# THE EARTHY FLAME: A STUDY OF THE POETRY OF THOMAS CAREW

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ABSTRACT

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By

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The poetry of Thomas Carew has received critical acclaim for its urbane elegance, its graceful form, its lyric beauty. Critics have found in Carew the perfect blend of Jonsonian neo-classical smoothness and Donnean wit. But while acknowledging his formal excellence, many critics have objected to Carew's subject matter as immoral, superficial, trivial, and unoriginal. And neither his popularity in his own time, nor the respect accorded his work today can be said to be based to any significant degree on a positive view of his ideas. It is too generally assumed that he is totally conventional, has nothing to say. However, a careful reading of his poetry reveals an intellectual complexity, a subtlety of thought and feeling, a depth of perception that make his treatment of

traditional subjects a highly individualistic accomplishment. It is primarily with these aspects of his work--with content rather than form, insofar as it is possible to separate the two--that this study is concerned.

Carew emerges, above all else, as the Poet of Pleasure. He readily acknowledges himself to be a devotee of sensuous experience, mortal beauty, sensual love. Yet he plays the hedonist's role with a careless ease which prevents his seeming to take it too seriously, and with a sense of humor and irony that grants him a certain distance and objectivity. Carew possesses, and nearly always indicates, an awareness of the disparity between his own earthy concept of man's nature and the concept generally acknowledged as ideal. His acute awareness of the tragicomic limitations inherent in the pursuit and the pursuer of pleasure, coupled with his extraordinary ability to convey sensuous experience, forms the core of Carew's best verse and gives it depth and relevance.

Nowhere are these qualities more evident than in Carew's erotic poem "A Rapture," his longest and most notorious work. Its most noted quality has always been its

"licentiousness," a fact which illustrates the oversimplification to which Carew's work has usually been subjected. For "A Rapture" does not move toward a single, unified effect, but maintains a deliberate, somewhat disturbing tension throughout. Carew uses his special descriptive power to convey vividly the two-sided nature of sensual pleasure, its ability to repel us even as we revel in it, its flaws as well as its attraction. For all its licentiousness, it is possible to argue that "A Rapture" is a highly moralistic poem.

The same complexity of thought and feeling is evident in most of Carew's amorous lyrics. He employs many of the poetic conventions inherited from his more idealistic Elizabethan predecessors, but usually in a highly original way. Frequently he introduces elements which have the effect of undermining the serious conventions which, on the surface, he appears to be embracing.

It is as spokesman for a realistic, down-to-earth view of human love that Carew is consistently at his best. His poems reveal his urgent belief in experiencing the pleasures of life and love to the fullest. There is not

time, he insists, for stalling games, for dwelling in impossible dreams of selfless devotion, for holding back out of pride, "honour" or fear. Carew's sensitivity to beauty and his acute consciousness of the transience of earthly joys lend vitality and poignance to his poetry.

Carew wrote a good deal of occasional verse in addition to his love lyrics. This poetry is of a more formal nature, requiring him to deal with subjects to which his customary sensual imagery and materialistic viewpoint are not always suited. Consequently, his occasional poems, though they reveal the same formal excellence as his lyrics, are less consistently pleasing. Only in the role of critic does Carew equal his accomplishments as a love poet. In the poems devoted to criticism of the literary works of his contemporaries, his perceptions are astute, his judgments sound. Though Carew's literary criticism lacks the earthy emphasis of his lyrics, it reveals the same sensitivity to and appreciation of beauty that characterizes his celebrations of love.

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By

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For my Mother and Father

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

# INTRODUCTION

Though he is far from being regarded as a major poet, the poetry of Thomas Carew probably enjoys more critical acclaim today than at any time since the seventeenth century. This will scarcely seem a startling statement; it is undoubtedly true of many other seventeenth-century writers. It might easily be explained by saying that Carew's verse, too light for the serious eighteenth century, too licentious for the moral nineteenth, is more acclimated to the potpourri of twentieth-century taste. Such a statement, however, implies that content or thought has been the major factor determining Carew's popularity; and while the history of Carew criticism may seem to bear out this implication, it does so largely in a negative sense. Eighteenth and nineteenth century critics objected to Carew's subject matter as trivial or immoral or extravagant; consequently his reputation during these years was at a low ebb.[1] However, neither his popularity in his own time, nor the respect accorded him today can be said to be

based to any significant degree on a positive view of his ideas. His amatory verses were prized by his Caroline audience for their lyric elegance, their graceful form, delicate wit. Rhodes Dunlap notes that his smooth lines continued to be "imitated and plagiarized" by poets until the end of his century.[2] His formal excellence was not enough, however, to enable him to survive in the Augustan period.

Is it enough today? Apparently so. This century's renewed interest in all aspects of metaphysical poetry has enabled Carew to slide into our field of study on Donne's coattails, as it were, having just enough of the metaphysical in him to pique our interest. Critics concerned with tracing influences have found in Carew the perfect blending of Jonsonian neoclassical smoothness and Donnean wit, with the emphasis decidedly on the former--so much so that "An Elegie upon the death of the Deane of Pauls" is often the only reason for his inclusion in studies devoted to Donne's influence.[3] He appears regularly, however, and usually with favorable commentary, in most general studies of metaphysical or cavalier or Renaissance love poetry. But with only occasional exceptions, stylistic and formal niceties

are still what critics focus on when they come to Carew (this includes most discussions of his "wit"). The excellence of thought and judgment which almost everyone agrees characterizes the Donne elegy is seemingly to be regarded as a fluke. Carew's primary subject, the conventions of courtship and love, is familiar enough; no one apparently sees any point in re-examining that old and worn terrain. Moreover, one finds that the bulk of critical attention and praise is directed toward the same four or five poems, with partial credit for their excellence often going to Donne or Jonson. With the exceptions of Rufus Blanchard and Edward Selig, scarcely anyone has bothered to treat his verse as being of serious interest in itself.

There is little point in my reiterating what so many others have already demonstrated. That Carew can imitate Donne's style with the best of the metaphysicals, or Jonson's like a legitimate Son of Ben; that in his best verse he achieves the combination of "the intense feeling of Donne and the discipline in conscious art of Jonson" which George Williamson sees as the hallmark of success in those poets who studied in both schools;[4] that he is master of rhetorical techniques of imagery and argument,

of the smooth line and the sensuous image--all of this can be readily granted.

And yet, when this is acknowledged, there is still, I think, more that needs to be said. For even during his two centuries of disrepute, no one really seems to have quarreled with Carew's formal achievements. It was rather that, within all that prettiness, he seemed to have nothing to say--or at least nothing that intelligent and serious readers could regard except with contempt. It is with Carew's subject matter, the attitudes, ideas, philosophies explicitly or implicitly expressed that the trouble has always lain. And it is with these aspects of his verse, insofar as it is possible to separate content from form, that I will be concerned in this paper.

Decadent, immoral, superficial, extravagant, are the critical pejoratives one runs across most frequently in connection with Carew's verse. Perhaps the most damning criticism of his subject matter is that made by W. J. Courthope who found him guilty of "emasculating taste" and all but dismissed him with these words: "An imagination so shallow, so incapable of penetrating to the heart and movement of things beyond the trivial circle of Court

amusements was of course unable to rise into the region of the noble and pathetic."[5]

Modern critics have been kinder. F. R. Leavis states that Carew "has claims to more distinction than he is commonly accorded" and "should be, for more readers than he is, more than an anthology poet . . ."; but he adds, almost in the same breath, this qualification: "To say this is not to stress any remarkable originality in his talent; his strength is representative . . . ."[6] H. J. C. Grierson refers to Carew as "a careful artist with a deeper vein of thought and feeling in his temperament than a first reading suggests."[7] Grierson's opinion is echoed in R. G. Howarth's commentary: "Yet even in Carew . . . there is a strain of deeper feeling, the sense of hidden and eternal things which haunts other poets."[8] Unfortunately, none of these scholars is specific or pervasive enough on the subject to offset the negative effect of two centuries of faint praise, indifference, and outright contempt. With so many claiming that a few glittering nuggets is all Carew's work has to offer, few readers will take the time to go back and dig for the deeper vein Grierson assures us is there.

Edward Selig, in The Flourishing Wreath (the only book-length study devoted to Carew's work), comments on the failure of the critics to resolve the "curious ambiguity" of Carew's reputation, which he sums up as follows: "Is Carew a witty, elegant, and creatively representative poet, or is he superficial and unoriginal?"[9] Selig goes on to prove the former quite conclusively; fortunately, he does not confine himself to doing only this, for it seems to me a disappointingly irrelevant goal. Not even his harshest critics have ever denied Carew wit and elegance. The conflict, as I see it, is rather between those who are satisfied with these accomplishments and those who feel that to be taken seriously a poet must do more. If the school or society or age he is content to represent is characterized by superficiality, mindless extravagance, trivia, then no matter how creatively and wittily he represents this character, his verse will do no more than entertain us briefly.

Granted that there are many of Carew's poems that do just that and nothing more. This is scarcely surprising since the raison d'etre of the sort of vers de societé the court poets produced was entertainment. That they can still delight us today is no negligible accomplishment.

But if this were all his verse undertook to do, I would be inclined to feel that Carew has probably received all the attention he deserves. I believe, however, that a careful examination of his work will show that Carew accomplishes much more than he has yet received credit for doing, that he has significant merits beyond being only "creatively representative" which have heretofore been pretty much ignored or overlooked. Outpourings of a deeply emotional or profoundly intellectual nature would hardly have been well received in his milieu. But the "deeper vein of thought and feeling" Grierson speaks of is there for those who will look, as too few of even Carew's admirers apparently did, beneath the glitter of witty images and playful conventions. Contrary to Courthope's statement, Carew is, it seems to me, very much concerned with the "heart and movement" of life; life, not as the idealists conceived it but as he saw it, and lived it. Indeed, from a historical point of view, the accuracy with which his work reflects the interest and temper of the English aristocracy during this crucial era is fascinating. As any history of the period points out, the failure of the aristocracy to assume their traditional responsibilities was a key factor in bringing about the

revolution which ensued soon after Carew's death. Leaving their country estates, they swarmed to the city, attracted by the glitter of the court. Everyone, from the King and Queen down to the lowest ranking hangers-on, was seemingly preoccupied with only one thing--enjoying himself, unburdened by dull or irksome duty, as if there were no tomorrow. Gaity, and wit, clever conversation, sophisticated flirtation, elegant entertainment; food, drink, love, and, of course, art; these were the order of the day, and all were apparently determined to seize it. This was the atmosphere in which Carew lived and worked, and which he sought to capture permanently in his poems. Perhaps the condemnation of such critics as Courthope, who do not so much blame him for what did concern him as for what did not, is testimony to how well he succeeded.

Carew emerges, above all else, as the Poet of Pleasure. He readily acknowledges himself to be a devotee of sensuous experience, mortal beauty, sensual love. Few will argue with Courthope's contention that nobility is lacking in such preoccupations. But in a world in which the inalienable right to the pursuit of happiness has so often been equated with the pursuit of pleasure, the subject can

hardly be realistically censured as trivial. Nor is it necessarily devoid of pathos when handled skillfully. And regardless of his own moral convictions, no critic can make a meaningful evaluation of Carew's achievement without exploring, with an open mind, his treatment of this major theme. As one of his more enlightened anthologizers notes: "Carew's intelligence, Carew's poise and strength, can scarcely be inspected in isolation from his own tautly imagined celebrations of pleasurable transiency, which common sense does not like to think about."[10] The truth of this observation should be obvious; and yet, this isolation of Carew's content from discussions of his style has too often been imposed. It is for this reason that I propose in this study to stress Carew's thematic content, most notably the sensuous hedonism that permeates his work.

To be sure, this deliberate preoccupation with sensuous delights and the pleasures of the flesh is risky, for there is real danger in seeming to take it too seriously. Any artist who, like Carew, makes it his primary subject must beware of becoming ridiculous, of crossing the line which separates the artist from the pornographer, libertine from lecher. Two elements in Carew's work prevent this

disaster. The first is the sense of humor and of irony with which he endows his persona, enabling him to play his role with a careless ease that prevents his seeming to take it seriously and grants him a certain distance and objectivity. Secondly, and more important, Carew possesses, and nearly always indicates, an awareness of the disparity between his own concept of man's nature and capabilities and the concept generally recognized as ideal.

Nowhere are these elements more apparent than in his treatment of love. Love was, of course, the conventional subject with which all gentlemen poets were expected to deal, and the majority of Carew's poems are devoted to it. But he deals with it, for the most part, in a delightfully unconventional way, exploiting the time-worn, idealized love traditions of preceding generations of poets to serve his own less romantic conceptions. Occasionally, he does attempt to seriously embody the familiar Petrarchan or Platonic ideals but without much success. For it is an "earthy flame" rather than a celestial one that burns in his breast. His muse is earthbound and deserts him when he attempts to rise to a higher plane.

Fortunately, such attempts are comparatively few. Most often, as I hope to demonstrate, Carew employs the conventions of ideal love poetry in order to undermine them. He seldom attacks them outright as did many of the other Cavaliers in whose hands the anti-Petrarchan pose was largely just one more convention. Carew, for the most part, either uses language and tone to work subtly against the conventional ideals being exploited, or eschews them completely, writing love poems of a frankly sensual or erotic nature. Even when his subject is not love, his poems are colored with the imagery of sensuous experience, which infuses them with an immediacy and vitality, a realism that is lacking in more strictly conventional poetry. G. A. E. Parfitt notes that ". . . Carew can react to a wide range of experiential stimuli; and has something of that varied awareness of what is involved in being human which is one of the marks of major poetry."[11] "Human" is a word one meets frequently in discussions of Carew's poems, for the basic human desire for satisfaction in this world--and the impossibility of attaining it for long--is what is recorded throughout his verse. Many, like Courthope, will insist he looks for it in the wrong

place, by confining himself to the realm of the senses. Yet for Carew these tangible pleasures, although fleeting, represent the only real happiness this world has to offer. He remains the poet of sensual beauty and earthly pleasures, though paradoxically, intelligently, humorously, and sometimes sadly aware of their limitations, their transience, their inability to provide lasting contentment or to satisfy man completely. This awareness of the tragi-comic limitations inherent in the pursuit and the pursuer of pleasure, coupled with his extraordinary ability to convey sensuous experience, forms the core of Carew's best verse, gives it depth and relevance, and a distinctly individual "Carevian" quality as well.

I do not wish to make Carew out to be a deep philosopher or attempt to weight his poems with a greater intellectual burden than they were made to carry. He is almost never profound; but he is perceptive. If his work is narrowly circumscribed by the time and place in which he found himself, he has probed the area allotted to him more thoroughly and clear-sightedly than most of his critics have realized.

Of the Cavalier poets in general, Robin Skelton writes: "They treat life cavalierly indeed, and sometimes they treat poetic conventions cavalierly too. For them life is far too enjoyable for much of it to be spent sweating over verses in a study . . . ."[12] This is seldom true of Carew who took his poetry too seriously for some. John Suckling says of him in "A Sessions of the Poets":

> His Muse was hard-bound, and th'issue of's brain
> Was seldom brought forth but with trouble and pain.
> (ll. 38-40)[13]

The pains taken are evident, of course, in the smooth perfection of Carew's lyrics, which seem to have been written with ease, so naturally and gracefully do they flow; but so too are they evident in the careful presentation of ideas, situations, conventions, wit, which reflect the tastes and concerns of his milieu. What he excludes may be as significant evidence of his assessment of Caroline existence as what he includes. It is, at any rate, an undeniable indication of how he wished to portray himself. No idealist, though thoroughly familiar with all the ideals of love and life proclaimed by others, he sustains throughout his verse an image of himself as a frank hedonist with no illusions about the nature or permanence of the happiness he pursued.

# CHAPTER I

## THE CAVALIER ETHIC

Carew's life was that of the professional courtier, a role which today is likely to suggest an aristocratic idler--in this case with some justification. But the popular humanistic concept of the ideal courtier prevalent in Elizabethan England makes clear that the courtier's role had at least the potential for great service to King and country as well as for development of all aspects of the individual. Soldier, scholar, statesman, patron, and critic of the arts; a man physically, morally, intellectually sound; poet and servant of love in its most pure and exalted form; this ideal figure was for a time no mere illusory image but one which many strove to realize. But this was at the height of the English Renaissance, a time of comparative domestic tranquility and national power, unprecedented achievement in the arts, patriotic fervor--a time as nearly ideal as man could hope to experience.

No such circumstances prevailed when Carew came to court. In a nation being slowly undermined by religious and political dissension, serving a King whose Right eventually proved more tenuous than Divine, in a court more interested in amours than armadas, the courtier's role must have seemed less confidently clear, the ideal an unlikely dream. If the life and writings of Sir Philip Sidney seem to epitomize the ideal Elizabethan courtier, Carew's life and attitudes, as set forth in his verse, seem to suggest deliberately the antithesis of that ideal.

Although Carew held no official position at court until 1630 when he was given the post of Sewer in Ordinary to King Charles, he had been an accepted and apparently admired figure in court circles since the last years of King James' reign. Court entertainments during the latter were both lavish and raucous, characterized by extreme displays of drunkenness and lasciviousness, practical jokes and horseplay, for King James, though affectionate and generous toward his friends, seems to have been a man of shockingly crude tastes--tastes for which his unfortunate son, who did not share them, would eventually pay the toll.

Christopher Hibbert describes, as a "characteristic evening at King James's Court," a scene recorded by one of the court wits on the occasion of a visit by Queen Anne's brother, the King of Denmark. Ben Jonson himself created a short "entertainment" officially welcoming the two Kings on this occasion.[1] One hopes his stately presentation, with its dignified Latin speeches, was executed with more finesse than characterized this performance later on in the evening:

> After dinner the ladies and gentlemen of the Court enacted for the royal guest the Queen of Sheba's coming to Solomon's Temple. The lady who took the part of the Queen of Sheba was, however, too drunk to keep her balance on the steps and fell over onto King Christian's lap covering him with "wine, cream, jelly, beverages, cakes, spices and other good matters" which she was carrying in her hands. The King, even more drunk than Sheba, struggled to his feet, took her round the waist and would have danced away with her had he not collapsed to the floor and been carried off to recover . . . . The performance continued, but the players stumbled and fell about to such an extent that it was impossible to discover what they were endeavouring to represent. Three ladies, gorgeously dressed as Hope, Faith and Charity, made a brief appearance but then promptly withdrew. Hope returned, tried to speak, failed and staggered out of the room again. Faith was no more successful. Charity did manage to kneel down in front of King James at her second attempt and to mumble a few words before following her companions down into the lower hall where they were both being sick. Victory "after much lamentable utterance" was

> "led away like a silly captive . . . ." Peace, boisterous and argumentative, endeavoured to take her place and "most rudely made war with her olive branches" on those, less drunk than she was, who interfered with her progress.[2]

Other accounts of Stuart revels make clear that elaborate entertainment did not require the excuse of a visiting monarch. David Harris Willson writes:

> Festivities were numerous, extravagant and disorderly. Queen Anne delighted in masques; and these entertainments, with their costly floats, costumes and scenery, their songs and dances, became the fashion. The court, wrote Arthur Wilson, was "a continued masquerado, where the Queen and her ladies, like so many sea-nymphs, or Nereids, appeared often in various dresses to the ravishment of the beholders, the King himself being not a little delighted with such fluent elegancies as made the night more glorious than the day." It is true that James enjoyed the atmosphere of revelry; he was more interested in the ladies than is often supposed and found their immodesty attractive.[3]

Not everyone, however, was "ravished" by these performances. Sir Dudley Carleton, in a criticism which stemmed from a production of Jonson's Masque of Blackness, expressed shock at "The King and Queen and some of the noblest of their courtiers painting themselves black to play the part of Ethiopians, and by ladies whose dresses were as inordinately expensive as they were revealing."[4]

And the Lady Anne Clifford wrote "that the ladies about the court had gotten ill names and the Queen herself had fallen from her former reputation."[5]

Whatever extravagance or indecency the Queen may have fostered, King James apparently surpassed her on both counts. His gifts to courtiers who took his fancy were generous to an extreme; and, "although he rarely got drunk himself . . . he encouraged his young men to drink too much, just as he encouraged the young ladies of the Court to wear scanty clothes and to behave lasciviously."[6] According to historian Lawrence Stone, "Incalculable harm was done to the prestige of the monarchy by the gold-rush atmosphere of gambling, sex and drink created by the lavish generosity and the genial tolerance of King James."[7]

Charles, in contrast, was a shy, reserved, fastidious man, to whom the excesses of his father's court must have been appalling. As Prince of Wales he took as little part in the proceedings so offensive to his sense of propriety as his position allowed; and when, in 1625, he succeeded to the throne and made Henrietta Maria of France his queen, he saw to it that the court reflected his more rigid concept of what majesty should be.

> . . . King Charles' Court was decorous, orderly, elegant and ceremonial. Foreign observers were astonished by its almost ritualistic formality. Not even the King of Spain was waited upon with such devoted subservience and minute regard to a drill-like and unchanging custom as was the King of England.[8]

It is not to be supposed that the immorality condoned by King James ceased entirely. But publicly, at least, the vulgar displays that had amused the former king went out of fashion, and "the nobility and courtiers who did not quite abandon their debaucheries, yet so reverenced the King as to retire into corners to practice them."[9]

Though unfailingly courteous and gracious, Charles lacked his father's warmth and humor and, though respected, was on affectionate terms with very few of his subjects. Had it not been for the Queen, the court to which Carew eventually attached himself might have been very dull indeed. The charm and gaity of Henrietta Maria, however, more than made up for the King's reserve and, as Charles lavished on his wife all the love and affection he seemed unable to bestow elsewhere, all her frivolities and extravagances were indulged.

> She loved dancing and colourful clothes, and the company of dashing handsome and rather disreputable men like Henry Jermyn, her Master

> of the Horse, and of nubile women as beautiful as Lady Mary Villiers; she loved to surround herself with fashionable young poets, to be gay with them and to show that she understood their wit, to act with them, even to go to the theatre with them, which was something no one could remember a Queen ever having done before.[10]

Carew, who had long since attained a reputation for elegant, witty, if somewhat licentious, verse, would surely have been one of the poets in whom the queen delighted. He was admirably qualified by virtue of his education and travels, his "excellent parts," his carefree temperament and elegant ease with the ladies, to fit into and contribute to this happy circle. We have little factual information on which to base an image of his role there. But from what we know of his life and character, we may easily surmise that, though officially one of the King's men, he was equally ready to be of service to the Queen and her companions. Dunlap records an anecdote related by another Gentleman of the Privy Chamber which, though not fully authenticated, presents a picture of Carew in action that seems thoroughly believable.

> "Queen Henrietta Maria.--Thomas Carew, Gentleman of the Privy Chamber, going to light King Charles into her chamber, saw Jermyn Lord St. Albans with his arm round her neck;--he stumbled and put out the light;--Jermyn

> escaped; Carew never told the King, and the King never knew it. The Queen heaped favours on Carew."[11]

Whether or not this particular service was actually rendered, there can be little doubt about Carew's poetic contributions to the Queen's pleasure. His poems include a variety of playful and entertaining verses which Dunlap ascribes to the years spent at court, as well as several poems dedicated specifically to the King, Queen and other noted members of the court. We know that many of his songs, some of them written for plays produced at court entertainments, were put to music by Henry Lawes, the King's Musician. But by far Carew's most significant contribution to the revels that characterized the court of Charles and Henrietta was his masque, Coelum Britannicum, a hyperbolic celebration of the virtues of the royal couple, on which he collaborated with Inigo Jones.

Masques were a favorite form of entertainment of the Queen as they had been with her predecessor; gorgeous, lengthy productions, as costly as they were elaborate, these extravaganzas, more than any other activity, seem to epitomize the essence of life at court. For there are varying, almost paradoxical aspects of the masque. A

highly refined and formalized type of entertainment, it employed myth, fantasy and complex symbolism, contained humorous as well as serious, even poignant, material, combined the poetic talents of such poets as Ben Jonson, Aurelian Townshend, and Carew, and the genius for artistic design of Inigo Jones, often for the primary end of extravagantly praising the royal audience who, with grave, unselfconscious vanity, usually took part in the ritual of their own glorification. Fantastic stories and themes were portrayed through music, dances (both rigidly formal and wildly grotesque), spectacular settings, costumes and mechanical effects, and through verse, partially exquisite poetry, part abject flattery.

In our prosaic times, the court masque may seem vain and outlandish. Indignation at the devotion of so much talent and expense to so frivolous an end may be mixed with an awe of so much splendour so casually consumed. But today's standards are scarcely applicable to 17th century royalty; for the times, the revels of the Caroline Court reflected the most cultured, refined, and elegant taste. What they did not reflect was any awareness of troublesome conditions outside the court.

> The King was estranged from his subjects, though he lacked the political insight or imagination to gauge the depth of animosity against his rule . . . . The Court's atmosphere emphasized its isolation. Its higher circles breathed an artificial air. Its theatricals with their precious, sentimental love themes were the amusement of a coterie. They induced a feeling of exclusiveness and aristocratic intimacy amongst the courtiers . . . . The literature responsive to the Court's sensibility expressed a spirit of make-believe . . . .[12]

Outside, storms were brewing on several fronts. But within, all conspired to contribute to a continuous impression of gaity and ease, serenity and luxury; practically nothing was suffered to penetrate the aura of adored, beneficent majesty which surrounded the complacent royal couple. Insulated from unpleasant realities, the patterns of their days, during the nine or ten years Carew spent at court, were not unlike the extravagant structure of his masque in which all elements were calculated to assure them of their immortal greatness.

Few of Charles' advisors cared or dared to disturb this happy illusion. Having quarreled with Parliament on both political and religious issues, the King had put an end to dissonance by dismissing it in 1629. He was not to recall it until almost eleven years later, when the voices

of dissension would be too many and too loud to be silenced. But for a decade, coinciding with Carew's residence at court, there was quiet. Chiefly by levying fines and taxes of various sorts, "some of doubtful legality and none of them popular,"[13] the King and his ministers managed to cover the ordinary costs of government without the aid of Parliament. With matters beyond this, the King did not wish to be troubled.

> He had neither taste nor talent for administration, declining to apply himself to problems of government which could not be solved by reference to his own fixed ideas, preferring the company of men whose cheerful optimism encouraged his own delusive hope that the country was as well run as the Court . . . .[14]

The latter, at least, seems to have been exceedingly well-run, and as sumptuous as it was orderly.

> Every day the King's table--where he sat in state and in public, served by attendants on bended knee--was provided with twenty-eight dishes, brought in to a fanfare of trumpets that temporarily stilled the less strident notes of his private orchestra. The Queen's table had twenty-four dishes; the other eighty-four had over four hundred dishes between them . . . .
>
> The staff necessary to maintain the huge and complicated organization at Whitehall--more, in fact, a rambling village than a palace--was immense. The numbers of those employed in the various departments in the King's Household, the Queen's Household, the

> Households of the Prince of Wales and of the other royal children was probably not less than 1,700. Almost half of all peacetime royal expenditure was devoted to this labyrinthine complex known vaguely as the Court.[15]

They were costly then, these years of borrowed peace, in more ways than one. As most members of the King's administrative council held other court appointments as well, and thus shared the blessings of this liberality, few protests against his extravagance reached the King's ears.

> The privy councillors advised the ruler in an individual capacity, not as a body endowed with a common voice. At the pinnacle of the Court, they were themselves rivals for the high offices and grants that would increase their wealth and multiply the suitors who crowded their doors. They formed factions that might be associated with differences of policy, but whose principal aim was to extend their influence over the King and form an exclusive channel for the receipt and distribution of the ensuing rewards.[16]

There were, naturally, men who saw the folly of this way of life, but who were helpless to remedy it. In his notes on Carew's masque, Dunlap quotes from a letter to the Earl of Strafford, one of the King's few competent and conscientious ministers, calling that harried gentleman's attention

to the lamentable situation of which he was already painfully aware.

> "There are two Masques in Hand, the first of the Inns of Court, which is to be presented on Candlemas-day; the other the King presents the Queen with on Shrove-Tuesday at Night: High Expenses, they speak of 20000 £ that it will cost the Men of the Law. Oh that they would once give over these Things, or lay them aside for a Time, and bend all their Endeavours to make the King Rich! For it gives me no Satisfaction, who am but a looker on, to see a rich Commonwealth, a rich People, and the Crown poor. God direct them to remedy this quickly."[17]

No such heavenly instruction made itself felt, however, and the King was not inclined to take direction from a lesser quarter. Until the Scottish rebellion in 1639 sounded the first major note of discord and revealed the Crown's poverty, the harmonious and lavish existence continued unchecked.

