, by self-interest rather than by any altruistic ideal. For Hobbes, the selfish pursuit of 'felicity' in which all human beings engage essentially excludes benevolence.

Parts Two, Three, and Four proceed to develop this thesis into an examination of 'Civil Society', the commonwealth into which rational animals form themselves for mutual security. In the opening chapter of Part Two ('Of the Causes, Generation, and Definition of a Commonwealth') Hobbes finally introduces the Leviathan of his title, 'that *mortal god*, to which we owe under the *immortal God*, our peace and defence'. When he returns to the idea in chapter 28 he further explains how 'the nature of man' has 'compelled him to submit himself to government' and how that government can be likened to '*Leviathan*, taking that comparison out of the two last verses of the one-and-fortieth of *Job*; where God having set forth the great power of *Leviathan*, called him, King of the Proud'. This mighty governor, or government, once constituted according to an agreed contract and given sovereignty, assumes absolute power. He, or it, must not, according to Hobbes, brook opposition. In the subsequent chapter, the 'late troubles in England' emerge as a determining factor in the argument concerning 'those things that weaken, or tend to the dissolution of a Commonwealth'. Neither the royalist nor the republican cause is particularly favoured (Hobbes himself had gone into exile in Paris and in 1647 had been appointed tutor to the Prince of Wales, but in 1651 he had reconciled himself to Cromwell's England). When, however, he expands on his belief that a sovereign should not be subject to civil laws, or to the idea that too close a study of Greek and Roman history suggests that 'regicide' can be glossed as 'tyrannicide' and therefore rendered respectable, he is clearly appealing to conservative royalist sympathies. His references to Julius Caesar as the 'popular' man or 'potent subject' who threatens the status quo are somewhat more ambiguous. In one sense they suggest a critical parallel to a usurping Cromwell (whose panegyrists were much inclined to appeal to Roman precedent); in another, they hint at the continuing threat to the Protector's own rule from his erstwhile supporters. The danger from a 'popular' and ambitious rebel is greater 'in a popular government, than in a monarchy', Hobbes explains, 'because an army is of so great force, and multitude, as it may easily be made believe, they are the people'. *Leviathan* sets down a theory of an authoritarian government which wields both spiritual and temporal power. In their time Hobbes's arguments had little appeal to those radical Puritans who pleaded particular inspiration and freedom of conscience as a defence against the State's insistence on uniformity and assent. Nevertheless, the strong strains

of anti-clericalism and theological nonconformity that run through *Leviathan* offered equally little intellectual comfort to those devout Anglicans who prayed for a determined restoration of the old order in Church and State. Since the 1650s *Leviathan* has continued to vex the world rather than to divert it.

Political Prose of the Civil War Period

Hobbes's contention that governments were constituted by the demands of human security and that states were held together by a contract between the ruler and the ruled rather than immutably ordained by God was scarcely original. His emphatic restatement of the idea was, however, a reflection of the revolutionary times in which his *Leviathan* evolved. In the late 1640s and 1650s the debate about the shape and authority of the rapidly changing constitution of England was intensely partisan. A defeated king had been obliged to surrender what remained of his sovereignty to the parliamentary victors of the Civil War, though he never abandoned the belief that he had been placed on his throne by God and had exercised a sacred trust as monarch. Parliament was obliged by its victorious army to bring the King to trial on the charge of being 'a Tyrant, a Traitor and a Murderer, and a public enemy to the Commonwealth of England'. In October 1646 the episcopal structure of the Anglican Church had been formally dismantled; with one traditional pillar of the historic state removed, the 'Rump' Parliament proceeded in March 1649 to abolish two others, the monarchy and the House of Lords. In May of the same year the House of Commons affirmed that England should from henceforward be ruled as 'a Commonwealth and free state by the supreme authority of this nation, the representatives of the people in parliament'. Once the King and his cause had been disposed of, power remained with the effective brokers of Parliament, the commanders of the army, most of them gentlemen landowners. Oliver Cromwell, who later refused the offer of a supposedly defunct Crown, was proclaimed Lord Protector in December 1653. He made his impatience with truculent parliaments and with extra-parliamentary opposition to his rule perfectly plain. Despite the widespread, free and public debate about the nature of sovereignty and the potential for sustained constitutional development, the Cromwellian Commonwealth was not marked by radical social change or by any notable experiment in popular democracy. In republican England political changes, conducted in the name of the people, remained reshuffles of the ruling élite. The Commonwealth proved to be more intent on enforcing a relatively narrow idea of godly rule than on advancing the inheritance of the meek.

To the victors in the struggle against monarchical 'tyranny' the defeat of the King seemed to open the way to a just restructuring of institutions by men of goodwill and energy. 'If God and a good cause give them Victory, the prosecution whereof for the most part, inevitably draws after it the alteration of

Lawes, change of Government, downfal of Princes and thir families', wrote John Milton in 1649, 'then comes the task to those Worthies which are the soule of that enterprize, to be swett and labour'd out amidst the throng and noises of Vulgar and irrational men.' These 'Worthies', the new men at the top, were consistently harried by 'irrational' opposition, an opposition which came both from apologists for the old order and from those who sought further to radicalize the new. The day after Charles I's hugger-mugger funeral at Windsor in January 1649, the most effective of the many pieces of royalist propaganda was published in London. *Eikon Basilike; the Pourtraicture of His Sacred Majestie in his Solitudes and Sufferings* consisted of the supposed meditations and prayers of the 'martyr' King. The volume, which probably drew on authentic materials, has since been generally ascribed to John Gauden (1605–62), a former sympathizer with Parliament and a future Bishop of Worcester. Any doubts as to its true authorship failed to dent its impressive sales and its widespread influence. Some forty-seven editions eventually appeared and the impact of the book was directly felt by Anglican and devoutly royalist readers well into the eighteenth century.

The political arguments of dissenting Puritans have belatedly attracted more detailed and sympathetic interest, particularly amongst historians determined to suggest a continuity in English radical thought or a primitive formulation of socialist and libertarian ideology. When Hobbes insisted on the proper 'subjection of ecclesiastics to the commonwealth', in order to protect the civil power against any dissolution of its authority, he appears to have been thinking not only of the temporal and spiritual claims of a Pope or of a state Church but also of the challenge to authority presented by the individual conscience. Hobbes foresaw his commonwealth tottering if it allowed assent to the twin doctrines of Puritan dissenters: that '*whatsoever a man does against his conscience, is sin*' and that 'no man dare to obey the sovereign power, further than it shall seem good in his own eyes'. The restless Protestant sectarians who had so unsettled the uniform tidiness of Archbishop Laud's ecclesiastical vision proved equally to be thorns in the side of Cromwell's generals. With the Anglican order, which they had so long opposed, gone, disagreements over authority and congregational discipline broke the tactical alliance between Independents and Presbyterians. It was, however, the smaller sects and the political groupings associated with them which seemed to threaten to disrupt the state. Cromwell was particularly vexed by the rebellion of the 'Fifth Monarchy Men', fanatical believers in the literal truth of the prophet Daniel's vision of the advent of a Fifth and Universal Monarchy which would succeed the four defunct ancient empires. They went beyond the Reformation identification of the Pope with the Antichrist by asserting that the rejection of papal authority marked the end of the lingering tyranny of Rome, and prepared the way for the imminent coming of Christ as King. The relatively conservative leaders of the Commonwealth did not prove to be willing ushers to the millennium or builders of a new social order either at home or abroad.

A more specifically English strain runs through the pamphlet literature of those radicals who held that the overthrow of Charles I had begun to undo the social and political evils of the Norman rather than the Roman Empire. With the removal of the lineal descendant of the Conqueror, England could again assert her native freedoms and throw off the yokes of a Norman aristocracy and Norman-imposed feudalism. This argument surfaces prominently in the vigorous debates held at Putney between representative officers of the parliamentary army in the late autumn of 1647. The debates arose from an attempt to keep the army united following the spread of Leveller politics and theology through its ranks. The Levellers, emboldened by God's evident hand in forging the new order, sought a fundamental rather than a cosmetic change in English society. *An Agreement of the People for a firme and present Peace, upon grounds of common-right*, which had been drawn up by 'agents' (elected representatives) of five regiments, was systematically invoked at Putney. This document demanded a more equal distribution of parliamentary constituencies, biennial elections, and an independent executive assembly which would control vital issues of civil, military, religious, and legal policy. Above all, it insisted on the '*native Rights*' of 'the noble and highly honoured . . . Free-born People of ENGLAND' and it sought to raise all male commoners to the full dignity of equal citizens by removing the property qualifications of voters. The record of the debates themselves (not published until the late nineteenth century) reveals the sharp differences between the cautious and essentially conservative General Henry Ireton (1611–51), and the articulate challenges of Colonel Thomas Rainborough (1610–48). Rainborough's memorable summary of his belief that 'the poorest he that is in England has a life to live as the greatest he' and his development of the idea that 'the poorest man in England is not at all bound in a strict sense to that government that he has not had a voice to put himself under' were interpreted by his opponents as an invitation to anarchy. To Rainborough they were expressions of a creed founded in natural and divine law. John Lilburne (1614–57), nicknamed 'Free-born John', was perhaps the most determined and contentious representative of the Leveller party. A seasoned antagonizer of bishops, Lilburne endured five separate periods of imprisonment as the various provoker of Episcopal, Presbyterian, parliamentary, and republican displeasure. In February 1649 he published an address to Parliament, a reiteration of Leveller demands coupled with a stinging attack on the Council of State's proposed legal moves against his party. *Englands New Chains Discovered: or The serious apprehensions of a part of the People, in behalf of the Commonwealth* accuses the Council of acting against the interests of a free nation by lumping together all opposition 'with such appellations as they knew did most distaste the People, such as Levellers, Jesuites, Anarchists, Royalists, names both contradictory in themselves and altogether groundlesse in relation to men so reputed; meerly relying for release thereof upon the easinesse and credulity of the People'. In his later apologia *The Just Defence of John Lilburn, against Such as Charge Him with Turbulency of Spirit* (1653), he spiritedly contends that he had suffered in the past

for 'the right, freedom, safety and well-being of every particular man, woman and child in England' as the would-be preserver of 'ancient laws and ancient rights'. For the future, he urges every democratic citizen 'continually to watch over the rights and liberties of his country, and to see that they are violated upon none, though the most vile and dissolute of men'.

The writings of William Walwyn (1600–80) and Gerrard Winstanley (?1609–76) stress the importance of brotherhood and the militant force of Christian love as a means of achieving a radical change in social relationships. Walwyn's pamphlet, *The Power of Love* of 1643, is steeped in the prophetic utterance of the Bible, but it also represents an explosion of anger at the manifest contrasts between rich and poor, between outward vanity and the burning inner light of faith. Although he was himself a prosperous merchant of gentleman stock, Walwyn insists in his preliminary address 'To the Reader' that the moral reformer must note 'the whole body of religious people themselves, and in the very Churches . . . view them well, and see whether they have not this worlds goods . . . and the wants and distresses of the poore will testifie that the love of God they have not'. A related anger at the anomalies of class privilege and class deprivation surfaces in Walwyn's attack on those who suppose that all good learning stems from universities: 'And as for learning, as learning goes now adaies, what can any judicious man make of it, but as an Art to deceive and abuse the understandings of men, and to mislead them to their ruine? if it be not so, whence comes it that . . . University men throughout the Kingdome in great numbers are opposers of the welfare of the Common-wealth, and are pleaders for absurdities in government, arguers for tyranny, and corrupt the judgements of their neighbours?' Now that the Scriptures are in English, he insists, 'why may not one that understands English onely, both understand and declare the true meaning of them as well as an English Hebrician, or Grecian, or Roman whatsoever?'

The Leveller insistence on individual freedom and equality in social and religious life took a practical, but to many local landowners, a particularly objectionable turn in April 1649 with the establishment of a small and emphatically Christian co-operative community on former Crown Land at St George's Hill in Surrey. The members of this so-called 'Digger' community preferred to be known as 'True Levellers'. They were obliged to defend themselves before the Council of War in the following December by claiming that they were recovering what had been originally stolen from the common people of England by the ancestors of 'Charles our Norman oppressour'. The most articulate of these Diggers, Gerrard Winstanley, was also aware that he and his comrades were attempting to regain an ideal, a model of Eden governed not by property rights but by love. Winstanley's fiercely argued defence of his project, *A New-Yeers Gift Sent to the Parliament and Armie* (1649), sees those who opposed the Diggers' scheme as perpetuators of the power of the king and defenders of the principles of an unredeemed creation. Towards its conclusion Winstanley's defence rises to an apocalyptic emphasis: 'Therefore, you rulers

of England, be not ashamed nor afraid of Levellers. Hate them not. Christ comes to you riding upon these clouds. Look not upon other lands to be your pattern. All lands in the world lie under darkness. So does England yet, though the nearest to light and freedom of any other; therefore let no other land take your crown. You have set Christ upon his throne in England by your promises, engagements, oaths, and two acts of parliament . . . Put all these into sincere action, and you shall see the work is done, and you with others shall sing Hallelujah to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for evermore.' Just in case his vision has not had the desired impact on Parliament and its army, Winstanley adds a dire warning: 'If you do not, the Lamb shall show himself a lion and tear you in pieces for your most abominable, dissembling hypocrisy, and give your land to a people who better deserves it.' Neither Christ, the 'great Leveller', nor the new rulers of England (who were inclined to see themselves as Christ's deputies) moved to save the doomed Digger community.

James Harrington's analytical exploration of the basis of an ideal republic, *The Common-Wealth of Oceana* (1656), which was also conspicuously dedicated to Cromwell, had a far greater impact both on contemporaries and on the two centuries that followed. Harrington (1611–77) shared with the Diggers a belief that the key to all social progress lay in the ownership and management of land. If he never quite accepts the kind of protocommunism with which the Diggers experimented and if he rejects the easy but unhistorical linkage of the Norman Conquest to the advent of feudalism, he places a considerable stress on the relationship between the nature of government and the equable distribution of property. Harrington's argument is firmly based in history and in ancient and modern political theory, notably that of Machiavelli; it finds examples in Roman experience, draws parallels with modern Venice and, above all, traces the steady decline of feudalism in England and the concomitant challenge to the monarchic principle. When a strong nobility and a richly endowed Church possessed the land then monarchy flourished, but, after the dissolution of the monasteries and the redistribution of Church land amongst a new order of rising gentry, the power of the king was weakened. 'The dissolution of the late Monarchy', Harrington notes, 'was as natural as the death of a man.' Charles I had been faced with circumstances the true nature of which he had signally failed to recognize; once Parliament had been stirred into action the only thing which stood in the way of the destruction of the throne was the fact that the people were 'not apt to see their own strength'. His case for a new republican order rising out of the ashes of the old is based on the idea of a commonwealth constituted of equal powers in which landed property is perpetually redistributed amongst the many and not accumulated by a few. This 'equal Common-wealth' is ruled by three separated powers: an elected and meritocratic Senate 'debating and proposing', the people 'resolving', and an elected and rotating magistracy which also has control over a state religion. Oceana's constitutional development rests on the wisdom and determination of a victorious general, one 'Olphaeus Megalator', a thinly disguised

Cromwellian clone. Harrington later propagated his ideas by presenting them in new dresses. His *The Art of Law-giving in three Books*, published after Cromwell's death in 1659, offers a more succinct account of historical development and a somewhat less fancifully Utopian project. Its urgent concern for the future of the Republic is evident in the despairing statement: 'England is now in such a condition that he who may be truly said to give her law shall never govern her; and he who will govern her shall never give her law.' The pamphlet dialogue *Valerius and Publicola, or the true Form of A Popular Commonwealth*, also of 1659, addresses the crisis caused by the dissolution of the Rump Parliament and the emergence of an army-dominated 'Committee of Public Safety' by reiterating the case for an enforced experimental change and by setting out the reasons against re-establishing the monarchy. Like Winstanley's equally pressing, if less sophisticated, pleas it fell on deaf military ears.

Milton

As a prose polemicist, John Milton (1608–74) was a masterly and at times vituperative defender of the various public causes he chose to espouse. In the early 1640s he produced five pamphlets attacking both the idea and the supposed enormities of English episcopacy; between 1643 and 1645 he published four tracts in favour of divorce, stemming from the unhappiness of his own marriage; in 1644 he offered his great defence of 'free' speech, *Areopagitica*, as a means of countering the licensing ordinance of a predominantly Presbyterian Parliament; following the execution of Charles I in 1649 he argued in both English and Latin for the propriety of bringing a tyrant to account and he attempted to undermine the success of *Eikon Basilike* by scathingly attacking its pretensions; in 1660, shortly before the restoration of the monarchy, he proposed in *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* the establishment of a 'Grand Councel of ablest men chosen by the people' as a means of safeguarding the unsteady republic. Of the anti-episcopal tracts, two, *The Reason of Church Government* and *An Apology for Smectymnuus* (both 1642), contain pertinent digressions on Milton's own life, education, and development. In the earlier tract he writes of his serene determination 'to lay up as the best treasure, and solace of a good old age . . . the honest liberty of free speech from my youth', and, with a self-assertive attempt to disarm protest, he adds, 'if I be either by disposition, or what other cause too inquisitive, or supositious of my self and my own doings, who can help it?' His intellectual credentials, he insists, had been proved by his ready acceptance into the high-minded salons of Italy during his travels of 1638–9, but despite his early success as a Latin stylist, he had subsequently resolved 'to be an interpreter & relater of the best and sagest things among mine own Citizens throughout this Iland in the mother dialect'. In *Of Reformation Touching*

Church Discipline (1641), however, he briskly lays out a general argument against the Anglican compromise based on a severely anti-episcopalian reading of English Reformation history. Bishops are blamed not simply with propping up an incompletely reformed church but, worse, with being the persecutors of the righteous; they have precipitated a war between England and Scotland ('dearest brothers in *Nature*, and in CHRIST') and their fury has forced 'faithfull, and freeborn Englishmen, and good Christians' to forsake 'their dearest home, their friends and kindred' in order to find refuge in 'the savage deserts of *America*'.