> Hours, days even, that should have been spent facing the difficulties of government were passed playing bowls and tennis and golf, in swimming and riding and hunting, in theological discussion, in conducting visitors round the treasures of his palaces, in singing or playing the viol da gamba, or in supervising the preparations for Court entertainments and Court masques.[18]

These were indeed "halcyon" days, to use Carew's term. And though later events proved what any

serious-thinking member of the Court must have known, that they should have been spent more profitably, if less pleasantly, no element of dissatisfaction or anxiety appears in Carew's lines. Given his temperament as well as his position, this is not surprising. His father, Sir Matthew Carew, had suffered severe financial reverses prior to his death, and Thomas, as the younger son and a hopeless profligate in his father's eyes, had no private income to speak of. As a young man Carew had alienated his one benefactor, Sir Dudley Carleton, by foolishly and inexplicably putting on paper disparaging impressions of the characters of Sir Dudley and Lady Carleton, an act which the couple, having discovered the document, felt to be an indication of base ingratitude.[19] Their forgiveness could not be obtained and Sir Matthew had died dispairing of his son's ever being safely established in the world. That he was so established then, despite his lack of personal fortune and influential relatives willing to advance him, seems to have been due primarily to his own very appealing nature and wit. Without more tangible assets to fall back on, having once been established as a member of the royal household, Carew was scarcely in a position to criticize the hand

that fed him. Possibly his experience with Sir Dudley had taught him discretion. A more likely possibility is that the extravagant and carefree life at Court exactly suited his easy-going, pleasure-oriented nature. But as he never deceives himself or us about the less-than-ideal quality of his way of life (he seems rather to stress it at times), so it is unlikely that he was blind to the flaws in a Court existence which revolved around pleasures, however refined.

Much of this is conjecture, of course. Though the occupations and activities of the Caroline Court are well documented, Carew's part in them, or any private judgments he made about them, are not. He apparently carried out his appointed court offices satisfactorily. But beyond this he seems to have felt no obligation or desire to go; no inclination to excel in physical feats, or to distinguish himself in war; no desire to involve himself in the political or religious issues which culminated in the revolution; no wish to establish himself as an arbiter of manners or morals or art. The few poems which touch on events of his day portray him as a rather disinterested observer, a paragon of non-involvement. When he does take note of events of his time, it is usually contemptuously; he refers

to his age as "froward," "churlish," "sullen." At other times he appears to be simply resigned to the unheroic character of his time, to find it comfortable, if uninspiring.

The most notable example of this stance is to be found in his epistolary poem, "In answer of an Elegiacall Letter upon the death of the King of Sweden from Aurelian Townshend, inviting me to write on that subject" (74-77). It is a puzzling poem for many readers, and one which W. J. Courthope found particularly despicable. Carew first disclaims his ability and worthiness to deal with this high subject; but lest anyone take his disclaimer too seriously, he devotes twenty-four lines to eulogizing Gustavus Adolphus, demonstrating a more than adequate ability for the task before elaborating on his refusal to carry it out. The remainder of this odd poem, which runs to one hundred and four lines, is given over to urging Townshend to return to writing poetry more suited to the poets of a "secure" and "obdurate" land--namely masques and "Revels." Some thirty lines follow praising Townshend's masque Tempe Restord with the final fifteen lines of the poem suggesting

that such topics are more appropriate than the heroic one Townshend would have him take up.

> These harmelesse pastimes let my Townshend sing
> To rurall tunes; not that thy Muse wants wing
> To soare a loftier pitch, for she hath made
> A noble flight, and plac'd th'Heroique shade
> Above the reach of our faint flagging ryme;
> But these are subjects proper to our clyme.
> Tourneyes, Masques, Theaters, better become
> Our Halcyon dayes; what though the German Drum
> Bellow for freedome and revenge, the noyse
> Concernes not us, nor should divert our joyes;
> Nor ought the thunder of their carabins
> Drown the sweet Aires of our tuned violins;
> (11.89-100)

Taken at face value, these are surely some of the most callous and ignoble lines in English poetry, and appear even more so when one recalls the idealistic Sidney's death in a foreign war, or contrasts them with the lines of Carew's mentor, Ben Jonson, in "An Epistle to a Friend, to perswade him to the Warres":

> Wake, friend from forth thy Lethargie: the Drum
> Beates brave, and loude in Europe, and bids come
> All that dare rowse: or are not loth to quit
> Their vitious ease, and be o'rewhelm'd with it.[20]
> (11. 1-4)

Courthope found in Carew's lines evidence to support the contemptuous opinion quoted earlier, and makes the statement that "Such lines are sufficient to explain the overthrow of the Cavaliers within twelve years at Marston

Moor."[21] Carew does, on occasion, carry his lust for pleasure and ease beyond the realm of good taste; it is possible that this poem with its offensive last lines is another such instance. But I think such a reading is very far from accurate.

Joseph Summers, in a much more recent commentary on this poem, also laments Carew's response to Townshend's invitation though not, like Courthope, because of its contemptible moral stance, but because he feels Carew passed up a subject that at last was worthy of his considerable poetic skills.[22] I cannot share Professor Summers' sense of a missed opportunity for I feel Carew turned the occasion to a far more meaningful end. Judging from the thirty lines of the poem which Carew did devote to eulogizing Sweden's King, I rather think he is far more aesthetically satisfying when he turns his attention to matters at home. And certainly from a historical standpoint the remarkably candid rendering of the spirit of the Caroline Court which he produced instead is both more moving and more valuable than any of the surviving heroic celebrations of the foreign warrior king.

Though primarily interested in Carew's poetic accomplishments and failures in discussing the poem, Summers, like Courthope, cannot resist commenting on it in its historical context:

> One does not have to remember that England was to be torn apart by civil war within ten years to recognize that such a smugly insular assumption of prosperity and an eternal party, like dancing on a volcano, was a defiance of the gods and fate which would have given pause to most Greeks and Romans.[23]

Summers' analogy seems particularly apt. But Carew was not dancing by himself, nor, to use Summers' terminology, is the voice he uses in this poem a private one. He is not merely expressing a personal preference but embodying the suicidal political "clime" of his milieu. Not all Romans had a proper sense of Nemesis and, in fact, their history provides the best possible precedent for the "eternal party" Carew describes. Reading the lines, "Nor ought the thunder of their carabins/Drown the sweet Aires of our tuned violins," may we not recall another court where the strains of 'fiddle' music overrode the thunderous roar outside? Charles, of course, was no Nero; but his blindly arrogant confidence in the security of his position, coupled with the multiple resentments smouldering in his

kingdom, might well seem ominous to one who had little faith in permanence. Are not "Halcyon dayes"--in early tradition, the tranquil, quiet days of the winter solstice--by definition, short-lived?

It will be objected that I am attributing to Carew far more insight or foresight than he possessed. The man was a self-declared hedonist, a notorious libertine. Then why not simply read this poem as expressing the true sentiments of a man dedicated to ease and self-indulgence? The answer lies, I believe, in Carew's poems, the same poems, curiously enough, which have led others to dismiss him as frivolous. Summers prefaces a discussion of Marvell's much analyzed "The Garden" by saying:

> In general, I think it is a good idea to have read most of a writer's work before one starts writing about individual poems, and to keep as much of that work in mind as one possibly can in readiness for those occasions in which one passage may provide a helpful gloss upon another.[24]

Encouraged by such an authority, I am more than ever inclined to assert that the smug assumption of "an eternal party" he sees in Carew's poem is not meant to be taken as the poet's own. "A man who so loves the surface beauties of this world almost inevitably comes to feel the poignant

brevity of such beauty and of this life."[25] This statement, which Summers makes about Herrick, is at least equally applicable to Carew who, in all his celebrations of sensuous beauty and pleasure, is seldom if ever smug about them. He is all too aware of their transience. No beauty, no joy is, for him eternal. Rather, if we may believe his most moving lines on the subject, their enjoyment is always mingled with "terror and apprehension" of their inevitably approaching end.[26] Thus the assumption of permanence in the revels described here is most uncharacteristic.

Nor have any of Carew's critics accused him of being dense or obtuse. Thus it is difficult to believe that he could be so stupidly insensitive as to fail to recognize the ignobility of the pose he adopts here. As the critics point out, the folly of his stance is obvious; what they refuse to see is that the contrast he sets up, ostensibly between his own commitments and Townshend's, is inescapably a contrast between England's concerns and those occupying the continental nations. If he comes out looking very bad so, obviously, does the milieu for which he speaks. Surely, in juxtaposing lines celebrating the heroic feats of Gustavus Adolphus with a nearly equal

number of lines outlining a masque, one of the "harmeless pastimes" that occupy the English court, he cannot be unaware that the latter suffers by comparison. Not that there is indicated, even implicitly, a desire to rouse others or himself to the call of the drums. He prefers the "sweetly-flowing numbers" of his own environment. But in acknowledging that such verse is of a humbler sort than that required to celebrate the acts of Sweden's King, in asking Townshend to abandon the "loftier pitch" and "noble flight" he has undertaken and descend to a lower level, there is surely implicit disparagement of the frivolousness of the climate at home in comparison with that into which Townshend has ventured. Yet Carew does not set himself apart from or above that climate. In part, of course, his adoption of the stated preferences as his own, along with any ignominy attached to them, would seem a diplomatic necessity in order to avoid any appearance of criticizing the makers of the feast. Still, there is little doubt that he found this climate most congenial to his tastes. If it is not of a superior nature, it is nevertheless geared to <u>human</u> nature which prefers "secure shades" to the intense heat of the battlefield. This is Carew's

defense of his stand, the only one he offers here or in any of his poems blatantly supporting the pleasure principle. At the close of his poem to Townshend, he says of the warring nations what seems no more than the simple, oft-proven human truth:

> Beleeve me friend, if their prevailing powers
> Gaine them a calme securitie like ours,
> They'le hang their Armes up on the Olive bough,
> And dance, and revell then, as we doe now.
> (ll. 101-104)

Courthope may have been partially correct in seeing reflected in Carew's stance here the cause for the regime's collapse. If so, it can only be because Carew represents realistically and accurately the prevalent insulated atmosphere of the court of the ill-fated Charles. He voices frankly the general, tacitly-implied, attitude at home and refuses to gloss it over with high-sounding phrases, to make empty gestures such as trumpeting the achievements of a man in whose nature and deeds he sees no reflection of himself or his world. To censure him for refusing to present things other than as they were is absurd. Ideally perhaps he ought to have dissociated himself from the world of play, urged his fellows on to nobler pursuits. But Carew never portrays himself to us as an ideal

courtier; rather he seems an antithetical figure--a realistic representative of his place and time, content to while away the waning hours of the "glorious night" as pleasantly, as luxuriously as possible. But there is nearly always an underlying awareness of something lacking in the role to which he has consigned himself. Though less introspective, he has something of J. Alfred Prufrock's self-insight and might well explain, or excuse, his failure to break the pattern of his days and ways similarly: "No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be." But there is nothing of that modern gentleman's self-pity and little of regret in Carew's lines. Lacking the greatness or the means to disturb his universe, he embraces wholeheartedly the compensations it offers. If mermaids will not sing to him, Celia will, and for Carew human voices, human pleasures, imperfect though they may be, will suffice because they must. If in reading his poems we are inclined to feel, with his most indignant critics, that here is a gifted man spending his God-given talents and years on the mundane and the trivial, without thought of the reckoning to come, we can scarcely avoid glimpsing in his verse the pattern in which the entire fabric of the Caroline Court was woven.

## CHAPTER II

## THE EARTHY FLAME

In the following pages I shall discuss at length two poems which I hope will support and clarify the claims which I have made for Carew. These poems, "A Rapture" and "To my worthy friend Master Geo. Sands, on his translation of the Psalmes," would seem to represent the opposite extremes of Carew's temperament and interest. Yet despite their differences, each poem illustrates the distinctive quality I spoke of earlier as the hallmark of Carew's best verse--a basic tension or ambiguity which may indicate a deeper debt to the metaphysical style than has been suspected. Each poem exhibits a simultaneous, paradoxical pull in two directions, and each has been subject to misinterpretations by readers who have failed to see that underlying character.

There is probably no better place to start an examination of Carew's poetic achievement than with his most notorious poem, "A Rapture." Its most noted quality has always been what Dunlap calls its "obvious but

magnificant licentiousness"[1] and Courthope considered it gross obscenity. Even the Caroline audience was apparently somewhat shocked by it, and in an anonymous satire written a few years after Carew's death, he is permitted to apologize posthumously for this "vain Rapture" as a product of "wisdom's nonage and unriper years."[2] Such criticism seems to me totally to miss the complexity of this poem which, if it is the product of his youth (and Dunlap, in his commentary, makes a strong case for dating it prior to 1624),[3] shows Carew to be remarkably precocious in more ways than one.

Erotic, Ovidian poetry enjoyed a long, successful run during the English Renaissance. The 16th century produced numerous long poems such as Marlowe's "Hero and Leander" and Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis"; the 17th seems to have leaned more toward shorter elegies in the tradition of the Amores or of Catullus. Nearly all the gentlemen poets tried their hand at this type of verse at one time or another. At first glance, Carew's "A Rapture" may appear to be just one more such experiment, but one that went too far, exceeding the bounds of "taste." At second glance we may be inclined to regard the poem as a

humorous parody of the erotic tradition; the sensual images and metaphoric descriptions are overabundant, redundant, ludicrous. Thus we might conclude that Carew is attempting to out-Ovid Ovid (who is much less "refined" than most of his imitators). This second judgment is certainly closer to the truth; but it is not the whole truth.

In his study of the evolution of love lyrics, H. M. Richmond discusses in detail the problems involved in writing verse of this nature in a culture dominated, as was Carew's, by precepts of Christianity.

> Frank invitations to sensual indulgence decline in popularity from the time of Petronius, despite the veiled delight in adultery which characterizes courtly love . . . . No major poet from the time of Dante can easily reconcile sensual satisfaction with the beliefs of his more serious moments (witness Chaucer's "Retraction"). This is not to say that conventional pleas for extra-marital love do not survive at least until about 1660, but they have usually an archaic flavor of quaint paganism, rather than the dynamic actuality which they clearly had for Catullus or Ovid. When the high Renaissance attempts literary seduction it does so with tongue in cheek, rarely in the bitter earnest of sexual desire . . . .
>
> It is necessary to stress this fact in order to clarify the apparent failure in the sequence of serious arguments for sexual indulgence, of the kind epitomized by Catullus' "Vivamus mea Lesbia," during the course of the seventeenth century. Marvell's "To his Coy Mistress" does nothing to qualify this

> statement, for while the sentiments offered by Catullus about the definitiveness of death were his literal belief and that of his age, those of Marvell's lover can in no way be reconciled either with the beliefs of the age or with the author's own religious poems . . . . What remains to the Renaissance love lyricist who is planning to compose an apparently sincere invitation to dalliance, is frequently only an interesting series of evasions of reality.[4]

While I might be disposed to argue with Mr. Richmond about any lack of dynamic actuality in Marvell's poem, his basic thesis is obviously valid, and important in considering the almost unique complexity of "A Rapture." Most of the well-known carpe diem, or persuasion-to-love, poems evade the inherent conflict between their arguments and the prevailing religious doctrine of chastity by simply ignoring the latter. Clearly, if these poetic arguments are non-objectionable in a Christian society, it is because they are tacitly recognized as mere conventions, or game-playing, not to be taken seriously. Thus the powerful plea by Marvell, the playful eroticism of Donne's "To His Mistris Going to Bed," and his irreverent argument in "The Flea," and even the cynical defense of adultery in Jonson's "Come my Celia"--all manage to be equally inoffensive, while Herrick's "To the Virgins to Make Much of Time" evades any

conflict by advising the girls to "go marry." There is also available, of course, the neo-Platonic argument of Donne's "The Extasie" for the bodies' embrace as a means of bringing souls together. But this too represents a conventional evasion of the primary religious issue. So long as the poet remains within the conventional formulae there is no difficulty.

But Carew, though he makes full use of conventional poses, arguments and imagery, exploits them for his own unconventional purposes. And, I suspect, it is this departure from the accepted formula, rather than the extreme eroticism of the imagery, which was responsible for the notoriety of the poem. For when the conventional mask is allowed to slip, one comes face to face with the human reality beneath the convention. And as has been indicated, though Carew's readers might tolerate and enjoy the convention, the reality underlying it was, or should have been, morally abhorrent. The result is that "A Rapture" possesses a complexity not possible in the strictly conventional poems ostensibly in the same tradition. Few critics have taken note of this distinction. In his essay "The Argument of Marvell's 'Garden,'" Frank Kermode discusses

the development of a genre of garden poetry rooted in the informal naturalism of the late Renaissance which found its most popular expression in the essays of Montaigne and the poetry of Tasso, most notably his Aminta. "A genre of poetry developed which assumed the right to describe the sensuality of a natural Eden, and a specialized kind concentrated on sexual gratifications as innocent, and the subject of unreasonable interference from Honour."[5] Though sexual indulgence is asserted to be innocent in the "libertine" gardens of this genre, Kermode stresses that

> we are not dealing with the innocence of Tasso's golden age, where there is a perfect concord between appetite and reason, or with the garden of innocent love that Spenser sketches in Faerie Queene . . . . The libertines use the argument of the innocence of sense to exalt sensuality and to propose the abolition of the tyrant Honour, meaning merely female chastity.[6]

This, according to Kermode, is the situation of Carew's "A Rapture"--a statement with which I must take issue.

Kermode is, of course, not here concerned with Carew's poem except as one of several examples of the genre extolling the libertine garden of innocent sexuality to which Marvell's garden of the solitary thinker is in

opposition. And certainly "A Rapture" does employ the major norms by which Kermode defines that genre. The tyrant Honour is explicitly denounced; the sexual gratifications to be enjoyed in Carew's "Elyzium" are affirmed to be innocent, without offense; and this is obviously not a place where appetite and reason could be said to be in perfect concord. It is indeed a libertine paradise. However, as I hope to show, the effect of the poem is not to support or exalt the notion of innocent sexuality, but to demolish it. If Marvell's "The Garden" is, as Kermode effectively demonstrates, "poetry written in the language of, or using the 'norms' of, a genre in a formal refutation of the genre,"[7] the same may be said of Carew's poem. "A Rapture," I would argue, is as clear and effective a rejection of libertine innocence as "The Garden." Carew does not, like Marvell, reject it out of hand for, unlike the latter, he has no substitute happiness to offer. Instead he gives the libertine argument a hearing so extensive that it finally defeats itself, disintegrating into a crude, petulant demand for female promiscuity.

The effect of Carew's poem is less happy than Marvell's for Carew admits into his poem conflicting elements that are never really reconciled. In his all-too-earthly garden the argument for sensual indulgence may be temporarily silenced but it cannot be annihilated. When "A Rapture" closes, the case for the innocence of sexual gratification is lost, but its appeal is still in evidence. As a consequence, the reader's reactions are likely to be ambivalent.

One critic who has taken note of the quality of conflict in "A Rapture" is G. A. E. Parfitt. He writes:

> The normal Elizabethan tactic, when expressing overt eroticism, is to condemn what is being expressed or to use some kind of pre-Christian setting; the usual Cavalier device is to ignore the Christian code, to pretend that poet and mistress are somehow exempt from it, or to emit a smoke-screen of pseudo-argument. Carew, however, not only acknowledges a conflict between Christianity and the erotic but suggests that such a clash is inevitable, while his embodiment of the erotic has such force and beauty that it makes the erotic-moral opposition a real factor in the poem, makes the poem a disturbing phenomenon, puzzling and extending our experience as poetry should do.[8]

Carew not only makes no attempt to resolve this conflict which he would probably consider irresolvable; he emphasizes it to the point where it must be considered the

primary focus of the poem. He uses his special descriptive power to convey vividly the two-sided nature of sensual pleasure, its ability to repel us even as we revel in it, its flaws as well as its attraction. In addition he makes his parody a means of focusing attention on paradoxical and hypocritical qualities in the attitudes and values of his own society, which welcomed erotic verse but demanded that it wear proper dress. And finally, he uses the conflicting elements of his poem to illuminate conflicting elements inherent in the dual nature of man.

Despite the length of the poem, it will be necessary to quote it in full because of the nature of my argument.

I will enjoy thee now my Celia, come
And flye with me to Loves Elizium:
The Gyant, Honour, that keepes cowards out,
Is but a Masquer, and the servile rout
Of baser subjects onely, bend in vaine
To the vast Idoll, whilst the nobler traine
Of valiant Lovers, daily sayle betweene
The huge Collosses legs, and passe unseene
Unto the blissfull shore; be bold, and wise,
And we shall enter, the grim Swisse denies
Only tame fooles a passage, that not know
He is but forme, and onely frights in show
The duller eyes that looke from farre; draw neere,
And thou shalt scorne, what we were wont to feare.
We shall see how the stalking Pageant goes

With borrowed legs, a heavie load to those
That made, and beare him; not as we once thought
The seed of Gods, but a weake modell wrought
By greedy men, that seeke to enclose the common,
And within private armes empale free woman.
  Come then, and mounted on the wings of love
Wee'le cut the flitting ayre, and sore above
The Monsters head, and in the noblest seates
Of those blest shades, quench, and renew our heates.
There, shall the Queene of Love, and Innocence,
Beautie and Nature, banish all offence
From our close Ivy twines, there I'le behold
Thy bared snow, and thy unbraded gold.
There, my enfranchiz'd hand, on every side
Shall o're thy naked polish'd Ivory slide.
No curtaine there, though of transparant lawne,
Shall be before thy virgin-treasure drawne;
But the rich Mine, to the enquiring eye
Expos'd, shall ready still for mintage lye,
And we will coyne young Cupids. There, a bed
Of Roses, and fresh Myrtles, shall be spread
Under the cooler shade of Cypresse groves:
Our pillowes, of the downe of Venus Doves,
Whereon our panting lims wee'le gently lay
In the faint respites of our active play;
That so our slumbers, may in dreames have leisure,
To tell the nimble fancie our past pleasure;
And so our soules that cannot be embrac'd,
Shall the embraces of our bodyes taste.
Meane while the bubbling streame shall court the
  shore,
Th'enamoured chirping Wood-quire shall adore
In varied tunes the Deitie of Love;
The gentle blasts of Westerne winds, shall move
The trembling leaves, & through their close bows
  breath
Still Musick, whilst we rest our selves beneath
Their dancing shade; till a soft murmure, sent
From soules entranc'd in amorous languishment
Rowze us, and shoot into our veines fresh fire,
Till we, in their sweet extasie expire.
  Then, as the empty Bee, that lately bore,
Into the common treasure, all her store,

Flyes'bout the painted field with nimble wing,
Deflowring the fresh virgins of the Spring;
So will I rifle all the sweets, that dwell
In my delicious Paradise, and swell
My bagge with honey, drawne forth by the power
Of fervent kisses, from each spicie flower.
I'le seize the Rose-buds in their perfum'd bed,
The Violet knots, like curious Mazes spread
O're all the Garden, taste the ripned Cherry,
The warme, firme Apple, tipt with corall berry:
Then will I visit, with a wandring kisse,
The vale of Lillies, and the Bower of blisse:
And where the beauteous Region doth divide
Into two milkie wayes, my lips shall slide
Downe those smooth Allies, wearing as I goe
A tract for lovers on the printed snow;
Thence climbing o're the swelling Appenine,
Retire into thy grove of Eglantine;
Where I will all those ravisht sweets distill
Through Loves Alimbique, and with Chimmique skill
From the mixt masse, one soveraigne Balme derive,
Then bring that great Elixar to thy hive.
  Now in more subtile wreathes I will entwine
My sinowie thighes, my legs and armes with thine;
Thou like a sea of milke shalt lye display'd,
Whilst I the smooth, calme Ocean, invade
With such a tempest, as when Jove of old
Fell downe on Danae in a storme of gold;
Yet my tall Pine, shall in the Cyprian straight
Ride safe at Anchor, and unlade her fraight:
My Rudder, with thy bold hand, like a tryde,
And skilfull Pilot, thou shalt steere, and guide
My Bark into Loves channell, where it shall
Dance, as the bounding waves doe rise or fall:
Then shall thy circling armes, embrace and clip
My willing bodie, and thy balmie lip
Bathe me in juyce of kisses, whose perfume
Like a religious incense shall consume,
And send up holy vapours, to those powres
That blesse our loves, and crowne our sportfull
  houres,
That with such Halcion calmenesse, fix our soules
In steadfast peace, as no affright controules.

There, no rude sounds shake us with sudden starts,
No jealous eares, when we unrip our hearts
Sucke our discourse in, no observing spies
This blush, that glance traduce; no envious eyes
Watch our close meetings, nor are we betrayd
To Rivals, by the bribed chamber-maid.
No wedlock bonds unwreathe our twisted loves;
We seeke no midnight Arbor, no darke groves
To hide our kisses, there, the hated name
Of husband, wife, lust, modest, chaste, or shame,
Are vaine and empty words, whose very sound
Was never heard in the Elizian ground.
All things are lawfull there, that may delight
Nature, or unrestrained Appetite;
Like, and enjoy, to will, and act, is one,
We only sinne when Loves rites are not done.
  The Roman Lucrece there, reades the divine
Lectures of Loves great master, Aretine,
And knowes as well as Lais, how to move
Her plyant body in the act of love.
To quench the burning Ravisher, she hurles
Her limbs into a thousand winding curles,
And studies artfull postures, such as be
Carv'd on the barke of every neighbouring tree
By learned hands, that so adorn'd the rinde
Of those faire Plants, which as they lay entwinde,
Have fann'd their glowing fires. The Grecian Dame,
That in her endlesse webb, toyl'd for a name
As fruitlesse as her worke, doth there display
Her selfe before the Youth of Ithaca,
And th'amorous sport of gamesome nights prefer,
Before dull dreames of the lost Traveller.
Daphne hath broke her barke, and that swift foot,
Which th'angry Gods had fastned with a root
To the fixt earth, doth now unfetter'd run,
To meet th'embraces of the youthfull Sun:
She hangs upon him, like his Delphique Lyre,
Her kisses blow the old, and breath new fire:
Full of her God, she sings inspired Layes,
Sweet Odes of love, such as deserve the Bayes,
Which she her selfe was.  Next her, Laura lyes
In Petrarchs learned armes, drying those eyes

That did in such sweet smooth-pac'd numbers flow,
As made the world enamour'd of his woe.
These, and ten thousand Beauties more, that dy'de
Slave to the Tyrant, now enlarg'd, deride
His cancell'd lawes, and for their time mispent,
Pay into Loves Exchequer double rent.
  Come then my Celia, wee'le no more forbeare
To taste our joyes, struck with a Pannique feare,
But will depose from his imperious sway
This proud Usurper and walke free, as they
With necks unyoak'd; nor is it just that Hee
Should fetter your soft sex with Chastitie,
Which Nature made unapt for abstinence;
When yet this false Impostor can dispence
With humane Justice, and with sacred right,
And maugre both their lawes command me fight
With Rivals, or with emulous Loves, that dare
Equall with thine, their Mistresse eyes, or haire:
If thou complaine of wrong, and call my sword
To carve out thy revenge, upon that word
He bids me fight and kill, or else he brands
With markes of infamie my coward hands,
And yet religion bids from blood-shed flye,
And damns me for that Act. Then tell me why
This Goblin Honour which the world adores,
Should make men Atheists, and not women Whores.
(49-53)

"A Rapture" does not move toward a single, unified effect, but maintains a deliberate and somewhat disturbing tension throughout. We are always pulled in at least two directions simultaneously. The opening is certainly conventional enough, having in it something of the Elizabethan tactic of a pre-Christian setting, and the Cavalier claim of exemption from the prevailing code. However, in rejecting the tyranny of "Honour," the poet is here

explicitly defying not a moral, Christian code but the conventional, man-made code of idealized courtly love with its artificial standards (including, of course, female chastity) for the conduct of lovers--standards which, he argues later, are themselves inconsistent with religious precepts. This Honour is derided as a false idol, an empty show, a papier mache giant weighing heavily upon those fools who uphold him. It is not an entirely original sentiment,[9] and coupled with the woman's liberation arguments of lines 18-20, seems but a pleasant sophistry. Along with Celia, we are invited to put aside false standards, unnatural inhibitions, and abandon ourselves to the sensual paradise Carew throws open to us. We are ushered into a lush, idyllic Garden of Love, the "heavenly" reward of the bold, the valiant, the wise. In accepting his invitation, we seem, so far, only to be defying empty forms, rather than valid religious restrictions. We have actually left a corrupt, unnatural world for a nobler, as well as more pleasurable one. A bed of roses, the cool shade of cypress groves, a bubbling stream, soft winds blowing--and lovers, naturally enjoying one another. Freed from the constricting bonds imposed

by artificial standards of society, "enfranchised" hands slide freely over "naked polish'd ivory." All of nature is involved in amorous play: streams, birds, winds, and bees that fly around "Deflowering the fresh virgins of the Spring." The lover is moved to emulate these. What could be more innocent? If somewhere in the reader an insistent voice answers "Almost anything," he is effectively caught in Carew's trap and can hardly escape facing some of the implications of his position.

For we have been told that Love and Innocence reign here. Supposedly, having rejected the unnatural and confining standards of society, we are in a veritable Eden, a pre-lapsarian state of innocence; all offence has been banished. Yet despite the poet's assurance that this is not an invitation to sin, but to a sinless state, the scene remains guiltily erotic. And it is difficult to say at first, whether the vision itself is at fault or if the evil is in us. Are we so corrupt that we cannot even momentarily conceive of sexual love as both pleasant and innocent as the Naturalists claimed, or as Religion assures us it was before the Fall? Must we, like Milton's

disgruntled Satan upon viewing Paradise, conclude "Myself am Hell"?

But "A Rapture" is not Paradise Lost and any confusion or discomfiture the reader might feel is quickly dispelled as the verse becomes more frankly salacious and we know exactly where we are. Despite the contemporary note struck in the opening lines urging rebellion against prevailing restrictions, Carew has used the Elizabethan tactic of whisking his reader back to a Pagan Paradise, the garden of Venus, in which we need not be concerned with moral issues from which we are temporarily playing truant. Our orientation complete, we can enter blamelessly into the playful spirit of the poem. We are, after all, reading for amusement, for simple pleasure which is unashamedly not of a very elevated sort. For the success of such verse depends, to a great extent, on a good-humored recognition on the part of the reader of his own "lower" instincts; it enables him to indulge them, and at the same time smile patronizingly at himself for his indulgence. Such intellectual slumming is fine sport precisely because the reader is enabled to let himself go (within certain pre-established limits), and yet

retain the smug assurance that he is not permanently resigned to this sphere. Carew's metaphoric descriptions of sexual love are ideally calculated to create such an atmosphere. Heaped one upon the other, they become more and more ludicrous, yet their absurdity does not cancel out their titillating effect. It is great fun, and the laughter makes it seem totally unnecessary to restrain our sensual enjoyment. Had the poem ended at line 114, the effect would have been completely happy.

But Carew does not stop there, and herein, perhaps, lies the true source of complaints about the poem. The remainder of it, though it ostensibly continues in the same vein, is in reality all downhill, and quite unpleasant. At first this seems to be simply an extension of the Venusion paradise, an erotic catalogue of famous lovers indulging themselves in love's rites. But gradually we become uncomfortably aware that something is wrong, that these virtuous people are out of place here. They too, it seems have been freed from the bonds of the giant Honour. The chaste Lucrece, so cruelly raped, to the horror (and secret delight?) of Shakespeare's readers, is turned lascivious courtesan, the faithful Penelope

a shameless exhibitionist. But because, for them, Honor was something more than just a convention, Carew's attributing to them a share of the seemingly insatiable lust (now seen clearly for what it is) exhibited by the speaker, Celia, and, to some extent, the reader who has stayed with them, is shocking. Once again we are made to stop and look carefully at our surroundings, at where we good people have chosen to wander; and we find, as in a nightmare, that we are not in Heaven but in a kind of Dantean Hell. Here those who, on earth, sinned through chastity against Love's precepts, burn for "Their time mis-spent." At this hideous, perverted picture of ideal figures writhing in lust, the whole gay illusion is brutally smashed. Carew has given us our tour through the slums; but he has neglected to see us safely back, untouched, to our own environment. He has left us there to find our own way back, and in the cold light of dawn, we may be somewhat ashamed of having sought such surroundings.

Admittedly, Carew has not played the fame fairly. Having assured us our defiance of Honour was merely a gambit, an exchange of one set of arbitrary poetic

conventions for another, he has introduced a group of revered figures from another tradition which cannot be reconciled with this one. The effect is like suddenly confronting one's mother at an orgy. The reader, having been caught with his guard down and his bad side showing, can either slink away red-faced or make the best of it and take Carew's little joke good-naturedly. If he does the latter, he will find that Carew is not quite through exposing his inconsistencies. The question of whether that Honour governing the behavior of lovers is only a word or a meaningful ideal, neatly avoided at the beginning of the poem, is now aggressively reopened as the poem changes direction once again.

The distasteful nature of the scenes in lines 115 to 146 has the effect of an implicit argument <u>against</u> deviating from the chaste code of love. Now Carew again argues <u>for</u> defiance of it. This Honour that enforces chastity is consistent neither with Nature, "humane" justice, nor religion. Sexual abstinence is an unnatural restriction to put on the "soft sex" and surely an inhuman punishment. The demands Honour makes on men are no less cruel; they must fight and kill to prove their

devotion, risking damnation for this breach of religion. Obviously, Honour's rule is unreasonable and ought to be ignored.

It is doubtful that Celia will be persuaded by the false analogy between her "unjust" victimization and his, or that she will reach the "logical" conclusion that, because Honour (the conventional tyrant) is inhumane, unjust and opposed to religious doctrine, her honor (chastity) is worthless and ought to be abandoned. In any case, the last sentence destroys any force his logic may have had. For his real quarrel with Honour is reduced to the petulant, ungallant, self-interested complaint that it demands sacrifices of men, puts them in conflict with religion, yet inflicts no such split loyalty or infamy on women. For it does not, where they are concerned, conflict with true honor based on moral doctrine. His final line's callous restatement of what he is asking of Celia counteracts and dispels the sensuous appeal of his earlier plea, and again seems to advise chastity, if only as the better of two bad alternatives; for the alternative to being a slave to the tyrant Honour is, for Celia, to be a whore. The puzzled reader, having been shoved from one

side of the argument to the other throughout the poem, might well be outraged by Carew's inconsistency as much as by his crassness. If Carew had not inserted the previous passage (lines 115-145) placing the faithful lovers in Hell, this final passage, with its unappealing frankness would probably have been sufficiently unpalatable to leave the courtly reader with an unpleasant aftertaste. And yet, if he was not offended by the poet's initial suggestion that Celia defy Honour and give way to lust, why should this final statement offend him? It is simply a blunt restatement of what the speaker has been suggesting all along, despite claims of innocence which have fooled no one. But up to now, Carew's persuasions have seemed to be working within familiar, acceptable traditions (albeit his use of them is somewhat gauche); at the end, he drops conventional phrasing and states plainly what he's asking. The reader who has not objected to the more euphemistic, though equally clear, argument, ought really not to complain here of bad taste. The hypocrisy and absurdity of such a reaction is blatantly clear. And the formal excellence Carew exhibits in his use of the pentameter couplet, his mastery of sensuous imagery, his wit and humor, make it

impossible to place the blame on artistic incompetence. The objector is thus placed in the position of protesting a breach of etiquette, having ignored a defiance of religion, and reveals his major concern as manners rather than morals. It is thus impossible to condemn the poet without condemning oneself.

Too few readers, shocked by the harsh sentiment of the poem's last lines, have stopped to consider that Carew, careful artist that he was, undoubtedly knew what he was doing. He could not have been unaware of their negative effect any more than he could have missed the ignoble connotations of his final lines to Townshend. One can only conclude that he is deliberately working to crush any illusions he might have created as to the perfect happiness to be found in the Elysium previously described. If lines 115 to 146 have not served to turn the dream to nightmare, these final lines are calculated, like a dash of cold water, to awaken any remaining dreamers to reality.

The nature of the poem then, is complex. It is sensual and funny, pleasant and unpleasant, and several other things besides. It seems unjust to simply classify it as "licentious." To do so is to fail to understand the

extent of Carew's achievement. "A Rapture," like Donne's "To His Mistresse Going to Bed," parodies the erotic genre, and through what is essentially a reductio ad absurdam, illustrates the fact that the argument for sensual indulgence, carried too far becomes ridiculous. But Carew's poem is much more complex than Donne's, goes more deeply into the nature of sensual pleasure and man's ambivalent attitude toward it. For all its licentiousness, it is possible to argue that "A Rapture" is a highly moralistic poem.

Carew posits a sensual paradise so pleasant that the reader may be strongly inclined to accept it as a reasonable facsimile of what man's life would have been like had Adam not fallen. It is ironic perhaps that our vision of unfallen happiness should take the form of unrestrained indulgence of those instincts considered "corrupt" as a result of the fall. But it is really not so paradoxical if one recognizes honestly Carew's habitual thesis that the pleasures of the senses are very much a part of man's happiness here on earth; why should we not long for a world where the frank enjoyment of them is untainted by any sense of guilt or shame? And it is

scarcely assuming much psychological insight to suggest that, just as the poorest men are the least likely to be completely convinced that money cannot buy happiness, so those who have attempted to conform most rigidly to social and religious restrictions on the indulgence of the lower instincts, are most likely to imagine that the abolition of all such restrictions may constitute happiness.

From what we know of Carew's life, it seems safe to exclude him from the ranks of the most unyielding moral conformers. Even in a society which is regarded today as having been extremely lax and indulgent, he was considered a libertine, and biographical facts suggest that he was not much given to denying himself pleasure. Whatever his actual experience, his poetry, and particularly "A Rapture," reveals him to have had few naive illusions about the joy to be derived from total gratification of the senses. And it must be recognized that "A Rapture" works to dispel any illusions a less experienced reader might have. The first effect of such gratification, as in the first twenty-four lines of the poem, may indeed be "sweet ecstasy." But after the initial exposure, as the novelty wears off, exhilaration wanes

and must be deliberately, artificially, refurbished. Thus the descriptions of the lovers' activity become more and more elaborately metaphorical, less natural, more strained, further and further removed from the naturalness and innocence claimed for it; finally they are downright ugly and oppressive. Carew demonstrates thereby, more effectively than any moral treatise could do, more completely than explicit poems on the subject (Shakespeare's "The expense of spirit in a waste of shame" and Jonson's "Doing a filthy pleasure is" come most immediately to mind), that there is something intrinsically degrading and self-defeating about total immersion in the sensual self. Yet if the last part of the poem leads us to such an awareness, the first part stands to remind us why men continue to fall prey to temptation. It is a concrete portrayal of the human dilemma Shakespeare summed up in his Sonnet 129:

> All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
> To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

Carew's poem is thus, not a condemnation of man's weakness and foolishness so much as a sensitive, artistic portrayal of the pathetic, frustrating, ludicrous limitations of the human condition.

It seems to me that Carew does this time and time again, though rarely so thoroughly as in "A Rapture." He is continually showing us man falling short of, or rebelling against, the established philosophical, social, or religious ideals. Often humorously, sometimes less pleasantly, he portrays situations where the disparity between the ideal attitude or mode of behavior and what actually occurs is clearly, though implicitly, obvious, and awareness of the disparity is essential to a full appreciation of the poem.

If "A Rapture" has been oversimplified by two centuries of readers into irrefutable proof that its creator was a shallow-minded voluptuary, the response to his commendatory verse to George Sandys has been almost as simplistic. Written in 1638, within two years of Carew's death,[10] the poem seems as far away in sentiment as in time from the earlier poem; so much so that many critics can only conclude that the Carew of the later poem is a new, reformed man. Such a conclusion is supportable only if one reads "A Rapture" as a straightforward, untroubled celebration of sensual pleasure and the poem to Sandys as a devout penitent's sincere

recanting of his former earthy ways. The latter reading, I feel, is no more justified than the former. Shorter, tighter, more unified in its tone and argument than "A Rapture," "To my worthy friend Master Geo. Sands, on his translation of the Psalmes" (93), even apart from the worthiness of its sentiment, is an admirable poem. Here, as in "A Rapture," and indeed nearly all of his serious poems, Carew employs the pentameter couplet, rather than the tetrameter form he preferred for his lighter verse. And style here is perhaps as important an element in creation of the intended compliment as language. Louis Martz's comments on the stylistic accomplishment in this poem suggest this is the case. "These couplets are completely end-stopped, each couplet standing as a perfect unit, somewhat anticipating the Augustan manner in caesura, balance, and antithesis. Carew is presenting here a superb imitation of the couplet style that George Sandys had achieved in his famous translation of Ovid's Metamorphoses . . . ."[11] This aspect of Carew's artistry has probably gone unnoticed by most readers of the poem; what has caught their attention is the apparently heartfelt tribute to Sandys' pious work and the unusually

introspective and regretful tone with which Carew assesses his own poetic accomplishments.

I presse not to the Quire, nor dare I greet
The holy place with my unhallowed feet;
My unwasht Muse, polutes not things Divine,
Nor mingles her prophaner notes with thine;
Here, humbly at the porch she listning stayes,
And with glad eares sucks in thy sacred layes.
So, devout penitents of Old were wont,
Some without dore, and some beneath the Font,
To stand and heare the Churches Liturgies,
Yet not assist the solemne exercise:
Sufficeth her, that she a lay-place gaine,
To trim thy Vestments, or but beare thy traine;
Though nor in tune, nor wing, she reach thy Larke
Her Lyrick feet may dance before the Arke.
Who knowes, but that her wandring eyes that run,
Now hunting Glow-wormes, may adore the Sun,
A pure flame may, shot by Almighty power
Into her brest, the earthy flame devoure.
My eyes, in penitentiall dew may steepe
That brine, which they for sensuall love did weepe.
So (though 'gainst Natures course) fire may be quencht
With fire, and water be with water drencht.
Perhaps my restlesse soule, tyr'de with persuit
Of mortall beauty, seeking without fruit
Contentment there, which hath not, when enjoy'd
Quencht all her thirst, nor satisfi'd, though cloy'd;
Weary of her vaine search below, Above
In the first Faire may find th'immortall Love.
Prompted by thy example then, no more
In moulds of clay will I my God adore;
But teare those Idols from my heart, and write
What his blest Sprit, not fond Love shall indite;
Then, I no more shall court the verdant Bay,
But the dry leaveless Trunke on Golgotha;
And rather strive to gaine from thence one Thorne,
Then all the flourishing wreathes by Laureats worne.

The self-deprecating references to his own verse, used primarily, I believe, as a complimentary technique to exalt the accomplishment of Sandys, have a sincere ring to them certainly. But to read into this "a sincere public avowal of changed endeavor and belief," a "remarkable alteration" in a man formerly capable of "savage cynicism," in short, a "moral revolution" as R. G. Howarth does,[12] is to ignore not only the grappling with the conflict between the ideal and the human which is implicit in so many of Carew's poems including "A Rapture"; it also fails to take note of biographical facts, later compositions, and contradictory evidence in the poem to Sandys itself. For to read Carew's poems carefully is to recognize that there is nothing revolutionary about his admission here of the imperfect and unexalted nature of the "mortall beauty" he has pursued throughout his life and his verse. He has never pretended it was otherwise. Nor need we be surprised at the apparently genuine reverence for Sandys' "sacred layes," his recognition of the superiority of a "pure" to an "earthy" flame or Muse. Had he not earlier, in the much acclaimed elegy on Donne, implicitly noted this same hierarchy of devotion, praising

first Donne's work as the "true Gods Priest," and only secondly his secular verse? And while Carew's admiration for Donne's work was undoubtedly genuine, he did not, for all that, abandon classical myths and models to follow in his footsteps.

I find little basis for George Williamson's remark, in his commentary on the Donne elegy, that "This is where Carew began the pursuit of beauty which ended, like Donne's, by being translated into higher terms and by contributing power to his fine lines to Sandys."[13] Surely, in view of Carew's work thereafter, the comparison between his "conversion" and Donne's is inapt.

The undue emphasis put on the pious sentiments expressed in the poem to Sandys seems to me untenable. It is true that it comes near the end of his life and critics who read moral reform into it are fond of referring (as does Mr. Williamson) to the Earl of Clarendon's lines on Carew: "But his Glory was that after fifty years of his Life, spent with less Severity or Exactness than it ought to have been, He died with the greatest Remorse for that Licence, and with the greatest Manifestation of Christianity, that his best Friends could

desire."[14] There is, however, conflicting evidence about the remorseful end. Dunlap relays an account from the notes of Izaak Walton which seems far more consistent with the inconsistent Carew, to the effect that the latter, having fallen ill, did indeed repent and receive absolution; however, upon recovering he returned to his old habits to the extent that, when a relapse occurred, he was refused a second absolution.[15] More pertinent perhaps to my rejection of the idea of a new Carew are his poems composed after the poem to Sandys, particularly "To my friend G. N. from Wrest" (written in 1640), in which we find him once again writing with relish of sensuous, if not sexual, delights. The only other poems which according to Dunlap, may be dependably dated after the one to Sandys (two on D'Avenant's Madagascar, one on Lord Cary's Malvezzi, and the song on the marriage of Lord Lovelace) are equally mundane.

The point I wish to emphasize is that this seeming inconsistency on Carew's part need not disturb us. A careful study of the amorous poems through which he is best-known will not support the simplified and generally accepted impression of him as a gross libertine against

which the Carew of the Sandys poem stands out in startling relief. For while he has never seriously embraced higher ideals, he reveals himself as keenly aware of them and his devotion to the sensuous pleasures delineated in "A Rapture" has never been total or blind. Indeed it is often qualified, or proclaimed with a good deal of irony. Thus the apologetic note he sounds in the Sandys poem need hardly strike us as an about-face. Above all, it is important to note that while he disparages his Muse, he does not forsake her. The last eight lines taken alone may seem to be a firm pledge to follow in Sandys footsteps, to abjure his idolatrous worship of women in favor of adoration of "the first Faire." However, this resolution is qualified, dependent as it is upon the conversion of his Muse, stated only as a possibility in the preceding fourteen lines. <u>If</u> his Muse is enflamed with love of God, <u>perhaps</u> his restless soul will cease its fruitless search for contentment in earthly love. This, it seems to me, is a "maybe" so big that only the most naive gambler would lay odds on it. It is true that the poem's tone of regret and humility rings true. Most poignant, perhaps, is the sense of weary dissatisfaction with the

earthy course he has chosen which comes through in lines 23-28. Yet despite these elements, angels or critics who, on this basis, rejoice at the sheep's return will find their celebrating premature and scarcely defensible. For one thing, the dissatisfaction with the imperfect happiness to be found in sensual love and mortal beauty has been expressed before, not only implicitly as in "A Rapture" but explicitly, and even more poignantly than here, in Carew's masque, Coelum Britannicum, written several years earlier. There the poet's ambivalent attitude toward Pleasure is explicit in the lines addressed to Hedone, who personifies it:

> but still the terror
> And apprehension of thy hasty end,
> Mingles with Gall thy most refined sweets,
> Yet thy Cyrcaean charmes transforme the world.
> (175)

Although the "faire cup" Hedone offers is known to contain poison, the poet is still unable to refrain from tasting. But he is clearly without illusion about the contentment and satisfaction to be attained. Thus this expression of dissatisfaction with hedonism in the Sandys poem cannot justify a reader's jumping to conclusions about a moral revolution.

There is, moreover, implicit evidence in the poem itself suggesting that, however firmly Carew might believe, intellectually, in the superiority of psalms to love songs, he is not really attracted to such writing. He manages to convey, through the images he employs, the utter lack of emotional and imaginative appeal Sandys' colorless muse holds for him. Following his own sensual muse, "unwasht" and profane though she may be, he equates with courting "the verdant Bay," striving for "flourishing wreathes"; the images suggest lush, thriving life, rich rewards. How harsh and bleak by comparison are the images he uses to describe the pursuit of Sandys' Divine Muse for whom he contemplates exchanging his own. To do so is to court "the dry leaveless Trunke on Golgotha" in hopes of gaining a thorn. Such sterile images work counter to the expressed preference for Sandys' muse in the poem's argument. Donne, in "La Corona" had used the same images of bays and thorns to symbolize the rewards of poetic and pious works respectively. But Donne's truly devout spirit enabled him to make the thorns seem truly preferable.

> But doe not, with a vile crowne of fraile bayes,
> Reward my muses white sincerity,
> But what thy thorny crowne gain'd, that give mee,
> A crowne of Glory, which doth flower alwayes;[16]

For "the true God's Priest," as Carew had called him, the thorn suggests a crown which will flower eternally. For Carew, whose lukewarm piety will never advance him beyond the church porch, a thorn is just a thorn, and seems to imply the rejection of all he truly cherishes.

It is impossible to believe that Carew really desires the quenching of his earthy flame though he recognizes intellectually (as does anyone contemplating reform of a pleasurable vice) that he should desire it. There is, consequently, a tension created here, similar to that operating in "A Rapture"; the explicit, idealistic statement of the poem is balanced against, undermined by, the more realistic natural tendencies revealed implicitly through the imagery. It is as though, underlying the debate over whether he will renounce profane for sacred verse, we can see in operation, though on a minor scale, the basic conflict in human nature between flesh and spirit. The ambivalence of Carew's attitude in no way diminishes the compliment to Sandys, who may be regarded as being above the struggle, having chosen the higher course. If anything, Carew's expressed difficulty in

emulating his friend makes Sandys' accomplishment seem the greater.

As for the outcome of Carew's conflict, few readers familiar with his thought and temperament will seriously expect him to trade in the bay for the thorn. And, for those who know his more characteristic work, the possibility that he may forsake his Muse seems as undesirable as it does remote. We are quite content that her "Lyrick feet" should "dance before the Arke." For in this happy phrase, meant to acknowledge the limitations of his poetry, Carew also manages to suggest its strength and appeal as well. Ideals may be necessary and important; but they can also be wearying. To acknowledge this is to recognize the essence of Carew's earthy charm. When the sun seems blinding, the stars unreachable, one could do worse than be a hunter of glow-worms.

## CHAPTER III

## LOVE POEMS: CONVENTIONAL IDEALS

As Carew could not enthusiastically worship where his senses as well as his soul were not engaged and fed, one might assume that in writing amatory poems he would have little interest in the legacy of idealized love conventions, either Petrarchan or neo-Platonic, which he and his contemporaries inherited from preceding generations of Renaissance poets. But while it is true that the view of love which emerges from Carew's love poems as a whole has a strong physical focus, he could scarcely avoid making use of the wealth of ready-made materials handed down to him. Indeed it would have taken an innovative genius to do so and Carew was not of this breed.

Considering the thoroughness with which the subject of love had been explored by their predecessors, and the number of poets at work at the time (Howarth reckons that about "a hundred and twenty poets were writing

between 1616 and 1660, and all of them at some moment capable of becoming fine poets"),[1] the Caroline Poets whose originality was not totally buried under the weight of set forms and prescribed attitudes, not to mention the common store of ideas and metaphors, accomplished no mean feat. Carew, I believe, managed it much more successfully than most.

Most critics have noted his extensive employment of conventional Petrarchan forms. That he is using them in a highly original manner has too often been overlooked. Thus it is possible for Francis Schoff to conclude, on the basis of frequent Petrarchisms in Carew's verse, that he is more kin to Spenser than to Jonson.

> . . . there is an obviously deep-seated delight in the entire Petrarchan pattern of expression; in its elaborately built arguments, its rhetorical devices, its praise of the lady and attacks on her cruelty, and above all its enthusiastically extreme conceits and hyperboles. Carew's world had wearied of all this, or thought it had outgrown it; ours mistrusts hyperbole almost by definition; but Spenser did not, nor his Elizabethan compeers; and Carew did not either.[2]

Such a conclusion, it seems to me, can only be supported by reading Carew's verse piecemeal, by ignoring the consistent subtle trend of thought running throughout, and

focusing instead on sheer numerical incidence of familiar forms.

More to the point is an article by Bruce King who sees Carew's employment of conventions as rhetorical and psychological strategy. "It is in the shaping of a literary strategy that a poet reveals his personality and the values he holds in relation, or opposition, to society."[3] King's point is extremely important, I think. Schoff, along with a majority of Carew's readers, assumes too easily that the frequent employment of Petrarchan conventions indicates Carew's desire to uphold them. King goes on to say that "Carew works within poetic conventions so that he may seem to speak with detachment and high self-control. The purpose is to avoid injury by keeping personal emotion at a distance. Carew uses poetic conventions to organize personal emotions for social warfare."[4]

This is precisely what Carew seems to me to be doing. It is not all-out war by any means--merely a little gentle shelling calculated to shake his contemporaries out of their pretenses and illusions, to make them see their life for what it was, not with any view to reforming it but because he found idealistic pretense

absurd. Contrary to Schoff's statement, there is evidence that Carew's world had neither wearied of nor outgrown the overblown love conventions of the preceding century. M. B. Pickel discusses at length the Platonic love cult that flourished in Charles' court under the guidance of Queen Henrietta Maria, though she notes: "This courtly Platonic movement should be distinguished from the mystical Platonism to be found in the work of Drummond and Donne earlier in the century, and of Spenser in the preceding century."[5] The wishes of the Queen and her ladies for idealized love poems could not be so easily turned aside as Townshend's request for a eulogistic poem on Sweden's King. Carew, of course, complied though without the fervor of a Wyatt or Sidney, and often with tongue in cheek. Robin Skelton, in a passage that seems to flatly contradict Schoff's "son of Spenser" thesis, takes note of this lack of enthusiasm.

> One might say, indeed, that Carew is the poet of normalcy. He suspects the over-elaborate and the exaggerated expression of emotion as being no more than a game on the part of the speaker. Admittedly, he himself could play the game, and play it well, but hardly ever without an ironic half-smile, a quiet glee.[6]

Readers familiar only with the heavily sensual verses most typical of Carew might possibly be inclined to imagine him with a perpetual leer rather than Skelton's ironic half-smile. But the latter is a far more accurate image, conveying something of the attitude with which he approaches even the most serious subjects, particularly human love.

Before turning to discussion of Carew's more frankly sensual, and more realistic, treatment of love, I should like to examine some of his experiments with conventional forms and themes from the idealized love traditions, to explore the devices he employs to avoid being merely imitative and to adapt the conventions to his own purposes.

Theoretically, the numerous established patterns for treating all aspects of a potential love relationship might not seem to offer real problems to a truly creative mind. There are, after all, different possible stylistic modes of expression, variations in language, tone, intensity, rhetorical and metrical patterns, imagery, associations--all tools the poet can employ to imbue the conventional situations with freshness and vitality. So

many resources for originality ought surely to offset the difficulties inherent in dealing with themes worn thin from repetition. However, a perusal of collections of Renaissance love lyrics is enough to convince most readers that these difficulties were too often insurmountable. H. M. Richmond in The School of Love, in which he traces the evolution of the love lyric from classical times through the seventeenth century, comments on the difficulties involved in eluding the pull of conventional forces:

> While the situations on which love lyrics are based seem commonly to be conventional, even if given impetus by some personal experience of the author, it might be assumed that the choice of his mode of communication would be entirely within the poet's own creative power. However, once the poet has committed himself to some well-defined traditional pattern this does not prove to be the case. The inescapable logic of that situation at once constrains the author to adopt certain methods of communicating the relationship. He finds certain methods carefully adapted to the theme by traditional practice and experiment, be it in the use of description, narrative, dialogue, or soliloquy. Thus in the two poems of Marvell and Catullus ["To his Coy Mistress," "Vivamus mea Lesbia"] in which the poets are seeking the release of sexual desire, despite the millennia separating them both poets adopt the posture of a lover speaking directly to his mistress. But once past this major decision of format each

> poet finds that more detailed prescriptions begin to operate. Both use the imperative form of verb in an emphatic manner; each heaps up verb forms, usually words of great energy and drama. The relentless logic of the situation leads the two poets to the same images and preoccupations--death, the sun, secrecy.[7]

Other well-known poems in the persuasion-to-love category will readily occur to the reader and most can only serve to support Richmond's contention. The situation does indeed confine the poet's choices. If we look at conventional situations in the idealized love traditions, we will find the case to be the same with them, though at times to a lesser extent. A lady has only so many parts that can be catalogued and praised, a lover only a limited number of approaches. The number of possible images, of course, is all but inexhaustible. But not all are equally appropriate or satisfying and a poet who is determined to be original must sometimes be content with images inferior in logic or beauty to those which custom has staled. The violations of sense and sensibility to which some poets were driven in their attempts to avoid or to improve upon what had become hackneyed are well-known to all who are familiar with

Renaissance poetry. And yet, despite such inherent difficulties, exquisite, memorable poems continued to be produced within the framework of the conventions.

At times, these are the result of formal or stylistic innovations; periodically a poet might come up with a syntactical or rhetorical formula which would unleash new potentialities in old themes. Carew's best-known lyric "Aske me no more" (pp. 102-3), a poem in the tradition of those seeking to define the attraction of the mistress, provides such an instance. Other poets in this species of compliment had apostrophized, analyzed, sentimentalized, puzzled over, the qualities of the force that possessed them. Carew speaks with the authoritative voice of one who has pondered metaphysical questions raised by his mistress and reached conclusive answers.