Milton's controversial tracts on divorce attempt to justify the idea of a godly separation of those whom the Law and the Church insisted had been permanently joined together by God. 'No effect of tyranny can sit more heavy on the Commonwealth', he stresses, than that of 'this household unhappines', a strained and unfulfilling marriage. In *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1643, revised 1644) he draws extensively on arguments from history, theology, and Scripture and he skirts round Christ's own explicit condemnation of divorce by flourishing a series of novel and convenient theological ideas. 'Unmeet consorts' make for a kind of chaos which stands against God's order in creation; Christ claimed that his yoke was easy and his burden light, therefore the burden of marriage law ought to reflect that ease; God, who offers liberty in his service, 'delights not to make a drudge of vertue, whose actions must be al elective & unconstrain'd'. The divorce tracts interlink a radical Puritan insistence on rethinking the implications of inherited moral laws with a distinctly personal irritation with received wisdom.

The greatest and most lastingly persuasive of Milton's pamphlets, *Areopagitica; A Speech of Mr John Milton for the Liberty of Unlicenc'd Printing, to the Parliament of England* (1644) argues for a far broader constitutional liberty. It pleads for an uninhibited exchange of ideas in a modern Protestant Commonwealth in the form of an ancient oration (the Areopagus had been the site of the meetings of the Council of State of ancient Athens). Despite the classical rhetorical form of his tract, Milton avoids Greek or Latin tags and laborious authoritative citations. When he protests that he cannot praise 'a fugitive and cloister'd vertue, unexercis'd & unbreath'd, that never sallies out and sees her adversary', he is also indirectly insisting on his Christian duty to speak out in English in the name of 'truth' (or at least his own idea of truth). He defines his aspirations by stressing the severe, logical beauty of his vision of liberty by contrasting it with the myopic fudges of his enemies (Roman, Laudian, and, by implication, Presbyterian censors). When he famously claims that books 'are not absolutely dead things, but doe contain a potencie of life in them to be as active as that soule was whose progeny they are', he opens up an extended, and highly charged, parallel between the unreformed Church's persecution of heretics and the attempted suppression of ideas in a Protestant state. Both are taken to be unlawful murder: 'As good almost kill a Man as kill a good Book; who kills a Man kills a reasonable creature, Gods Image; but hee who destroyes a good Booke, kills reason it selfe, kills the Image of God, as it were in the eye.' As he develops the idea, he subtly inflates the nature of this 'murder' from homicide to martyrdom, finally comparing the suppression of the entire issue of a book to a massacre of the human spirit ('whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elementall life, but strikes at that ethereal and fift essence, the breath of reason it selfe, slaies an immortality rather than a life'). At two crucial points in his discourse Milton assumes a patriotic register in order to both hector and flatter the parliamentary representatives of a rising and exemplary England, a nation 'not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit, acute to invent, suttle and sinewy to discours, not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to'. For Parliament to deny such a nation its proper freedom, he asserts, would challenge the special revelation of God's liberty to 'his Englishmen'. When he returns to his grand national theme he again adopts an oratorical voice, part classical, part biblical in its inspiration: 'Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant Nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: Methinks I see her as an Eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazl'd eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long abused sight at the fountain itself of heav'nly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amaz'd at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms.'

Milton's grand vision floundered amid the evident divisions, schisms, and uncertainties of the England of the Interregnum. The 'timorous and flocking birds' had outstared the revolutionary eagle. Milton had explicitly affirmed his own republicanism in a series of pamphlets. *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, published shortly after Charles I's execution in 1649, had argued that kings derived their authority solely from the people, and, as its full title indicated, it also attempted to prove '*that it is Lawfull, and hath been held so through all Ages, for any who have the Power, to call to account a Tyrant, or wicked King, and after due conviction, to depose, and put him to death; if the ordinary Magistrate have neglected, or deny'd to doe it. And that they, who of late, so much blame Deposing, are the Men that did it themselves*'. Yet more boldly, given the developing political situation, *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (1660) adulated the achievements of the fragmenting English Republic and warned of a return of 'the old encroachments ... upon our consciences' if an Anglican monarchy were restored. The 'good Old Cause' of the Republic would, he insists, be utterly undermined by kings who, 'never forgetting thir former ejection, will be sure to fortifie and arm themselves sufficiently for the future against all such attempts hereafter from the people'. As an alternative, Milton presents the case for a free and emphatically Protestant Commonwealth which would preserve both civil and religious liberty. Yet more daringly, he suggests that this commonwealth would ensure its freedoms by introducing a kind of federalism based on county assemblies subordinate to a national Parliament.

If Milton's career as a public apologist for the English Revolution effectively ended with the extinction of the Republic and the restoration of Charles II in May 1660, his career as a poet took on a new significance. His first collected volume of verse, the *Poems of Mr John Milton, both English and Latin, Compos'd at Several Times* (1645), had been the fruit of some fifteen years of experiment with English and Latin metres. It was published when the poet himself had written little new verse for five years and when he was aware, at the age of 36 that he was going blind. Although his publisher announced in the Preface to the volume that he hoped that Milton's work would have the popular success of Waller's recent collection, he proved to be unduly optimistic (Waller's went through three editions in 1645 alone; the reputation of Milton's was assured only by its belated reissue in 1673). As it was originally constituted in 1645 the *Poems* showed off the range and variety of Milton's achievement to date, from his adolescent paraphrases of the Psalms and his 'On the Morning of Christs Nativity' (written in 1629) to the 'Mask', now generally known as *Comus* (first published anonymously in 1637), and 'Lycidas' (which had been published under the signature 'J.M.' in a volume of tributes to Edward King in 1638). The poem placed prominently at the beginning of the volume, 'On the Morning of Christs Nativity', is an essay in devotional poetry parallel to Crashaw's 'A Hymne of the Nativity', but where Crashaw allows his wondering shepherds to observe the incarnate Word as a weeping infant, Milton concentrates on a wondrous divine sovereign whose birth extinguishes the power of the pagan gods and silences their oracles. The stress throughout is cosmic rather than human. In some senses Milton's Christ child, who was 'wont at Heav'n's high Councel-Table, | To sit the midst of Trinal Unity', is already the father to the man who will ride in majesty against the rebel Angels in *Paradise Lost* and who will coldly dumbfound Satan in *Paradise Regained*. The longest poem in the collection, *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle*, had been extensively revised by Milton from its performing version. Although the work originally stemmed from a fruitful working relationship between Milton, who had a fine ear for music, and his friend, the composer Henry Lawes, its emphasis in published versions fell on the word, not on music, dance, or spectacle. Yet *Comus* remains a later flowering of the forms evolved at court earlier in the century. It is in essence an occasional piece written for performance at the official residence of the newly appointed Lord President of Wales whom the attendant spirit praises as 'a noble Peer of mickle trust' whose 'temper'd awe' will direct the Welsh, an 'old and haughty Nation proud in Arms'. Its original actors included the Earl of Bridgewater's three children as the Lady and her two noble brothers and Lawes himself as 'the attendant Spirit afterwards in the habit of *Thyrsis*'. Sabrina the nymph who finally releases the Lady from her troubled enchantment by Comus in the 'drear Wood', is the spirit of the 'smooth Severn stream', the river that waters the western marches of England. The dissimulating Comus is neither the protagonist nor the anti-hero of the piece, but it is through him that Milton first establishes what proved to be a lasting

professional interest in the nature and force of temptation and in the character and motivation of a tempter.

Although they are too neatly complementary to evoke the real lure of contrasting temptations, inclinations, and antipathies, 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso' are shaped as representations of opposed states of mind. Both are written in deft octosyllabic couplets. The first of the poems seeks to banish melancholy, the second to cultivate it; the first turns actively to public mirth, the second to the private pleasures of the *vita contemplativa*. Where 'L'Allegro' somewhat forcedly celebrates the rustic joys of 'Jest and youthfull Jollity, | Quips and Cranks, and Wanton Wiles', 'Il Penseroso' calls for the company of a 'pensive Nun, devout and pure, | Sober, stedfast, and demure'. Where the narrator of 'L'Allegro' professes to be drawn to comedy on the 'well-trod' modern stage, that of 'Il Penseroso' meditates alone by reading the 'Gorgeous Tragedy' of the ancients 'in som high lonely Towr'. The fact that the Puritan Milton should in the latter poem allow his narrator to seek out 'Cloysters pale', organs, choirs, and painted windows which cast 'a dimm religious light' suggests the degree to which he is conventionally reliant on the panoply of the old religion rather than on the clear and unfiltered light of reformed faith. By contrast, 'Lycidas', a monody bewailing the drowning of the pious scholar, Edward King, in 1637, is transfused with evocations of light and learning. The name 'Lycidas' (the 'best of pipers') is taken from the Greek bucolic poet, Theocritus, and distant but distinct echoes of classical pastoral poetry run through Milton's elegy. Its form, however, is that of an English adaptation of current Italian *canzone*, a form which gave Milton the freedom to vary both the structure of his verse paragraphs and the lengths of his lines. 'Lycidas' blends elements of the pagan and the Christian, and intermixes gods and saints, nymphs and angels. It mirrors the contemporary idea of revealed Christianity as an enlightened extension of aspects of pagan spirituality by moving from a grieving and almost stoic acceptance of loss to an assertion of a sure and certain hope of the Christian Resurrection. When Camus, the personification of the University of Cambridge, enters the poem at line 103 its frame of reference shifts easily enough towards modern learning and to modern Puritan polemics. Camus is closely followed by the figure of St Peter, the keeper of the keys of heaven and hell, who expresses not merely regret for the loss of the talented Cambridge graduate, King, but a deeper sadness for the state of the Church which he might nobly have served. Milton not only hijacks the first Pope to his cause, but makes him the mouthpiece for an attack on bad shepherds (Anglican prelates and 'corrupted Clergy') who fail both to feed 'the hungry Sheep', and to offer proper defence against the 'grim Woolf' (the Roman Church) who 'daily devours apace'. The closing sections of the poem transform the earlier evocation of mourning with an allusion to the might of the redeeming Christ 'that walk'd the waves'. Lycidas rises above the waters in which he once sank to be received into the 'blest Kingdoms meek of joy and love'. In the last lines the lamenting, uncouth (here 'unknown') shepherd who has been the narrator of

the poem rises, twitches his 'blue' mantle (that is, no longer of mourning colour) and sets out to 'fresh Woods, and Pastures new'.

The 1645 edition of the *Poems* contains some ten sonnets, five of which are in Italian. The 1673 reissue added nine more, all composed between 1645 and 1658; three further, including 'To the Lord General Cromwell' of 1652, were published posthumously in 1694. If the Italian sonnets play with conventionally amorous ideas, those in English turn, for the most part, to private and political themes. Milton honours the dead wife of a friend, and pays public tribute to the talents of his sometime friends and associates Henry Lawes, Cyriack Skinner, and Edward Lawrence. More poignantly, he also takes up personal issues, notably the consequences of his blindness ('When I consider how my light is spent') and a vision, as through a glass darkly, of his dead second wife ('Methought I saw my late espoused Saint'). It is, however, in the explicitly political sonnets that his resonant, declamatory style moves him furthest from the ideas and the imagery of love. 'On the late Massacher in Piemont', for example, rings with religious indignation at the massacre of Waldensian Protestants by the Duke of Savoy in 1655 and demands divine retribution for such an offence against God's truth. A similar urgency echoes through the sonnet which Milton addressed to Cromwell ('our cheif of men') in May 1652. Its opening octave plays tribute to the Protector's 'faith & matchless Fortitude' and to his recent military successes, but its sestet shifts from adulation to a demand for renewed civil action. In returning to the religious issues that had long concerned him, Milton insists on the rights of dissenters to detach themselves from any established state Church which might attempt to bind 'our soules with secular chains'. The final couplet cleverly reverses a reference to Christ's parable of the hireling shepherd, who, unlike the good shepherd, runs away from the threatening wolf. Only Cromwell, it is implied, has the energy and determination to keep the pack of 'hireling wolves' at bay.

With the collapse of his hopes for the development of an earnest Protestant republic in 1660, Milton seems, of necessity, to have turned away from overtly political literature and to have redirected his creative urge into a long cultivated project for an English epic poem. His heroic poem might, he trusted, proclaim to the civilized world the coming of age of English literature. Milton assiduously prepared for the intellectual challenge he had posed himself, searching for both an appropriate subject and an epic style worthy of it. In the Latin poem 'Mansus' of 1638–9 he had considered the fitness of subjects drawn from national history, and in particular from Arthurian legend; in the early 1640s he noted down some twenty-eight further ideas including a heroic treatment of King Alfred whose exploits, he held, might stand comparison to those of Homer's Odysseus. At some point in the Civil War the idea of ancient kingly heroism must have seemed too coloured by the sins of modern monarchs to be a fit subject for epic celebration, though material assembled for these abortive projects was reshaped as the prose *History of Britain* (probably written

in the late 1640s, published 1670), a volume which bemoans the failure of both Britons and Saxons to maintain and defend their ancient liberties.

The exploration of a more devastating and universal failure emerges in the project for a sacred tragic drama entitled 'Adam Unparadiz'd'. To what extent Milton had developed the scheme of this tragedy can no longer be ascertained but it would seem that certain elements of it served in the dramatic shaping of the providential theme of *Paradise Lost* (1667, revised 1674). As the poem's opening lines stress, he had moved from a meditation on the political disappointments visited on 'God's Englishmen' to an epic treatment of 'Man's First Disobedience . . . Death . . . woe . . . loss'. Earlier European epic poems had celebrated some kind of military success: Homer's *Iliad* traced the causes and progress of the Greek struggle against Troy; Virgil's *Aeneid* explored the origins and nature of Rome's imperial destiny; Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1581) dealt heroically and romantically with the First Crusade; and Camoens's *Os Lusiadas* (1572) rejoiced in the past and present expansion of maritime Portugal. Milton, who was familiar with all these works, was ready to assume neither a nationalistic nor an optimistic stance in the scheme of *Paradise Lost*. His subject was the failure of humankind to live according to divine order and its slow but providential deliverance from the consequences of the Fall. The myth with which he chose to deal, and in which he believed literally, was, like many other parallel myths and folk-tales, an exploration of the moral consequences of disobedience. The discovery of the knowledge of good and evil is neither accidental nor happy. The central 'character', Adam, has no heroic destiny. Through his, and Eve's corruption all humankind is corrupted and, as both are finally obliged to understand, the spiritual struggle to regain Paradisal equity and equability extends through each generation of their descendants. In a profound sense Adam and Eve fall from the ideal into the human condition. The great theme of the poem is obedience to the behests implicit in the creative order of an omnipotent God. The will of God is imprinted in the harmony of nature, and the disaster of the Fall is as much ecological as it is moral. Despite the temptation presented by the poem itself to see the rebellion of Satan as a heroic gesture of liberation and the Fall of Adam as a species of gallantry towards his wife, *Paradise Lost* insistently attempts to assert to a reader the ultimate justness of a loving God's 'Eternal Providence'.

Although Milton plays with heroic parallels and allusions throughout the poem, in the case of Satan such references help to place both the fallen angel's sense of himself and the reader's sense of him. Satan is also negatively defined by his standing in antithesis to the accumulated ideas of Christian heroism which run through the poem. Elsewhere, echoes of older epics, such as the extended similes or the idioms derived from Greek and Latin, help to forge a new, sustained, variable, weighty, and to some extent artificial language appropriate to the poem's ambitious scheme. Even the structural parallels with the epic poems of Homer and Virgil, such as the battle in Heaven, the formal debates, and Satan's exploratory journey through Chaos, are given a new

cosmic context. Milton deals with what are ostensibly incomprehensible perspectives stretching outwards and upwards in time and space, and his language, remote as it frequently is from everyday discourse, both challenges earth-bound concepts and relocates received images. In vastly elaborating the bald account of Adam's Fall in the Book of Genesis, he extends his viewpoint beyond the acts of Creation and Eden to an imaginative history of how the peccant angels fell from Heaven, how Satan evolved and perfected his scheme to mar Creation, and how God's promise of redemption will be realized. The structure of the poem breaks both with simple sequential chronology and with conventional perceptions of time and the measurement of time. Neither Adam nor any of the angels conceives of mortality, and though Adam knows days and nights in Eden, neither Heaven nor Hell recognizes such divisions. Light itself is described as more than simply the radiance of a sun on which Satan can land as if he were one of Galileo's sunspots (III. 588–90). If Hell is characterized by lightless penal flames and by 'darkness visible', Heaven blazes with inextinguishable divine effulgence which both is and is not conterminous with that of the sun. The blind poet addresses this light in his induction to Book III:

> Hail holy Light, offspring of Heav'n first-born,
> Or of th' Eternal Coeternal beam
> May I express thee unblam'd? since God is Light,
> And never but in unapproached Light
> Dwelt from Eternitie, dwelt then in thee,
> Bright effluence of bright essence increate
> Or hear'st thou rather pure Ethereal stream,
> Whose fountain who shall tell? . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> thee I revisit safe,
> And feel thy sovran vital Lamp; but thou
> Revisitst not these eyes, that roul in vain
> To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
> So thick a drop serene hath quencht thir Orbs,
> Or dim suffusion veild.

The narrator dwells on his human disability in the face of the blazing perfection of an unseen, but imagined, Godhead; he can neither see in normal human terms, nor properly comprehend in Heavenly terms.

Milton's avoidance of precise definition here is typical of his acceptance of the limitations of human knowledge throughout his poem. In Book VIII Adam, who 'thirsts' for knowledge, is advised by the visiting archangel Raphael of the likely nature of his defective fumbling for 'scientific' truth:

> To ask or search I blame thee not, for Heav'n
> Is as the Book of God before thee set,
> Wherein to read his wondrous Works, and learn
> His Seasons, Hours, or Dayes, or Months, or Years:

> This to attain, whether Heav'n move or Earth,
> Imports not, if thou reckon right, the rest
> From Man or Angel the great Architect
> Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge
> His secrets to be scannd by them who ought
> Rather admire . . .