> Aske me no more where Iove bestowes,
> When Iune is past, the fading rose:
> For in your beauties orient deepe,
> These flowers as in their causes, sleepe.
>
> Aske me no more whether doth stray,
> The golden Atomes of the day:
> For in pure love heaven did prepare
> Those powders to inrich your haire.

Aske me no more whether doth hast,
The Nightingale when May is past:
For in your sweet dividing throat,
She winters and keepes warme her note.

Aske me no more where those starres light,
That downewards fall in dead of night:
For in your eyes they sit, and there,
Fixed become as in their sphere.

Aske me no more if East or West,
The Phenix builds her spicy nest:
For unto you at last shee flies,
And in your fragrant bosome dyes.

Richmond notes that "the poem was perhaps, the most imitated one of the century, and this in an age whose poets copied each other freely."[8] What is most immediately striking about this poem is its rhetorical pattern and it is this element, almost exclusively, which lent itself to imitation.[9] After all, lovely as they are, the images of the lady as a repository of the beauty of roses, sunbeams, nightingales' song, and fallen stars were old when Carew was born. However, careful reading reveals that, here too, Carew is working changes on the old formulas. The resulting freshness is not really satisfactorily explained by pointing out the metaphysical influence which is discernible in the poem. It is true that the worn Elizabethan images take on a new depth of

meaning as a result of the metaphysical note struck in the last two lines of the first stanza which suggest the lady is not merely a final resting place for nature's beauties, but the formal cause from whence they spring, their raison d'etre. There is implicit an assurance that in residing in her these beauties are not only not lost, but that they will be reborn, an assurance reinforced by the use of such words as "orient," "sleepe," "keepes warme," and the familiar image of the Phoenix. Yet I cannot agree with George Williamson's statement that the poem "employs the Metaphysical mode of wit within the song convention that Jonson passed on to the Caroline poets."[10] Despite the admitted "learnedness" of the phrase "as in their causes" (Dunlap notes at length that it is to be understood in relation to the four causes distinguished by Aristotle, Carew's reference being to the concept of formal cause),[11] and the enrichment which the traditional compliment derives from it, the poem remains in essence the conventional Elizabethan tribute to beauty. Unless one learned reference is sufficient indication of the metaphysical mode of wit, there is nothing in the poem to suggest the school of Donne. There is no

real ambiguity here, no concentration of image or argument. The structure is cumulative rather than logical. The "causes" conceit, if a simple analogy may be so designated, is not developed. As it has no logical basis, to attempt to expand it logically would destroy its effectiveness. Carew wisely slips it in casually, almost imperceptibly, with no desire to startle, to shift the argument to an intellectual plane. Helen Gardner's discussion of the distinction between Elizabethan and metaphysical conceits leaves little doubt about the nature of Carew's.

> Elizabethan poetry, dramatic and lyric, abounds in conceits. They are used both as ornaments and as the basis of songs and sonnets. What differentiates the conceits of the metaphysicals is not the fact that they frequently employ curious learning in their comparisons. Many of the poets whom we call metaphysical, Herbert for instance, do not. It is the use which they make of the conceit and the rigorous nature of their conceits, springing from the use to which they are put, which is more important than their frequently learned content. A metaphysical conceit . . . is not indulged in for its own sake. It is used . . . to persuade, or it is used to define, or to prove a point . . . . It can only do this if it is used with an appearance of logical rigour, the analogy being shown to hold by a process not unlike Euclid's superimposition of triangles.[12]

Surely none of these metaphysical traits apply to Carew's use of the phrase "as in their causes"; and just as surely

this is the only image that suggests the metaphysical. Though the poet pretends to be resolving metaphysical questions, the poem's argument remains traditionally Elizabethan. What truly distinguishes it from its hundreds of predecessors employing the same imagery is that Carew manages a rather striking reversal of the carpe diem formula in which the nature images are commonly used to stress the transience of the lady's beauty. His implication that her beauty is more permanent than the fleeting beauties of nature magnifies the compliment many times over, yet so subtly that there is no sense of excessive hyperbole. This serene assurance of her almost immortal beauty, coupled with the certitude suggested by the negative imperative with which he begins each verse, gives the speaker an air of confident authority and his essentially hackneyed "discoveries" a forceful emphasis that makes them appear singular.

There are other equally striking instances where revitalization has been achieved through syntactical devices. But the possibilities are obviously limited and all new fortuitous formulas were immediately assimilated

into the common store to be used and reused until the form became as routinely familiar as the theme.

Ultimately, although fresh imagery, form and syntax might aid a poet in making a conventional love situation less blandly predictable, most successful love lyrics--successful in the sense that they allow us to feel that the situations posited and sentiments expressed are something more than a mere literary exercise of the author's skill--depend on the writer's ability to bring new insights, introduce new possibilities of action or feeling, to the situation itself. I would not go so far as to suggest, as Samuel Johnson does in his Lives of the Poets, that it is folly to write of imagined situations and that "he that professes love ought to feel its power."[13] But as no true lover ever feels his love to be precisely like any other, though love be as old as Eden, so no poet who is willing to adopt the exact responses of hundreds of others in addressing his mistress can create the impression of a potentially actual situation. An intelligent awareness of the psychology of the situation posited, and of human nature in general, can go far to atone for any lack of true emotion in breathing

life into conventions. Anyone who doubts this need only read Donne's early poems. According to Richmond, "What each lyricist accomplishes in a successful love poem is . . . not simply to individualize or dramatize a conventional topic but to express more fully the necessary facts and logical outcome of that kind of situation."[14]

The facts and outcome, insofar as there is room for variation, will of course depend largely on the projected personalities of the individuals involved. Too often these figures are purely formulaic, as flatly predictable as their situations, and can call forth no imaginative involvement on the part of the reader. In such cases smoothness of line and excellence of image must suffice to engage our interest. These are by no means negligible accomplishments. But in an age where so many wrote so well on such limited material, something more is required for a poem to attract more than passing attention. Carew's lyrics manage to do so with satisfying frequency, chiefly because his lovers are usually distinguishable as believable human beings expressing real emotions. Parfitt writes that Carew uses language "precisely to re-enliven the human situation which lies behind

all conventions but which repetition so easily deadens."[15] "Human situation" are key words here; for it is precisely the human situation that most ideal, Petrarchan poetry seems to want to ignore. The continued popularity of ideal love conventions made it almost inevitable that Carew should try to incorporate them into verses written for a courtly audience, even though he found the rarified atmosphere of such love unsuited to the earthy elements of his own nature. But though he makes use of Neo-Platonic and Petrarchan themes, he frequently gives his own distinctive variations to the patterns, causing us to look at them from a slightly different perspective from which the old, worn motifs seem less predominant.

He does not always do so. It might be well to look at some instances where he makes no attempt to adapt the conventional expression of ideal, eternal love to his own more realistic, if somewhat grosser, understanding of that emotion. His "servile imitation" (to use his own phrase) of the emotions of others results in verse which, apart from its formal merits, is not only uninspiring but imaginative, in contrast to his more successful love poems where the love expressed is not so unalloyed. His

song "Eternitie of love protested" (23-4) is a case in point.

> How ill doth he deserve a lovers name,
> Whose pale weake flame,
> Cannot retaine
> His heate in spight of absence or disdaine;
> But doth at once, like paper set on fire,
> Burne, and expire!
> True love can never change his seat,
> Nor did he ever love, that could retreat.
>
> That noble flame, which my brest keepes alive,
> Shall still survive,
> When my soule's fled;
> Nor shall my love dye, when my bodye's dead,
> And never fade:
> My very ashes in their urne,
> Shall like a hallowed Lamp, for ever burne.

The marriage of true minds which Shakespeare and Donne conveyed so beautifully is, in Carew's hands, merely a formula and unconvincing. Imagery is nearly always Carew's forte. But the image here of ashes burning forever in their urn is unlikely to attract or move us. Carew is never at a loss for appealing images to communicate the beauties of sensual love. But he cannot express attractively ideals which are neither real nor attractive to him. He lacks the vision that can conceive of souls or minds meeting with an impact equal to or greater than the impact of bodies; and, it seems, he

lacks the imagination to write as if he could. These unmemorable lines were set to music by Henry Lawes, which no doubt helped to give them an appeal they lack when merely read.

"To Celia, upon Love's Ubiquity" (123) is a still less satisfying poem which has not even music to recommend it. Carew borrows from Petrarchan love the pose of the long-suffering lover whose devotion to his mistress is unaffected by her unchanging coldness; from the neo-Platonic writers he takes the concept of love's ubiquity, its indifference to physical absence. From both traditions he takes the most familiar images and lumps them together indiscriminately. The result is a poem as disunified as it is unoriginal, as improbable as it is undistinguished. Though definitely mediocre, it is not unequal to much of the poetry being produced at the time; but had Carew often written so, he would not rank among those comparative few who deserve to be remembered today. Fortunately his talents were seldom so misemployed as in the following lines.

> As one that strives, being sick, and sick to
> death
> By changing places, to preserve a breath,

A tedious restlesse breath, removes and tryes
A thousand roomes, a thousand policyes,
To cozen payne, when he thinks to find ease,
At last he finds all change, but his disease,
So (like a Ball with fire and powder fild)
I restless am, yet live, each minute kild,
And with that moving torture must retain
(With change of all things else) a constant payn.
Say I stay with you, presence is to me
Nought but a light, to shew my miserie,
And partings are as Rackes, to plague love on,
The further stretchd, the more affliction.
Goe I to Holland, France, or furthest Inde,
I change but onely Countreys not my mind:[16]
And though I passe through ayr and water free,
Despair and hopelesse fate still follow me.
Whilest in the bosome of the waves I reel
My heart I'le liken to the tottering keel,
The sea to my own troubled fate, the wind
To your disdayn, sent from a soul unkind:
But when I lift my sad lookes to the skyes,
Then shall I think I see my Celia's eyes,
And when a Cloud or storm appeares between,
I shall remember what her frownes have been.
Thus, whatsoever course my fates allow,
All things but make me mind my business, you.
The good things that I meet I think streames be
From you the fountain, but what bad I see,
How vile and cursed is that thing thinke I,
That to such goodnes is so contrary?
My whole life is bout you, the Center starre,
But a perpetuall Motion Circular:
I am the dyalls hand, still walking round,
You are the Compasse, and I never sound
Beyond your Circle, neyther can I shew
Ought, but what first expressed is in you:
That wheresoever my teares doe cause me move
My fate still keepes me bounded with your love;
Which ere it dye, or be extinct in me,
Time shall stand still, and moist waves flaming
be.
Yet, being gon, think not on me, I am

A thing too wretched for thy thoughts to name;
But when I dye, and wish all comforts given,
Ile think on you, and by you think on heaven.

The complex syntax, phrasing, and imagery are suggestive of Donne, if only superficially; but where the latter developed metric and stanzaic forms to complement his rhetoric and point up logical stresses, Carew uses pentameter couplets, a form which often works against the sense. Though Donne used this form for his elegies, the couplets there set off logical breaks or pauses in his argument. Here the rhymes are often intrusive and are allowed to control sentence structure to the detriment of any attempt to emulate the rhythms of real speech. Lines 27 through 32 provide the most awkward demonstration of this. And at times, as in line three, an image or thought must be dragged out to fit the metric line.

The poem's content is no less unremarkable than its form. The compass image of lines 35 through 38 is obviously plundered from Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning." Less obviously, the opening image of men "sick to death" is suggestive of the virtuous men dying to whom the parting lovers are compared in Donne's poem. Even the phrasing of the first line seems to echo Donne's

opening: "As virtuous men passe mildly away." Likewise, in lines 19 through 26, there are echoes of these lines from Donne's "Elegie XII. His Parting From Her":

> I will not look upon the quickning Sun,
> But straight her beauty to my sense shall run;
> The ayre shall note her soft, the fire most pure;
> Water suggest her clear, and the earth sure.
> Time shall not lose our passages; the Spring
> How fresh our love was in the beginning;
> (ll. 73-78)

The essential process is the same; the lover in each poem predicts that he will see his absent mistress in the elements of nature which surround him. And yet their conditions are not really similar. Both of Donne's poems affirm the oneness of the lovers and the inability of Fate to divide them through physical separation. But, while Carew too affirms this Platonic concept of love as a matter of the mind, a union unaffected by physical distance, the beauty as well as the logic of the concept is destroyed by the fact that his is an unrequited love. In his case, it is misery that remains constant despite separation, which is more a matter for lament than consolation. And lament he does, with all the tear-floods and sigh-tempests eschewed by Donne's lovers, but typical of the Petrarchan sonneteers. Like any ideal lover of

that school, Carew's remains humbly faithful despite the lady's disdain. The final lines, in which one may catch faint echoes of Shakespeare's sonnets, round off the absurdity. Though all his thoughts are to be absorbed in her, she is not to think of so wretched a thing as he is; and though she be the source of all his wretchedness, he can still say that to think of her will be to think of heaven. The irrationality of these final lines will scarcely be noticed by anyone who has picked his way through this grab-bag of borrowed posturings and images. So little resemblance is there between this and Carew's other love poems that one cannot help but wonder if he did not deliberately set out to construct this mindless imitation to mimic the poetic parasites who continuously copied what they could not create.

Such speculation, of course, is futile. The poem stands as an indicator of what Carew might have been had he been content to transfer unquestioningly into verse, unaltered by his own experience, the attitudes toward love and the fixed formulas for its expression developed by poets before him.

In another attempt at Platonic love poetry, "To my Mistresse in absence" (24), an earthy element creeps in despite the convention. Here the "boundless spirits" of two Donnelike lovers meet and souls kiss; but the hours lag and the souls' chief joy in their "bitter absence" comes from contemplating their bodies languishing with desire to join with one another--a consummation wished for no less fervently by their watching souls whose own meeting seems decidedly less than satisfactory. Carew learned much from Donne but he could not learn to convey convincingly a love independent of the senses. No more could he imagine himself as eternally idolizing an untouchable goddess whose unnatural coldness condemned him to a life of abject suffering. Fortunately he does not often try. Usually when he imagines himself in a conventional situation, he imagines his own natural responses and writes accordingly. Believable as well as lovely verses result.

"The Spring" (3) is such a poem. Although its theme is highly conventional, the situation involved admits large scope for Carew's descriptive talents and may cause his reader to wish he had more often devoted

himself to the celebration of natural, rather than feminine, beauty. Here his use of the pentameter couplet is sure. There is no attempt at the irregular and unwieldy syntax of "Upon Love's Ubiquity." Instead his sentences flow naturally as he moves from one point of observation to another. He regulates the tempo through masterful use of the caesura, and the patterns and cadences of natural speech are maintained.

> Now that the winter's gone, the earth hath lost
> Her snow-white robes, and now no more the frost
> Candies the grasse, or castes an ycie creame
> Upon the silver Lake, or Chrystall streame:
> But the warme Sunne thawes the benummed Earth,
> And makes it tender, gives a sacred birth
> To the dead Swallow; wakes in hollow tree
> The drowzie Cuckow, and the Humble-Bee.
> Now doe a quire of chirping Minstrels bring
> In tryumph to the world, the youthfull Spring.
> The Vallies, hills, and woods, in rich araye,
> Welcome the comming of the long'd for May.
> Now all things smile; onely my Love doth lowre:
> Nor hath the scalding Noon-day-Sunne the power,
> To melt that marble yce, which still doth hold
> Her heart congeald, and makes her pittie cold.
> The Oxe which lately did for shelter flie
> Into the stall, doth now securely lie
> In open fields; and love no more is made
> By the fire side; but in the cooler shade
> Amyntas now doth with his Cloris sleepe
> Under a Sycamoure, and all things keepe
> Time with the season, only shee doth carry
> Iune in her eyes, in her heart Ianuary.

The imagery, though predictable, is lovely, the sounds melodious. But perhaps the outstanding element in

the poem is Carew's use of objective tone. Dunlap notes that "the paradox of burgeoning earth and unhappy lover" was developed by Petrarch and used widely by his imitators.[17] Traditionally the joys of Spring are recorded primarily to point up the contrasting misery of the out-of-tune lover. Carew gives his lover a slightly different voice and viewpoint, altering the traditional emphasis. His poem is rather more impersonal than its English predecessors. There is no overt expression of emotion, no reference to his suffering. The understated simplicity with which the central contrast is first stated, in line thirteen, gives it added impact. The complaint is slipped in delicately and naturally. But the punctuation--nowhere else do we get two end-stopped phrases in a single line--gives it the emphasis it requires. Carew will not adopt the usual role of abject lover. It is not <u>he</u> who is out of tune with Nature, but the lady. The fact that she alone, of all things in Nature, does not respond to the charm of Spring proclaims her unnatural indeed. And when not even the "scalding" heat of the noon day sun can melt her heart, a lover as clear-sighted as this one will not be long in concluding that the warmth of his love will

never do it. There is a note of regret perhaps in the contrasts drawn in lines 17-24. But the speaker himself seems very much attuned to the season and not at all likely to waste it weeping useless tears among the willows. No speculation about the future of his love is made, of course, and there is no hint of faithlessness. But the conventional figure takes on firmer dimensions than usual by being made to seem less the helpless victim of an overpowering emotion than the adequate master of it. A stronger, more effective poem results.

The plight of the unrequited lover is taken up again in "A cruell Mistris." (8). In this complaint, Carew employs conventional precepts of the religion of love. Too many ladies before this had been elevated to the status of goddess or saint at whose shrine the lover worshipped for the poem's situation to need any explanation. Indeed, Carew does not even bother to state the conceit explicitly before launching his complaint. But though the imagery is standard, his argument reveals that he is not quite reconciled to the role of humble suppliant in which the poet-lover who thus idealizes his mistress is normally cast.

Wee read of Kings and Gods that kindly tooke
A pitcher fil'd with water from the brooke;
But I have dayly tendred without thankes
Rivers of teares that overflow their bankes.
A slaughter'd bull will appease angry Iove,
A horse the Sun, a Lambe the God of love,
But shee disdaines the spotlesse sacrifice
Of a pure heart that at her altar lyes.
Vesta is not displeas'd if her chast vrne
Doe with repayred fuell ever burne;
But my Saint frownes though to her honour'd name
I consecrate a never dying flame.
Th' Assyrian King did none i'th' furnace throw,
But those that to his Image did not bow;
With bended knees I daily worship her,
Yet she consumes her owne Idolater.
Of such a Goddesse no times leave record,
That burnt the temple where she was ador'd.

Rufus Blanshard says of Carew that "He re-informs the old conceits with new meanings, creates ironic contexts for the expression of traditional attitudes, and argues or pleads with a combination of grace and ingenuity that disguises platitude."[18] This statement seems an apt description of Carew's accomplishment here. The flood of hyperbole to which this tradition usually lends itself is kept under control in this poem as a result of the ironic tone and logical development. The speaker does not address the lady directly. He might be pleading his case before some divine court of appeals, so reasonably does he argue. He progresses, in lines one through twelve, by

citing facts and precedents which prove the unreasonableness of his lady's continued disdain, showing that Kings and Gods have been pleased with lesser sacrifices than those he has offered. Thus, without inpugning her godhood, he substantiates his claim to some show of kindness from her.

In the final six lines, however, the argument strikes a more formidable note. The voice is as calmly reasonable as ever, but the irony is more prominent. With the analogy introduced in line thirteen the poet verges on heresy, letting slip the pretense of the mistress' divinity. The term "Idolater" is a lovely touch, for it lends added implications to the nature of the poet's love, or more accurately, to his realistic perception of that love. An idolater is, literally, one who worships a false god, and the preceding reference to the Assyrian King who, despite the inaccuracy in nationality, is undoubtedly Nebuchadnezzar, emphasizes this meaning. The latter threw into the furnace those worshipers of the true God who refused to pay homage to the image he had erected. Unlike them, the poet has not refused to worship the idol. And in pointing out the injustice of

his being consigned to the flames anyway, he is incidentally reminding her that she is just that--a false idol, not a legitimate goddess. It is ungallant of him perhaps; but it has the effect of bringing the static conventional situation to life, making the relationship seem more plausible. An ideal lover might suffer his mistress' incessant scorn without diminishing his devotion. A real, human lover in such a situation must grow bitter, impatient with one who took his devotion so much for granted, and might well remind her that she has feet of clay as Carew does here. The final couplet carries this message still further. It may seem at first glance to say only that such an implacable goddess as this has been heretofore unknown. As such it could be taken as a compliment, an expression of the awe in which she is held. But when we recall another essential element in the tradition of Petrarchan love poetry, that the poet-lover may render his lady immortal through his lines, the couplet seems to contain a veiled threat. If her divinity rests solely on her ability to command his adoration, her immortality depends on his willingness to eternize her in verse. If she destroys him, or his love, no such

poetic evidence of her powers and virtues will survive. It is an elegantly subtle warning to a vain young lady that she cannot continue to deny this supplicant forever--unless, of course, she is prepared to be one of those goddesses of whom "no times leave record."

Carew's reworking of conventional formulas is not always as subtle and serious as in the two poems discussed above. If he is a little less selfless in paying court to his lady than his idealistic predecessors, he is surely more entertaining. The sense of humor, and of irony, which frequently mark his verse could not help but find an outlet in his experiments with conventions which posed such a challenge to the writer's originality and in which he found so much that was absurd.

One of the most popular conventions of Petrarchan love poetry was the writing of verse compliments idealizing the beauty of the lady. Usually such verses took the form of a catalogue of the separate elements of her physical beauty, described in hyperbolic terms, ending with praise of her inner beauty (mind, virtue, soul) which, in accordance with the ideal love

relationship, was her chief attraction. This form remained popular with the cavalier poets, but in their hands became something less reverent and romantic, more playful and urbanely gallant. This applies to most of the verse compliments of Carew; however, because he often gives his compliments a structure or tone strongly reminiscent of the earlier Petrarchan verses, the reader's attention is apt to be drawn to the disparity between his humorous or earthy expressions of love and those of his more idealistic predecessors. I would like to examine two such typically Carevian compliments.

"The Comparison" (p. 98) adopts a quietly reverent tone so completely reminiscent of the 16th century sonneteers that it is possible to be lulled by it into reading the poem as a simple throwback to their conventional idealizations. But the simplicity, like the tone, is deceiving. For if one ignores the tone and attends only to what is said in the opening lines, the poem appears to be instead an almost equally conventional anti-Petrarchan statement. It seems his intention is to mock the hackneyed hyperboles as Shakespeare

does in his Sonnet 130, "My Mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun." Carew's poem begins:

> Dearest thy tresses are not threads of gold,
> Thy eyes of Diamonds, nor doe I hold
> Thy lips for Rubies: Thy faire cheekes to be
> Fresh Roses; or thy teeth of Ivorie:
> Thy skin that doth thy daintie bodie sheath
> Not Alablaster is, nor dost thou breath
> Arabian odours . . .

So many poets had disclaimed such metaphors that another such disclaimer, which Carew seems to be writing, would hardly strike the reader as original. What is striking is his reversal of the direction in which the poem seems to be going. It turns out he is not attacking these metaphors for their extravagance, as others had done. The trouble with them is that they are not extravagant enough to describe his mistress. The poem continues:

> those the earth brings forth
> Compar'd with which would but impaire they worth.
> Such may be others Mistresses, but mine
> Holds nothing earthly, but is all divine.
> Thy tresses are those rayes that doe arise
> Not from one Sunne, but two; Such are thy eyes:
> Thy lips congealed Nectars are, and such
> As but a Deitie, there's none dare touch.
> The perfect crimson that thy cheeke doth cloath
> (But onely that it farre exceeds them both)
> Aurora's blush resembles, or that redd
> That Iris struts in when her mantl's spred.
> Thy teeth in white doe Leda's swan exceede,
> Thy skin's a heavenly and immortall weede,
> And when thou breath'st, the winds are readie
> strait

To filch it from thee, and doe therefore wait
Close at thy lips, and snatching it from thence
Beare it to Heaven, where 'tis Joves frankincense.
Faire Goddesse, since thy feature makes thee one,
Yet be not such for these respects alone;
But as you are divine in outward view
So be within as faire, as good, as true.

This second catalogue, if anything, exceeds in its hyperbole the excesses of the Petrarchan poets to which Carew was implicitly alluding in the first seven lines. Its tone remains serious and reverent, and the poem closes with an expression of the conventional concept of ideal beauty as being very much a matter of the inner nature. We might conclude that Carew is, after all, writing a serious traditional compliment. But the shift from an apparently anti-Petrarchan to a Petrarchan attitude in mid-stream, as it were, suggests that Carew is having a little fun with the convention itself. Having renounced the usual metaphors as too gross to describe his mistress, he sets out to clothe her in suitably divine images. It would seem his is a truly uplifted, spiritual love untainted by earthy elements. Yet, though the images he finally uses are, as he says, of a divine nature, the references are to pagan divinities and suggest the gods' more erotic moments: Aurora blushing as

she slips from her lover's bed, Jove venting his lust on Leda in the form of a swan, Iris strutting in her scarlet dress. The psychological implications are such that, though he earnestly professes to worship an ethereal beauty, his love is revealed to be of a somewhat more corporeal nature. As in the verse letter to Sandys, the choice of images deliberately belies the profession of ideals incompatible with the sensual side of man's nature which, as Carew demonstrates in this not so simple compliment, cannot be totally denied.

Equally delightful, though it works in quite another way, is Carew's poem, "The Complement" (99). Selig calls this poem "an exercise in the tradition of informing a young lady that she is not loved for any single feature, but for all of them combined."[19] This is certainly what the poem does, but I would suggest that the tradition from which this lyric, and others like it, is an offshoot, is the one discussed in my treatment of the preceding poem, that of informing a lady that she is loved not so much for any feature of her physical beauty, as for her inner beauty, which surpasses them all. For the reader thoroughly familiar with this tradition, such

a statement would be the logical culmination of Carew's catalogue, and his refusal to supply it gives the conclusion of the poem a humorous impact. As, stanza by stanza, the poet takes up and then gently rejects each of the lady's separate beauties as the cause of his love, he would seem to be moving toward an ultimate citing of one as superior to all of the others. And logically, as well as ideally, that chief beauty must be her mind or soul, which are, as everyone knows, always to be regarded as eminently superior to physical beauties. However, in this poem too, the conventional ideal is undermined. The light tone and the obvious relish the speaker takes in sensuously describing her physical features do not at all suggest an ideal lover likely to appreciate her finer, abstract qualities. Yet he is prevented from seeming merely a leering, callous sensualist by the humor which accompanies his sensuous dallying. His love does <u>not</u> go beyond the purely physical, but he is as good-humoredly aware of its (and his) limitations, its deviation from the ideal, as is the reader.

The poem is too long to quote in full, but the stanzas describing the lady's neck and breasts will serve very well to illustrate.

> I doe not love thee (O my fairest)
> For that richest, for that rarest
> Silver pillar which stands under
> Thy round head, that globe of wonder;
> Though that necke be whiter farre,
> Than towers of pollisht Ivory are.
>
> I doe not love thee for those mountaines
> Hill'd with snow, whence milkey fountaines,
> (Suger'd sweete, as sirropt berries)
> Must one day run through pipes of cherries;
> O how much those breasts doe move me,
> Yet for them I doe not love thee:
> (ll. 25-36)

The excessive hyperbole of globes, pillars, mountains, fountains and pipes of cherries is deliberately absurd as, the speaker knows, is a love based solely on such features. Yet while we see the absurdity of an overemphasis on physical beauty we are not allowed to forget that it is nevertheless highly appealing to man's sensual nature. The descriptions grow more deliberately licentious as the poet moves down the lady's body. He is obviously enjoying his imaginative journey, and at each stop it is harder to believe his protest that it is not for this item that he loves her. His playful

audacity reaches new "heights" in this stanza celebrating her thighs:

> I doe not love thee for those thighes,
> Whose Alablaster rocks doe rise
> So high and even that they stand
> Like Sea-markes to some happy land.
> Happy are those eyes have seene them,
> More happy they that saile betweene them.
> (ll. 43-48)

Had the poem ended with the conventional tribute to her inner beauty, it would have been most unconvincing after such a catalogue. Instead, Carew closes with an admission of what the reader has known all along. It is these physical attributes that he loves her for, though not for any particular one: "But wouldst thou know (deere sweet) for all." His failure to praise any higher quality in the lady is no letdown. And his initial playful fear that his mistress will be grieved to hear that it is not her physical charms he loves her for suggests that she too would neither expect nor desire a compliment in line with the ideal. The effect of "The Complement" is thus a very delightful one all around; though it may be in conflict with the more serious tradition of compliments that its structure recalls, it is totally at peace with itself.

As I have tried to indicate in this discussion, it is not unawareness of the ideals postulated for men, particularly as they apply to human love, that is responsible for Carew's consistenly down-to-earth poetry, but rather an awareness and acceptance of the fact that such ideals are too often either unattainable for man, or undesirable, at odds with his humanity. Poets who sang of ideal love strove to idealize the objects of their affection, placing them on pedestals so high that they exceeded the grasp of mortal men. The absurdity of such a process, in view of man's real nature and needs, is illustrated often in Carew's verse. In "A divine Mistresse" (6), a truly exquisite poem in which irony is a major device, he posits a mistress endowed with all the perfections the Petrarchan poets attempted to assign to theirs. Yet the tone is not boastful or elated but wistful. For the lady is out of reach for the lover, as perfection is beyond the reach of humanity. She possesses "every beauteous line," yet the speaker, whose ideal is realized in her, cannot be called happy.

In natures peeces still I see
Some errour, that might mended bee;
Something my wish could still remove,
Alter or adde; but my faire love
Was fram'd by hands farre more divine;
For she hath every beauteous line:
Yet I had beene farre happier,
Had Nature that made me, made her;
Then likenes, might (that love creates)
Have made her love what now she hates:
Yet I confesse I cannot spare
From her iust shape the smallest haire;
Nor need I beg from all the store
Of heaven, for her one beautie more:
Shee hath too much divinity for mee,
You Gods teach her some more humanitie.

The speaker's situation is no different from that of thousands of sonneteers before him; only his ironic insight differentiates him. The poem reveals that perfection is unnatural, incompatible with imperfect humanity; he who strives to attain it must meet, inevitably, with frustration. How nonsensical then, seems all the idealists' striving to make a woman the epitome of a perfection which can only alienate her from them. As the close of Carew's poem reveals, man cannot hope to embrace his ideal without in some way diminishing the perfection which attracted him in the first place. The prayer of the last line is, in effect, a contradiction of the lines which precede it, and it underlines the

pathetic, paradoxical position of man. Perfection is not really perfection if any desirable quality is lacking. This "divine" lady lacks the humanity that would place her within the lover's reach, which is certainly desirable. The speaker is thus reduced to saying she would be more perfect if less perfect which is paradoxical nonsense. But if that is true, what are we to say of all the poetry which seems bent on presenting this inhumanly perfect, unreachable woman as ideal?

G. A. E. Parfitt, in his article on Carew, includes an excellent commentary on this poem.

> The stress on the earth-bound limitations of the poet's nature is in part the conventional pose of the poet's inferiority, and as such a compliment to the mistress, but Carew also reminds us that the attitude his persona adopts has validity, hyperbole is being held in check by a kind of realism. So "humanitie" does more than make the obvious contrast with "divinity"; it also reminds us that idealization of the mistress can dehumanize a situation.[20]

It is precisely this dehumanization of love that Carew finds so unappealing and works to eliminate in his experiments with ideal love conventions. Of course, going to the opposite extreme and treating love as a purely physical process can be dehumanizing also. Carew is

completely aware of this, and though some of his lovers are this gross, their defects are always made apparent.

A realist, at least where love is concerned, is what Carew finally, essentially, is. The folly, the pain, the imperfections of love, as well as its joys, find expression in his verse. Love for him is seldom serious, spiritual, Godlike; like man himself, love has its humorous, its earthy, even beastly, sides and all apsects receive recognition. Perhaps the thing about Carew which best explains the direction taken in his verse, and even his life, is the fact that he is so frankly unashamed of being human. He accepts the bad with the good, the bitter with the sweet, the pleasure and the pain. His reader must do so too.

## CHAPTER IV

## LOVE POEMS: UNCONVENTIONAL REALITIES

As is already evident from the preceding chapters, it is as spokesman for a realistic, down-to-earth view of human love that Carew is consistently at his best. Despite a certain amount of inevitable repetition such a discussion must entail, I should like to turn now to analysis of some of his finer love poems in order to justify the claims I have made for him and, hopefully, to permanently dispel any lingering notion that, in abjuring the romantic ideals of love as a predominantly aesthetic and spiritual experience, he reduces it to a gross, animalistic process. For Carew, though no idealist, is a serious, often eloquent champion of love as a deeply meaningful human experience in which coy deceptions and daydreams have no place.

His precepts are simple, sane, consistent. A satisfactory love relationship, he asserts again and again, must nurture the senses as well as the soul of

man; and it must be a mutual attraction between equals, involving reciprocal affection and giving. His most memorable lovers disdain the mistress-servant relationship of the courtly love code, refuse to pretend satisfaction with neo-Platonic embraces of souls or minds only. They neither worship women nor denigrate them in the anti-Petrarchan fashion; they only ask that they be fair. Other lovers may waste themselves and time in devotion to a hopeless cause; Carew's lovers, when they go a-courting, expect to win their suits. They enjoy the game of courtship and they play it with a flair. But they are not likely to regard a smile from the lady or permission to be near her as a satisfactory resolution of it all.

Generally, Carew's verse implies that love is not love unless it finds reciprocation. It does not endure repeated rebuffs or long separation. He writes in his song "Separation of Lovers" (61-62):

> Yet though absence for a space
> Sharpen the keene Appetite,
> Long continuance, doth quite
> All love's characters efface.
>
> For the sense not fed, denies
> Nourishment unto the minde,

Which with expectation pinde,
Love of a consumption dyes. (ll. 17-24)

The poet does not deny that love has its seat in the mind but points out reasonably that the mind depends on the body for nourishment. The healthy-love-in-a-healthy-mind-in-a-healthy-body argument is not really sound logic, of course; and by making love's growth, or alternatively its dying, analogous to the physical process, it seriously undermines the suggestion that the mind is the paramount factor in love. Yet despite the speciousness of the logic, his thesis that physical sustenance is vital to love is too often true to be lightly dismissed.

Though "Separation of Lovers" is not one of Carew's better poems, the logical structure and rational tone it employs are typical of the group of fine poems, emphasizing the sensual aspects of love, that will be the focus of this chapter. The syllogistic structure often serves to offset the poet's sensual emphasis, to make his insistence on physical involvement seem reasonable--as indeed it is if one accepts his argument that man, as a mixture of soul and sense, cannot be fulfilled by a love that denies one half of his nature. Thus in

"To his mistresse retiring in affection" (129-30), a poem in the Petrarchan tradition of the faithful, though unrequited, lover, Carew asserts that reason is opposed to such supposedly ideal devotion:

> But if my constant love shall fail to move thee,
> Then know my reason hates thee, though I love thee. (11. 11-12)

Edward Selig states that "The main difference between Carew and his predecessors in the Petrarchan tradition is that Carew is disposed to reason with the ladies, not just to appear before them on bended knee."[1] It is an important point, I think, though somewhat understated. With reason, or at least the appearance of logic, on their side, Carew's liberated lovers are quite disposed to argue or even to threaten. Unencumbered by idealistic notions of women's divinity, they are apt to insist on favors from their ladies rather more substantial than ribbons or bracelets of hair. They are not above bargaining, using the poet's power to immortalize as a weapon, though they wield it gently as a rule.

"To a Lady that desired I would love her." (81) and "Ingratefull beauty threatned." (17) are two of Carew's most superb poems in this vein. Predictably

enough, Donne's influence can be seen more clearly here than in any of Carew's poems with the exception of his Donne elegy. According to Rufus Blanshard, what Carew learned from Donne "was to probe, explore, question, ring changes on the old conceits."[2] This aspect of Donne's style can be seen in these poems, but perhaps more striking, though less tangible, are familiar echoes in tone, voice, attitude. And yet these are no servile imitations. Carew is never as strenuously analytical as Donne nor are his images as astonishing. His irony is softened by gallantry, his meter, even when irregular, is musical. If his images do not strike us as original, his use of them often does. Because he does not try to startle, preferring to be subtle in his effect, nothing impedes the flow of his lines, the harmonious meshing of image and idea. Thus it is that, as Joseph Summers notes, Carew "often surpasses Donne in the evocation of sensuous and sensual (rather than dramatic) immediacy."[3]

In tone and style, "To a Lady that desired I would love her" is strongly reminiscent of Donne's "Womans Constancy." Its theme, however, is completely different. Donne's poem, in which the speaker anticipates with scorn

the various ruses his lady might use to justify her subsequent faithlessness, is a single seventeen line unit with irregular meter. The first five lines are sufficient to show the similarities.

> Now thou hast lov'd me one whole day,
> Tomorrow when thou leav'st, what wilt thou say?
> Wilt thou then Antedate some new made vow?
> Or say that now
> We are not just those persons, which we were?[4]

Carew's poem, which is twice the length of this one, is devoted to gentle persuasion, and as the poem progresses, stanza after smooth stanza, the sensuous music of his alliterative lines gradually drowns out the echoes of Donne.

> 1.
> Now you have freely given me leave to love,
> What will you doe?
> Shall I your mirth, or passion move
> When I begin to wooe;
> Will you torment, or scorne, or love me too?
> 2.
> Each pettie beautie can disdaine, and I
> Spight of your hate
> Without your leave can see, and dye;
> Dispence a nobler Fate,
> 'Tis easie to destroy, you may create.
> 3.
> Then give me leave to love, and love me too,
> Not with designe
> To rayse, as Loves curst Rebells doe,
> When puling Poets whine,
> Fame to their beautie, from their blubbr'd eyne.

4.
Griefe is a puddle, and reflects not cleare
Your beauties rayes,
Joyes are pure streames, your eyes appeare
Sullen in sadder layes,
In chearfull numbers they shine bright with prayse;
5.
Which shall not mention to expresse you fayre
Wounds, flames, and darts,
Stormes in your brow, nets in your haire,
Suborning all your parts,
Or to betray, or torture captive hearts.
6.
I'le make your eyes like morning Suns appeare,
As milde, and faire;
Your brow as Crystall smooth, and cleare,
And your dishevell'd hayre
Shall flow like a calme Region of the Ayre.
7.
Rich Natures store, (which is the Poets Treasure)
I'le spend, to dresse
Your beauties, if your mine of Pleasure
In equall thankfulnesse
You but unlocke, so we each other blesse.

This prospective lover, rational and cautious, is seemingly unwilling to proceed with the relationship until he knows exactly what he is getting into. Yet his hesitance is only a ruse, though a very urbane one. Although apparently concerned about how his advances will be received, he is already launching his attack in the second stanza with a confidant and well-prepared argument which, though it seems carefully based on reason, is largely an appeal to her vanity. At the same time, he

is subtly laying out the rules by which he will play the game. He makes it clear that the lady's "leave to love" (one suspects this will be the last time she will have the upper hand) must imply more than the right to weep at her disdain and, in his grief, write poems celebrating her beauty. Such conquests are "easie," within the power of any "pettie beautie" and therefore, he implies, beneath her. In any case, such a one-sided arrangement would be in no way desirable, for it could satisfy neither of them, as he makes clear in the witty argument of stanzas four through six. His unhappiness at being unable to possess her would make it impossible for him to do her beauty full justice in his verse.

In a fine reversal of traditional usage, all the Petrarchan images of wounds, flames, darts, stormes, nets, commonly used to compliment a mistress, are here treated as unflattering and demeaning. Such stuff is produced only for "Loves curst Rebells" by "puling Poets" whose blubbered eyes cannot clearly appraise beauty. With these disparagements, he neatly forestalls the possibility that she might wish to play the role of scornful lady to his abject servant. She is almost bound to show herself above

such puerile games--and to prove herself equal to his expectations by meeting them. Her only alternative to adopting the mild aspect he praises so highly in stanza seven (and if she does, can the key to her "mine of Pleasure" be long withheld?) is to withdraw her leave to love altogether. In either case, the poet has the satisfaction of an immediate answer to his initial question.

It may not be a very uplifting proposition, but the reason and elegance with which it is presented, and the pleasant picture which the final stanza presents of a balanced relationship in which each bestows his richest gifts upon the other, prevent it from being unpalatable. Considering the earthy nature of the love described, this is no small accomplishment in itself.

"Ingratefull beauty threatned" echoes this insistence upon mutual rights in love, though much less delicately and pleasantly. Yet the no-nonsense approach of this poem gives it an immediacy which is extremely effective. The tone and situation are reminiscent of Donne's Elegie VII (to which Helen Gardner has given the title "Tutelage"), though Donne's ringing rebuke of the

ungrateful lady ("Natures lay Ideot, I taught thee to love")[5] is not matched in Carew's calmer opening--perhaps because his lover is not as frustratedly helpless as Donne's.

Know Celia, (since thou art so proud,)
'Twas I that gave thee thy renowne:
Thou hadst, in the forgotten crowd
Of common beauties, liv'd unknowne,
Had not my verse exhal'd thy name,
And with it, ympt the wings of fame.

That killing power is none of thine,
I gave it to thy voyce, and eyes:
Thy sweets, thy graces, all are mine;
Thou art my starre, shin'st in my skies;
Then dart not from thy borrowed sphere
Lightning on him, that fixt thee there.

Tempt me with such affrights no more,
Lest what I made, I uncreate;
Let fooles thy mystique formes adore,
I'le know thee in thy mortall state:
Wise Poets that wrap't Truth in tales,
Knew her themselves, through all her vailes.

As Rufus Blanshard points out in comparing this with Donne's poem, "Carew's movement is less nervous, his imagery less audacious."[6] The greater control shown by Carew's speaker is justified, I think, by the fact that he is more in control of the situation. For, unlike Donne (or any poet before him according to H. M. Richmond who traces the theme of the lover rebuking a faithless or ungrateful mistress from classical poets through the

Stuart lyricists), Carew recognizes and uses, as a weapon to keep his lady true, the poet-lover's subjective view of her nature. For she is a goddess, a queen, an angel, only as long as he continues to portray her as such.

> It was left to Carew in "Ingrateful Beauty Threatened" to bring the warning of a fickle woman to its full maturity as an immediately effective psychological weapon, rather than a wistful hope for her future ruin. Carew's poem is another of the peaks of Renaissance creativity and deserves the most careful attention . . . . It is important to stress that what is involved is not simply a poet's pride in his craft, it is the sense of the power of a lover's affection to confer a distinction on its source far superior to that source's intrinsic virtues. The poem turns as much on a point of applied psychology as upon a poet's vanity. The loss of a lover subtly diminishes the attractions of a beautiful woman--this is the assertion that is made by Carew . . . .[7]

Whether or not a reader catches the subtle psychology that has impressed Richmond, he can scarcely help being moved by the naturalness of the poet's feeling or, more simply, <u>believing</u> in it. For it seems to me that much of the poem's appeal stems from the fact that its angry tone and frankly self-interested argument are so convincing, so realistically, typically, eternally human. The lover in this poem has made the mistake of giving the lady what she wants in advance, on credit as it were;

and she has not only taken his gifts as her due, with apparently no thought of payment, but is now using them against him. Only an idealist or a fool would suffer such a situation meekly. This lover is neither. He is more like a businessman who will no longer be put off with promises nor intimidated by arrogance. In short, he will possess or repossess.

Carew's use of imagery in this poem seems to me particularly fine. Many a poet has claimed the credit for making his mistress' beauty famous or immortalizing her in verse. But I cannot recall another instance in which the poet has claimed to have <u>created</u> her beauty, as if out of nothing, like a God. Not only is this power stated explicitly in line fourteen, but it is implied in line five through the use of "exhal'd" with its suggestion of the poet's having, like God, <u>breathed</u> life into common clay. The image of his having "ympt" or grafted her name to the wings of fame, as if it were some gigantic, soaring bird, is also striking. But by far the most impressive image--it might justifiably be called a conceit--is that in lines fifteen through eighteen. Not only poets, but theologians and philosophers as well, have traditionally

"cast Poetical vails over the face of their mysteries,"[8] created myths, parables, symbols, in an effort to make the sublime comprehensible. The poet, at first glance, seems only to be ranking himself among the select few who are capable of looking on Truth (in this case, the lady's real dazzling self) unveiled. As such, the image is a compliment to her as well as to himself, implying that she is as mystic, as generally unknowable, as Truth. In reality though, he has wrapped this very mortal lady in tales in order to make her appear more dazzling, more divine than she really is. But he makes it clear that the "mystique formes" in which he has presented her are only for fools to believe in; and he does not intend her to count himself among them. There is clearly nothing philosophical about the superior knowledge of her he intends to attain.

This aggressive, unchivalric assertion of the poet's rights over his "creation" may seem offensive; but as Richmond points out, it "is surely a proper reaction to the lady's earlier insolence to her lover."[9] The justice and wit of the argument are undoubtedly primarily responsible for the popularity of the poem, which is one of the most frequently reprinted of Carew's works.

F. R. Leavis calls it "a distinguished achievement," and comments:

> It is not a mere charming trifle; it has in its light grace a remarkable strength. How fine and delicate is the poise it maintains may be brought out by looking through Carew's Restoration successors for a poem to compare with it. In its sophisticated gallantry there is nothing rakish or raffish--nothing of the Wild Gallant; its urbane assurance has in it nothing of the Restoration insolence . . . it represents a Court culture (if the expression may be permitted as a convenience) that preserved, in its sophisticated way, an element of the tradition of chivalry and that had turned the studious or naively enthusiastic Renaissance classicizing and poetizing of an earlier period into something intimately bound up with contemporary life and manners--something consciously both mature and, while contemporary, traditional.[10]

Lovers, alas, no longer rely on the power of poetry to woo or retain a lady's affection. But though the moves in Courtship have been modified, it is still the same game, involving the same emotions and rules of fair play. Thus the lover's angry resentment at a fickle woman's abuse of his love, the feeling which gives the poem its force, remains timeless.

The faithlessness of lovers is a theme dealt with frequently in Carew's realistic love poems. He was keenly aware that love, like all other joys of human

life, was likely to be imperfect and, therefore, impermanent. But if he was without the faith in the endurance of love which characterized the verse of his Renaissance predecessors, he could not be as blasé about it as his Cavalier contemporaries. The inconstancy of lovers, male or female, is not something he can joke about in the fashion of Donne or Suckling. Eleven of his poems treat situations in which love has been scorned or betrayed and in all of them we are made aware of the pain inflicted. Despite his reputation as a libertine, Carew, at least in his poetry, seems always to take the failure of a love affair seriously. Though he may not himself have believed in the permanence of love, his lovers never seem quite able to banish all hope of finding it. And when that hope dies, they are bitter or angry or hurt. They do not vow to continue loving, as Petrarchan lovers might, despite their wounds; but neither do they bounce back lightly to another love as if they had expected no different from women (or men) and couldn't care less. For always, often in spite of knowing better, they <u>had</u> expected more. In their disillusionment they may blame themselves for their naiveté as much as their lover for

exploiting it. Thus the abandoned mistress in "In the person of a Lady to her inconstant servant" (40) refuses to complain to the god of love about her lover's abuse of her kindness, knowing she should not have believed the vows and tears which won her favors:

> If I implore the Gods, they'le find
> Thee too ingrateful, me too kind. (ll. 20-21)

The plight of a lady rejected by a lover after he has enjoyed her physically is so common in literature that it is difficult to portray without boredom or bathos. The poem just mentioned is saved from either fate by Carew's allowing the lady to recognize and state the inevitable judgment her complaint would draw from the Gods, as well as from men. In "A deposition from Love" (16), however, the traditional situation undergoes a refreshing reversal. Here a lady who has given herself to her lover proves the traitor, leaving the man to mourn what has been lost. Its formal beauty and exquisite portrayal of the feelings involved make this one of Carew's finer poems.

> I was foretold, your rebell sex,
> Nor love, nor pitty knew;
> And with what scorne, you use to vex
> Poore hearts, that humbly sue;
> Yet I believ'd, to crowne our paine,
> Could we the fortresse win,

The happy lover sure should gaine
  A Paradise within:
I thought loves plagues, like Dragons sate,
Only to fright us at the gate.

But I did enter, and enjoy,
  What happy lovers prove;
For I could kisse, and sport, and toy,
  And tast those sweets of love;
Which had they but a lasting state,
  Or if in Celia's brest,
The force of love might not abate,
  Jove were too meane a guest.
But now her breach of faith, far more
Afflicts, then did her scorne before.

Hard fate! to have been once possest
  As victor, of a heart,
Atchiev'd with labour, and unrest,
  And then forc'd to depart.
If the stout Foe will not resigne,
  When I besiege a Towne,
I lose, but what was never mine;
  But he that is cast downe
From enjoy'd beautie, feeles a woe,
Onely deposed Kings can know.

Despite the second stanza's celebration of the sensual pleasures of love, something one comes finally to expect from Carew, the speaker is clearly lamenting the loss of something more than just a body. There is, in Carew's philosophy, more to love than sensual delights or a businesslike exchange of favors. In his discussion of the Renaissance poets' refinement of the classical treatment of heterosexual love as a purely physical attraction,

H. M. Richmond comments: "If one recognizes that love is not simply the gratification of sensual desire, the failure of the mistress to live up to expectation is not to be handled adequately by a blistering curse, any more than the possession of her body would of itself be wholly satisfying."[11] Though Richmond is talking specifically about such poets as Wyatt, Spenser, and Donne, in whom this refined sensibility is not surprising, this poem proves that it was shared by Carew. His lover, though forewarned of the obstacles in the path to a lady's heart, had nevertheless believed that once he surmounted them and achieved his goal, his happiness would be assured. Clearly, it was not merely sexual enjoyment of her that he sought or he would have nothing to complain of. He had hoped for a lasting relationship and had made the complacent male assumption, which Carew here suggests is not always justified, that possession of her body assured him of her heart and loyalty as well. Thus when she abandons him, he is not as easily reconciled to his fate as the lady in the poem mentioned above. For though their situations are identical, there is plenty of precedent for her being betrayed; but all the conventional

beliefs about the behavior of women in love argue against his own betrayal.

Donne, in "Loves Alchymie," presents a disgruntled lover whose outraged tone reveals that he too had entertained hopes for a relationship that went beyond the physical and was disappointed. Donne's lover, in his disillusionment, is embittered and turns his wrath on all women:

> Hope not for minde in women; at their best
> Sweetnesse and wit, they'are but Mummy, possest.
> (ll. 23-24)

The emotional effect of Donne's poem derives from the dramatic immediacy of the speaker's tone which metaphorically collars his listener and holds him spellbound throughout the harangue. Carew's is a much quieter and smoother poem as befits the voice of his lover, who is not bitter or outraged, but hurt. Unlike the disenchanted man in Donne's poem, this man had found the happiness he sought, or thought he had. In the woeful tone sustained throughout the poem, the frustration and sorrow man feels when his fragile dreams collapse is magnificently expressed. In the ignored warnings, the hopes now recognized as naive, the remembered happiness

and, above all, the sense of loss, the tragi-comic story of imperfect humanity's imperfect love is captured, timeless, though wrapped in the language and traditions of Carew's own age. The paradise created by love, in which man may momentarily feel level with the gods, is continually being lost, reminding him that, after all, he is more kin to Adam than to Jove. Hard fate indeed, and yet man, forewarned, continues to pursue it, unwilling to accept the inevitability of the fall, feeling, perhaps, that it's better to be a king deposed than never to have reigned at all. It is impossible to help wondering whether Charles would have agreed. At any rate, the final image must have had added poignance for the Caroline audience in the decade that followed its publication in 1640.

In insisting on a depth of genuine feeling in this poem, I am at odds with Edward Selig who finds it "sprightly" rather than melancholic, and "as carefree a performance as Suckling's ''Tis now, since I sate down before/That foolish fort, a heart.'"[12] Aside from the seige imagery which is common to both poems, I can see no real similarity. Indeed Suckling's clever but completely

playful lyric, written in ballad meter, contrasts with and points up the seriousness of Carew's. Suckling sustains the single image of the unsuccessful siege throughout his ten stanzas, closing with a joke about women's Honor, apparently the main point of his poem, which occupies the last three stanzas:

> I sent to know from whence and where
> These hopes and this relief;
> A spy inform'd, Honor was there,
> And did command in chief.
>
> March, march, quoth I, the word straight give,
> Let's lose no time, but leave her;
> That giant upon air will live,
> And hold it out for ever.
>
> To such a place our camp remove,
> As will no siege abide;
> I hate a fool that starves her love,
> Only to feed her pride. (ll. 28-40)[13]

Unlike Carew's lover, the suitor in this poem has lost nothing but time, and his playful cynicism is completely appropriate. The carefree argument is suited to the simplicity of the form. Each stanza is a complete unit of thought, and the light rhythm is almost never hampered or slowed by internal punctuation. Carew uses the same basic 4-3-4-3 meter, but by careful use of punctuation, continuation of a syntactical statement through

six or eight lines, and the addition of a tetrameter couplet after each eight lines, he creates a smooth but sophisticated stanza ideally suited to his more somber tone. This stanza also serves to emphasize the division of his love affair into its three separate stages of seige, triumph, and fall from grace.

Selig apparently cannot conceive of Carew's being capable of even imagining a lover's disappointment in such a situation. He argues: "Surely, the poet has not been deceived. Even at the height of his folly, he was far too sophisticated to put much faith in the rules of conventional courtship . . . . In short, since he was forewarned about women, he has no present grounds for complaint."[14] The conventional warnings about women's cruelty, it should be noted, were usually confined to her behavior during courtship, and this the lover was quite prepared for. But her abandonment of him after she had given herself is most unconventional and not the kind of thing the sonneteers were wont to record. So Carew's lover may be allowed to complain and yet be acquitted of the charge of naive faith in the conventions of love. It is true that the careful artistry of the complaint

prevents this from seeming an intensely personal expression of emotion. But despite the aesthetic distance the poet achieves, the tone is still decidedly melancholy.

Selig was perhaps identifying the poem's persona too closely with Carew himself, for if the latter was ever prey to the folly described in "A deposition," it is not recorded. His voice is far more often that of a somewhat cynical expert in affairs of the heart, who knows better than to put faith in love's promises. In several poems he offers the benefit of this experience to prospective lovers in the form of advice, usually very negative. No defender of his own sex, he cautions young ladies against succumbing to the tearful pleas of their admirers. "Good counsell to a young Maid" (25) suggests that, behind his seeming adoration of his mistress, the lover has really only one thing on his mind.

When you the Sun-burnt Pilgrim see
  Fainting with thirst, hast to the springs,
Marke how at first with bended knee
  He courts the crystall Nimphe, and flings
  His body to the earth, where He
Prostrate adores the flowing Deitie.

But when his sweaty face is drencht
  In her coole waves, when from her sweet
Bosome, his burning thirst is quencht;
  Then marke how with disdainfull feet

He kicks her banks, and from the place
That thus refresht him, moves with sullen pace.

So shalt thou be despis'd, faire Maid,
When by the sated lover tasted;
What first he did with teares invade,
Shall afterwards with scorne be wasted;
When all thy Virgin-springs grow dry,
When no streames shall be left, but in thine eye.

The analogy of the Pilgrim kneeling at the spring seems to me very fine. In one stroke Carew has recalled the conventional Petrarchan imagery of the religion of love in which the lover worships at his lady's shrine, and has reduced this idealized love to a simple physical need. Sexual passion is what inflames the lover, as the sun the pilgrim, and the former's passion is as quickly sated as the latter's thirst. The water image of the first two stanzas is smoothly carried into the third in the form of virgin-springs and tears, and serves to emphasize that the young maid is far more vulnerable than the water nymph disdained by the pilgrim. For while the latter's springs are not noticeably diminished, the virgin-springs or vital juices of the human lady could, according to Renaissance belief, be exhausted. The only streams remaining to her will be her tears--the price she will pay for drying his.

Carew's dismal outlook might be depressing to a young maid, especially one nurtured on the chivalric love tradition, but it is pragmatic advice such as Ann Landers might dispense, adding no doubt that the girl should hold out for marriage--a qualification which Carew wisely does not make, for a view of love as something which lasts only until passion is sated is obviously inconsistent with illusions of wedded bliss.

In another "Good counsel to a young Maid" (13), this one a song, Carew again cautions the fair sex against a lover's wiles. Here he warns that a mirror is a much more reliable reflector of a lady's beauty, and a safer one, than lovers' tears. Poetry, the poet reveals, is likewise a deceitful device, whose purpose is not to honor but to trap.

> Netts, of passion's finest thred,
> Snaring Poems, will be spred,
> All, to catch thy maiden-head. (ll. 10-12)

In this poem, it is his fever rather than his tears that the lover transfers to the lady, with possibly more serious effects.

> Then beware, for those that cure
> Love's disease, themselves endure
> For reward, a Calenture.