'Reckoning right' becomes an essential educational element in the working out of the narrative. *Paradise Lost* is primarily neither a didactic poem nor a piece of evangelical propaganda, but its impact on a reader depends on Milton's essentially Puritan insistence on a reader's unimpeded freedom of interpretation. Although the narrator prompts certain assumptions (that Satan and the fallen angels are mistaken in their belief that they can effectively fight back against Heaven, for example, or that God is both benevolent and omnipotent in his plan for creation), the epic voice never narrowly enforces meaning. A reader, like Adam, is at all times bidden to exercise the principle of 'rational liberty' and to explore and analyse the evolving pattern of moral and religious experience. The poem systematically disturbs the complacency about the myth it is retelling and re-presenting. The infernal debate in Book II, for example, poses contradictory questions about resistance and rebellion and it allows for the mental force of a sometimes specious, sometimes persuasive rhetoric (particularly that of Belial and Satan). By contrast, the seemingly awkward, austere and largely biblically-expressed externalization of the forethought of God in Book III presents a concise summary of biblical assumptions about the nature of the Godhead and a careful restatement of the theological significance of freewill in Heaven and Earth. The presentation of Paradise and its human inhabitants equally demands interpretation. Milton's narrative scrupulously suggests the nature of the gulf that separates an unfamiliar, seasonless, unfallen world of thornless roses and frisky beasts from the familiar one of tempests, frosts, shame, and bloodshed. The uncorrupted, temperate Adam and Eve 'innocently' express their sexual relations 'founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure' but the fallen pair are inwardly shaken by 'high passions, anger, hate | Mistrust, suspicion, discord'. Adam's final wisdom is not defined by his knowledge of the distinction between good and evil but by his willingness to accept obedience 'and love with fear the only God'. As the archangel Michael comfortingly instructs him, a proper combination of faith and good works will render him 'not loth | To leave this Paradise' and to possess instead 'A Paradise within thee, happier far'.

Paradise Lost attempts to uphold the virtues of patience not passivity, of enlightened learning not submissive ignorance. It shows us not simply Adam un-Paradised, but Adam possessed of true humanity: mortal, suffering, and seeking for both grace and liberty. It also sustains the probity of inner certainty, in terms both of Adam's insight and of a reader's freedom of judgement. From this idea of the primacy of conscience stems Adam's wounded reaction to the vision of future corruptions, tyrannies, and injustices presented to him by

Michael in Books XI and XII. His and Eve's departure from Paradise is tearful, but it also offers the prospect of a 'subjected' world which is 'all before them' and in which they can choose their place of rest. Their choices, and those of their descendants, will, it is implied, be part of a greater quest to restore a Paradisal order in the fullness of time.

The consistency of Milton's achievement in *Paradise Lost* was not matched by what is ostensibly its successor, the four books of *Paradise Regain'd* of 1671. Despite its title, *Paradise Regain'd* does not assert the idea that the redemption of humankind hinges on Christ's resistance to temptation in the wilderness, though a Job-like patient submission to the will of God is clearly a dominant theme. Milton's interest in the withdrawn, meditative Christ at the beginning of his ministry had been hinted at in the parallel drawn in Book XI of *Paradise Lost* when Adam is led to the highest hill of Paradise from where a vast prospect opens:

> Not higher that Hill nor wider looking round,
> Whereon for different cause the Tempter set
> Our second *Adam* in the Wilderness,
> To shew him all Earth's Kingdoms and thir glory.

The 'second Adam' is here to reverse the cause of the Fall if not yet to undo its consequences. We are presented with a serious, scholarly, articulate, ethical, passionate, sinless Christ, but a cold one. Essentially, the poem lacks drama. Although the Christian reader of *Paradise Regain'd* knows the outcome of the encounter with Satan in the wilderness as much as he or she knew earlier that Adam and Eve would fall, a meeting of the incarnate, omnipotent, and omniscient God with his far from omnipotent opponent inevitably suggests an unequal struggle of wills and a foregone conclusion. The real interest of Milton's poem lies in its presentation of arguments, not in an exploration of personality or an imaginative speculation about the unknowable. Satan's intellectual and sensual assaults, and Christ's reasoned responses to them, juxtapose ideologies, ways of seeing, thinking, reading, interpreting, and believing. Satan asks less for submission than for compromise and to answer him Christ insists on the wisdom of understanding, a wisdom which locates and judges rather than deprecates and fudges.

Milton's tragedy *Samson Agonistes* was published with *Paradise Regain'd* in 1671 though its date of composition is uncertain. The tragedy takes as its subject the ruined and blinded Samson, the failed hero of Israel, taunted by his alien wife Dalila, the cause of his downfall, and scorned by Harapha, the representative of the victorious Philistines. Yet Samson's former failure to resist temptation also proves a fortunate fall. Herein lies the problem of its dating. The drama has been traditionally assumed to date from the period of Milton's own proscription and blindness and to be a further reflection on the mysteries of divine providence which casts down those who had once seemed champions of the national cause. Some critics have, however, been inclined to

see it as a work of the late 1640s or early 1650s. Its subject is essentially appropriate to both phases in Milton's career for *Samson Agonistes* seeks to adapt the form of Greek tragedy to the needs of a Christian society and to equate a Hebrew moral to the faith of a Protestant elect. The drama closely follows both classical models and the prescriptions of classical critics. Unlike the English tragedies of Milton's immediate forebears and contemporaries, it adheres faithfully to the unities of time, place, and action, it places considerable weight on its Chorus of Danites, and it traces the growth in enlightenment of its protagonist. It differs from its models in that it is emphatically optimistic in its internal insistence that Christian tragedy is a contradiction in terms. Samson's slow enlightenment drives him not to despair but to a reconciliation to the benign purposes of God. His death is seen not as a purging but as a triumph in which the Chorus is finally brought to an awareness of the hero's 'dearly-bought revenge, yet glorious'. Samson's father Manoah proclaims the special nature of the sacrifice of his son:

> Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
> Or knock the brest, no weakness, no contempt,
> Dispraise or blame, nothing but well and fair,
> And what may quiet us in a death so noble.

Samson, as a type of Christ, prefigures the Messiah's redemptive death, mastering defeat through a submission to the will of God. True liberty, all of Milton's biblically based works imply, rests in a resolved and independent understanding of the nature of service.

Marvell

Three major poets, all secretaries to the republican government and all dressed in official mourning, walked behind Cromwell's coffin in the Lord Protector's magnificent funeral procession to Westminster Abbey in November 1658. The eldest, John Milton, had proved his loyalty to the doomed Commonwealth, a loyalty that he silently maintained. The youngest, John Dryden, later tactfully shifted his poetic ground away from tributes to Cromwell to celebrations of the returning Charles II. The loyalties of the third poet, Andrew Marvell (1621–78), appear to have been far more subtly ambiguous. Marvell had spent the early part of the Civil War travelling in The Netherlands, France, Italy, and Spain and it was during a second visit to France in 1656 that a visiting English royalist described him as a 'notable Italo-Machavillian'. The exact degree of Marvell's commitment to the divisive causes of his day will always be indeterminate; the acute political intelligence which permeates his poetry is not. In the Preface to the second part of his prose satire *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* (1673) he insisted that until 1657 he had 'not the remotest relation to publick matters' and that thereafter he had entered into an official employment which he considered 'the

most innocent . . . toward his Majesties affairs of any in that usurped and irregular Government'. Despite this exculpatory insistence, it is evident that Marvell recognized in Cromwell the dynamic spirit of the age, the kind of decisive figure whom Machiavelli had seen as the shaper of political change.

Although Marvell's earliest published poems suggest an association with royalist literary circles, his support for the new Republic is plain enough in 'An Horatian Ode Upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland' of May 1650. Some surviving copies of Marvell's posthumously published *Miscellaneous Poems* (1681) contain versions of two further commendatory poems to the Lord Protector (though in most copies of the volume a censor, either official or private, has excluded them). All three poems celebrate a victorious general and a heroic instrument of God. 'The First Anniversary of the Government under his Highness the Lord Protector, 1655' recognizes an 'indefatigable' Cromwell who 'cuts his way still nearer to the Skyes, | Learning a Musique in the Region clear, | To tune this lower to that higher Sphere'. In 'A Poem upon the Death of His Late Highness the Lord Protector' (1658) the dead Cromwell is proclaimed not only to have outbraved King Arthur and outprayed King Edward the Confessor but also to have left a reputation which will increase with the passage of time 'when truth shall be allow'd, and faction cease'. The subtlest and most probing of these public poems is the earliest, Marvell's joint tribute to the literary example of Horace and to the extraordinary vitality of Cromwell. The 'Horatian Ode' sees its addressee in the complementary roles of the fulfiller of tradition and the breaker of moulds. Cromwell outclasses Roman precedent and he assumes the role of the Christian hero, the man made by the peculiar circumstances of modern times who will act according to the will of God. He brings not peace but a sword. At the opening of the poem a 'forward Youth' is stirred to turn from the arts of peace to those of war; at its close, military might is brought to bear not simply on rebellious Ireland and Scotland, but also, if God wills, on Catholic France and Italy (where Cromwell may yet equal the triumphs of Caesar and Hannibal). But at the centre of the ode Marvell places a careful tribute to Charles I as the representative of an honourable but dying order. Charles is a '*Royal Actor*', playing his final part with proper decorum and bowing out of the historical scene. The King's 'bleeding Head' is seen not as a threat to the fledgling Republic but as a sacrifice prophetic of its 'happy Fate', akin to the legendary sign offered to the Roman architects who laid the foundations of the Capitol. Yet the new England holds more promise than ancient Rome. It has been set apart for a special destiny evident in the triumphs of an agent who remains a faithful servant to the policies of the Commonwealth and a falcon obedient to the parliamentary falconer.

The 'Horatian Ode' recognizes a Cromwell who, like the 'forward Youth', had forsaken rural retirement in favour of service in a just war. In June 1650 Cromwell's former commander-in-chief, Thomas, Lord Fairfax, resigned his parliamentary commission and withdrew from public life to his Yorkshire estates. Here at Nun Appleton Marvell joined him as tutor to his daughter. The

poems which are generally assumed to date from this period reveal a concern with the interconnections of public and private life in a time of violent disruption. The four 'Mower' poems, for example, see death, disappointment, and 'common ruin' intruding into a rural Arcadia. More substantially, Marvell's lengthy tribute to his patron, 'Upon Appleton House: To My Lord Fairfax', is an adaptation of the mode established by Ben Jonson in his 'To Penshurst' fitted to new times. But where the narrator of Jonson's poem is confident, that of Marvell's is uneasy; the first observes the extravagant plenty stemming from peace and order, the second is aware that beyond the house's 'composition' there is war and the rumour of war. In Marvell's opening stanzas, Appleton House and its demesne are given a context which relates them to an ancestral past and to an uncertain but progressive future. At stanza 41, however, the scope broadens to refer to a greater garden, that of a ruined and fallen England, an Eden devastated by war ('What luckless Apple did we tast, | To make us Mortal, and Thee Wast?'). Fairfax's retirement, though admirable in itself, has deprived England of the gardener fittest to bring it to a new perfection. The glimpses of rural violence in the fields around the estate (mowers 'massacring' grass, for example) serve as metaphors of a more universal devastation. This confusion, and the play of paradoxes involved, seem to impose upon narrator and reader alike a need to read a given selection of signs in order to interpret the workings of providence. The end of the poem is typically ambiguous. There is a firm return to the ideal embodied by the house and its occupants as Fairfax's daughter is presented as the auspicious restorer of a limited earthly paradise, much as her father may still be to the country at large. But the enigmatic last stanza moves yet again into a realm of dislocation and upheaval as salmon-fishers pull their leather boats on to their heads and appear as strange tortoise-like representatives of a 'dark *Hemisphere*'.

Marvell's other poems of retreat into gardens are, despite their recalls of the fallen state of humankind, less ambiguous. 'Bermudas' refers to a providential 'accident' by means of which Puritan refugees from Laudian persecution make a landfall on a paradisal island in the New World. Here all Marvell's hopes of renewal, so readily associated with the word 'green', inform a hymn of praise written in the manner of a metrical psalm. There is a similar delight in rediscovering Eden in 'The Garden', a poem which opens with a flamboyant display of erudite wit; gardens, we are told, sustain the rewards of all ambition in that they are the source of the symbolic crowns once awarded to saints, soldiers, athletes, and poets; they contain the originals of traditional metaphors for, and expressions of, physical love; and they suggest that all passion ends in vegetable life (Apollo only chased Daphne, and Pan Syrinx, knowing that they would conveniently turn into plants). When the narratorial 'I' enters the poem in the fifth stanza, we are presented with an alternative vision, that of a fertile paradise where fruits offer themselves to be touched and tasted and where, as yet, the only fall results from the amorous outreaching of melon tendrils and the embraces of flowers. This, however, is neither Goblin Market nor the

loquacious garden of *Alice in Wonderland*. The poem represents an attempt to recapture innocence through meditation and solitude. The creative mind finds the strength to 'annihilate' all existing creation into the freshness of 'a green Thought in a green shade' and the imagined world is seen as an exclusive paradise possessed by a solitary Adam. Only the references to time in the final stanza subtly suggest that seasonless Eden is separated from a corrupted and transient world by the consequences of a historic Fall.

Marvell's lyric poems are haunted by time and a tantalizing and sometimes disorienting sense of human failure. Like explicatory poems from an emblem book, 'On a Drop of Dew' and 'A Dialogue between the Soul and Body' contrast pictures of the 'restless' and 'unsecure' soul, longing for heaven, with those of the enclosing and complaining prison of the body. 'The Definition of Love' plays, in the manner of Donne, with paradoxes and images of frustration in dealing with a love 'begotten by despair | Upon Impossibility'. 'Young Love' and 'The Picture of little T.C. in a Prospect of Flowers' express a delight in the beauty of young girls, girls courted by an older poet or, in the case of 'little T.C.', wooed by Nature, but preserved from any consummation of love by the fact of their youth. Marvell's famous address 'To his Coy Mistress' is perhaps the finest of the many variations on the theme of *carpe diem* developed in English Renaissance poetry. It has a witty urgency which is both fantastic and millenarian:

> Had we but World enough and Time,
> This coyness Lady were no crime.
>
> . . . . .
>
> I would
> Love you ten years before the Flood:
> And you should if you please refuse
> Till the conversion of the *Jews*.

The inclination of the Lady's heart may well be revealed by 'the last Age', but the narrator presses her to yield before the extinction of passion on the Day of Judgement. Time does not redeem, it destroys; its 'winged Charriot' rushes the lovers towards the prospect of 'Deserts of vast Eternity' and to a grave where the poet's song echoes in the vacancy. The last section attempts to counter these negatives with a reassertion of life and pleasure. Only here does the narrator insist that the lovers' energy can try to outpace or stop Time; by rolling their strength into a ball they can 'tear', like cannon-shot, through 'the Iron gates of Life', though what kind of serenity they will achieve once through these barriers remains indeterminate. 'To his Coy Mistress' both argues against and assaults resistance. It sees an unconsummated relationship standing frailly against a background of mortality, war, and the end of all things; it briefly, even desperately, holds out the possibility of a physical triumph against the all too evident encroachments of change and decay.

Pepys, Evelyn, and Seventeenth-Century Autobiographical Writing

As a 15-year-old schoolboy Samuel Pepys (1633–1703) had witnessed the execution of King Charles I at Whitehall. In an entry in his diary for 30 January 1663 he notes the official commemoration of the event in Restoration London with wry solemnity; the *Fast for the King's murther* was one which his household was forced to keep 'more than we would have done, having forgot to take any victuals into the house'. Pepys expressed his loyalty to the restored Crown by going to his parish church for the newly decreed service marking 'the Day of the Martyrdom of the Blessed King' and by hearing a sermon 'upon David's heart smiting him for cutting off the garment of Saule'. Pepys had begun his diary in January 1660 well aware of the rapid and momentous changes taking place in British politics; in May of that year he accompanied his patron, Lord Sandwich, on the voyage to bring over Charles II from the Netherlands, and in October he saw the 'first blood shed in revenge for the blood of the king' when the regicide Thomas Harrison was publicly hanged, drawn, and quartered at Charing Cross.

Pepys is not merely the most celebrated of the seventeenth-century diarists, he is also the most vivid and the most entertaining; but he is by no means a unique phenomenon. His century saw an increase in autobiographical writing which has sometimes been vulgarly accredited to a rise in 'bourgeois individualism' and to a concomitant interest in self-analysis and individual experience. It was a form of self-expression open to both men and women and it was one that later led on to experiments with fictional first-person narratives (such as those of Daniel Defoe), but it was not necessarily one that was confined to an urban middle class. Pepys's origins were certainly bourgeois, but his employment as Surveyor-General of the Admiralty victualling office opened up to him the world of court politics and aristocratic manners and his diary carefully records the distinctions between the tastes of 'Citizens' and those of the Restoration court. Two of the most avid chroniclers of themselves and their family connections, Lady Anne Clifford (1590–1676) and Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle (1623–73), stemmed from, and married into, distinguished aristocratic families. The stimulus to record details of the world as it impinged on the individual consciousness appears primarily to have been religious rather than social. If confined to the literate, it was generally a class-less phenomenon. Contemporary diarists and autobiographers seek to catalogue examples of divine providence, to count personal blessings, and even to present their financial accounts for God's scrutiny. Others recognize a pressing necessity to demonstrate the working-out of divine purpose in private and public history, either to prove the nature of new beginnings or to find evidence of the imminent end of time.