Rather let the Lover pine,
Then his pale cheeke, should assigne
A perpetuall blush to thine. (ll. 13-18)

In his cynical ascription of ulterior motives to poets' compliments and his treatment of love as a communicable disease, Carew is delightfully iconoclastic. Yet, with the closing references to lover's pale cheek and maiden's blush, those familiar Petrarchan images, he might be thought to have been expressing all along the most conventional of sentiments. It is an amusing performance with a humorous yet pointed moral for the maid: 'tis better to be cold than to burn.

It is not only the ladies who receive the benefit of Carew's counsels. If he seems to show a disproportionate concern for their welfare, perhaps this is because the Petrarchan poets, assuming the lady to have the upper hand, concentrated almost exclusively on the hardships wrought by love on the long suffering male. In his "SONG. Conquest by flight." (15), Carew dispenses some rather more conventional advice to both sexes.

Ladyes, flye from Love's smooth tale,
Oathes steep'd in teares doe oft prevaile;
Griefe is infectious, and the ayre
Enflam'd with sighes, will blast the fayre:
Then stop your eares, when lovers cry, 5

Lest your selfe weepe, when no soft eye
Shall with a sorrowing teare repay
That pittie which you cast away.
  Young men fly, when beautie darts
Amorous glances at your hearts:
The fixt marke gives the shooter ayme;
And Ladyes lookes have power to mayme;
Now 'twixt their lips, now in their eyes,
Wrapt in a smile, or kisse, Love lyes;
Then fly betimes, for only they
Conquer love that run away.

There is nothing particularly original about the poem's sentiments or imagery. The blasting sighs of lovers, amorous glances darted by ladies, are all too familiar fare. Still, Carew manages to serve it up with a flair. The careful balance of the argument with its pleasing juxtaposition of ladies and lovers, ears and eyes, focuses attention on the weapons of each sex rather than on the worn images. Ladies must close their ears, for men attack with words and sighs, while men must shield their eyes from the penetrating power of the lady's beauty, particularly her eyes which are her most formidable weapon.

The advice to fly, stressed in the imperative openings of the poem's two sections, receives its logical justification in the closing couplet with its neat paradox of conquest by flight--the only possible victory in

the conflict of love. So cleverly and subtly is the imagery of weapons and warfare woven through the poem that the reader may not be aware until these final lines that the poet has been describing a battle.

According to Rufus Blanshard, Carew consistently excels his contemporaries "in the careful working out of single metaphors, in the logical persuasiveness of argument, and in the combined variety and smoothness of rhythm."[15] This poem, though not an exceptional example of Carew's verse, admirably demonstrates all three of these characteristics. The extended battle metaphor, the witty paradox through which he points up his argument, his masterly control of the tetrameter couplet, prevent the poem's seeming merely one more bland repetition of an old theme. The style might be called mildly "metaphysical," the form and subject semi-classical, and in the smooth blend of the two there is evidence not only of Carew's debt to both Donne and Jonson but of his own special talent as well.

Blanshard's three distinguishing characteristics are again apparent in "Boldness in love" (42). Returning here to the warmly sensuous imagery that is his forte,

Carew dispenses advice on how to succeed in love, advice more in keeping with his usual image as a kind of Caroline Hugh Hefner than with Ann Landers. The theme is ancient but still serviceable, and the poet's skills revive it beautifully.

> Marke how the bashfull morne, in vaine
> Courts the amorous Marigold,
> With sighing blasts, and weeping raine;
> Yet she refuses to unfold.
> But when the Planet of the day,
> Approacheth with his powerfull ray,
> Then she spreads, then she receives
> His warmer beames into her virgin leaves.
> So shalt thou thrive in love, fond Boy;
> If thy teares, and sighes discover
> Thy griefe, thou never shalt enjoy
> The just reward of a bold lover:
> But when with moving accents, thou
> Shalt constant faith, and service vow,
> Thy Celia shall receive those charmes
> With open eares, and with unfolded armes.

It is difficult to say enough about this little lyric without seeming to blow its accomplishment out of all proportion. It is surely a minor masterpiece of its type, its strengths being largely formal. The single, carefully developed conceit of the woman as a flower to be unfolded is made to carry the argument, and to give it its sexual undertones. The feminine feints of the Petrarchan lovers are implicitly disparaged through the

imagery. Carew's woman is not a blushing rose or a pale lily but an "amorous" marigold, a richly suggestive choice since it is thought to be named for the virgin, yet is a flower that traditionally opens itself to the warmly penetrating rays of the sun. Thus Carew advises young men to abjure the bashful techniques of sighs and tears in favor of a bolder, more masculine approach.

It is an appealing, persuasive argument, if not a particularly startling one. What is startling is the artistry with which Carew adapts his form to his content, letting the sound and rhythm of his lines reinforce his ideas. The poem divides into two eight-line stanzas. In the first four lines of each he describes, respectively, the courtship of the bashful morn and the bashful lover. These lines, with their repeated 'm' and 's' sounds, their internal punctuation, and abab rhyme scheme, are relatively slow-moving, softly feminine. But with the description of the bold lovers in the fifth and sixth lines of each section, Carew shifts to rhymed couplets, and to harder consonant sounds, achieving a faster moving, more "masculine" line. In addition, the last line of each section (lines eight and sixteen) are extended an extra

foot, emphasizing the successful culmination of the bold lovers' efforts--the unfolding of the flower, the deflowering of the lady. Carew, of course, never puts it so callously, but the sensual imagery he uses, particularly in lines seven and eight, makes it impossible to mistake his meaning. And since he stresses frequently in his amorous verse that the pleasures of love are shared by women as well as men, he would be unlikely to apologize for his counsel here, no doubt feeling that the amorous Celia should no more resent the successful lover than the marigold the sun.

Carew's attitude here may seem in direct conflict with his advice to young maids in the poems discussed previously. This would not be disturbing if it were so, since the poet is under no obligation to maintain a consistent viewpoint from poem to poem. But there is actually a certain consistency in Carew's expressed attitudes. What he warns the ladies against is becoming victims of sensual passion disguised as pain or as meek adoration. Submission out of pity for a lover's tears is what leads to betrayal and regret. Similarly, in poem after poem, Carew reveals his contempt for the Petrarchan lover who

hides his natural desires under a mask of pure devotion, and he advises young men to eschew such tactics, wooing with manly warmth instead of with tears. Not only will heat serve better to melt a cold heart, but presumably a lady who responds to it will share the lover's desire and his pleasure. Then should their love prove unenduring, as in Carew's experience it so often does, neither will have cause to complain. If from this initial understanding love grows into something finer and more enduring, well and good; but in Carew's earthy philosophy, recognition and acceptance of the physical nature of the attraction must come first.

When Carew turns his hand to persuasions to love, he follows his own advice, preferring to inflame a lady's senses rather than her soul. "A Rapture" provides the ultimate example of this, and nowhere else does he attempt seduction on such a scale, or with such a barrage of sensual images. But persuasion is a fine art, and the poet demonstrates his mastery of it in several other instances. Obviously, the coldly chaste beauty of the Petrarchan sonneteers is not Carew's ideal. His Celia is usually conceived of as a warm-blooded woman who need not be

convinced of her own sensuality, though she seems to have a healthy self-interest that prevents her from being a pushover. With such a mistress, persuasion to love is primarily a matter of convincing her that it is to her advantage. Carew's usual strategy is to lodge his appeal for sensual indulgence in the form of logical argument which has the lady's best interests at heart. His "SONG. Perswasions to enjoy" (16) is a delightful example.

> If the quick spirits in your eye
> Now languish, and anon must dye;
> If every sweet, and every grace,
> Must fly from that forsaken face:
> Then (Celia) let us reape our joyes,
> E're time such goodly fruit destroyes.
>
> Or, if that golden fleece must grow
> For ever, free from aged snow;
> If those bright Suns must know no shade,
> Nor your fresh beauties ever fade:
> Then feare not (Celia) to bestow,
> What still being gather'd, still must grow.
> Thus, either Time his Sickle brings
> In vaine, or else in vaine his wings.

Despite the rich images, the sensuous immediacy Carew often achieves is lacking in this lyric due to the formality of its structure. The focus is on logic rather than feeling, but the facility of the argument more than atones for its lack of intensity. It is as if the poet felt his appeal to be so eminently reasonable that no

other pressure, psychological or emotional, could possibly be required. It is assumed that Celia needs no convincing about the pleasures to be found in love; nor is there any suggestion of moral reservations. The issue is thus neatly reduced to a question of _when_ she should reap love's harvest--not whether she should do so. Should she seize the day--or try to preserve her "fruit" for a later date (and possibly a better offer)? The very real dilemma facing an actual young lady in such a situation is ignored. An actual woman who permitted her fruits to be sampled might well find the market value of the rest of her crop seriously diminished. The poem evades this unpleasant reality by treating beauty as a kind of passport to Pleasure which only Time can revoke. Given this hypothesis, the poet's solution is completely logical.

The basic argument is not original with Carew. Dunlap notes that it had been presented more succinctly by Ronsard in _Sonnets pour Hélène_, II, xxxii.[16] Ronsard's original may be more succinct, but it lacks the artful facility and logical poise of Carew's version. Though he makes the same point, Ronsard plays down its logical

ingenuity, while Carew capitalizes on it. Richmond quotes the lines in question and supplies a quite literal translation which, by its very flatness, serves to illustrate the extent of Carew's achievement, though it all but obliterates Ronsard's.

> Si la beauté se perd, fais-en part de bonne heure,
> Tandis qu'en son printemps tu la vois fleuronner.
> Si elle ne se perd, ne crain point de donner
> A tes amis le bien qui tousjours te demeure...
>
> (If beauty fades, use it soon while you see it
> flower in its springtime: if it does not fade,
> do not fear to give to your friends the good which
> will always remain with you . . .)[17]

Granted that almost everything but the sense is lost in the translation, it is nevertheless clear that Ronsard throws away the argument which Carew converts into a real tour de force. In the English poem, Ronsard's two simple "ifs" are gracefully extended until all their implications are explored, and the two possibilities are held in a delicate balance until they are brought together in the final dazzling couplet with its conclusion that compliance with his request will assure beauty's victory over her ancient enemy Time. This splendid summary of the poem's argument surely points the way for Marvell's concluding couplet in "To His Coy Mistress":

> Thus, though we cannot make our sun
> Stand still, yet we will make him run.

Rhythm and syntax are identical, the ideas expressed nearly so. The only real difference is that Marvell's conclusion, like his argument, is more firmly grounded in reality than Carew's. For Marvell's plan for outwitting Time is at least theoretically possible, while Carew's is not.

In view of the poet's avowed intent, the fact that the hypothesis entertained in the second half of Carew's poem is untenable scarcely detracts from the effectiveness of the argument. It is far more gallant than the traditional carpe diem with its unpleasant, though necessary, insistence on the time limit imposed on beauty. His willingness to entertain the possibility that Celia might be exempt from the fate of ordinary mortals is a flattering concession that costs the lover nothing and may well win him his suit. Though he has ostensibly addressed himself to her reason, the poet has all along been indirectly appealing to the lady's vanity--a powerful ally in any argument, as Carew is demonstrably aware. Yet despite this realistic touch, the song remains more an aesthetic

achievement than a psychologically or dramatically convincing appeal to a real woman.

The reverse is true of "To A. L. Perswasions to love" (4). In this much longer poem the speaker argues persuasively in a frank, down-to-earth manner, but at such length that his relentless logic threatens to become oppressive. Though the identity of the lady is not known, one is quite ready to believe in both A. L.'s reality and the poet's ardor. But both the lady and the reader might wish that some of the graceful urbanity with which he addressed the mythical Celia had been reserved for his appeal to the real woman. What begins as an eloquent argument against chastity threatens to become a filibuster as the speaker warms to his subject.

Thinke not cause men flatt'ring say,
Y'are fresh as Aprill, sweet as May,
Bright as is the morning starre,
That you are so, or though you are
Be not therefore proud, and deeme
All men unworthy your esteeme.
For being so, you loose the pleasure
Of being faire, since that rich treasure
Of rare beauty, and sweet feature
Was bestow'd on you by nature
To be enjoy'd, and 'twere a sinne,
There to be scarce, where shee hath bin
So prodigall of her best graces;
Thus common beauties, and meane faces
Shall have more pastime, and enjoy

The sport you loose by being coy.
Did the thing for which I sue
Onely concern my selfe not you,
Were men so fram'd as they alone
Reap'd all the pleasure, women none,
Then had you reason to be scant;
But 'twere a madnesse not to grant
That which affords (if you consent)
To you the giver, more content
Then me the beggar; Oh then bee
Kinde to your selfe, if not to me.
Starve not your selfe, because you may
Thereby make me pine away;
Nor let brittle beautie make
You your wiser thoughts forsake:
For that lovely face will faile,
Beautie's sweet, but beautie's fraile;
'Tis sooner past, 'tis sooner done
Then Summers raine, or winters Sun:
Most fleeting when it is most deare,
'Tis gone while wee but say 'tis here.
These curious locks so aptly twind,
Whose every haire a soule doth bind,
Will change their abroun hue, and grow
White, and cold as winters snow.
That eye which now is Cupids nest
Will proue his grave, and all the rest
Will follow; in the cheeke, chin, nose
Nor lilly shall be found nor rose.
And what will then become of all
Those, whom now you servants call?
Like swallowes when your summers done,
They'le flye and seeke some warmer Sun.
Then wisely chuse one to your friend,
Whose love may, when your beauties end,
Remaine still firme: be provident
And thinke before the summers spent
Of following winter; like the Ant
In plenty hoord for time of scant.
Cull out amongst the multitude
Of lovers, that seeke to intrude
Into your favour, one that may
Love for an age, not for a day;

One that will quench your youthfull fires,
And feed in age your hot desires.
For when the stormes of time have mou'd
Waves on that cheeke which was belou'd,
When a faire Ladies face is pin'd
And yellow spred, where red once shin'd,
When beauty, youth, and all sweets leave her,
Love may returne, but lover never:
And old folkes say there are no paynes
Like itch of love in aged vaines.
Oh love me then, and now begin it,
Let us not loose this present minute:
For time and age will worke that wrack
Which time or age shall ne're call backe.
The snake each yeare fresh skin resumes,
And Eagles change their aged plumes;
The faded Rose each spring, receives
A fresh red tincture on her leaves:
But if your beauties once decay,
You never know a second May.
Oh, then be wise, and whilst your season
Afford you dayes for sport, doe reason;
Spend not in vaine your lives short houre,
But crop in time your beauties flower:
Which will away, and doth together
Both bud, and fade, both blow and wither.

Dunlap notes that the poem's original title, "An Admonition to coy acquaintance," "points for the modern reader the anticipation of Marvell's To His Coy Mistress."[18] However, even under its present title the similarities are readily apparent. Both poems employ the tetrameter couplet, logical structure, extended syntax, and both stress the carpe diem argument. However, the argument

is made more palatable in Marvell's poem by the lover's gallant and flattering apology for his haste, and by his representation of himself as an equal victim in Time's chase. Carew chooses to focus on old age, rather than death, as the prospect to be feared and his descriptions of the lady's future condition range from the unpleasant to the downright repugnant. Not content with his ruthless projection of her as a lustful old crone, her hair whitened, skin wrinkled, complexion yellowed, he rubs it in with his reminder that in this fate she is less fortunate than the snake, the eagle, and the rose. Such lines are not likely to inspire a lady's affection;[19] rather, the speaker seems to be trying to terrify her into compliance. There is no trace in this poem of the graceful irony with which Marvell softens his references to the grave and gently mocks both his lady's coyness and his own passion. Carew's lover seems to get carried away, either by his own skillful rhetoric or his lust, until he becomes almost overbearing.

And yet individual passages are not without beauty. According to Dunlap, the first twenty-six lines appear in manuscript as a separate piece, as do lines

thirty-seven through forty-eight, the latter segment having been put to music by Henry Lawes.[20] Reading either passage singly one is more aware of Carew's formal artistry, his control of syntax, rhythm, sound and tone, and the argument is not at all obtrusive. The artist's aesthetic sensibility holds the lover's urgency in check. But this balance is upset slightly when one reads the poem as a whole. The cumulative weight of all its arguments suggests that the speaker is primarily a lover, not an artist, moved by passion rather than aesthetic considerations, his goal the lady's acquiescence, rather than a poem. Consequently the persuasion continues beyond aesthetically-dictated stopping points, ending only when all the arguments have been raised. Nature, pleasure, time, even prudence, are enlisted in his passion's cause; he even manages to imply, in lines fifty-four through fifty-seven, that this is a life-long love he offers, without ever actually making such a promise. It is a believable if not endearing performance, passionate sophistry such as a young man schooled in rhetoric and classical poetry might conceivably dish out. And it is impossible to believe the effect is accidental. The poem

is partially original, partially a free translation of Marino, and Dunlap notes that "the manuscripts exhibit numerous variants, suggesting that the piece as a whole received long and careful polishing."[21] Like "A Rapture," this poem manages to convey the fact that too much emphasis on the purely physical aspects of love, and of human nature, is cloying, self-defeating. Here the same incitements to pleasure which have proved attractive or enticing when administered lightly are shown to diminish in effectiveness when the dosage is greatly increased.

It is interesting to note, particularly in view of Henry Lawes' connection with both works, that the first part of the poem's argument (lines 6-16) anticipates in part the argument of Milton's Comus, another intemperate champion of the senses. Milton's seducer, like Carew's, is seemingly anxious lest the lady offend Nature by being "scarce" where the latter has been "prodigall." Comus argues:

> List Lady, be not coy, and be not cozened
> With that same vaunted name Virginity;
> Beauty is Nature's coin, must not be hoarded,
> But must be current, and the good thereof
> Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,
> Unsavory in the enjoyment of itself.

> If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
> It withers on the stalk with languished head.
> Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown
> In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities
> Where most may wonder at the workmanship;
> It is for homely features to keep home . . .
> (ll. 737-48)[22]

Milton, of course, provides his lady with a rebuttal to Comus' argument. Her charge,

> Thou hast nor Ear nor Soul to apprehend
> The sublime notion and high mystery
> That must be utter'd to unfold the sage
> And serious doctrine of Virginity,
> (ll. 784-87)[23]

might perhaps be as justly levelled at Carew. It is unlikely that he would disagree, for he makes no pretense of understanding the sublime. He seems never to have come up with an answer to arm his ladies with, knowing no genuinely satisfactory substitute for the sensual pleasures offered by his lovers. Yet he <u>is</u> aware of the dehumanizing nature of an exclusively physical conception of happiness, and frequently, as in the poem to A. L., demonstrates implicitly that beyond a certain point the sensual approach loses its luster.

For a critic to read these poems, note the ignobility of the ideas expressed, perceive the less than pleasant effect produced, and refuse to allow the poet

the same perceptiveness and sensibility they claim for themselves, seems rather supercilious. One might with equal justice indict Chaucer for his Pardoner's cupidity. Had Carew voiced more "respectable" doctrine elsewhere, his most contemptuous critics might have been inclined to grant his celebrations of pleasure, as well as his explorations of its limitations, the serious attention they deserve. But though Carew often portrays the frustration and debasement that beset those who live by the pleasure principle, he never entirely repudiates it. He offers no retraction or apology, undergoes no conversion. Consequently, his themes are met with contempt or good-humored tolerance, but almost never considered seriously, despite the fact that, like all good literature, they serve to heighten our awareness and understanding of human experience. Perhaps the failure of many critics to acknowledge this is explained by the fact that these poems often spotlight a part of human nature we prefer not to recognize, at least not in ourselves. The weakness of the flesh, and the power it exerts over our beings despite that weakness, seen close up is distasteful, sordid, sad. And Carew will

not let us ignore it, nor always laugh it off lightly. It is easier to denounce than to forgive him.

"A Rapture" is supposedly Carew's most outrageous work, the one which earned him notoriety and a reputation as an incorrigible libertine which he never seems to have shaken. Yet, though its brevity may have made it a less noteworthy example, "The second Rapture" (103) surpasses the first by far in the portrayal of lust and the frank dedication to sexual pleasure. "A Rapture" at least has humor to recommend it and manages to be engagingly erotic for at least one hundred of its lines. There is nothing engaging about the salaciousness portrayed in "The second Rapture." The "itch of love in aged vaines" about which A. L. was warned in the preceding poem is materialized here in the person of an elderly man--a "dirty old man" in today's terminology. I suppose the poem might be regarded as an exercise in obscenity, demonstrative of Carew's lack of taste, by some readers and as a joke by others. I must confess I find it strangely moving. For no readily definable reason, the "protagonist" reminds me of Jonson's Volpone; though sex rather than gold is his obsession, he is as much a victim of his lust as is Volpone of greed,

as unwittingly comic in his single-minded animality, and as irrevocably imprisoned.

> No worldling, no, tis not thy gold,
> Which thou dost use but to behold;
> Nor fortune, honour, nor long life,
> Children, or friends, nor a good wife,
> That makes thee happy; these things be
> But shaddowes of felicitie.
> Give me a wench about thirteene,
> Already voted to the Queene
> Of lust and lovers, whose soft haire,
> Fann'd with the breath of gentle aire
> O're spreads her shoulders like a tent,
> And is her vaile and ornament:
> Whose tender touch, will make the blood
> Wild in the aged, and the good;
> Whose kisses fastned to the mouth
> Of threescore yeares and longer slouth,
> Renew the age, and whose bright eye
> Obscures those lesser lights of skie:
> Whose snowy breasts (if we may call
> That snow, that never melts at all)
> Makes Jove invent a new disguise,
> In spite of Iunoes jealousies:
> Whose every part doth re-invite
> The old decayed appetite:
> And in whose sweet imbraces I,
> May melt myselfe to lust, and die.
> This is true blisse, and I confesse,
> There is no other happiness.

If Carew is joking here, the joke is aimed at himself, and sharply pointed. The lecherous old man lusting after a young girl is a staple figure in literature and nearly always the target of ridicule. If there is any truth in Carew's contention that "there are no paynes/Like

itch of love in aged vaines," it is pain for which there seems to be no sympathy. Lasciviousness may be reprehensible in the young, but in the aged it is regarded as repulsive, an offense, one suspects, less to moral than to aesthetic sensibilities. Any senior citizen unwise or unfortunate enough to be afflicted by it must suffer in silence or, like Chaucer's Januarie, risk revilement. It is an unusually unpleasant dilemma, comic rather than tragic, but one which must be realistically recognized as inevitable by anyone who believes that the pleasures of the flesh provide the only basis for earthly happiness. And Carew, who so often unashamedly asserts this belief, could scarcely avoid seeing that one of its most serious defects was the prospect it offered for old age. Short of recanting, or surrendering all hope of happiness, the aging voluptuary can only continue on his chosen course regardless of the ludicrous figure he cuts. Though Carew never reached three score, he must certainly have given some thought to that time when the ladies would turn a cold ear to his songs and snicker at his attempts at seduction. "The second Rapture" might well be the result of these distasteful speculations.

The aged lecher that is the poem's speaker is presented with a touch of irony. This staunch supporter of sexual pleasure, speaking presumably with the authority of a lifetime of experience, solemnly denounces as false all the traditional earthly goals of men. His applying the term "worldling" to the miser is a delightful touch, making us the less prepared for what is coming. When not just wealth, but friends, honor, family, longevity, are disparaged, we quite naturally expect him to offer some "higher," less worldly goal as an alternative to those he has rejected. In short, Carew has set the reader up in order to get the maximum shock value from his punch line. Having cancelled out all those values which most of us take for granted, his old man does not beat around the bush when it comes to providing <u>his</u> solution. "Give me a wench about thirteene" is such a stunning incongruity that, after the initial surprise, laughter is the inevitable response. Not until the speaker has elaborated at some length, relishing each sensuous detail, do we begin to consider his suggestion seriously and react less favorably. The rapacious fantasies might incite disgust, contempt, outrage, or possibly, more laughter at the speaker's expense. The

extreme youth of the imagined Venus who will rekindle his decayed appetites inevitably intensifies any of these reactions. J. W. Ebsworth, one of Carew's Victorian editors, suggests an amendment to "above thirteene,"[24] but as Dunlap points out, "it is hard to see how that would really help matters."[25]

There can be no doubt that Carew has deliberately insured a strongly negative reaction to his hoary hedonist and to his philosophy. It may possibly be tempered by sympathy, for not only is the erotic orgy contemplated an unconvincing formula for happiness, but it seems unlikely to exist outside the speaker's fantasies. Thus his confession that "There is no other happiness" makes him seem bereft indeed.

Though revitalizing the sexual desire of an aging man seems to have been a popular theme in seventeenth century poetry, I have run across nothing that equals the realism, wit, and potency of Carew's treatment of it. Herrick's "To His Mistresses," a lament for lost pleasures, is perhaps its best-known rival. It needs only a brief comparison to reveal the superiority of "The second Rapture."

Helpe me! helpe me! now I call
To my pretty Witchcrafts all:
Old I am, and cannot do
That, I was accustom'd to.
Bring your Magicks, Spels, and Charmes,
To enflesh my thighs, and armes:
Is there no way to beget
In my limbs their former heat?
Aeson had (as Poets faine)
Baths that made him young againe:
Find that Medicine (if you can)
For your drie-decrepid man:
Who would faine his strength renew,
Were it but to pleasure you.[26]

The fey exclamations of Herrick's persona, yelping about his impotence in sing-song rime, are as emotionally absorbing as a nursery rhyme. Neither the speaker nor his problem seem real; devoid of the erotic fantasies that obsess Carew's determined sensualist, Herrick's dry, decrepit man seems to have forgotten what all the heat was about, and only knows that the fire has gone out. The wasted gallantry of his last line is unlikely to send his mistresses scurrying for matches. The old man is not disgusting, for it is impossible to believe in his desire, or sad, for one cannot believe in his plight. He is either senile, in which case the poem is utterly tasteless, or silly.

The lecher in "The second Rapture" may be offensive, but only because he is convincing. And he is called into existence for a purpose. The object lesson of Carew's portrait is not so much the foolishness of the old man as the emptiness of his philosophy and the life he has based on it. The man's insistence on his "truth" to the end in no way diminishes this lesson. It is a bit late at threescore and more to cultivate fortune, honor, family. He can only cling blindly to the hedonistic principles that brought him to this point. There is, of course, nothing in the poem to prove that his dogmatic statement is not a sudden and temporary aberration rather than the culmination of a lifetime dedicated to voluptuous experience. But the title surely is designed to make the reader recall Carew's first, widely-known "Rapture" and to suggest a connection between them. The second must be seen as a sequel to the first, and anyone who might have overlooked Carew's implicit warnings about the debasement inherent in the pursuits depicted in "A Rapture" is sure to find those same pursuits, carried into old age, absurd and uninviting. Carew offers us no alternative happiness, and may well have believed with the speaker that there is no other. But "The

second Rapture" testifies powerfully to his awareness that fulfillment does not reside permanently in abandoning oneself to lust.

And yet, despite this knowledge, lacking another creed to inspire him, Carew continues to celebrate sensual pleasure, fanning his earthy flame in poem after poem. In "The tinder" (104) he complains that every fair woman has the power to inflame him; in "SONG. To my Mistris, I burning in love" (34), he insists that only "Equall flames" can "quench Loves fire"; and in "SONG. The willing Prisoner to his Mistris" (37) he exults in love's torment, disdaining a cure:

> As he brings ruine, that repaires
> The sweet afflictions that disease me.

This paradox may best sum up Carew's ambivalent attitudes toward sensual love. The happiness derived from fulfillment might be fleeting, mingled with pain. But as his metaphor suggests, absence of pain is not necessarily health; and absence of desire is not happiness. Indeed, the ultimate absence of both afflictions is death. And while, metaphysically speaking, death might indeed constitute true health and happiness, it is not a definition

that Carew, with his essentially earthy concept of man, can accept. Nor, for him, could an ascetic life provide the answer. As the extinction of his flame meant only ashes, he could not cease to feed it, even if it threatened to consume him. (Perhaps it is not going too far to say that it eventually did, since his death at forty-five is believed to have resulted from syphilis.) For most readers past the first blaze of youth, Carew's dedication, apparently in his life as well as his poetry, to experiencing the extremes of desire and pleasure might seem not only unwise but immature, did not his own sometimes bitter irony reveal his awareness of the limitations of such an existence. Joseph Summers remarks that "Carew, like some later poets, had come to know by experience that a simple sensuous hedonism may be one of the most painful of all creeds, particularly for a man past thirty-five . . . ."[27] Unlike more "respectable" creeds which enable man to transcend his mortal nature, Carew's offers no promise of victory over decay and death. It simply suggests that through constant revitalization and heightening of sensual experience these spectres can be temporarily held off. Because this is defiance doomed to defeat, it is not

necessarily to be sneered at. And perhaps because, our belief in Death as a new beginning having grown less confident, we are no longer so sure that it is unwarranted defiance in a wrong cause, fewer readers are sneering. Though most men submit, grudgingly or gracefully, to Time's yoke, settle for contentment rather than ecstasy, make temperance a virtue from necessity, Carew's incorrigible hedonism strikes a chord which only hypocritical or envious natures can denounce as alien.