Lucy Hutchinson (b.1620), the wife of the regicide John Hutchinson,

produced her *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson* (published 1806) as a justification of her husband's republican career and for the benefit of her children. Although she had contrived to save her husband's life at the time of the Restoration by writing a penitent letter to the Speaker of the House of Commons, her private memoir is far removed from a mood of penitence. It offers a vivid, shrewd, and plainly expressed picture of the life of an influential Puritan family during the Civil War, with an autobiographical 'Fragment' added to it. Lucy Hutchinson's account of herself suggests the innate strength and resourcefulness of a much-tried woman, one who in her young days 'had a melancholy negligence both of herself and others, as if she neither affected to please others, nor took notice of anything before her . . .'. This tendency to melancholy, perhaps the product of the severe limits imposed on women's action in a patriarchal society, is briefly reflected in Margaret Cavendish's *A True Relation of my Birth, Breeding and Life* which was added to the original edition of her stories *Natures Pictures* in 1656. Cavendish, who married the exiled Marquis (later Duke) of Newcastle in Paris in 1645, was a convinced royalist, a lady-in-waiting to Queen Henrietta Maria and, like her husband, an accomplished if essentially dilettante writer. She was, according to a distinctly unimpressed Pepys, known for the 'antic . . . extravagancies' of her appearance and remarkable only for the commonplaces she expressed on a visit to the Royal Society. Her *True Relation* suggests a more vivid and self-analytical character. She admits to being 'dull, fearful and bashful' in her youth, but the reverses of family circumstances during the Commonwealth rendered her, she proudly claims, 'fortune-proof'; she sees herself in exile as passing her time 'rather with scribbling than writing'; she had loved, she claims, 'extraordinarily and constantly, yet not fondly, but soberly and observingly'. A far greater mixture of love and pride, self-criticism and self-projection marks the career of Lady Anne Clifford, by her two marriages Countess of Dorset and Countess of Pembroke. She was also, by right of succession, the heir to vast estates in the north of England. It was for these disputed rights that she fought against the browbeating of her first husband, the specious arguments of lawyers, and the bullying of King James I. Her tenaciousness is evident in the surviving portions of the diary that she kept for the years 1616, 1617, and 1619 (published in 1923). In April 1617, for example, she records of her husband: 'Sometimes I had fair words from him and sometimes foul, but I took all patiently, and did strive to give him as much assurance of my love as I could possibly, yet I told him that I would never part with *Westmoreland* upon any condition whatever.' Elsewhere she notes of the two great houses of which she was mistress by marriage that 'the marble pillars of Knole in Kent and Wilton in Wiltshire were to me often times but the gay arbours of anguish'. Her diary also suggests the profound spiritual comfort she found in a disciplined Anglicanism and in an informed interest in literature. She refers to her reading of Chaucer and Sidney, but the range of her tastes is clearer in the Clifford family triptych, the 'Great Picture' she had had painted of herself and her immediate kin in the 1640s, where she

appears surrounded by a select library which includes volumes of St Augustine, Spenser, Jonson, Donne, and Herbert.

Samuel Pepys's diary covers the years 1660–9, breaking off on 31 May 1669 with a mournful reflection on 'all the discomforts' that would accompany what he had reason to believe was the onset of blindness. He neither went blind, nor began another diary. The surviving six-volume manuscript, written in the shorthand he had learned as an undergraduate, was not transcribed until the early nineteenth century (a bowdlerized version was published in 1825, but a thorough transcription had to wait until 1970–83). The original editing was deemed to be necessary not because Pepys had used his shorthand, as was sometimes customary with his contemporaries, to record significant ideas in sermons (he records sleeping through many of the sermons he heard) but because he chose to present an account of what Coleridge was later memorably to call 'the mind in undress'. Pepys is sheepishly honest about his extramarital sexual diversions. In September 1663, for example, he records taking a Mrs Lane with him to Lambeth 'and there did what I would with her but only the main thing, which she would not consent to, for which God be praised'. Later we find him describing his amorous adventures in a peculiar private language cobbled together from English, French, Italian, and Spanish: 'And so I walked to Herberts and there spent a little time avec la mosa, sin hazer algo con ella que kiss and tocar ses mamelles, que me haza la cosa a mi mismo con grand plaisir.' Pepys's 'undressed' mind is, however, far from simply self-indulgent or self-condemnatory. He writes a frank account of his daily affairs, noting the state of his health as much as that of the nation he serves, annually congratulating himself on his personal good fortune and thanking God for his advancement and that of the realm. The diary serves as an indispensable historical source largely because of the receptive and steady mind of its maker. His accounts of court and parliamentary intrigues and gossip, of the workings of the Admiralty administration, and of great public misfortunes, such as the Plague of 1665 and, most memorably, the Great Fire of London of 1666, are interspersed with sharp observations on food and dress, on servant problems and domestic comforts, on medical progress and novelty in poetry, on music (for which he had a passion) and manners (for which he had a sharp eye). Pepys had a particular relish for the repertory on offer in the newly opened London theatres, showing a preference for Jonson's comedies over those of Shakespeare: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, acted at the King's Theatre in 1662, struck him as 'the most insipid ridiculous play that I ever saw in my life' (though he rejoiced at the innovative presence of 'handsome women' on the stage); two years later a performance of *Bartholomew Fair* at the same theatre provoked the sentiment that it was 'the best comedy in the world'; *Volpone* proved 'a most excellent play', but *Twelfth Night*, which he saw in 1663, was 'a silly play and not relating at all to the name or day'. His appreciation of Shakespeare's tragedies, both in performance and on the page, is, however, evident not simply in his comments on *Macbeth* ('a most excellent play for variety . . . one of the best

plays for a stage') but also in his claim to be able to recite Hamlet's soliloquy 'To be or not to be' by heart.

Compared to Pepys's the diary of his friend John Evelyn (1620–1706) seems staid, self-consciously pious, even reserved. It is far more a formal record of the public events of what Evelyn's epitaph described as 'an age of extraordinary events, and revolutions' interspersed with informed reflections on the high culture and the scientific enterprise of the period. In his lifetime, and in the century following, Evelyn was known as a connoisseur, an amateur antiquarian and, above all, as the author of *Sylva: or a Discourse of Forest Trees* (1664), a scientific disquisition on the art of arboriculture and the cultivation of the informal garden. His diary, which was discovered in 1813 and published five years later, covers the years 1620–1706, from the reign of James I to that of Queen Anne. The first part, offering an account of his family, his youth, and an educational tour across Western Europe during the period of the Civil War, was written retrospectively in 1660; the second section dates from the early 1680s; only the third part, dealing with the years from 1684 onwards, is actually a contemporary diary. Evelyn emerges from his '*Kalendarium*', as he called it, as a man of illimitable curiosity. He has a keen eye for painting and sculpture, noting with pride his 'discovery' in 1671 of the talent of the wood-carver, Grinling Gibbons, 'in an Obscure place . . . neere a poore solitary thatched house'. Despite his admiration for the increasingly unfashionable architecture of the Middle Ages (he found Salisbury Cathedral 'the compleatest piece of Gotic Worke in Europe, taken in all its uniformitie'), he is convinced of the superiority of the ordered regularity of the classical style, admiring the Renaissance buildings of Rome as a young man and, later, the mastery of the 'incomparable' Sir Christopher Wren. His interest in the possibilities of the new science is manifold. He makes a point of witnessing operations for gall-stone and for gangrene, studies the effects of torture on the human body, becomes an early member of the new Royal Society, and delights in Sir Thomas Browne's eclectic and somewhat fusty 'Cabinet of rarities'. Throughout, he professes an informed loyalty to the teachings and practices of the Church of England as opposed to the religious fragmentation imposed under the rule of the 'arch-rebell' Cromwell. When in 1685 the Catholic Duke of York, James II, succeeds Charles II on the throne, he confidently proclaims that 'the Doctrine of the Church of Eng: will never be extinguish'd, but remaine Visible though not Eminent, to the consummation of the World'. In his view of religion, as much as in his observation of things secular, Evelyn is well aware of the necessity of accommodation to the *Zeitgeist* of the latter half of the century, the new spirit, developed from the ideas of Bacon, of rational clarity and practical enquiry. If, on the one hand, a performance of *Hamlet* in 1662 seems to him to 'disgust this refined age', on the other an old priest preaching in the manner of Lancelot Andrewes in 1683 ('full of Logical divisions, in short and broken periods and latine sentences') seems quirkily old-fashioned to an ear grown accustomed to a 'plaine and practical' exposition. Plainness and practicality later proved to be the keynotes of a new sensibility.

Varieties of Religious Writing in the Restoration Period

When Charles II was restored to his throne in 1660 the Church of England was restored with him. Despite the fact that he had taken the Presbyterian Covenant in 1650 in an attempt to secure the support of Scottish Protestants and had followed the leanings towards Roman Catholicism of the Stuart court in exile, Charles attempted to maintain a double policy of support for the national Church and its bishops as an ideal of religious toleration. His attempts were always awkward. In the 'Declaration of Breda', prudently published immediately before his restoration, Charles had pronounced 'liberty to tender consciences' in matters of religion and in his two later 'Declarations of Indulgence' (1662, 1672) he reiterated the principle of tolerance towards Dissenters from the Church of England, both Roman and Protestant. Yet as 'Defender of the Faith' he faced sustained opposition to a policy of tolerance from an Anglican Parliament and from the newly reinstated and triumphalist bench of bishops. Both bodies were intent on enforcing uniformity in the guise of religious and social consolidation. The Corporation Act of 1661, for example, required all members of municipal corporations to declare that they had received the sacrament according to the rites of the state Church; the Act of Uniformity of 1662 reinforced the use of the Book of Common Prayer and required assent from all ordained ministers to its exclusive use; the Conventicle Act of 1664 declared illegal all dissident religious meetings in private houses; and finally the Test Act of 1673 required all holders of office under the Crown to conform to Anglican usages and beliefs. The one glory of these otherwise repressive Acts of Parliament was the final revision of the Book of Common Prayer. Apart from its lectionary based on the 1611 translation of the Bible and a new service in solemn commemoration of the 'martyred' Charles I (abandoned only in 1859), the 1662 Prayer Book confirmed the uses, translations, traditions, and innovations gradually evolved from historic sources since the time of Cranmer. It remained the unchallenged pillar of Anglican worship until the abortive, but essentially conservative, attempts at reform in 1928 and until the introduction of the flat, flabby, but arguably more flexible, 'Alternative Service Book' in 1965.

The imposition of the conditions of the Act of Uniformity on St Bartholomew's Day 1662 reminded one distinguished Puritan divine, Richard Baxter (1615–91), of the infamous massacre of Protestants in Paris in 1572. Baxter estimates in his memoirs, *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (1696), that some two thousand non-conforming ministers 'were silenced and cast out' by being deprived of their parishes and pulpits. The effects of Carolean legislation moulded the distinctive early radicalism of Nonconformity. They did more than confirm

that English religious affairs were plural rather than uniform; they ultimately determined the nature and future role of dissent in British political life. Although Baxter had been appointed to a royal chaplaincy in 1660 and had been offered, but had declined, the bishopric of Hereford, he felt that he could conform neither to the definitions of the Prayer Book nor to the traditional conception of the rule of bishops in the Church. Baxter, who had been distressed by the sectarian schisms within Cromwell's army, was no proponent of narrow definitions or of theological nit-picking; he was, rather, an early advocate of basic ecumenism, a multiform union of Christian believers regardless of credal distinction. His benign influence ran through English Nonconformist thought in the eighteenth century and bore a hybrid fruit in the religious ideas of his Anglican admirer, Coleridge, in the nineteenth century. Baxter's moderate, reasonable ecumenical strain, one which he types in his autobiography as an inclination to 'reconciling principles', is evident both in his life and work. It had determined his deep suspicion of Cromwell's civil and religious policies and his distaste for fragmentary and disputatious Puritan sects; it also moulded his devotional writings, in particular, his once vastly popular treatise *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* (1650). In this treatise he writes of the operation of grace on the individual as a reasonable process, not as one of sudden inspiration or irrational personal conviction: 'Whatever the soul of man doth entertain must make its first entrance at the understanding; which must be satisfied first of its truth, and secondly of its goodness, before it find further admittance. If this porter be negligent, it will admit of anything that bears but the face of truth and goodness . . .' Baxter is scarcely a coldly dispassionate writer, as his tribute to his dead wife *A Breviate of the Life of Margaret Baxter* written 'under the power of melting grief' in 1681 amply demonstrates, but his memoirs consistently point to the importance of temperate thoughtfulness. The battles over episcopacy in the reigns of both Charles I and Charles II were, he suggests, lost and won (depending on which side the arguer stood) due to an ignorance of the spirit of reconciliation and a rejection of 'true moderate healing terms . . . by them that stand on the higher ground, though accepted by them that are lower and cannot have what they will'.

Amid the diverse setbacks and persecutions of the latter part of his career Baxter came to recognize the true quality of the stand taken by the most troublesome of the mid-seventeenth-century 'sectaries', the Quakers. In the late 1650s he had seen them merely as Ranters 'turned from horrid profanenesse and blasphemy to a life of extreme austerity'. These 'Friends', as they were properly called, posed problems for the English magistracy under the regimes of both Cromwell and the restored Stuarts. To Evelyn in 1657 the humble, imprisoned Friends he visited in Ipswich seemed merely 'a new phanatique sect of dangerous Principles' and 'a Melancholy proud sort of people, and exceedingly ignorant'. Pepys describes an encounter between a would-be flippant Charles II and a forthright Quaker woman who remained determinedly silent until the King was prepared to be serious and then 'thou'd him

all along', making her case by addressing him informally in the intimate second-person singular. The *Journal* of George Fox (1624–91), the founder of the Society of Friends and the first to formulate a doctrine of reliance on the 'Inner Light' of Christ, most clearly demonstrates why the uncompromising zeal of the early Quakers seemed so socially disruptive. After long wrackings of conscience, Fox came to recognize the peculiar nature of his calling in 1646. Prompted by the inner voice which he associated with the voice of God, he withdrew from worship in 'steeple-houses', the churches controlled by the 'priests' (both Anglican or Presbyterian) of whose teaching he disapproved, and began his own ministry as an itinerant preacher. The surviving manuscripts of Fox's *Journal*, which retrospectively describe his mission, appear to have been begun during one of his frequent terms of imprisonment in 1673 and were finished after his release in 1675. This self-justifying account of the acts of a latter-day apostle was published posthumously in 1694. At its opening Fox explains the origin of the nickname 'Quaker', a term first used by a Justice of the Peace at Derby 'because wee bid them tremble at the Word of God', but the substance of the work traces a series of challenges to the world. The account of the year 1651, for example, offers accounts of his preaching barefoot on market-day in Lichfield and proclaiming the doom of the unrepentant 'bloody citty', his berating of a Catholic who had the temerity to invite him home, and his refusal to speak in a painted church because 'the painted beast had a painted house'. In 1654 he writes to Cromwell as a 'Deare Friend' advising him to 'be still, and in the Councill of God stand . . . that thou mayst frustrate mens ends and calme mens spirits, and Crumble men under, and arise and stand up in the power of the Lord God, and the Lambes Authority'; in 1660 he writes with an equally presumptuous informality to Charles II, recommending him not to encourage 'Maygames with Fiddlers, drumms, trumpetts' and Maypoles 'with the Image of a Crowne on topp of them'. In 1669 he ventures to Catholic rural Ireland, in 1671 to the West Indies, and in 1672 to the eastern seaboard of North America. Throughout he stresses an absolute rightness of the divine nature of his calling and the new religious order he had introduced. 'Them that bee in Christ Jesus', he insists, 'are new Creatures: and in him all flesh is silent: but they that have the worde of the Lord and from the Lord may speake it freely as they are commanded.'

John Bunyan's autobiographical account of the awakening of his soul to sin, his conversion, and his later ministry in *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners: Or a Brief and Faithful Relation of the Exceeding Mercy of God in Christ, to his poor Servant* (1666) to some degree mirrors Fox's. Both saw the delineation of their sufferings in the world, their awareness of their personal election, their vocation to preach the Gospel, and their perception of glory in the hereafter, not merely as a private process of self-examination but as a means of inspiriting the faithful. Both produced much of their finest work while enduring long terms of imprisonment as a direct result of their principled law-breaking and the accounts of both suggest a hard, uncompromising, proletarian zeal which is

quite distinct from the melting, principled gentlemanly moderation of their fellow Puritan visionary, Baxter. Bunyan (1628–88), who was in fact no friend to Quakers, is intent on offering a picture of 'the merciful working of God upon my soul' and he describes a process of delivery both from worldly delights (such as dancing or bell-ringing) and from an acute and painful sense of sin (which early manifested itself in the form of nightmares and visions). He also stresses his conviction that he was called from his despair of salvation by a persistent inner voice: 'one morning when I was again at prayer and trembling under the fear of this, that no word of God could help me, that piece of a sentence darted in upon me, *My grace is sufficient* . . . And, O methought that every word was a mighty word unto me; as *my*, and *grace*, and *sufficient*, and *for thee*; they were then, and sometimes are still, far bigger than others be.' Bunyan is always careful with words, always alert to the expression of what he sees as the inspired word of God manifested to the world.

Bunyan's saturation in the Bible is particularly evident in his greatest and most lastingly influential work, *The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to That which is to come; Delivered under the Similitude of a Dream Wherein is Discovered The manner of his setting out, His Dangerous Journey; And safe Arrival at the Desired Country* (1678, Part II, 1684). It is a direct development from *Grace Abounding* in that it objectifies and universalizes what had been an account of a personal spiritual pilgrimage. It is also a startling departure from the earlier work in its allegorical illumination of spiritual experience, an allegory which draws on biblical images, on popular retellings of stories of righteous warfare, and on the kind of illustration offered in emblem books. As Bunyan claims in his verse 'Apology for his Book', he 'fell suddenly' into his allegory and as he worked ideas 'began to multiply | Like sparks that from the coals of fire do fly'. It remains a work of fiery immediacy; the language in which it is told is vivid, dignified, and straightforward and its narrative line is as direct and unbending as the narrow road to heaven pursued by Christian, Faithful, and Hopeful. The names of the compromised back-sliders the pilgrims encounter on their journey, as much as the words they utter, deftly suggest the real opposition to the forward progress of the elect; Mr Worldly-Wiseman counsels caution in taking the 'dangerous and troublesome way'; Formalist and Hypocrisy avoid the gate of conversion by taking a short cut and doing 'what they had custom for'; Talkative, the son of Saywell, and the dweller in Prating-row, talks glibly but fails to act on his words; the twelve jurymen at Vanity Fair (Mr Blind-man, Mr No-good, Mr Malice, Mr Love-lust, Mr Live-loose, Mr Heady, Mr High-mind, Mr Enmity, Mr Liar, Mr Cruelty, Mr Hate-light, and Mr Implacable) readily condemn Faithful to death in obedience to convention, ease, and precedent. Christian's journey from the City of Destruction to the Heavenly City is also beset by a darkness—outwardly represented by the Slough of Despond, the Castle of Giant Despair, and the Valley of the Shadow of Death—that is recognizable from the account of Bunyan's own inner tribulations in *Grace Abounding*. Christian's progress, accompanied at first by the martyred Faithful and latterly

by the redeemed Hopeful, represents that of the individual believer blessed by the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. He is also blessed with a gathering certainty of his election to eternal salvation and he forges a way forward aided simply by his understanding of Scriptural promises. Much as Milton allows in *Paradise Lost*, a reader's response to the narrative line of *The Pilgrim's Progress* depends on an individual's freedom to identify with the process of spiritual learning and ordinary heroism allotted to Christian. This process is extended in the second part to Christian's family, and above all to his wife Christiana, who accompanied by her champion and protector, Great-heart, retreads the road marked by memories of her husband's moral victories.

The original sales of *The Pilgrim's Progress* seem to have been matched by those of Bunyan's now largely forgotten tracts such as *A Few Sighs from Hell* (1658) and *Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ* (1678, reissued twelve times by 1720); later editions had a unique currency in ordinary and far from exclusively Puritan homes. More than a hundred years after it first appeared it was one of the very few books, apart from the Bible, owned and studied by relatively uneducated men and women such as the parents of the Reverend Patrick Brontë and those of George Eliot; later, it provided Thackeray with the title he had long sought for *Vanity Fair* and moulded important aspects of Dickens's very different pilgrimage narratives, *Oliver Twist* and *The Old Curiosity Shop*. None of Bunyan's later allegories ever rivalled its inventiveness and popular prestige. Both *The Life and Death of Mr Badman* (1680) and *The Holy War* (1682) share a considerable vitality of observation and moralistic comment. *Mr Badman* has often been thought of as an early experiment in realist fiction or, less helpfully, as a proto-novel. It takes the form of a spirited, but somewhat repugnant, question-and-answer dialogue between Mr Wiseman and Mr Attentive concerning the steady moral descent of a far from exceptional sinner, a small tradesman wallowing sordidly in petty lusts and animal pleasures and clearly on his way to the Infernal rather than the Celestial City. *The Holy War, Made by Shaddai upon Diabolus, For the Regaining of the Metropolis of the World. Or, The Losing and Taking Again of the Town of Mansoul* is less narrowly censorious and more vividly informed with the language of battle that Bunyan had doubtless picked up during his service with the armies of Parliament. It tells the story of the sieges and liberations of, and the attempted coups within, the city of Mansoul, the delight of its creator, Shaddai (God the Father). Mansoul is liberated after its betrayal to Diabolus (Satan) by Shaddai's son Emanuel, only for it to lapse twice again, partly in analogy to what Bunyan would have seen as the centuries of papal darkness. Emanuel's steadfast and undeterred deliveries of the citizens of Mansoul, and his trust in his worthy lieutenants (Lord Self-denial, Lord Wilbewill, Mr Godlyfear, Meditation, Conscience, and Understanding), look forward to a final, but as yet unrealized, judgement and a redemptive purging of all corruption. That apocalypse, Bunyan seems to be implying, was near at hand.

Innocence, so obviously lost in the fallen world of Bunyan's visions, manages to reassert its command in the work of Thomas Traherne (1637–74). Traherne was, like Fox and Bunyan, the son of poor parents; unlike them, he was sent to Oxford through the generosity of a well-off relative and unlike them he found in Anglicanism a framework within which he could develop and explore his extraordinary spiritual gifts. Under the Commonwealth he had served as the minister for a Herefordshire parish, but in 1660 he chose to be ordained priest under the newly restored Anglican dispensation. It was in Herefordshire in the 1660s that he became closely involved with the pious circle surrounding Susanna Hopton, a grouping less formal than that which had earlier flourished at Little Gidding, but one which shared many of its spiritual disciplines and aspirations. From his childhood Traherne seems to have experienced a mystical feeling for the unspoilt radiance of creation; at the age of 4, while sitting 'in a little Obscure Room in my Fathers poor House', he claims to have been prompted to a meditation on the goodness of God by 'a real Whispering Instinct of Nature'. In his early manhood he cultivated what he saw as the virtues of 'Profound Inspection, Reservation and Silence', writing in the third part of his *Centuries of Meditations* of a resolution to spend the period of his return in rural England 'in Search of Happiness, and to Satiat that burning Thirst which Nature had enkindled in me from my Youth'. With the exception of Vaughan, few writers of his period describe such an intense relationship with nature. It is possible that for both, the absence of the formal flow of the Anglican liturgy during the time of the Commonwealth intensified their experience of a God revealed as much in the multifariousness of the natural world as in sacramental worship within the walls of a church. Traherne's poems and rhapsodic prose of his *Centuries* (published from the surviving manuscripts in 1903 and 1908) retain a sense of a free, urgent, and far from Puritan, response to the wonder and infinity of God. For him the revolution in human affairs consisted of regaining and exploring the paradisal vision vouchsafed in childhood rather than in building an earthly Jerusalem in anticipation of the millennium. In his poem 'Innocence' he looks back to a time flooded with heavenly light as a way of looking forward:

> That Prospect was the Gate of Heav'n, that Day
> The anchient Light of Eden did convey
> Into my Soul: I was an Adam there,
> A little Adam in a Sphere
> Of Joys! O there my Ravisht Sence
> Was entertaind in Paradice,
> And had a Sight of Innocence.
> All was beyond all Bound and Price.

A similar evocation of uncomplicated primal felicity pervades the poems 'Wonder' ('How like an Angel came I down! | How bright are all things here!') and 'The Rapture' ('Sweet Infancy! | O fire of Heaven! O sacred Light!').

Traherne's lyrics 'My spirit', 'The Circulation', and 'The Demonstration' offer a series of Neoplatonic reflections on the interrelationship of the delighted human soul and the intellectual perfection of God. 'The Demonstration' speaks, for example, of a God seeing, feeling, smelling, and living through his creatures: 'In them ten thousand Ways, | he all his Works again enjoys, | All things from Him to Him proceed | By them; Are His in them: As if indeed | His God head did it self exceed.'

In the 510 meditations which make up the *Centuries* (the incomplete fifth *Century* has only ten sections) Creation is seen as imbued with the light and presence of God. In the opening meditation the human soul is compared to an empty book, awaiting the imprint of the truth, the love, and the whispered counsels of its Maker. As a whole, the *Centuries* form a record of an intense spiritual communication with God, a process detached from the distractions of contemporary politics by which the alert soul advances to glory not by 'the Nois of Bloody Wars, and the Dethroning of Kings' but by the 'Gentle Ways of Peace and Lov'. Despite the occasional awareness of the pain of desertion, of the fading of light, or of 'a certain Want and Horror . . . beyond imagination' at the diminution of vision, Traherne generally expresses a rapt wonder and an unalloyed joy stimulated by the evidence of God's presence in the visible world. Traherne does not attempt to write in terms of what would later be termed 'Natural Theology', a demonstration of God and his workings through a close 'scientific' observation of nature, for he glimpses a bright world in which God is implicit rather than defined. 'You never Enjoy the World aright', Traherne insists in the twenty-ninth meditation of the first *Century*, 'till the Sea it self floweth in your Veins, till you are Clothed with the Heavens, and Crowned with the Stars'. This sense of union with Creation is presented as a vision vouchsafed by Heaven rather than as the achievements of an energetic proto-Romantic imagination. In the fifty-fifth meditation Traherne sees his experience as flowing freely in time and space and fused with that of the patriarchs and the prophets: 'When I walk with Enoch, and see his Translation, I am Transported with Him. The present Age is too little to contain it. I can visit Noah in His Ark, and swim upon the Waters of the Deluge . . . I can Enter into Aarons Tabernacle, and Admire the Mysteries of the Holy Place. I can Travail over the Land of Canaan, and see it overflowing with Milk and Hony.' He moves freely backwards and forwards through both biblical and personal history, both histories being records of providential direction. In the opening sections of the third *Century* he recalls 'those Pure and Virgin Apprehensions I had from the Womb, and that Divine Light wherewith I was born'. As a child he had seen the English rural world as 'New and Strange at the first, inexpressibly rare, and Delightfull, and Beautifull'; the cornfields are 'Orient and Immortal' and the dust and stones of the street appear 'as Precious as GOLD'. The vision fades not simply because the child loses his innocence, or takes on a pressing awareness of sin, but because custom, education, and quotidian usage intervene. To regain this lost paradise the soul must 'unlearn,

and becom as it were a little Child again'; what has been glimpsed in the here is to be realized in the hereafter.

Private Histories and Public History: Aubrey, Sprat, and Clarendon

The Oxford antiquarian Anthony Wood (1632–95) somewhat ungenerously described one of his major sources of biographical information, John Aubrey (1626–97), as 'a pretender to antiquities ... a shiftless person, roving and magotie-headed, and sometimes little better than crased'. Wood's *History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford* (1674, 1792–6) and his biographical dictionary of Oxford worthies, *Athenae Oxonienses* (1691–2), retain some curiosity value as once influential, if torpid, assemblages of information; Aubrey's work, by contrast, has an explorative freshness which stems from the very nature of its eccentric randomness. The only work that Aubrey himself saw through the press, *Miscellanies*, 'a Collection of Hermetic Philosophy' (1696), is in its way a pioneer essay in anthropology jumbled together with folklore, superstition, and occult learning. His other studies—observations on the topography, natural history, and antiquities of the counties of Surrey and Wiltshire and the pithily brief lives of British celebrities—remained in manuscript until their publication in subsequent centuries. Aubrey is now recognized as a major figure in the early history of British archaeology, but it is as an anecdotal biographer that he has achieved popular and posthumous celebrity. He wrote unmethodically or, as he put it himself, he set information down 'tumultuarily, as if tumbled out of a Sack', but more significantly as an enterprising biographer he recognized the importance of private history and the transitory nature of ephemeral and oral sources of information. ''Tis pitty that such minutes had not been taken 100 yeares since or more', he complained to Wood in 1680, 'for want thereof many worthy men's names and notions are swallowd-up in oblivion'. He relished unconsidered trifles, he collected gossip, and he haunted the funerals and the church monuments of friends and notable strangers alike. As a 9-year-old boy he claims to have been fascinated by a series of engravings of the elaborate funeral of Sir Philip Sidney; he was a pall-bearer at the obsequies of the satirist Samuel Butler and the anatomist William Harvey and he recalls the details of the dramatist Sir William Davenant's handsome walnut coffin; he is equally taken with the idea of an old woman living amongst the bones in the crypt at Hereford Cathedral and with the discovery of the pickled body of the humanist John Colet amidst the ruins of old St Paul's after the Great Fire. He had a nose for gossip and an ear for a telling expression. He notes, for example, that the mathematician Sir Jonas Moore cured his sciatica by 'boyling his Buttock' and that the Puritan controversialist William Prynne studied with a long quilt cap shading his eyes, having arranged to be interrupted every three hours by a servant bringing him a

roll 'and a pott of Ale to refollicate his wasted spirits'. Aubrey's lives of Milton and Hobbes (he knew the latter well) are his most substantial and amongst his most lively. He apologizes for Milton's republicanism by asserting that he acted 'out of pure Zeale to the Liberty of Mankind', but he notes, on the evidence of John Dryden, that the poet's conversation was 'pleasant ... but Satyricall' and that he pronounced the letter R 'very hard—a certain signe of a Satyricall Witt'. Of Hobbes's pleasure in geometry he recalls that he 'was wont to draw lines on his thigh and on the sheets, abed, and also multiply and divide'.

References throughout Aubrey's 'Brief Lives' suggest something of the honour accorded by learned contemporaries to the Royal Society, founded in London in the years of Charles II's restoration and awarded charters by its royal patron in 1662 and 1663. In his account of the life of the statistician Sir William Petty, for example, Aubrey records Sir William's suggestion that the Society should hold its annual elections on St Thomas's rather than St Andrew's Day, for the former saint had required evidence before he was prepared to believe. The Royal Society was both a club for like-minded enthusiasts and a partial realization of the progressive 'scientific' ideas fostered earlier in the century by Bacon. In its professed ambition of advancing learning in general, it attempted to gather together a broad range of thinkers, both professional and amateur, and to provide a focus for a variety of investigation and experiment. Its early members included those whose contribution to the history of science proved remarkable, such as Robert Boyle, Robert Hooke, and John Ray, and those who have since been chiefly remembered for their non-scientific work, such as the mathematician turned architect, Sir Christopher Wren, and the writers, Cowley, Evelyn, Waller, and Dryden. No clear distinction between scientific and humanistic knowledge, or between specialist spheres of human enterprise, was drawn until late in the nineteenth century. In his confident *The History of the Royal Society of London*, begun as early as 1663 and published in 1667, Thomas Sprat (1635–1713) attempted to define the role of empirical thought in 'this Learned and Inquisitive Age' and to defend the record of the '*Illustrious Company*, which has already laid such excellent Foundations of so much good to *Mankind*'. 'The increase of Experiments will be so far from hurting', he insists, 'that it will be many waies advantageous, above other Studies, to the wonted Courses of Education'. Natural Philosophy, Sprat maintained, was the key discipline of the new age; it both helped in the advance of industry and national prosperity and provided a reasoned prop to Anglican Christianity. Moreover, the very nature of pragmatic scientific enquiry was also antipathetic to the disruptive 'passions, and madness of that dismal Age' of the Civil War and the Republic.

As a practical statesman of the 1640s and the 1660s, and a loyal servant of the Crown, Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon (1609–74) recognized in the Restoration settlement a judicious return to a balanced constitution of the state in which order stemmed from an Anglican monarch obedient to the law. Like

Sprat, he believed that empiricism and pragmatism should be preferred to idealism and to the tunnel-vision so characteristic of much Puritan radicalism. In common with Sprat's *History of the Royal Society*, Clarendon's *The True Historical Narrative of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England* (begun in 1646, completed during his second exile in 1671–4, published 1702–4) demonstrates the extent to which certain dominant and devout English thinkers had moved away from the conviction that the Day of Judgement was at hand. Their *Histories* are not concerned with eschatology or with the impulse to restore an earthly paradise but with the idea of progressive development. For Sprat, God's purposes are revealed in the investigation of the laws of created nature. For Clarendon, the severe political disruptions of the mid-century provide monitory signals to the opening future and to those rebuilding the state according to historical principles. His *History* traces the breakdown of the institutions in which he most trusts and the progress of a 'rebellion' against duly ordained order. At its conclusion he briefly recognizes 'the merciful hand of God' in the 'miraculous restoration of the Crown, and the Church, and the just rights of Parliament' and he somewhat tentatively trusts that the providential process will continue: 'no nation under heaven can ever be more happy if God shall be pleased to add establishment and perpetuity to the blessings he then restored.' Although such royalist, conservative prejudices broadly determine the nature of his argument, he can be a sharp enough critic of those he once served or advised. Clarendon remains amongst the most observant of the many analysts of the character and policies of Charles I, praising real enough virtues and probing the all too disastrous shortcomings: 'He was, if ever any, the most worthy of the title of an honest man; so great a lover of justice, that no temptation could dispose him to a wrongful action, except it was so disguised to him that he believed it to be just . . . He was very punctual and regular in his devotions . . . and was so severe an exactor of gravity and reverence in all mention of religion, that he could never endure any light or profane word, with what sharpness of wit soever it was covered . . . His kingly virtues had some mixture and allay, that hindered them from shining in full lustre, and from producing those fruits they should have been attended with. He was not in his nature very bountiful, though he gave very much . . . He was very fearless in his person; but, in his riper years not very enterprising. He had an excellent understanding, but was not confident enough of it; which made him oftentimes change his own opinion for a worse, and follow the advice of men that did not judge so well as himself.' Although this last sentence expresses something of Clarendon's own impatience with his sometime master's inconsistency, he writes more in irritation than in anger. His clear, moderated, clausal style allows for an easy interplay of praise and dispraise, compliment and the withdrawal of compliment, statement and qualification. Clarendon's works were presented by his heirs to the University of Oxford and from the considerable profits earned by the publication of the *History* a new printing-house, named for the historian, was constructed. These profits testify to the degree of esteem in which the weight of

Clarendon's opinions, his political assessments and, above all, his careful style were held by the generations that immediately succeeded him. They were generations that believed in the merits, principles, and inheritance of a very different revolution from that of the 1640s.

The Poetry of the Restoration Period: Rochester and Dryden

Charles I's famously happy, faithful, and fruitful marriage was not mirrored by that of his eldest son. If the first Charles's court was characterized by what Clarendon calls 'gravity and reverence in all mention of religion', the second Charles's was, despite its cloak of Anglican conformity, far more inclined to accept and enjoy sexual, religious, and verbal licence. The restored King, who had been schooled in a certain kind of elegant cynicism by his years in exile, set the tone of a cultured but libidinous court. The marked change of mood was evident not simply in the contrast between the personalities of two kings or between two types of court poetry but also in the reaction of certain influential patrons and writers against two older fashions: the dense, intellectual quirkiness of the school of Donne and the humourless, moral seriousness of Puritan writing and Puritan mores. The new ethos was one where sexual innuendo flourished. It was also one which stimulated and fostered the stricter disciplines of poetic satire, a satire which fed on the contradictions, the ironies, and the hypocrisies of society. Most of the verse written by Marvell after the Restoration, the verse that was most admired by his later contemporaries, was of a political or satirical character. 'Sharpness of wit', spiced with a degree of profanity or ribaldry, was as much to Charles II's taste as were cultivated indolence, ministerially abetted chicanery, and the distractions of his mistresses. One of his most prominent courtiers, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (1647–80), is famously said to have reacted to the King's announcement that he would tolerate a relaxed frankness amongst his intimates with the impromptu quatrain: 'We have a pritty witty king | Whose word no man relys on: | He never said a foolish thing, | And never did a wise one.' Unabashed, the King replied that though his words were his own it was his ministers who were responsible for his actions.