What these non-idealistic amorous verses most consistently reveal, then, is Carew's urgent belief in experiencing the pleasures of life, and love, to the fullest. Though this means risking pain, it is a price lovers should be willing to pay. In life's short span there is no time for stalling games, for dwelling in impossible dreams of abstract devotion, for holding back out of vanity or virtue or fear. To fully love is to be fully alive, and each refusal to love is a victory for death. This unwillingness to dwell in a limbo of suspended desire is nowhere more brilliantly expressed than in the song "Mediocritie in love rejected" (12). Both its style--a seemingly effortless blend of Donnean and Jonsonian

elements, and its content--an urgent yet sensuous rejection of placidity in favor of more sensational existence, make this a distinctively Carevian poem, and thus an excellent one with which to close this discussion.

Give me more love, or more disdaine;
  The Torrid, or the frozen Zone,
Bring equall ease unto my paine;
  The temperate affords me none:
Either extreame, of love, or hate,
Is sweeter than a calme estate.

Give me a storme; if it be love
  Like Danae in that golden showre
I swimme in pleasure; if it prove
  Disdaine, that torrent will devoure
My Vulture-hopes; and he's possest
Of Heaven, that's but from Hell releast:
  Then crowne my joyes, or cure my paine;
  Give me more love, or more disdaine.

The poem's theme is not new; other poets had employed the technique of beseeching a mistress to choose a single consistent extreme of love or hate. Petrarch pleads for "morte o merce," Tasso for "tutto crudele o tutto pia," Jonson for "Scorne or pittie."[28] But it is Carew who converts the conventional abstractions into concrete realities, embodying the emotional extremes in physical experience so that love and disdain become increasingly more tangible through his imagery. "Vulture-hopes" is a powerful and ambiguous image which may describe the carnality

of his desire for the woman as well as its effect on himself, i.e. his hope is gnawing away at him (a carrion feast). Either way, this image, coupled with his demand for a storm, manages to suggest ravenous desire, a frenzy of passion. Yet the poem's structure is a model of balance and poise, so that the overall impression is one of powerful emotions held in check by the exigencies of form, both artistic and social. The resulting tension is aesthetically as well as emotionally effective.

The lack of restraint he apparently exhibited in his personal life is not carried over into Carew's poetry. When he takes up the sensual themes that are his dominant interest, the sure hand of the artist is always in control, shaping and subordinating this rawest of raw material to the requirements of his art. Thus these verses written "in the amorous way" demonstrate a triumphant merging of the two prevailing preoccupations of Carew's life--the art of love and the love of art.

# CHAPTER V

## OCCASIONAL VERSE

In my discussion of Carew's love poems, I have stressed those elements which seem to me distinctive in Carew and which arise perhaps less from his formal talents than from his personal philosophy and temperament, which led him to search out the satisfactions to be found in love with an intensity uncommon in his fellow Cavaliers. Because of this preoccupation, my readers may justifiably have formed the impression of Carew as a man who spent all his waking hours pursuing, amusing, and instructing the ladies. Such an impression is, of course, inaccurate and unfair to Carew. Turning to his occasional poems, we see the poet in other roles than that of the lover, upholding values beyond mere personal gratification; and though they are perhaps insufficient to reveal the complete man, these poems nevertheless suffice to place him in the mainstream of Cavalier thought, values, and traditions.

The social character of Cavalier poetry has been commented upon by many scholars and may well be considered its most distinctive element, an element which partakes as much of the ethical as the aesthetic ideal of this group of poets. It has to do with a tone or mode of speaking, an aesthetic stance these poets adopt, as much as with their subject matter. Cavalier poetry, according to Robin Skelton, presents man as "extrovert rather than introvert, as a social rather than a solitary creature."[1] These poets are concerned, then, with relationships between people, relationships which matter because they are essential to a full and meaningful life. These relationships are explored in their verses for a friendly and homogeneous audience which shares the poet's sense of their importance. Such a poetry and such an audience require a mode of speaking, writing, that is neither too intimate nor too formal, neither a private probing of personal feeling nor an impersonal stating of general public values. The Cavaliers meet this requirement with what can only be described as a <u>social</u> voice, a natural and casual tone, as at ease with its "listeners" as with those it explicitly addresses, able to introduce the personal or the trivial without

apology, to sound whatever note it wills--humorous, erotic, cynical, plaintive, moral, elegiac--certain of striking a responsive chord in its audience that shares the background, interests, and values of the speaker.

But what, precisely, are those interests and values? Earl Miner, in his fine scholarly study, The Cavalier Mode from Jonson to Cotton, sees "the good life" as the central ideal of Cavalier poetry.[2] And the good life, as the Cavaliers conceived it, entailed not only the pursuit of moral virtues (the vita bona) but also those physical and social comforts conducive to solid human gratification and happiness (the vita beata). In Miner's words, "Cavalier poetry reveals a consistent urge to define and explore the features of what constituted human happiness, and of which kind of man was good."[3] We have already explored at length Carew's concern with "the good life" though I have not used that term. I have noted that for him hedonistic pleasures of the senses seem to hold the surest potential for happiness. And though it might seem on the surface that it is merely the vita beata rather than the vita bona that concerns him, this is not entirely true. These virtues which his fellow poets

suggest are essential, on both the individual and social levels, to an ideal existence--peace, order, loyalty, justice, liberality, constancy--are the same qualities I have shown Carew to be affirming, implicitly or otherwise, in his amorous pursuits. This affirmation is most clearly emphasized by his expressed failure to find enduring happiness in love relationships where these virtues are lacking.

Unlike most of the Cavaliers, Carew seems to have found nearly all the essentials of the good life in the court society. The stress which most of these poets put on friendship (chiefly masculine), on withdrawal to the country and the simple pleasures of a warm fire, good wine and conversation, is missing in Carew. This difference may be merely due to temperament, but is more likely explained by the fact that he died before the long Cavalier "winter" set in, and so took such pleasures for granted. Miner argues convincingly the Cavaliers' preference for friendship over love as the ideal relationship.[4] This is not, it seems to me, true for Carew, for whom the heterosexual love relationship remained the summum bonum. But friendship was, nevertheless, important to him, as were

most of the other elements implicit in the Cavalier good life. His occasional verses demonstrate this, allowing us to glimpse the poet in other roles than the lover's, concerning himself with matters beyond the "Tourneyes, Masques, Theaters" which, in his poem to Townshend, he pronounced as the proper preoccupations for the Caroline poets. There is Carew, the loyal friend of both men and women, celebrating their joys and accomplishments, mourning their griefs and failures; Carew, the devoted subject honoring his King, the embodiment of Law and Order and, therefore, Goodness; Carew, the lover and critic of the arts, commending or censuring with remarkable candor and perceptiveness; and there is Carew, the sojourner at country estates, contemplating the virtues of life removed from the court.

In his poem refusing Townshend's request for an elegy on Gustavus Adolphus, Carew protested the incapacity for such a task of "My Lyrique feet, that of the smooth soft way/Of Love, and Beautie, onely know the tread." And while both modesty and a temperamental disinclination to undertake the task may have motivated his disclaimer, there is certainly an element of truth in it. When writing

of love Carew's poetic instinct for the tone, rhythm, image, form most appropriate to his purpose is sure. This is less consistently the case in his occasional verse, which requires a slightly more formal, or public, voice and demands that he deal with subjects to which his customary sensual imagery and materialistic viewpoint are not always suited. As I noted in my discussion of his attempts to celebrate the virtues of love independent of the senses, Carew lacks the ability to present convincingly ideas and ideals that cannot be embodied in images derived from the earthy pleasures in which his values are rooted. This imagery, which was employed so effectively in praising and seducing his mistresses, is not always so successful when applied to other themes. Yet it too often seems Carew knows no other way of looking at life. Whether he is describing the role of a critic, his New Year's wishes for the King, the joys of marriage, or the virtues of a country house, he seems to think primarily in terms of a physical appetite to be sated. Sexual metaphors find their way with equal ease into a young girl's epitaph and a critical commentary on the virtues of poetry. Where the physical element is sufficiently subdued, or where wit and humor

support it, Carew's earthy emphasis does not offend, aesthetically or otherwise. In instances where no other factor serves to mitigate it, however, the results are sometimes unpleasing. Perhaps nothing so well exemplifies this as his epithalamia, to which we shall turn shortly.

There are some poems, of course, which are in no way indecorous, but which manage only to be blandly, conventionally adequate. This is hardly surprising since the occasions a poet feels obliged to acknowledge in verse do not always inspire him imaginatively or emotionally. Thus, if his response seems somewhat mechanical, as is likely when a great many of these occasional works are read consecutively, the reader should not be too quick to censure. The problem is, after all, an occupational hazard of poets, one to which the Cavaliers were particularly prone. For rare Ben Jonson, the comsummate occasional poet, almost any birth, death, marriage, publication, kindness or insult provided an opportunity to voice, in formal context, deeply-held values and convictions, and indeed to carry out the poet's duty to praise virtue and learning, censure vice and ignorance wherever he found it. But Jonson's was a more consciously public poetry than that of the Cavaliers

who styled themselves his sons. Stripped by formal occasions of the casual ease with which they addressed their mistresses and friends, forced to abandon their habitual pose of taking nothing too seriously, they were self-conscious, unsure of how to proceed. Unwilling to preach, or otherwise address the public conscience (if such a thing existed), or to put on display their personal feelings (if indeed they had them), they wrote elegies of tedious verbosity, epithalamia and commendatory verses of the most commonplace images and sentiments, salutes to the king on traditional anniversaries, even when the realm trembled on the brink of disaster, expressing the most routine, though no doubt sincere, wishes for the undisturbed continuation of his happiness. In comparison with some of the efforts of his fellows, such as Suckling, Lovelace, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Carew's least pleasing offerings seem remarkably good.

Only in their epistolary poems to friends, many of them closer to lyric than letter and only in the loosest sense 'occasional,' do the Cavaliers speak meaningfully and movingly of public events which concern them deeply. To see the truth of this, one need only peruse such poems

as Lovelace's ode "The Grasshopper," addressed to his friend Charles Cotton, Cotton's warmly nostalgic lyric epistle "To my dear and most worthy Friend, Mr. Isaac Walton," Carew's poems to Sandys and "To my friend G. N. from Wrest." The writers are aware, certainly, of a larger audience than the individual addressed, and the poems are not so personal in nature as to preclude that audience from sharing the feelings communicated. But these poets seem to require the assurance of a specific, clearly-envisioned listener in order to speak of what touches them deeply. Forced to adopt an impersonal public verse or, alternatively, an introspective private verse that affects no audience at all, they fall back rather heavily upon imitations of classical poets or of Donne and Jonson. There are exceptions, of course. Herrick in particular manages the private voice exquisitely at times, as in his plaintive sonnet "The bad season makes the Poet sad"; and Shirley's haunting poem "The Glories of our Blood and State," though it is hardly impersonal, is nevertheless very much in the public vein. Generally, however, the charm and excellence of most good Cavalier poetry derives from the poets' perfection of the social

mode, and we seldom find them equally impressive when they are forced to adopt an alternative stance.

With this caution, let us turn now to an examination of Carew's occasional works. Always a conscious and careful artist Carew manages to acquit himself with more grace on these "public" occasions than many of the Cavalier contemporaries who mocked his conscientiousness. Still, his products are of uneven merit, varying from the barely adequate to the solidly satisfactory to the superb. On only four occasions (unless one allows excerpts from his masque)--his elegy on Donne, and his poems addressed respectively to Jonson, Sandys, and G. N.--does he equal or surpass his artistry as a love poet, achieving that perfect meshing of style and form with content that produces enduring poetry. It can not be coincidence that in three of these instances he is deliberately imitating the style of the poet to whom the lines are addressed. Without a specific model to work from, Carew is less sure of his ground.

I should like to turn first to a group of four poems having to do with marriage. Only two are actual commemorations of weddings, but all are interesting, if not necessarily pleasing, attempts by Carew to explore

imaginatively the happiness to be found in this union. Unhappily, when his imagination fails and he falls back on his own experience to guide him, the limits of that experience are painfully apparent.

One of these poems is in the form of "An Hymeneall Dialogue" (66) between bride and groom. It has not been associated with any particular wedding and, strictly speaking, may not belong in a discussion of occasional verse. But it is worth mentioning precisely because its concept of the couple's union, a neo-Platonic blending of spirits so profound that each shares the other's nature, contrasts so strikingly with the grosser union of bodies celebrated in his "official" marriage songs. The poem obviously represents one of Carew's infrequent forays into the unfamiliar territory of ideal love, represented here by the complete marriage. In both form and content, the poem recalls Donne's "The extasie" and it seems likely that the latter's "dialogue of one" inspired this monologue of two. The first two stanzas should suffice to demonstrate the character of this union:

Groome. Tell me (my love) since Hymen ty'de
The holy knot, hast thou not felt
A new infused spirit slide
Into thy brest, whilst thine did melt?

Bride. First tell me (sweet) whose words were those?
For though your voyce the ayre did breake,
Yet did my soule the sence compose,
And through your lips my heart did speake.

There follows a realization that a mutual exchange of souls and hearts has taken place and that each now partakes of the qualities formerly unique to the other. The chorus intrudes still further into the Donnean sphere, expanding though not necessarily improving on his ecstatic mathematics.[5]

Chorus. Oh blest dis-union, that doth so
Our bodyes from our soules divide,
As two doe one, and one four grow,
Each by contraction multiply'de. (ll. 17-20)

However derivative the poem might be, and however illusory the union it envisions, one might well wish that when it came to celebrating actual marriages Carew had been less thoroughly himself, and had retained something of the ideal regardless of whether he felt reality likely to sustain it.

The nature of the union celebrated in his little poem, "To my Cousin (C. R.) marrying my Lady (A.)" (47), contrasts sharply with that of the dialogue. This is not

a formal marriage song, of course, merely a congratulatory lyric addressed to a distant relative and friend, Carew Ralegh (son of Sir Walter), ten years Carew's junior, who served with him as a gentleman of the privy chamber of Charles I.[6] The poem is short enough to be quoted in full.

> Happy Youth, that shalt possesse
> Such a spring-tyde of delight,
> As the sated Appetite
> Shall enjoying such excesse,
> Wish the flood of pleasure lesse:
> When the Hymeneall Rite
> Is perform'd, invoke the night,
> That it may in shadowes dresse
> Thy too reall happinesse;
> Else (as Semele) the bright
> Deitie in her full might,
> May thy feeble soule oppresse.
> Strong perfumes, and glaring light,
> Oft destroy both smell, and sight.

It would be difficult to find a more typically Carevian poem than this. The pose of the wiser, more experienced elder man, advising the novice on how to avoid the hazards of an excessive exposure to pleasure and beauty, is a stance he adopts frequently. Given the relationship between the poet and Ralegh, the urbane yet intimate tone, the frankly erotic anticipation of the feast in store for the young man, seem exactly right, at least initially. And the half-mocking assumption that there is need for

caution is lightly humorous and yet richly complimentary to the lady Ralegh has had the good fortune to capture. Yet beneath the joking demeanor is the serious truth which Carew's pursuit of sensual happiness has taught him and which he has often expressed elsewhere. Total immersion in the "flood of pleasure" does lead to satiation and is oppressive to the spirit. The expression "Too reall happinesse" may simply be affirming the actuality of the joys the young man will experience; but the phrase also suggests he will find them excessively real, less pleasing than when some part is left to the imagination. And the ambiguity underlines the pathetic paradox that frustrates the sensualist at every turn; those pleasures most feverishly desired turn to ashes once possessed. The epigrammatic couplet which concludes the poem underlines the warning. If this was not Carew's intention, then he has erred most uncharacteristically in ending a "happy" poem on a somewhat sour note.

Such an error seems unlikely. The poem may appear simple, a few good-humored lines dashed off to congratulate a friend. But the simplicity, as always in Carew, is deceptive. The catalectic trochaic tetrameter (used

nowhere else in Carew's verse) is sustained throughout the poem, and only two end-rhymes are used for the entire fourteen lines. The seemingly offhand allusion to Ovid's story of Semele and Jove is, in reality, central to his theme, invoking classical authority to support it. This is obviously a carefully constructed work of art. Neither Carew's form nor the development of his theme can be faulted. And since the poem is in the social mode, the speaker directly addressing an intimate friend, the voice is natural and easy. Yet, in treating only the physical aspect of marriage, the poem fails to do justice to the significance of the occasion. The deficiency is less severe in this poem than in the epithalamia. This is, after all, just between the boys. Nevertheless, though jocular allusions to the joys of the marriage bed are inevitable, one might reasonably expect, serious effort having gone into the poem's composition, some reference to the blessings of marriage beyond its physical pleasures. Some idealization, some recognition of at least the potential for a significant and enduring union, capable of uplifting rather than oppressing, is surely in order. There may be a kind of perverse integrity in Carew's refusal to provide it. But less

faithful adherence to his avowed hedonistic principles, less emphasis on appetite, would have been more decorous in commemorating weddings.

This unrelenting physical emphasis at least serves to distinguish Carew's epithalamia somewhat from a host of others. Such poems are as predictable in their content as the events of the wedding day itself, and any original or individual touches must come in the way of imagery, structural innovations, or the introduction of themes applicable to the particular occasion and couple. The essentially formal nature of the epithalamium, which ideally celebrates not merely a particular wedding but marriage itself, does not lend itself readily to the latter. And inevitably certain images seem to attach themselves automatically to descriptions of the day, the bride (whether waking, dressing, approaching, or undressing), the groom, the festivities. Fresh and original images were of course sought by the poets, but with generally unremarkable and sometimes grotesque results.[7] After Spenser's matchless "Epithalamion," there must have seemed little of worth that could be added to this form, and a poet could only imitate him unashamedly or resign himself to praising and

pleasing on a far less ambitious scale. Carew's two contributions to the tradition make no pretence to being in other than a minor key.

Neither of these poems is in any way outstanding, though both are at least adequate. Neither is without a certain amount of ingenuity and skill; but their emphasis on the sexual consummation of the union toward which, due to their brevity, the poems seem to rush, is disconcerting. Inevitably, all epithalamia move toward this same event; but the better ones do so with a gentle, slowing-building eroticism that make it the culminating happiness of a day studded with joys, as well as a new beginning. With Carew it is close to seeming the raison d'etre of the marriage. In one of these poems this emphasis is oppressive and, to me, distasteful; the second, through pleasing form and clever imagery, manages to avoid this fate.

"On the Marriage of T. K. and C. C. the morning stormie." (79) was written for the nuptials of Thomas Killigrew, a fellow courtier and poet, and Cecilia Crofts, daughter of Carew's friend John Crofts, whose hospitality he celebrates in his poem "To Saxham."[8] The day's inclement weather is the unifying element to which nearly all

of the poem's images and compliments are linked. One might well suspect that Carew, having waited until the event was upon him, seized upon the infelicitous behavior of nature as a theme he could build on. There is no other element in the poem that would indicate an attempt to capture the specific occasion or to treat the union of his two good friends as in any way exceptional. Only the storm that clouds their wedding day sets them apart from the archetypal bride and groom upon whom the sun is traditionally said to shine. Though Carew does his best to make the gloomy weather symbolically favorable, the continuous references to it, coupled with the pentameter line he employs, create a somewhat depressing and solemn tone. The Petrarchan cliches with which the lines are packed do not suffice to brighten it. The predictable compliment with which the poem opens is all too indicative of what will follow:

> Such should this day be, so the Sun should hide
> His bashful face, and let the conquering Bride
> Without a Rivall shine whilst He forbeares
> To mingle his unequall beames with hers.

The beauty of the bride does not alone explain the sullen weather. The storm is also there to signify that

> The cheerefull Bridegroome to the clouds and wind
> Hath all his teares, and all his sighes assign'd.
> (ll. 11-12)

The struggling tempest only serves to contrast the "Eternall calmes" that now reign within the victorious suitor's breast. Mention of the present calm inspires the poet to advise the groom to recall past torments endured for the sake of "free passage to that fruit" which has now been attained. Such thoughts will stimulate his appetite that he may "better taste" and thoroughly "relish" what he is about to devour--the "Delights of her faire body, and pure soule." The delights of the soul, whatever they may be, get no further mention. Having spent thirty lines whipping up an appetite, Carew and the groom can proceed to the feast without further amenities. The poem concludes:

> Then boldly to the fight of Love proceed,
> 'Tis mercy not to pitty though she bleed,
> Wee'le strew no nuts, but change that ancient forme,
> For till to morrow wee'le prorogue this storme,
> Which shall confound with its loude whistling noyse
> Her pleasing shreekes, and fan thy panting joys.
> (ll. 31-36)

So much for the peace that earlier set the bridegroom apart from the tempestuous struggles of external nature. He and the storm are now at one, allies in the battle of love. Conceivably some readers might find some aesthetic satisfaction in this neat reconciliation of opposites. I find it insufficient to compensate for the repulsive brutality

of the resultant image. The earthy wit does not enhance or honor the union it celebrates; if anything it demeans it. The poem is simply not worthy of the occasion that inspired it.

Carew's second effort, "An Hymeneall Song on the Nuptials of the Lady Ann Wentworth, and the Lord Lovelace" (114) succeeds somewhat better, though it is not a really memorable achievement. The groom was John Lovelace, possibly a cousin of the poet Richard Lovelace, who later dedicated his Lucasta to the lady John married. Anne Wentworth was the niece of Carew's friend, John Crofts.[9] The poem combines both classical and metaphysical elements in its structure and imagery. The result is unusual but not displeasing. Because the stanzaic pattern of the poem is highly original and difficult to describe adequately, it deserves to be reproduced in full.

Breake not the slumbers of the Bride,
But let the Sunne in Triumph ride,
Scattering his beamy light,

When she awakes, he shall resigne
His rayes: And she alone shall shine
In glory all the night.

For she till day returne must keepe
An Amarous Vigill, and not steepe
Her fayre eyes in the dew of sleepe.

Yet gently whisper as she lies,
And say her Lord waits her uprise,
The Priests at the Altar stay,

With Flowry wreathes the Virgin crew
Attend while some with roses strew,
And Mirtles trim the way.

Now to the Temple, and the Priest,
See her convaid, thence to the Feast;
Then back to bed, though not to rest:

For now to crowne his faith and truth,
Wee must admit the noble youth,
To revell in Loves spheare;

To rule as chief Intelligence
That Orbe, and happy time dispence
To wretched Lovers here.

For the're exalted farre above
All hope, feare, change, or they do move
The wheele that spins the fates of Love.

They know no night, nor glaring noone,
Measure no houres of Sunne or Moone,
Nor mark times restlesse Glasse:

Their kisses measure as they flow,
Minutes, and their embraces show
The howers as they passe.

Their Motions, the yeares Circle make,
And we from their conjunctions take
Rules to make Love an Almanack.

There is something rather fine about Carew's numbers here. Constant, yet varied, the smooth, regularly changing rhythmic patterns reinforce his metaphoric description of the lovers' "heavenly" motions. It is true that the

element stressed is again the physical joining of the couple. Fully half of the twelve stanzas are devoted to the pleasures of the marriage bed. Nevertheless, the union is made to seem less grossly material by the astrological conceit Carew uses to describe their lovemaking. There is unusual delicacy in his ambiguous descriptions of the motions and conjunctions of bodies both celestial and earthly. Dunlap's commentary directs the reader to Thomas Stanley's translation of Mirandola's A Platonick Discourse upon Love for an explanation of Venus' governance of fate, helpful in understanding how the lovers can "move/The wheele that spins the fates of Love."[10] However, the conceit surely owes as much to Donne as anyone, and not just in the general sense that most characteristically 'metaphysical' poems are indebted to him. It is only a small step from the lover taking his mistress' love as the sphere in which his love will reside as the directing intelligence ("Aire and Angels"), to this youth's governing the sphere of Love (both his bride and Venus). Nor is there any great distance between the laity begging love's "saints" for a pattern of their love ("The Canonization") and the "wretched Lovers" of Carew's poem who observe the

motions of these "celestial" bodies in order to formulate "Rules to make Love an Almanack." Despite such similarities, the poem is derivative rather than imitative. Much in its style and content is still original Carew. It is in many ways a very nice little poem. But neither it, nor any of the other nuptial poems, could be said to convey, except superficially, the essential, enduring virtues of marriage.

This failure is not surprising. Though for Carew an ideal love relationship must be enduring, unchanging, marriage does not seem to have held for him any assurance that the ideal could be achieved. None of his poetic declarations of love imply a desire to officially "tie the knot"; "To A. L. Perswasions to Love" hints at the possibility of a permanent union--but only to insure a companion in age and a means of relieving lust when one is no longer able to attract other lovers. Thus his too materialistic and cynical view of life and love may have interfered with his producing a truly satisfying nuptial poem.

The same viewpoint may also have handicapped Carew when it came to writing elegies. Granted he may have had intense feelings about death. His love poems reveal an

abiding concern with the ravages of time, the rapid flight of precious minutes, hours, years, and life itself. This is a theme which preoccupied most of the Cavaliers, as is witnessed by the number of carpe diem and sic vita poems they produced. But unlike most of the others, Carew never discovered any remedy that could soothe the pains inflicted by Time, or constructed any defense against its power.[11] The vague, insensate joys promised for the next world, whether he believed in them or not, could not inspire him imaginatively and lacked the appeal of this world's pleasures. Consequently, death's sting and the grave's victory were not things he could scoff at, but real catastrophes. Unfortunately this viewpoint, though it might be productive of powerful emotion, was bound to prove a drawback when it came to writing funeral elegies.

A distinction should be made here, though the Cavaliers did not themselves always preserve it, between elegies and epitaphs. For the latter, which are shorter and of a simpler construction than the elegy, and presumably designed to be engraved on tombstone or monument, a poignant expression of loss, whether it derives from genuine affection for the deceased or a general prizing of life, is

sufficient. This sentiment is likewise an essential ingredient of a good elegy, but the latter, which deals with the subject more complexly and completely, requires that the sense of grief and loss be balanced with sentiments of a more positive and hopeful nature. The elegy, ideally, ought not merely to mourn or praise, but to console. And Carew, though he might pay lip service to traditional religious consolations, could find very little to offer in the way of real comfort. Consequently, his elegies are generally inferior to his epitaphs.

Apart from the Donne elegy, which is in a class by itself and will be discussed later, Carew wrote only three poems that could properly be classed as elegies. All of them employ the pentameter couplet--Carew's usual form for serious "public" verse--and all are too lengthy to permit reproduction here, the shortest being seventy-four lines in length. None of the three is remarkable for any depth of feeling. Indeed their tone is closer to that of conventional compliment than elegy, a fact which, in at least two of them, is readily understandable since Carew had a dual purpose in writing.

"An Elegie on the La: Pen: sent to my Mistresse out of France" (19) was written when the youthful Carew was in Paris with Lord Herbert. It is both an elegiac tribute to the Lady Martha Peniston, whom he had met at court, and a love lyric to the lady he is believed to have been wooing in England. His two themes are brought together in the first sixteen lines, in which he invites every lover presently bewailing in tears and verse the absence or cruelty of a mistress to temporarily forget his personal grief and bemoan this universal sorrow--the death of Lady Peniston. Tears dropped on her bier will be, not brine, but manna, and verses "which else must die" will live through the influence of this lady who gave life to the Muse. The poet next addresses his mistress, begging her to forgive this tribute of tears and poetry paid to another out of the stock reserved for her. They are shed, he explains, for her as well as the dead woman:

> for when I saw her dye,
> I then did thinke on your mortalitie;
> For since nor vertue, witt, nor beautie, could
> Preserve from Death's hand, this their heavenly mould
> Where they were framed all, and where they dwelt,
> I then knew you must dye too, and did melt
> Into these teares, but thinking on that day.
> (ll. 31-37)

Not until line 45 of the poem does Carew turn his full attention to eulogizing Lady Peniston. The conventional praises of her angelic virtues are uninteresting except for the rather absurd conclusion to which they lead. This saintly woman,[12] it seems, was universally loved and worshipped on earth because the world was "too bad/To hate or envy her," incapable of appreciating or striving to be like her. But she will certainly meet a better class of people in heaven, "fellow Saints" more nearly her equals who may have the good judgment to envy her. Thus, he concludes, heaven may mean a diminishing of her happiness.