Rochester is the most subtle, brilliant, and scurrilous of the Restoration heirs to the poetry of Lovelace, Suckling, and Carew. In his work, and in that of less vitally intelligent poets such as Sir Charles Sedley (?1639–1701) and Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset (1638–1706), Cavalier gallantry is rearticulated through the exercise of an indulgent world-weariness. As both his letters to his wife and the poems reveal, Rochester was capable of adjusting and interfusing the seeming anomalies of tenderness and cynicism, domesticity and debauchery, quick wit and meditative seriousness in his nature. Some of his periods of provincial exile from court were occasioned by his having

overstepped the limits of royal tolerance (as when he satirically assaulted the King with such couplets as 'Nor are his high desires above his strength: | His sceptre and his prick are of a length' and 'Restless he rolls about from Whore to Whore, | A Merry Monarch scandalous and poor'); others were elective interludes of recuperation, study, and meditation. 'He loved to talk and write of speculative matters', wrote Bishop Burnet, the man who brought him to a death-bed reconciliation with Christianity, but as much of his poetry suggests, Rochester also delighted in the pleasures that dulled and unperplexed thought. In 'Upon Drinking in a Bowl' he proclaims Cupid and Bacchus his patron saints, washes his cares with wine, and turns to Love again. The songs 'An Age in her Embraces past', 'Absent from thee I languish still', and 'All my past Life is mine no more' hedonistically announce that soul is sense and attempt to hold on to what 'the present Moment' offers. A more distinctly speculative, but no less wittily sceptical, poet emerges in his address to the 'Great Negative', 'Upon Nothing'. It is a poem which plays with the theological concept of a Nothing from which Something emerges, but it is also haunted by a sense of futility and universal human hypocrisy and it finally sees Nothing as an unholy trinity of 'the great Man's Gratitude to his best Friend, | King's Promises, Whores Vows'. Rochester's finest exercise in the satirical mode, 'A Satyr against Mankind' (1675), returns to the idea of the basic falseness of all human pretension to honesty, virtue, wisdom, and valour, but it opens with a devastating undercutting of the great panjandrum of the age, human reason:

> Reason, an *Ignis fatuus* of the Mind,
> Which leaves the Light of Nature, Sense, behind.
> Pathless, and dangerous, wand'ring ways it takes,
> Through Errour's fenny Bogs, and thorny Brakes . . .

The deluded victim of this presumption to rationality first stumbles into doubts, is temporarily buoyed up by philosophy, and then finally and painfully recognizes the terrible error into which he has fallen:

> Then old Age, and Experience, hand in hand,
> Lead him to Death, and make him understand,
> After a Search so painful, and so long,
> That all his Life he has been in the wrong.

The poem presents human life as a jungle in which creatures prey on one another and in which fear is the dominant stimulus to action ('Meerly for safety, after Fame they thirst; | For all Men would be Cowards if they durst'). Unsurprisingly, Rochester seems to have felt a special affinity with his pet monkey. His portrait, now in the National Portrait Gallery in London, shows him crowning this monkey with a poet's laurels. In response, the monkey offers its master a mangled sheet of verses. Like much of Rochester's poetry it is a self-mocking artifice, at once cynical and provocative, flippant and serious.

Although poetic satire was a form cultivated by court wits, it was far from being an exclusively aristocratic property. Two highly esteemed satirists, John Oldham (1653–83) and Samuel Butler (1613–80), emerged from relative obscurity to assert their significance as professional, as opposed to amateur, poets. In the case of Oldham, who made a living as a schoolteacher and private tutor, literary fame came towards the end of a relatively short life and was largely assured by a succession of posthumous editions of his poems. Butler, the son of a Worcestershire farmer, achieved startling success only at the age of 49 with the publication of the first part of *Hudibras* in 1662. *Hudibras* (Part II of which appeared in 1663 and Part III in 1678) proved to be the most popular long poem of its day, quoted, cited, imitated, admired, and flattered by parody. The reputations of both poets have since suffered from this initial blaze of contemporary adulation and the failure of later audiences to be enthralled by their work. Although the names of the major characters in Butler's *Hudibras* are derived from Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, his mock-heroic, digressive narrative from Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, and much of his ironic tone from Rabelais's *Gargantua*, the prime objects of its satire are very much the products of the confused, divisive, post-revolutionary age. The poem's comically cumbersome octosyllabic couplets also allow for a considerable range of allusive comment on what Butler saw as the intellectual, political, and religious charlatanism of modern England. As a Baconian sceptic he was far more inclined to attack the prevalence of popular error and personal delusion than to hold up self-evident truths or ideals. *Hudibras* aphoristically glances at churchmen and statesmen pursuing strategies of power under the guise of Presbyterian or monarchical principle:

> To domineer and to controul
> Both o're the body and the soul,
> Is the most perfect *discipline*
> Of Church-rule, and by *right divine*.

If the varieties, obsessions, and peculiar rhetoric of English Puritanism prove to be the poem's main bugbear, and the petty theological divisions between the Presbyterian Sir Hudibras and his Independent squire, Ralpho, the initial focus of its satire, the introduction of the deluded astrologer Sidrophel in the second book and the reflection on the recent political disruption of the Civil War in the third serve to emphasize the breadth of Butler's satirical commentary.

Oldham, the son of a Puritan minister, is both a more disciplined and more directly classically rooted satirist. In the Preface to his imitation of Horace's *Ars Poetica*, for example, he aspires to put the Roman poet 'into a more modern dress, that is, by making him speak as if he were living and writing now'. Oldham's poetry looks back in order to attack the vices of the present; it reflects on precedent by insisting on a continuity in the expression of poetic indignation. The poems by which he was best known in his lifetime, the four vituperative *Satyrs upon the Jesuits* (1679–81), are unrelievedly

angry denunciations of Jesuit machinations (a particularly hot issue in the wake of the exposure of the so-called 'Popish Plot' to assassinate Charles II in 1678). If scarcely ever a gentle poet, Oldham is certainly a subtler one in his later work such as the 'Satyr concerning Poetry', the 'Letter from the Country to a Friend in Town', or 'A Satyr address'd to a Friend that is about to leave the University, and come abroad in the World'. This last poem underlines the neglect and poverty which is the likely lot of a schoolmaster ('A Dancing-Master shall be better paid, | Tho he instructs the heels, and you the Head') and it also reflects on the blessings of 'a close obscure retreat', a small estate sufficient to support a private man's withdrawal from the irritations of work and public affairs. Here in an English equivalent of Horace's Sabine farm, 'free from Noise, and all ambitious ends', the poet aspires to 'Enjoy a few choice Books, and fewer Friends, | Lord of my self, accountable to none, | But to my Conscience, and my God alone'.

John Dryden's 'To the Memory of Mr Oldham' (1684) claims an affinitive sympathy between the two poets ('sure our Souls were near ally'd'). It also, somewhat unfairly, suggests that Oldham died before he had learned to purge his poetic style of 'harsh cadence', a ruggedness which Dryden held was not fully appropriate to satire. Dryden (1631–1700) uses his elegy to display his own versatility; it is an exercise in modulation, a smooth play with couplets and triplets, written in a pentameter which is subtly extended into an occasional hexameter and in couplets varied by a single effective triplet. Oldham is mourned both as a reflection of Virgil's Nisus, who slipped and failed to win a race, and as a poetic equivalent to Marcellus, the prematurely dead heir of the Emperor Augustus of whom much had been hoped. In both cases Dryden seems to be modestly projecting himself as the poet who has achieved the eminence denied to Oldham. As much of his criticism suggests, Dryden also seems to have seen himself as the heir to Milton's laurels. Nevertheless, his vision of Britain under the restored Stuarts is conditioned not by the idea of a stern republic outbraving the Roman, but by the example of the Imperial Rome of Augustus. In both periods the rule of an enlightened monarch could be seen as eclipsing the divisions of a preceding civil war. In the title of his elegy to Charles II, *Threnodia Augustalis* (1685), he glances at the parallel between the Emperor and the King while stressing the 'healing balm' of the Restoration and the maintenance of a distinctive brand of English liberty under the Stuart Crown ('Freedom which in no other Land will thrive | Freedom an *English* Subject's sole Prerogative'). This singular modern kingdom, Dryden maintained in the dedication to his tragedy *All For Love* (1678), required a disciplined poetry worthy of its heroic destiny and of its exalted place amongst the nations of Europe. The proper models for this poetry could only be Augustan. If his translation of *The Works of Virgil* (1697)—appearing at a time when Dryden's hopes for the Stuart dynasty had been dashed by the defeat and exile of James II—no longer exhibits a confidence in parallels between a dubious then and a triumphant now, his dedicatory essay still infers that patriotism demands

an appropriate modern prosody and that 'A Heroick Poem, truly such', was 'undoubtedly the greatest Work which the Soul of Man is capable to perform'.

Though Dryden produced no heroic poem of his own, his quest for an English equivalent to Virgilian 'majesty in the midst of plainness' remained central to his patriotic mission as a poet. He continually strove for a Latinate precision, control, and clarity, but if his supreme poetic models were classical, his response to a select band of English writers suggests the degree to which he also saw himself as standing in a vernacular apostolic line. The Preface to his volume of translations—*Fables, Ancient and Modern* (1700)—stresses, for example, that he saw Chaucer as the prime figure in this canon (though his attempts at 'translating' certain of *The Canterbury Tales* into English 'as it is now refined' are far from distinguished tributes). This same Preface also declares a larger affinity in its assertion that poets have 'lineal descents and clans as well as families'. Spenser, he believes, 'insinuates that the soul of Chaucer was transfus'd into his body', while Milton 'has acknowledg'd to me that Spencer was his original'. Much of Dryden's most strenuous criticism appeared as prefaces to his own work but his most shapely critical manifesto, *Of Dramatic Poesie, An Essay* (1668), is a set piece written at a time of enforced theatrical inactivity during the Plague of 1665. It takes the form of a conversation between four characters in which the assertion of one is answered by the response of another; each character is allotted a formal speech, one defending ancient drama, another the modern; one proclaiming the virtues of French practice, another (Dryden's patriotic mouthpiece) the English. There is no real dialogue in the Platonic sense though there is a good deal of name-dropping and, latterly, of weighing the respective merits of Jonson, Fletcher, and Shakespeare. Jonson ('the most learned and judicious Writer which any Theater ever had') stands throughout as a touchstone of theatrical 'regularity', while the more 'natural' Shakespeare ('the man who of all Modern and perhaps Ancient Poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul') is approvingly allowed the rank of an English Homer 'or Father of our Dramatick Poets'.

Three of the four disputants of *Of Dramatic Poesie* are typed as 'persons whom their witt and Quality have made known to all the Town'. The fourth, who seems to stand for Dryden himself, is clearly their social and intellectual equal. All are members of a court which the essay's dedication confidently proclaims to be 'the best and surest judge of writing'. This was possibly the last point in English history at which such a flattering observation might be regarded as having a ring of authenticity. Dryden was also amongst the last influential writers to have sought and won discriminating court patronage and advantageous royal promotion. On the death of his erstwhile dramatic collaborator, Sir William Davenant, in April 1668, he was appointed Poet Laureate and in 1670 he also obtained the post of Historiographer Royal. Throughout his career he seems to have projected himself as an official spokesman in poetry. His early public verse—the grotesque schoolboy elegy 'Upon the death of Lord Hastings' (1649), the maturer tribute to the dead Cromwell (the *Heroique*

Stanzas Consecrated to the Glorious Memory of his Most Serene and Renowned Highness Oliver) of 1659, and the two fulsome panegyrics addressed to Charles II (*Astraea Redux* of 1660 and *To His Sacred Majesty* of 1661—testifies to a desire to be a representative voice. The nimble 'historical' poem, *Annus Mirabilis, The Year of Wonders, 1666* (1667), is floridly dedicated 'to the Metropolis of Great Britain' both as a tribute to London's ordeal during the Great Fire and as a patriotic and emphatically royalist statement in the face of metropolitan resentment of the restored monarchy. In the poem it is the King's policies that serve to defeat the Dutch in war and the King's prayers that persuade Heaven to quell the flames.

Fourteen years elapsed between the composition of *Annus Mirabilis* and the publication in 1681 of the political satire *Absalom and Achitophel*. They were years spent actively in writing for the theatre, an experience which helped both to purge Dryden's verse of its early tendency to picturesqueness and to foster an interest in character and repartee. Dryden the satirist entertains through a witty intermixture of reasoned argument, refined technique, and invective. *Absalom and Achitophel* is a party poem, one designed to please friends by advancing their cause and to provoke enemies by ridiculing theirs. 'The true end of *Satyre*', he wrote in his preliminary declaration to his reader, 'is the amendment of Vices by correction'; the satirist himself is a physician prescribing 'harsh Remedies to an inveterate Disease', a disease affecting the body politic in which 'an Act of *Oblivion* were as necessary in a Hot, Distemper'd State, as an *Opiate* would be in a Raging Fever'. Dryden's reference here is specific. He wishes to memorialize and not to forgive the treasonable acts of Charles II's illegitimate son, the Duke of Monmouth, and his main abettor, the Earl of Shaftesbury, in attempting to exclude legally from the throne the King's proper successor, his brother, the Catholic Duke of York. The poem, which takes as its basis the biblical story of the rebellion of Absalom against his father David, is both a *histoire à clef* and a witty deflation of those, generally humourless, Protestants whose first recourse in argument was to refer to biblical precedent or justification. Dryden's narrative makes little direct appeal to the sacred but it does allow the radiance of divine pleasure to reflect from David to Charles and it opens with a witty deflection of any taint of adultery on Charles's part by insisting that it is set 'In pious times . . . Before *Polygamy* was made a sin'. The real joy of the poem lies in its exploration of forced parallels (Absalom and Monmouth, Achitophel and Shaftesbury, Saul and Cromwell, Pharaoh and Louis XIV of France, the Sanhedrin and Parliament, and the Jebusites—a name with a hint of 'Jesuit' about it—and English Catholics) and in its deftly scathing portraits, notably those of Shaftesbury, Buckingham (Zimri), and the Whig Sheriff of London, Bethel (Shimei). The aristocratic villains are introduced solemnly as if in a heroic poem; the less elevated, especially the shabby plotter Titus Oates (Corah), far more abusively ('Prodigious Actions may as well be done | By Weavers issue, as by Princes Son'). Shaftesbury/Achitophel is cast as the Satanic tempter of the honourably gullible Monmouth/Absalom; he holds out the prospect of personal glory and public salvation, and he flatters the young man with perverted biblical images pregnant with a sense of a divine mission:

> Auspicous Prince! At whose Nativity
> Some Royal Planet rul'd the Southern sky;
> Thy longing Countries Darling and Desire;
> Their cloudy Pillar, and their guardian Fire:
> . . . . . .
> The Peoples Prayer, the glad Diviners Theam
> The Young-mens Vision, and the Old-mens Dream
> Thee *Saviour*, Thee, the Nations Vows confess;
> And never satisfi'd with seeing bless . . .

The poem, which has relatively little 'plot' in the strict sense of the term, is structured around a series of vivid arguments and apologies. It closes with a reasoned affirmation of intent from the 'Godlike' David, part a regretful denunciation, part a defence of royal prerogative, part a restatement of an ideal of constitutional balance. It is presented as a second Restoration with the King's position approved, in late baroque pictorial fashion, by an assenting God and a thundering firmament.

Shaftesbury's continued machinations against Charles's policy of support for his Catholic brother stimulated two pale satirical reflections of *Absalom and Achitophel*. The King himself is said to have provided the subject of Dryden's *The Medall: A Satyre Against Sedition* (1682), a frontal attack on Shaftesbury's character and on the motives of his party (the Whigs to whom the poem is slyly dedicated). *The Second Part of Absalom and Achitophel* also of 1682 is largely the work of Nahum Tate, but Dryden's contribution of some two hundred lines of abuse, especially the sketches of the 'Heroically mad' Elkanah Settle (Doeg) and of Thomas Shadwell (Og), have a vicious palpability about them. Shadwell (?1642–92) became the object of Dryden's satire partly as a result of his political affiliations, but more directly as a result of an increasingly unfriendly rivalry in the theatre (Shadwell's operatic adaptation of *The Tempest*, *The Enchanted Isle* of 1674, was a particularly galling success). Dryden's bitter distaste for the flippancy and shoddiness of Shadwell's work as a poet reached its peak in the lampoon which he had begun in the late 1670s but published only in 1682, *Mac Flecknoe, or A Satyr upon the True-Blew-Protestant Poet, T.S.* It is a poem which advances beyond critical sniping to a rage at the deathliness of human stupidity. Flecknoe, whom Dryden assumes to be an Irishman, finds his true heir in a loquacious Celtic bard, the irrepressible (and non-Irish) Shadwell. The poem defines by negatives and discrepancies; it undoes epic pretensions by playing with mock-heroic and it purports to let dullness express itself while showing off the virtues of wit. The elevated tone of its opening couplet crashes once Flecknoe emerges as a fatuous Augustus seeking to settle his succession; Shadwell, the inadequate prince of a London slum, is enthroned bearing 'a

mighty Mug of potent Ale' instead of an orb and, with a due sexual innuendo, a copy of his play *Love's Kingdom* instead of a sceptre as a symbol of his impotent claims to literary worth.

Dryden's two philosophico-religious poems of the 1680s, *Religio Laici, or A Laymans Faith* (1682) and *The Hind and the Panther* (1687), are public defences of the authority of a Church rather than, as they might have been in the hands of earlier seventeenth-century poets, explorations of the springs of devotion or private faith. In the Preface to the earlier poem Dryden describes himself as one who is 'naturally inclin'd to Scepticism in Philosophy' though one inclined to submit his theological opinions 'to my Mother Church'. The poem sees the Church of England as serenely fostering '*Common quiet*' in the face of attacks from Deists, Dissenters, and Papists and it blends within the form of a verse-epistle theological proposition with satirical exposition. Its striking opening image of human reason as a dim moon lighting the benighted soul is developed into an attack on those Deists who reject the Scripturally based teachings of Christianity. As it proceeds, the poem also attempts to demolish both Roman claims to infallible omniscience and the Puritan faith in individual inspiration, but it ultimately begs the vital question of religious authority. This question is emphatically answered in *The Hind and the Panther*, Dryden's longest poem, written after his reception into the Roman Catholic Church in 1685. It is a somewhat wordy and unworthy tribute to his new-found religious security, an allegorical defence of James II's attempts to achieve official toleration for Catholics in a predominantly Anglican culture and an attempt to prove the validity of Catholic claims to universal authority. It takes the form of a beast fable in which Quakers appear as hares, Presbyterians as wolves, Romans as hinds, and Anglicans as panthers. It is obliged to resort to the absurdity of a good-natured conversation about the mysteries of religion in which a hind actually attempts to *persuade* a panther, and to the incongruity of casting the Christian God as the nature god, Pan. Personal conviction and a certain political urgency coincided again in *Britannia Rediviva*, the propagandist public ode written to celebrate the birth of James II's heir in June 1688. Dryden's poem rejoices in the fact that the Stuart family has at last produced legitimate male issue and it attempts to brush aside the protests of 'th' ungrateful Rout' who both doubted that the child was truly the King's and were profoundly uneasy at the prospect of an assured Catholic succession to the throne.

The birth of James's son was not received with universal rejoicing in his kingdom, bringing as it did a long-drawn-out constitutional crisis to a head and immediately precipitating the overthrow of an alienated regime and with it the Poet Laureate's pious hopes. With the abrupt end to his official career in 1688, Dryden's sense of a patriotic mission for English poetry was forced to take a new and less overtly political turn. Apart from his translations and his libretto for Henry Purcell's extravagant 'Dramatick Opera' *King Arthur, or The British Worthy* (1691), two late lyric poems—*A Song for St Cecilia's Day, 1687*, and *Alexander's Feast; or the Power of Musique. An Ode, in Honour of St Cecilia's Day* (1697)—proved of particularly fruitful impact on the eighteenth century. Both poems contributed to the fashion for the irregular stanzas and verse paragraphs of the 'Cowleyan' Ode. More significantly, both later attracted the attention of Handel, anxious to prove his credentials as a composer resident in England and as a setter of English texts. If in *Britannia Rediviva* Dryden had produced the right words for what was soon seen as a wrong and intensely divisive cause, in his two St Cecilia *Odes* he provided the occasion for an extraordinary exploration of the potential of harmony.

Women's Writing and Women Writing in the Restoration Period

Dryden's ode 'To the Pious Memory of the Accomplisht Young Lady Mrs Anne Killigrew, Excellent in the two Sister-Arts of Poesie, and Painting' (1686) was, according to Dr Johnson, 'the noblest ode that our language has ever produced'. It was remarkable not simply for its intrinsic qualities but also for its celebration of an exceptional woman artist in a world largely dominated by patriarchal principles, prejudices, and images. Anne Killigrew (1660–85) had quietly earned a respect as a practitioner of what Dryden significantly styles 'sister arts' before her life was cut short by smallpox. She was the daughter of a well-connected royalist clergyman and the niece of the playwrights Thomas and Sir William Killigrew. To mention Anne in connection with her theatrical relatives and her famous obituarist is neither to belittle her art nor to reach out automatically for masculine comparisons but to establish her good fortune in being born into a cultured family, one which used its social influence in her favour and fostered the flowering of her talent. She served at court as a maid of honour in the cultured and sober household of Mary of Modena (the second wife of James II) where she was acquainted with other women of talent and ambition (notably Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea and Sarah Jennings, the future Duchess of Marlborough). If her 'accomplishment' as a mythological painter and portraitist has since been largely ignored, her poetry has properly gained a modest reputation. In her over-ambitious first poem, 'Alexandreis' (published in the posthumous collection of 1686), she prayed that her 'frozen style' might be warmed by 'Poetique fire'. That the prayer was answered is shown in her far more sophisticated address to the undemonstrative Mary of Modena ('To the Queen'), a poem which stresses the Queen's piety and virtue while appealing to heaven for a 'Prowess, that with Charms of Grace and Goodness' the poet might pay due honour to a queen suspected and unloved by the public at large.

Killigrew's work is essentially that of an amateur, aware of the high culture of court circles surrounding her, but precluded from ever training her poetic voice to its proper pitch and fluency. The nagging self-doubt, evident in her defence of her work in 'Upon the saying that my Verses were made by another',

is partly qualified by reference to the work of an earlier poet, one known to her admirers as 'the Matchless Orinda'. Katherine Philips (1631–64) seems to Killigrew to be the model of a woman writer accepted by her literary peers and the reading public alike ('What she did write, not only all allow'd, | But ev'ry Laurel, to her Laurel, bow'd!'). Philips, the well-educated daughter of a London merchant, at the age of 16 married into the Welsh gentry. Despite her husband's service as a Member of Parliament during the Commonwealth, Philips herself seems to have maintained certain royalist sympathies and to have won the respect of Henry Vaughan who in 1651 praised her work in *Olor Iscanus*. The *Poems. By the Incomparable, Mrs K.P.*, which first appeared in 1664 without the aggrieved author's permission, are marked by a celebration of female friendship. In her seclusion in Wales in the 1650s Philips drew round her a circle of like-minded women and cultivated particularly intense platonic and poetic relationships with Mary Aubrey ('Rosania') and Anne Owens (the 'Lucasia' to whom nearly half her verses are addressed). In April 1651 she writes in 'L'Amitie: To Mrs M. Awbrey' of two souls grown 'by an incomparable mixture, One', and with a Donne-like sense of the exclusivity of love in perilous times, she proclaims that 'sublim'd' lovers rise 'to pitty Kings, and Conquerours despise, | Since we that sacred union have engrost, | Which they and all the sullen world have lost'. In welcoming 'the excellent Mrs A.O.' into her little society Philips compares her circle to 'A Temple of divinity' which will attract pilgrims a thousand years hence. 'There's a religion in our Love', she declares in 'Friendship's Mysterys, to my dearest Lucasia', a poem set to music by Henry Lawes in 1655, and in contrasting the 'Apostasy' of Rosania to the steady friendship of Lucasia she resorts to a parallel with Elisha's succession to Elijah as the new friend takes up the mantle of Orinda's love. Philips's poems in memory of her dead infant son Hector (the 'Epitaph' and 'On the death of my first and dearest childe', both dated 1655) poignantly mourn a long-hoped-for child cut off before his proper time. Her best 'public' poetry tends to mark royal occasions: she laments the execution of Charles I, and anxiously anticipates the return of his son ('Hasten (great prince) unto thy British Isles | Or all thy subjects will become exiles; | To thee they flock'); she bemoans the passing of the much admired 'Winter Queen', Elizabeth of Bohemia, in 1662 ('this Queene's merit fame so far hath spread | That she rules still, though dispossesst and dead'); and she responds gracefully to the Duchess of York's request for examples of her work with a poem opening with the lines: 'To you, whose dignitie strikes us with awe, | And whose far greater judgment gives us law'. In her short lifetime Philips's main claim to fame was her successful rhymed-couplet translation of Corneille's tragedy *La Mort de Pompée*, performed in Dublin and London in 1663. At the time of her death she left incomplete a version of the same dramatist's *Horace* (completed by John Denham and acted in 1668). Both translations were printed in the posthumous collection *Poems. By the Most Deservedly Admired Mrs Katherine Philips. The Matchless Orinda* in 1667.

The acclaim accorded to Philips's work was a rare enough phenomenon in a

period of markedly unequal opportunities for women writers. A prosody shaped by reference to ancient poetry and a universal insistence on the primacy of Latin and Greek in education left many women, to whom the public educational system was largely closed, without what was regarded as the essential basis for the development of a poet's craft. Although there were relatively few direct heirs to the remarkable generation of highly educated sixteenth-century aristocratic women, changing social and religious conditions in the 1640s and 1650s do seem to have forced open literary doors. Nevertheless, even the gifted Dorothy Osborne (1627–95) could complain in one of her celebrated letters to her fiancé in 1653 that the poems of Margaret Cavendish (which she was anxious to read) were somehow a literary aberrance, or, as she put it, an 'extravagance': 'Sure the poore woman is a little distracted, she could never bee soe rediculous else as to venture at writeing book's and in verse too.' The emergence of distinctive women's writing has all too frequently been ascribed in over-neat socio-historical terms to the rise of the bourgeoisie and bourgeois reading habits or to the impact of certain Protestant sects. The poems of the emigrant Puritan, Anne Bradstreet (*c.*1612–72), were clearly admired enough by certain of her American co-religionists to be sent to London for publication in 1650 as *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America*. Quakerism too laid great stress on the equality of the spiritual experience and testimonies of women and encouraged the forthright witness of female Friends. Many of the most prominent women writers of the Restoration period would, however, have eschewed all connection with either the merchant class or with the still *déclassé* extremes of sectarian Puritanism. Women found their own voice, and made that voice respected, in the face of manifest disadvantage but not necessarily by confronting the intolerance of any given 'establishment'. The extraordinarily well-connected Margaret Cavendish herself partly disdained female pretensions to fashion rather than intellectual pursuits: 'Our sex takes so much delight in dressing and adorning themselves . . . and instead of turning over solid leaves, we turn our hair into curles, and our Sex is as ambitious to shew ourselves to the eyes of the world when finely drest, as Scholers do to express their learning to the ears of the world, when fully fraught with authors . . .' Most gentlewomen, whether or not they had a rudimentary education, were, like their middle-class sisters, primarily required to be efficient and skilled managers of their sometimes considerable households rather than blue-stockings *manquées*. Piety and Christian observance were, however, never regarded as exclusively male preserves and the very emphasis on the niceties and complications of religious affiliation, which is so characteristic of seventeenth-century writing, inevitably influenced the expression of female spirituality. The upheavals of the Civil War and the Commonwealth seem also to have prepared the way for the more general acceptance of the authority of women's voices, not all of them conventionally pious or decorous. The impulse to speak out was as much Anglican and royalist as it was Dissenting and republican, as chaste as it was licentious.

To some of her twentieth-century cultural heirs the work of the pioneer feminist Mary Astell (1666–1731) has seemed enigmatic and contradictory in its impulses. Astell's best-known work, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the advancement of their true and great interest* (1694), argues that unmarried women of the upper and middle classes should use their dowries to establish and endow women's 'seminaries', colleges which would serve both as educational institutions and as refuges for 'hunted heiresses' and the aged. The second part of *A Serious Proposal* (1697) advocates the importance to women's intellectual development of the kind of abstract reasoning too often regarded as an exclusively masculine pursuit, and her *Some Reflections on Marriage* (1700) warns women of the seriousness of committing themselves to the potential tyranny of a husband. The vast body of Astell's writing is not, however, exclusively concerned with women's prospects. She uses poetry primarily to express her religious hopes. 'Ambition' was first published in a collection of poems presented to her patron, Archbishop Sancroft, in 1684. It is a poem which asserts the spiritual rights of women but which scorns temporal ambition; it looks to the pleasures of retirement from the world but it also lays an emphatic claim to equality in the sight of both posterity and God. When in January 1688 she writes 'in emulation of Mr Cowley's Poem call'd The Motto' she pursues a series of brief meditations on worldly limitation as opposed to heavenly freedom. She acknowledges her divine calling, but modestly recognizes the restraints imposed on her mission by her gender:

> How shall I be a Peter or a Paul?
> That to the Turk and Infidel,
> I might the joyful tydings tell,
> And spare no labour to convert them all:
> But ah my Sex denies me this,
> And Marys privledge I cannot wish
> Yet hark I hear my dearest Saviour say,
> They are more blessed who his Word obey.

Astell seems to be thinking less of Cowley and more of that other confounded missionary and revolutionizer of women's lives, St Theresa. But Astell was no Papist. Her determined polemical support for the Church of England against the claims of Dissenters, in such conservative essays as *Moderation Truly Stated* and *A Fair Way with Dissenters and their Patrons* (both 1704), can be seen as integral to her claim to be a respected participant in the intellectual debates of her time.

Aphra Behn (1640–89) has long been claimed to have been the first professional woman writer in England. She was a professional not by inclination or choice, but of economic necessity. Like her less talented contemporary Delarivière Manley (1663–1724), Behn wrote fiction for easy domestic consumption and comedy as a proven way of making money in the theatre. If much was once made of the contrast between the reputations, styles, and

œuvres of the upright 'Orinda' Philips and the notoriously immodest 'Astrea' Behn, the contrast was not consciously fostered by either party. Behn, of indeterminate social origins, seems to have had little formal education, but her experiences as a colonist in Surinam in the early 1660s almost certainly schooled her in the ways of a dissolute world more efficiently than any course in classical rhetoric or Roman history. Her facility in French is, however, evident in her translations of Fontenelle's *The History of Oracles* and *A Discovery of the New Worlds* in 1688 and, in the same year, of the romance *Agnes de Castro*. Behn's reputation as a poet loyally anxious to commemorate any given royal occasion was rivalled only by her considerable success with the London public as a dramatist. Her first play, *The Forc'd Marriage*, was produced at the Duke of York's Theatre in September 1670; seventeen further plays, the vast majority of them comedies, were acted and printed during her lifetime. Her comedies are generally energetic intrigues marked by sexually frank and witty banter between characters. There is little room for *gravitas* or learning. *The Feign'd Curtezans* (1679) (dedicated to Charles II's mistress, Nell Gwynn) revolves around the amatory negotiations of two wild local girls and two English gentlemen in Rome, an intrigue varied by distressed ex-fiancés and brothers and by the folly of Sir Signal Buffoon and his Puritan tutor, Mr Tickletext. Behn's antipathy to Puritanism and its political allies is particularly evident in the chaotic comedy *The Roundheads* (1681/2), a play in which the wives of prominent Puritan politicians are wooed by two cavaliers (Loveless and Freeman) and in which the interconnection between pimping and politicking occasionally hits its mark. Behn's most vividly successful achievement remains the first part of *The Rover* (1677), a play based on Thomas Killigrew's *Thomaso or The Wanderer* but replete with self-reference. Its dominant male characters, Belvile and Willmore, are the kind of exiled cavaliers that Behn must have known from her days in Surinam, men in whom she seems to have taken a distrustful pleasure; both are refugees from political failure in England who espouse the cause of philandery almost as a royalist protest against Puritan restraint. The flamboyant Willmore wins his true-love in time-honoured fashion by confounding the wishes of her father but in the process he breaks off his liaison with Angellica Bianca, a 'famous courtesan' who shares the playwright's initials. When Angellica confronts her faithless lover at the end of the play she attempts to stress the pain of her disillusion; she had once lovingly hoped to raise his soul 'above the vulgar', even to make him 'all soul . . . and soft and constant', but she has discovered that what she received in return was 'no more than dog lust . . . and so I fell | Like a long-worshipped idol at the last | Perceived a fraud, a cheat, a bauble'.

Angellica's picture of herself as a slave to the whims of a fickle male enforces Behn's constantly implied theme of the limited choices open to contemporary women. Permissiveness may offer a merry freedom to men, but that freedom too often relies on the servitude of the other sex. Although she generally draws back from defining and directly protesting against this servitude in her plays,

Behn's most famous novel, *Oroonoko, or the History of the Royal Slave* (1688), forms an early attack on what she perceives as the more distant colonial problem of human slavery, degradation, and suffering. *Oroonoko* is on one level a clumsy and romanticized account of the betrayal of an African prince into American slavery; on another it is an early attempt to insist on human dignity and to examine the redemptive force of love. Before his contrived fall, the hero is described as a man capable of 'reigning well, and of governing as wisely . . . as any Prince civilised in the most refined schools of humanity and learning, or the most illustrious courts', but it is through his love of 'the brave, the beautiful and the constant Imoinda' that he is inspired to rebel, to suffer silently the horrible consequences of his rebellion, and to assert his understanding of a morality which transcends that of his oppressors. As a writer who had acted out the roles of both colonizer and courtesan, Behn suggests that she possessed a proper insight into the meaning of oppression.

'Restoration' Drama

When the public theatres reopened in 1660, after eighteen years of official displeasure, a tradition needed to be re-established which was both responsive to the recent past and a reflection of new tastes and fashions. Two well-connected impresarios, both with roots in the courtly and theatrical past, effectively nursed the London stage into robust health. Sir William Davenant (1606–68), who was rumoured to be the godson and, even more preposterously, the bastard of Shakespeare, had established his credentials as a playwright and a librettist of court masques in the reign of Charles I. In 1656 he had managed to evade the government ban on theatrical performances by staging an opera, or 'Entertainment after the manner of the ancients', *The Siege of Rhodes*. This English opera, with music (now lost) by Henry Lawes, boasted 'a Representation by the Art of Prospective in Scenes and the Story sung in Recitative Musick' and included a timely musical debate between Diogenes and Aristophanes on the virtues and demerits of public amusements. Thomas Killigrew (1612–83), with Davenant a holder of one of the two royal patents granting a monopoly over London acting, had written, and had possibly seen performed, the bawdy, anti-romantic comedy *The Parson's Wedding* before the theatres were closed in 1642. It was, however, the innovations fostered by the more extravagant Davenant which appear to have led the way. The introduction of overtures, 'curtain tunes', instrumental interludes, and 'ayres' with unsung dialogue led in the early 1690s to some of Purcell's most interesting public commissions, but the very use of such music during scene-changes serves as an indicator of the vital changes in production introduced in the Restoration period. Davenant's theatres at Lincoln's Inn Fields and Dorset Garden and Killigrew's at Drury Lane were expensively designed, purpose-built, and covered. A proscenium arch with flat wings, painted shutters, and backcloth behind it allowed for complex illusions of space and distinct changes of scene. Above all, the actors who performed on a well-lit apron stage now included women, a result both of the break in the training of boys to play female roles and of the influence of continental practice.

The active patronage of King Charles II and his brother James, Duke of York, assured that the court attended performances mounted beyond its confines and open, at a somewhat steep cost of one to four shillings, to any who could afford admission. When Killigrew's company opened their first theatre (a converted tennis-court) in November 1660 with a performance of the first part of Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, they were looking back to an established 'classic' with a sound royalist theme. The plays of Shakespeare, Jonson, and Fletcher continued to hold their own, if sometimes after a process of cosmetic 'improvement'. Although the *Henry IV* plays, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Julius Caesar* survived without major alteration, and attracted actors of the calibre of Thomas Betterton (1635–1710) (who was personally tutored in the part of Hamlet by Davenant who claimed to have known the actor first instructed by Shakespeare himself), Davenant proved to be an efficient cobbler together of texts revised according to new canons of taste. His *The Law Against Lovers* (1661–2) ingeniously fused *Measure for Measure* with *Much Ado About Nothing* and his versions of *Macbeth* and *The Tempest* (the latter in collaboration with Dryden) allowed for musical and choreographic spectacle and for a quite excessive symmetry of plotting. Balletic witches and siblings for Miranda and Caliban apart, the most celebrated and enduring of the Restoration adaptations was Nahum Tate's *History of King Lear* of 1681. Tate (1652–1715), who claimed to have found the original tragedy 'a heap of jewels, unstrung and unpolish't', hamstrung his own version by omitting the Fool and by introducing a love-plot for Edgar and Cordelia and a happy ending in which Lear, Cordelia, and Gloucester all survive. In common with Colley Cibber's melodramatic simplification of *Richard III* it was performed, in preference to Shakespeare's original, until well into the nineteenth century.

The natural enough preoccupation of much Restoration tragedy with politics also took its cue from Shakespeare, if a Shakespeare recast in a severely Roman mould. Dryden's *All for Love: or, The World Well Lost* (1677) claims to imitate the style of 'the Divine *Shakespeare*' while radically rearranging the story of Antony and Cleopatra; and Thomas Otway's *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* (1680) loosely adapts elements of *Romeo and Juliet* in a charged Roman Republican setting. The steady dignity of Dryden's blank verse in *All for Love*, and his decorous tidying-up of Shakespeare's complexities of plot in conformity with neo-classical canons, are likely to strike its modern readers (and its occasional audiences) as more appealing than the ambitious and extravagant heroics of his earlier tragedies such as *Tyrannick Love, or, The Royal Martyr* (1669), *The Conquest of Granada* (1670), and *Aureng-Zebe* (1675). Dryden's fascination with the dilemmas of the great in antique or exotic settings is to some degree paralleled by that of Otway (1652–85). *Caius Marius*, like his far

finer tragedies *Don Carlos, Prince of Spain* (1676), *The Orphan, or, The Unhappy Marriage* (1680), and *Venice Preserv'd, or A Plot Discover'd* (1682), originally served as vehicles for the tragic histrionics of the actor Thomas Betterton. All are high-flown and declamatory, showing suffering, emotional conflict, and intrigue shot through with mawkish sentiment. The situation of the noble Jaffeir, torn by opposed loyalties, in *Venice Preserv'd* is, however, handled with real panache, while its echoes of contemporary English plots and counterplots give it a particular urgency which has ensured its periodic revival.

The Shakespeare who served as an adaptable native model to the writers of tragedy in the 1660s, 1670s and 1680s proved far less influential on those who evolved a new comic style. If much Restoration tragedy deals with foreign politics, the comedies of the period are concerned with English philandery. In a period of literary history notable, in aristocratic circles at least, for its rejection of solemnity and moral seriousness, the darker and more questioning side of Shakespeare's comedies and the earnest morality of Jonson's provided hints rather than patterns. Restoration comedy, like the satyr-plays of the ancients, reverses and debunks the heroics of contemporary tragedy. In *The Rehearsal* George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham (1628–87), cleverly burlesqued the extremes of the heroic mode through a series of parodies. *The Rehearsal*, first produced in December 1671 and continuously adapted and flatteringly imitated in the eighteenth century, freely satirizes plays and playwrights, producers and actors, but its appeal to audiences must always have lain in a sneaking respect for the form it lambasts. The plays of Sir George Etherege (?1634–91) and William Wycherley (1641–1715) are far more characteristic of the hybrid, symmetrical, sexual comedy popular in the reign of Charles II. Both are masters of a comedy which accentuates the artificiality of the stage in order to mirror and comment on the sheen of the 'polished' society that produced it. Where contemporary tragedy can be heightened to a point of pompous absurdity, the comedy is frank and 'realistic'. Etherege's *The Comical Revenge: or Love in a Tub*, first performed at the Duke's Theatre in March 1664, was said to have 'got the Company more Reputation and Profit than any preceding Comedy'. It has a double plot in the earlier seventeenth-century manner: one, concerning the amatory rivalry of two gentlemen, is written in couplets; the other, dealing farcically with the antics of the playboy Sir Frederick Frollick and of his French valet, Dufoy, is both distinguished from it by its prose and partly mediated by the evident gentility of Sir Frederick. *She wou'd if she cou'd* (1668) is, as its suggestive title indicates, far more of a signal of what was to become the general current of contemporary comedy. Lady Cockwood, up from the country, frantically courts adultery despite her front of prudish respectability; Courtall and Freeman, both London libertines with names that indicate their predilections, ultimately find satisfaction in the arms of Sir Oliver Cockwood's younger kinswomen, Ariana and Gatty. The play presents its audience with two kinds of hypocrisy and double standards; the pretentious and reprobate Cockwoods are unmasked, but the gallants triumph

through an alternative deception which wins them witty, willing and, above all, young lovers. Older lovers, it is implied, are implicitly ridiculous while young women of good society are the proper prey of those young men who dare to angle for them. Etherege's funniest and best-crafted play, *The Man of Mode: or, Sir Fopling Flutter* (1676) brings this adulation of the successful philanderer to a dashing crescendo. Dorimant and Medley are, we assume, to be taken as models of merriment, cleverness, resilient 'good nature', and sexual irresistibility (or at least they see themselves as such); against them, Etherege pits a Frenchified fool, Sir Fopling Flutter, 'a person . . . of great acquir'd follies' who fails where they win, who sparkles like tinsel where they attempt to blaze like well-cut diamonds (albeit paste diamonds). Yet it is in the very intensity and control of Dorimant's charm that much of the power of the play lies. He is a sceptical, manipulative corrupter, but he is also a man capable of falling for Harriet Woodvil, a woman able to parry his wit and his manœuvres alike. *The Man of Mode* remains a quizzical and ambiguous play designed to divert a cynical world and to vex moralizing ones.

Wycherley's friend Dryden held that *The Plain-Dealer* (1676) 'obliged all honest and virtuous men, by one of the most bold, most general, and most useful satires which has ever been presented in the English theatre'. Despite Dryden's admiration of him as a satirist by inclination, Wycherley is rarely an earnest moralist. He is amused with, rather than scathing about, the dubious morals of society and he disconcerts more than he disturbs. He both enjoys and acknowledges the dangers of posturing. Wycherley's plays suggest that high society's cultivation of the superficial elevates wit and politeness above personal decency. The aimless confusions and *longueurs* of his first two comedies, *Love in a Wood, or, St James's Park* (1671) and *The Gentleman Dancing-Master* (1672), contrast vividly with the mastery of construction and situation evident in *The Country-Wife* of 1675. Although he cannot be called central to the plot, the play's major character, the sexual gourmand Horner, establishes its sardonic tone. If the emerging love of the honest Harcourt and the stubborn Alithia is ultimately blessed, and a series of fools, hypocrites, and gulls are ruthlessly ridiculed, it is Horner who after a triumphant campaign of debauchery (hidden by the ruse that he is impotent following an operation for the pox) escapes any kind of retribution. Other characters prate about their 'dear, dear, honour' while Horner, whose name is a sexually loaded pun on the word 'honour', both undermines pretence and exposes the pretenders to contempt. *The Plain-Dealer* of 1676, in part an adaptation of Molière's *Le Misanthrope*, is at once a more savage and more romantic play. Its ambiguous and world-hating protagonist, Manly, 'of an honest, surly, nice humour', has patriotically procured the command of a ship 'out of honour, not interest'. He is the 'plain-dealer' who announces to the audience in the Prologue that he has been created to disconcert: 'I, only, act a part like none of you' | And yet you'll say, it is a fool's part too: | An honest man who, like you, never winks | At faults; but unlike you, speaks what he thinks.' Much hinges on the words 'plain' and

'honest' but rather than face the inevitability of the undeceived Manly's descent into a Timon-like rejection of the shams and deceptions of a parasitic society, Wycherley somewhat gratuitously delivers him into the arms of the chastely honest and abstract Fidelia. Although love does not exactly conquer all, reconciliation does, perhaps because Wycherley cannot really conceive of any viable or acceptable alternative.

With the death of Charles II in 1685 and the flight to France of James II in 1688, direct royal patronage of the stage diminished (though James's daughter and successor, Mary II, maintained a discriminating interest in the theatre). A generation of playwrights passed with the political regimes which fostered their wit, but both comedy and tragedy were set, even stuck, in smooth grooves. In the Preface to his tragi-comedy *Don Sebastian* of 1689/91 Dryden mourned that 'the Humours of Comedy were almost spent, that Love and Honor (the mistaken Topicks of Tragedy) were quite worn out, that the Theatres could not support their Charges, and that the Audience forsook them'. Because of these discouragements he felt condemned as a dramatist 'to dig in those exhausted Mines'. This same Dryden could, however, recognize that by 1694 one major new talent had emerged, one hailed in his poem 'To Mr Congreve' as the true heir to Etherege's 'Courtship' and to Wycherley's 'Satire, Wit, and Strength'. William Congreve (1670–1729) achieved a startling popular success with *The Old Batchelour* in 1691 and followed it in 1693 with *The Double-Dealer* and in 1695 with *Love for Love*. Congreve acquired his mastery through a combination of instinct and experience. Each of his early plays advances his technique and assimilates the lessons of his predecessors. If his Spanish tragedy *The Mourning Bride* of 1697 might seem aberrant to latter-day readers, its initial popularity is testified to by the familiarity of its opening line ('Music has charms to sooth a savage breast') and of its famous observation that 'Heav'n has no rage, like love to hatred turn'd, | Nor Hell a fury, like a woman scorn'd'. His last and most brilliant comedy, *The Way of the World* (1700), was by comparison a failure with its public. Little of the play, Congreve remarked in its Dedication, had been 'prepared for that general taste which now seems predominant in the pallats of our audience'. To some later commentators, however, it is the last and greatest play of the 'Restoration' period, the climax of the dramatic experiments of forty years and the comedy that uniquely allows for both true wit and genuine feeling, for social satire and for the establishment of marital alliances based on tenderness rather than convenience. The impact of the play depends both on the complex social and family interrelationships of the characters and on the discrepancies between what is publicly declared and what is privately acknowledged. The importance of definition is especially evident in the relationship between Mirabell and Millamant. In the famous 'proviso' scene in Act IV each lays down conditions to the other; though she has admitted to loving 'violently', she seeks a relationship which looks cold to the outside world ('let us be as strange as if we had been married a great while; and be as well bred as if we were not married at all'); he insists that she abhor the trivia that divert less

intelligent women. Both determine to stand aside from the marital way of the world, and the way of much contemporary comedy, which the play's concluding couplets see as a 'mutual falsehood' and as 'marriage frauds' that are 'too oft paid in kind'.

The work of two of Congreve's far less subtle contemporaries serves to throw the quality of *The Way of the World* into further relief. Sir John Vanbrugh (1664–1726) is now far better known as a flamboyantly inventive architect than as a dramatist. His buildings are brilliant, balanced, whimsical, and weighty; his plays are merely brilliant and whimsical. Vanbrugh had a hand in some eleven plays, most of them collaborations or adaptations from the Spanish and the French. Only two, *The Relapse; or Virtue in Danger* (1696) and *The Provok'd Wife* (1697), are completely his. A third, *A Journey to London*, was finished by Colley Cibber and produced posthumously in 1728 under the title *The Provok'd Husband*. *The Relapse* is a somewhat conventional response to, and a continuation of, Cibber's far drabber comedy *Love's Last Shift*. In the original production at Drury Lane Cibber himself played Lord Foppington, the character to whom Vanbrugh allots his most effervescently witty and harsh lines. The discordant picture of marriage in *The Provok'd Wife* is relieved only by the suppleness of the colloquial comic dialogue in which the play abounds. The work of the Irish-born actor/playwright, George Farquhar (?1677–1707), is marked by a shift away from the London-oriented comedies of his predecessors into the fresh fields of the English provinces. *The Constant Couple, or a Trip to the Jubilee*, produced in 1699, was one of the theatrical hits of its day but like its sequel, *Sir Harry Wildair* (1701) it seems a slight, if sexually candid, piece of work compared to the long-popular *The Recruiting Officer* (1706) and *The Beaux' Stratagem* (1707). With the British victory at Blenheim of 1704 vividly impressed on the public mind, and with the military campaign against Louis XIV of France still being pursued, *The Recruiting Officer* had a particular contemporary currency. Despite its thin plot and the lightness of its intrigues, the play is tartly observant of the nastiness of a soldierly career and, in the resourceful Sergeant Kite, offers one of the finest comic roles in the English theatre tradition. *The Beaux' Stratagem* reveals an equally relaxed interplay of cynicism, realism, and romance. Its central male characters, Aimwell and Archer, both 'gentlemen of broken fortunes', are fortune-hunters rather than rakes and success in their chosen provincial careers is ultimately determined by the emergence of their natural virtue. At a crucial point in the action Aimwell is obliged to admit that he is 'unequal to the Task of Villain' having been won over to the uprightness of love by Dorinda's 'Mind and Person'. It is an admission that might have seemed merely a cynical device in a play of the 1670s. By 1707 it may well have been taken as indicative of honest geniality.

By the late 1690s, what the Victorian historian, Macaulay, later saw as the 'hard-heartedness' of 'Restoration' comedy was melting under the sun of benevolence. It was a form initially evolved to divert a jaded élite and to reflect on their manners and morals (or their spectacular lack of the latter). It was a form

that flourished both because of the accuracy of the reflection and because of the cultivated artificiality of high society and the stage alike. When Dryden claimed that the new 'refinement' of conversation was a direct result of the influence of Charles II and his court, he was in part thinking of the new 'naturalism' of the stage. The King, he argued, had 'awakened the dull and heavy spirits of the English from their natural reservedness' and had loosened 'their stiff forms of conversation, and made them easy and pliant to each other in discourse'. The 'wit' of the period certainly follows the lead of the court in its 'hard-heartedness'. It is in part a revolution against moral seriousness and the kind of piety that is worn on the sleeve, in part an echo of a new respect for clarity and reason. The world of the seventeenth century had been turned upside down; crowns and mitres had been knocked off heads only to be restored in a world that looked more cynically and questioningly at all forms of authority. Many of the private convictions which had been revolutionary in the 1640s seemed reactionary in the 1680s. The drama of the 'Restoration' period ought, however, to be seen as an essential element in the literature of a revolutionary age. Unlike much of its satirical poetry the comedies of the last forty years of the seventeenth century have retained an immediacy, a subversiveness, and an ability to provoke the prejudices of audiences. If scarcely revolutionary in themselves, the plays of the period are a response to revolution and to the seventeenth century's experimental reversal of values. The comedies do not offer anything so pretentious as redefinitions but they do continue to irritate and laugh audiences into reaching out for definitions.

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Eighteenth-Century Literature 1690–1780

ALEXANDER POPE's epitaph for the monument erected to the memory of Sir Isaac Newton in Westminster Abbey in 1731 succinctly proclaims the extraordinary intellectual virtue of the greatest scientific innovator of the age. A Latin inscription witnesses to Newton's immortality, an immortality triply safeguarded by Time, Nature, and Heaven; a couplet in English, the sublime confidence of which has served to provoke later generations, unequivocally asserts that the systematized vision which he offered was divinely inspired. 'Nature and Nature's Laws lay hid in Night. | God said, *Let Newton be!* and All was *Light*.' Pope's epitaph is more than a personal tribute to a great man; it is a public statement displayed in a much frequented national church which sums up the gratitude of a proud civilization. Newton (1642–1727), 'the Miracle of the present Age' as Joseph Addison called him, had given his eighteenth-century heirs a carefully reasoned theoretical framework on which a whole range of additional theories could be hung. His *Principia* of 1687 and his *Opticks* of 1704 suggested that there were indeed intelligible laws in nature which could be demonstrated by physics and mathematics, and, moreover, that the universe exhibited a magnificent symmetry and a mechanical certainty. This universe, Newton had declared, could not have arisen 'out of a Chaos by the mere Laws of Nature'; such a 'wonderful Uniformity in the Planetary System' had to be the handiwork of an intelligent and benevolent Creator. To the many eighteenth-century propagators of Newton's thought, the great could be related to the less, the cosmic to the terrestrial, and the divine to the human by means of a properly tutored understanding of the natural scheme of things. By interpretation, Newton's heavens declared that there was order, law, and indeed design in creation. Largely thanks to the propagandist work of the Royal Society in London and European-wide advances in astronomy, mathematics, mechanics, physics, and optics, natural philosophy had shed the taint of forbidden knowledge. Religious mystery could be enhanced, and sometimes even replaced, by rational wonder. The revolution in scientific thought begun by Copernicus 150 years earlier was to be fulfilled as popular enlightenment.