> There's losse i' th' change 'twixt heav'n and earth,
> if she
> Should leave her servants here below, to be
> Hated of her competitors above. (ll. 59-62)

The poet's continuous injecting of complimentary references to his own mistress makes it impossible to sustain an elegiac mood. One simply feels the Petrarchan conventions through which the lover addresses his lady have been carried over into elegy. Certain passages recall Donne's "Funerall Elegie" for Elizabeth Drury, but the similarity is superficial. Where Donne manages to make his hyperbole thematically and symbolically meaningful, in Carew it is just flattery.

One would like to dismiss this poetic mongrel as simply a novice poet's unsuccessful experiment in combining genres. But ten years later Carew again combined elegy with another theme, though this time rather more artfully. Still, "To the Countesse of Anglesie upon the immoderately-by-her-lamented death of her Husband" (69) is probably of more historic than literary interest. The excessively-mourned husband in the poem was Christopher Villiers, youngest brother of the Duke of Buckingham (George Villiers) whose unlimited favor with both James and Charles made him for years the most powerful man in England. Though Buckingham's two brothers shared in his good fortune, they apparently lacked completely the charm and brillance which enabled him to attain it. One historian offers the following entertaining glimpse of the brothers' social standing:

> John was a weakling in mind and body. Christopher dull and unattractive. But they could hope for great things, and one of the court wits prophesied that
>
> > Above in the skies shall Gemini rise,
> > And Twins the court shall pester,
> > George shall call up his brother Jack
> > And Jack his brother Kester.[13]

John Villiers managed to make a brilliant marriage to the daughter of Sir Edward Coke, largely, it seems, through the machinations of the boys' scheming and rapacious mother; but her efforts on Christopher's behalf were less fruitful.

> Buckingham's other brother, Christopher, lent comedy to a sombre tale, for the ladies would not have him. Of three heiresses at whom he and his mother took aim, one rejected his proposals with ridicule, one was protected by her father, and one made a runaway match in order to escape. Some years later he married a distant kinswoman.[14]

Even allowing some licence to friendship, gratitude (Villiers and his lady were apparently patrons of Carew) and poetic convention, Carew's description of the Earl clashes ludicrously with the historical account.

> Know when that heape of Atomes, was with bloud
> Kneaded to solid flesh, and firmely stood
> On stately Pillars, the rare forme might move
> The froward Juno's or chast Cinthia's love.
> In motion, active grace, in rest, a calme
> Attractive sweetness, brought both wound and balme
> To every heart. He was compos'd of all
> The wishes of ripe Virgins, when they call
> For Hymens rites, and in their fancies wed
> A shape of studied beauties to their bed.
> Within this curious Palace dwelt a soule
> Gave lustre to each part, and to the whole.
> This drest his face in curteous smiles; and so
> From comely gestures, sweeter manners flow.
> (ll. 31-44)

There follows further praise of Villiers' courage, modesty, and nobility of character.

But Carew has a purpose beyond eulogizing the dead Earl. In the opening lines he chides the countess for her immoderate and fruitless grief; she is still a young woman, and in the closing lines he seems to be urging her to put herself back in circulation.

> Then let him rest joyn'd to great Buckingham,
> And with his brothers, mingle his bright flame:
> Looke up, and meete their beames, and you from thence
> May chance derive a chearfull influence.
> Seeke him no more in dust, but call agen
> Your scatterd beauties home, and so the pen
> Which now I take from this sad Elegie
> Shall sing the Trophies of your conquering eye.
> (ll. 79-86)

Carew undoubtedly speaks as a concerned friend. He had known the countess, the former Elizabeth Sheldon, before her marriage (his poem "Upon the sickness of (E. S.)" was apparently written for her),[15] and these lines from the poem suggest he had acted as intermediary between her and her future husband:

> I could remember how his noble heart
> First kindled at your beauties, with what Art
> He chas'd his game through all opposing feares,
> When I his sighes to you, and back your teares
> Convey'd to him (ll. 69-73)

Whatever the realities of the situation there is something indecorous, if not ludicrous, about combining an elegy with the suggestion that the widow seek new conquests. Carew's candid advice is consistent with his personal feeling that no relationship or happiness is permanent, and that life is for living fully. But though his advice might have been personally gratifying to the widow, aesthetically at least, it is unsound. As too often happens with Carew's occasional verse, his personal convictions conflict with conventional public values.

Carew's approach in his third elegy, "Obsequies to the Lady Anne Hay" (67), is no more exalted. The dead girl, who was a distant relation of Carew and the stepdaughter of Lucy, Countess of Carlisle,[16] might be just one more pretty face he seeks to compliment, his task being more difficult than usual since he did not know her.

> But who shall guide my artlesse Pen, to draw
> Those blooming beauties, which I never saw?
> (ll. 19-20)

In what may be an implicit (and negative) allusion to Donne's treatment of Elizabeth Drury in his Anniversaries, the poet considers and then rejects (ll. 29-38) the possibility of making the girl an embodiment of all the virtues

of her sex and detailing what her "progress" would have been, judging by the beginnings of a life shaped by the exactest moral and divine laws. He decides instead to let "virgins of equall birth" catalogue her virtues and beauties. Through the resulting picture she will (like all the many ladies similarly enshrined in art by poets) achieve immortality. The apotheosis which concludes the poem is more suited to a love sonnet than a funeral elegy:

> Their breath shall Saint thee, and be this thy pride,
> Thus even by Rivals to be Deifide.

Such are the hollow comforts Carew could offer the bereaved. Though aware of the conventional sentiments appropriate to such occasions, he was evidently uncomfortable with them and sought what alternatives he could.

In the writing of those shorter elegiacal verses called epitaphs, however, he was relieved of the necessity of extended commentary and of finding consolation for, or meaning in, the loss. Most of these shorter poems are far more gratifying, though critics differ on their merits. The epitaph on Maria Wentworth (sister of Anne Wentworth, whose marriage he commemorated) provides a case in point. Courthope, who didn't like much of anything about Carew,

states flatly that "Carew's elegies, in which he endeavors to imitate Ben Jonson, are frigid and insincere."[17] I assume that the critic is using the word "elegies" loosely, since Jonson's influence is really evident only in the epitaphs. It is certainly present in Maria Wentworth's, but so too is Donne's, and the poem could not justly be called an imitation. Rufus Blanshard makes the impressive statement that "Donne and Jonson, if they had collaborated to celebrate Maria Wentworth, could not have done better."[18] Undoubtedly, the poem (56) does capitalize on the strengths of both poets, while avoiding their eccentricities; the results are very find indeed.

> And here the precious dust is layd;
> Whose purely-tempered Clay was made
> So fine, that it the guest betray'd.
>
> Else the soule grew so fast within,
> It broke the outward shell of sinne,
> And so was hatch'd a Cherubin.
>
> In heigth, it soar'd to God above;
> In depth, it did to knowledge move,
> And spread in breadth to generall love.
>
> Before, a pious duty shind
> To Parents, courtesie behind,
> On either side an equall mind,
>
> Good to the Poore, to kindred deare,
> To servants kind, to friendship cleare,
> To nothing but her selfe, severe.

So though a Virgin, yet a Bride
To every Grace, she justifi'd
A chaste Poligamie, and dy'd.

Learne from hence (Reader) what small trust
We owe this world, where vertue must
Fraile as our flesh, crumble to dust.

Here, particularly in the fourth and fifth stanzas, are Jonson's classical simplicity and firm moral vision, without any of his terse bluntness. Here too, most notably in the second and sixth stanzas, is Donne's strenuous 'metaphysical' wit, without any of his metrical irregularity or syntactical contortions. The lyric sweetness is Carew's own. Francis Schoff feels that "No other elegiac lyric of the age quite approaches this one."[19] Joseph Summers, on the other hand, finds the wit and "ingenious compliment" excessive and offensive, at least to modern tastes, and states, "It is hard to believe that his elegy . . . could have satisfied anyone's notions of decorum."[20] My own reading of seventeenth century poetry has instilled a growing conviction that no compliment could offend by its excessiveness, at least not so far as those on the receiving end were concerned. Maria Wentworth's parents were so far from finding the poem indecorous as to have the first six stanzas engraved on their daughter's tomb.

The contempt of the world expressed in the final lines seems to derive more from personal disillusionment than spiritual firmness; for Carew, apparently even the pious Christian virtues are unenduring. Nevertheless, this plaintive vision of virtue, as well as flesh, crumbling to dust lends an added poignance to the poem. The completeness of the loss makes the "dust" seem yet more precious, the clay more fragile, the betrayal more complete. Carew's earthy realism, which could not always conform itself to what was proper to the occasion, is here sufficiently contained by the rather rigid demands of the form with admirable results.

Carew's three epitaphs on the Lady Mary Villiers are more purely Jonsonian in style. The child whose death they commemorate was probably the daughter of Carew's patrons, the Earl and Countess of Anglesey, who died at the age of two.[21] The first of these poems (53) is highly reminiscent of Jonson's "On My First Daughter."

> The Lady Mary Villers lyes
> Under this stone; with weeping eyes
> The Parents that first gave her birth,
> And their sad Friends, lay'd her in earth:
> If any of them (Reader) were
> Known unto thee, shed a teare,

Or if thyselfe possesse a gemme,
As deare to thee, as this to them,
Though a stranger to this place
Bewayle in theirs, thine owne hard case;
For thou perhaps at thy returne
Mayest find thy Darling in an Urne.

The greater simplicity of form and statement are more suggestive of genuine feeling than the sophisticated imagery of the Maria Wentworth epitaph. Of course, it is impossible to elaborate convincingly on the virtues of so young a child, and Carew appeals to the anonymous reader of the inscription to mourn not the particular loss, but the fragility and insecurity of the life most dear to him. This universal emphasis in no way minimizes the preciousness of the actual child or the severity of the family's loss. Rather, these are accentuated by making the child symbolic of every cherished individual, her death emblematic of humanity's deepest sorrow. The final lines of the poem recall Carew's statement to his mistress in the elegy on Lady Peniston: "for when I saw her dye,/I then did thinke on your mortalitie." But what was in that poem primarily an ingenious justification for his "disloyalty" in shedding tears for another woman, is here a simple acknowledgement of a universal human truth. Every death involves us, if

only as a reminder of our own mortality and that of those dearest to us.

Only one minor element interferes with my satisfaction with this elegant little poem. I am a little uneasy with the figure of speech Carew uses to embody this "hard case." "Urn" is a fairly commonly used alternative to "grave" to denote a final resting place, and has the added advantage here of suggesting ashes, the symbol employed by the Church as a memento mori. It ought to serve Carew's purpose perfectly. Yet I find it difficult to avoid an all too literal, and slightly ludicrous, picture of the situation evoked in the last line, like something one might find in Evelyn Waugh. Probably this unfortunate reaction is due to my exposure to the "sick" humor of the 20th century and would not have affected Carew's contemporary reader. Still, there is something diminutive about an urn that is not, for me, perfectly consistent with the profundity of the concept being expressed.

I am less impressed with the other two epitaphs Carew composed on this same occasion, though they have drawn favorable critical acclaim. The problem with writing three epitaphs is the same as that encountered in

composing an extended elegy. The simple poignant facts of the deceased's dearness and the mourners' grief having been stated, the poet can only go on to adorn and embellish them, or endow them with symbolic significance, until they no longer seem authentic or have power to move us. No doubt Carew wrote three poems because one seemed an insufficient offering on this occasion. He wished the girl's parents to know how deeply he shared their loss. Though there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of his feeling, its strength is inevitably diluted by the artifice required to treat the same subject twice more without repeating himself. He chooses, in his second offering (54), to elaborate on the purity of the child's soul.

> The purest Soule that e're was sent
> Into a clayie tenement
> Inform'd this dust, but the weake mold
> Could the great guest no longer hold,
> The substance was too pure, the flame
> Too glorious that thither came:
> Ten thousand Cupids brought along
> A Grace on each wing, that did throng
> For place there, till they all opprest
> The seat in which they sought to rest;
> So the faire Modell broke, for want
> Of roome to lodge th' Inhabitant.

The poem is not without its aesthetic merits. Carew takes the idea developed in the first two stanzas

of the Maria Wentworth poem, that of the body being incapable of containing the soul within it, and develops it into the single conceit that is the poem. I find the image here of the body as an overcrowded tenement, too small and not really fine enough to accommodate its guests, less pleasing than that in the other poem, which stresses only the fineness and fragility of the "clay." Others, however, find the conceit completely satisfactory. Rufus Blanshard writes that "The appropriateness of the conceit is that it fits a child, and at the same time draws an ageless contrast between the immortal soul and its earthly resting place."[22] This "ageless contrast" may well be Carew's thesis; but I am afraid many a reader may be too preoccupied with the cleverness of the conceit to see it. Moreover, Mary's case is obviously so exceptional that it does not readily occur to one to see in it a reflection of the universal condition. But, even granting the suitability of the image, the greater wittiness of this poem does not, for me, please so well as the natural feeling and eloquent simplicity of the first epitaph.

Having covered the girl's spiritual graces, Carew turns, in his third epitaph, to celebration of her physical

potential. The poem has a sweetness of tone and a richness of imagery to recommend it, and is highly complimentary; but the compliment hardly seems appropriate for a two-year-old child.

> This little Vault, this narrow roome,
> Of Love, and Beautie is the tombe;
> The dawning beame that 'gan to cleare
> Our clouded skie, lyes darkned here,
> For ever set to us, by death
> Sent to enflame the world beneath;
> 'Twas but a bud, yet did containe
> More sweetnesse then shall spring againe,
> A budding starre that might have growne
> Into a Sun, when it had blowne.
> This hopefull beautie, did create
> New life in Loves declining state;
> But now his Empire ends, and we
> From fire, and wounding darts are free:
> His brand, his bow, let no man feare,
> The flames, the arrowes, all lye here.

Louis Martz writes that this poem "inherits the Jonsonian form as displayed in many of Jonson's own epigrams and epitaphs, but carries beyond Jonson its elegance and perfection of form, its delicacy of sympathetic admiration for dead Beauty."[23] Despite its formal merits, however, and the fine imagery of lines seven through ten, the poem's hyperbole is too deeply rooted in the amorous conventions to really suit the occasion. Carew seems constitutionally incapable of dwelling for long on any abstract

value, goodness, happiness, or beauty, without drifting into the sensuous world which for him embodied all of these.

If there were difficulties inherent in elegizing the Villiers child, writing an epitaph for the most famous member of this family was an even more delicate problem. Feeling ran high where George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, was concerned. He inspired both fanatical love and virulent hate, though ultimately the latter predominated and eventually cost him his life. The spoiled favorite of both James and Charles, in whom extraordinary physical attractiveness and personal charm combined with shrewd intelligence and political ambition, held incredible power during the decade he reigned at court and, historians agree, with catastrophic effects. Maurice Ashley states flatly that "in so far as one man caused the disasters that befell the Stuart monarchy in the middle of the century, that man was Buckingham."[24] Perez Zagorin is more expansive, but no less harsh.

> Buckingham's domination formed an epoch of critical importance in the pre-history of the revolution. It deformed the workings of the King's government and the patronage system. It sowed disaffection in the Court and was a

> prime cause of enmity on the political scene. It brought the royal regime into hatred and contempt. To the favorite's ascendancy must be ascribed in no small measure the decline of the crown's moral authority . . .[25]

David Willson provides more of a close-up view of Buckingham in action as Carew must have observed him.

> He had what everyone craved: the ear of the King and the patronage of the kingdom. Great men and small paid homage to him, and the King was the foremost of his worshippers. It is small wonder that his head was turned and that he became vain, wilful and arrogant. Furious at any cross, he grew quarrelsome and easily offended . . . . His path became strewn with men whom he had helped to ruin.[26]

Parliament attempted to put an end to Buckingham's power without success. Finally an assassin's knife succeeded where legal means had failed, to the intense sorrow of the King and the Duke's family and friends, but to the great joy of the people. In the first of his two epitaphs (57) Carew memorializes the razing of the "structure" that was Buckingham:

> By blinded zeale (whose doubtfull light
> Made murders scarlet robe seeme white,
> Whose vain-deluding phantosmes charm'd
> A clouded sullen soule, and arm'd
> A desperate hand, thirstie of blood)
> Torne from the faire earth where it stood;
> (ll. 9-14)

Close as he was to the family, even Carew apparently felt obliged to acknowledge that Buckingham's murderer had been motivated by zeale rather than viciousness, for the man was known to have acted out a fanatical patriotism that not everyone considered misguided.

Whether Carew felt compelled to commemorate the Duke's death because of his close association with the family, out of loyalty to the king, or because he sincerely admired him is impossible to say. Most of the court poets seem to have kept a discreet silence or kept their tributes to an absolute minimum. The King was dissuaded from constructing a monument to his favorite, or even participating in a state funeral, for fear of the riots that might ensue.[27] Yet Carew undertook to write two rather lengthy epitaphs. (Presumably, a monument proportionate to Buckingham's importance would be large enough to accommodate them.) For once, however, he kept his penchant for extravagant compliment in check. The first poem seems primarily designed to please Buckingham's widow and is of less interest or merit than the second, which is in many ways a remarkable poem, unique among Carew's works. In it he seems more kin to the Augustan poets than the Stuart

lyricists. Nowhere else does Carew sound more poised and mature. Here, finally, the public voice has been mastered.

> Reader, when these dumbe stones have told
> In borrowed speach, what Guest they hold,
> Thou shalt confesse, the vaine pursuit
> Of humane Glory yeelds no fruit,
> But an untimely Grave. If Fate
> Could constant happinesse create,
> Her Ministers, Fortune and Worth,
> Had here that myracle brought forth;
> They fix'd this childe of Honour, where
> No roome was left for Hope, or Feare,
> Of more, or less: so high, so great
> His growth was, yet so safe his seate.
> Safe in the circle of his Friends:
> Safe in his Loyall heart, and ends:
> Safe in his native valiant spirit:
> By favour safe, and safe by merit;
> Safe by the stampe of Nature, which
> Did strength, with shape and Grace enrich:
> Safe in the cheerefull Curtesies
> Of flowing gestures, speach, and eyes:
> Safe in his Bounties, which were more
> Proportion'd to his mind then store;
> Yet, though for vertue he becomes
> Involv'd Himselfe in borrowed summes,
> Safe in his care, he leaves betray'd
> No friend engag'd, no debt unpay'd.
>  But though the starres conspire to shower
> Upon one Head th'united power
> Of all their Graces, if their dire
> Aspects, must other brests inspire
> With vicious thoughts, a Murderers knife
> May cut (as here) their Darlings life.
> Who can be happy then, if Nature must
> To make one Happy man, make all men just? (58)

In this assessment of Buckingham the poet seems to speak from a neutral ground. Indeed, his primary purpose

seems to be, not to honor the controversial Duke but to draw a moral lesson from his fall. This approach permits him to elaborate upon the Duke's considerable merits, many of which would seem to have little bearing on "the vaine pursuit/Of humane Glory" which is supposedly the poet's text. Still, this graceful, restrained enumeration of the Duke's merits, confined chiefly to his many personal graces could scarcely offend even his most rabid political enemies, particularly since Carew treats them as gifts of fortune and nature. Carew's true theme is a less narrow one than is suggested by his opening lines; it is, in fact, the familiar theme that underlies most of his serious poems--the ephemeral nature of earthly happiness. No mention of Buckingham's faults or weaknesses is required to explain his death, nor does Carew single out his murderer for special condemnation. Human nature being what it is, the Duke's fall was inevitable. What we are to learn from the fate of the man who had everything is not only the vanity of the pursuit of personal Glory, but that there is no "constant happinesse," no security to be found in this world.

Though the poem is implicitly pro-Buckingham in its conclusion as well as its description, it is so in a general, non-controversial sense which allows Carew to stay pretty much within the confines of truth without antagonizing either faction. The tact and probity which replace Carew's usual witty extravagance testify to how successfully he has submerged his personal voice in the public one, and without any sacrifice of formal excellence. It is impossible to fault Carew's performance on this occasion.

The commemoration of deaths and marriages imposes fairly rigid demands and restrictions on the writer of occasional verse. He must focus inevitably on the beauty of the bride and the passion of the groom, or, just as unavoidably, on the virtues of the departed. The poet knows automatically what must be said; how to say it artistically and originally, yet decorously, are his only concerns. This is almost equally true, apparently, of poetic tributes to royalty. The works of the Cavaliers are liberally sprinkled with commemorative verses to the Stuart monarchs and their families. Each birth, birthday, anniversary, sickness, New Year's Day, inevitably generated a surge of poetic activity, if not always creativity. Here and there

one finds a poem, or a passage, of genuine artistic merit, but for the most part, reading through a series of these poems is a little like flipping through a Hallmark catalogue. One has a choice of the religious or secular, lyric or solemn, witty or profound, classical or contemporary, but the message is nearly always the same. To say this is not to question the sincerity of the poets' feeling, but flattery, not feeling seems to have been the name of the game. A festive occasion is naturally not the time to bring up unpleasant topics; if the poets painted a golden picture of the monarch as ideally wise and good, and universally beloved and worshipped, it is scarcely their fault that Charles chose to behave as if this were the reality. Still, one longs for a prophetic voice raised in warning, daring to remind the King that he, no less than Buckingham, is mortal and that no mortal happiness is secure.

One will not find such a voice in Carew's poems. There are four royal tributes among his works. Two are dedicated to King James, one commemorating an illness, the other the King's visit to Saxham, the Crofts family estate; the other two are dedicated on New Year's Day to King

Charles and his Queen respectively. The poems are uniformly flattering, and, no doubt gratifying to those on the receiving end of the compliments and good wishes. "A New-Yeares gift. To the King" (89) is the best and most interesting of the four. The extravagance and unreality that characterize most of the royal tributes are restrained in this one, except perhaps in the hope expressed for a year that is "one great continued festivall." The poet's wishes for such solid human joys as pleasure in wife and children, and enduring peace seem the more heartfelt for their simplicity and attainability. These are, of course, traditional wishes, but fine lines enrich Carew's presentation of them. His wish for conjugal joys, for example, seems less facile for its mature recognition that the mind plays a part in such delights:

> May the choyce beauties that enflame
> His Royall brest be still the same,
> And he still thinke them such, since more
> Thou canst not give from Natures store.
> (ll. 19-22)

The conventional hope that the King will be blest with numerous progeny is rescued from complete banality by the image of

The faire and God-like off-spring growne
From budding starres to Sun's full blowne.
(ll. 25-6)

Perhaps most remarkable, however, because it is so uncharacteristic of Carew is the belligerent loyalty of his last lines.

Let his strong vertues overcome,
And bring him bloodlesse Trophies home:
Strew all the pavements, where he treads
With loyal hearts, or Rebels heads;
But Byfront, open thou no more,
In his blest raigne the Temple dore.
(ll. 29-34)

Dunlap sees the last two lines, with their suggestion of hostilities having recently been concluded, as evidence that the poem "is probably to be dated 1 January 1630/1; Charles had made peace with Spain in 1629 and with France in 1630."[28] He is very probably correct. Still, one can not help speculating about the extraordinary fervor of those closing lines. They may be explained by Carew's love for peace, made eminently clear in his poem to Aurelian Townshend. But the war abroad seems to have caused little interruption of the gay court existence and certainly did not affect Carew personally. Moreover, the Spanish and French could not properly be called rebels, nor did they owe any loyalty to Charles. One can not help

wondering if the reference is not to an interruption of peace much closer to home. In 1639, the Scottish uprising had forced Charles to raise an army in an attempt to quell the revolt. Carew had accompanied the abortive expedition, which ended with the King's signing a forced and all too temporary peace[29] (certainly a bloodless trophy, if only a second-place one). That it was a miserable experience for Carew is evident from his allusion to it in his poem "To my friend G. N. from Wrest." He could be indifferent to war when it did not touch him; when it did he recognized it as alien to all the earthly comforts and joys he cherished most. Might not this poem's fervent and ruthless desire for peace, as well as the down-to-earth simplicity of his other wishes, have derived from that experience? Might the poem commemorate New Year's Day, 1640, the last peaceful one Charles was to know, and the last of Carew's life? These may be only idle and romantic speculations but they render this celebration of an otherwise routinely festive occasion slightly more intriguing.

Other, less official occasions, whose recognition was appropriate but not obligatory, offered the poets a bit more leeway for self-expression. It was customary

among this group of poets to acknowledge in verse literary achievements of friends, such as a book of poems, a play, masque, or, as in the case of George Sandys, a translation. Besides honoring a friend, such poems offered the poet an opportunity to display his own learning, talent, and critical acumen. Rarely, of course, does one find among these works anything approaching the quality of Jonson's exquisite tribute to Shakespeare; but then, artists of their magnitude are rarer yet. Many of these poems inevitably owe more to friendship than to the writer's genuine, unbiased respect and admiration for the work per se. Still others use such complimentary occasions primarily as an excuse to sound off on what the poet considers the abuses of the age in regard to literature. Ben Jonson wrote both kinds as well as sincere and elegant praises of works or poets genuinely deserving of recognition. And so did Carew, though his excursions into the realm of literary criticism are far less frequent than Jonson's.

Carew plays the critic's role with considerable perception and finesse. Geoffrey Walton refers to the poet as "that excellent literary critic, Thomas Carew,"[30] and that excellent literary critic, Louis Martz, has this

to say: "Carew is indeed one of the great critics of English literature; if he had been writing in our own day he would undoubtedly be known as one of the 'new critics.'"[31] Carew's reputation as a critic must rest on a very small body of works--just eight pieces in all. Three of them rank among his best poems, a fact which surely indicates that, however much he might play the dilettante, he took the judgment of art seriously. His fine poem to Sandys, which criticizes his own work as well as his friend's, has already been treated in an earlier chapter. Most of the others are less remarkable, with the notable exception of those treating the work of Donne and Jonson. But all reveal a discerning awareness of the precepts of good art and good criticism.

The briefest and least serious of Carew's critical commendations is his poem "To Will, Davenant my Friend" (98) acknowledging the publication of D'Avenant's heroical poem Madagascar. This is undoubtedly one of those instances in which friendship rather than desert stimulated the critic's glowing review. The reader accustomed to the exaggerated flattery which flows between friends in this

period will be amused rather than outraged at Carew's hyperbolic comparisons.

> When I behold, by warrant from thy Pen,
> A Prince rigging our Fleets, arming our Men,
> Conducting to remotest shores our force
> (Without a Dido to retard his course)
> And thence repelling in successe-full fight,
> Th' usurping Foe (whose strength was all his Right)
> By two brave Heroes, (whom we justly may
> By Homer's Ajax or Achilles lay,)
> I doubt the Author of the Tale of Troy,
> With him, that makes his Fugitive enjoy
> The Carthage Queene, and thinke thy Poem may
> Impose upon Posteritie, as they
> Have done on us: What though Romances lye
> Thus blended with more faithfull Historie?
> Wee, of th'adult'rate mixture not complaine,
> But thence more Characters of Vertue gaine;
> More pregnant Patterns, of transcendent Worth,
> Than barren and insipid Truth brings forth:
> So, oft the Bastard nobler fortune meets,
> Than the dull Issue of the lawfull sheets.

If this seems rather cavalier criticism, not really worthy of the name, the reader may like to compare John Suckling's commemoration of Davenant's work before dismissing Carew's as utterly frivolous.

> TO MY FRIEND WILL D'AVENANT, UPON HIS POEM
> OF "MADAGASCAR"
>
> What mighty princes poets are! those things
> The great ones stick at, and our very kings
> Lay down, they venture on; and with great ease
> Discover, conquer, what and where they please.
> Some phlegmatic sea-captain would have stay'd
> For money now, or victuals; not have weigh'd
> Anchor without 'em; thou, Will, doest not stay

So much as for a wind, but go'st away,
Land'st, view'st the country; fight'st, put'st
all to rout,
Before another could be putting out!
And now the news in town is, D'Av'nant's come
From Madagascar, fraught with laurel home;
And welcome, Will, for the first time; but prithee,
In thy next voyage bring the gold too with thee.[32]

Suckling's verse makes no pretext to critical judgment. His exuberant, witty response to D'Avenant's achievement is that of a comrade rather than a connoisseur. Suckling and Carew are often lumped together by students of this period as equally illustrative of the Cavalier ideal of elaborate indifference, of taking nothing seriously. The very real difference between them, at least as far as their approach to art is concerned, is exemplified in the contrast between these two poems. Both poets are having a bit of fun with their subject, Carew with his sexual conceit and Suckling with his explorer-conquerer imagery. But while Suckling seems to indulge in his conceit for its own sake, Carew's conveys a just and relevant, if not terribly original, critical observation on the nature and value of works such as D'Avenant's. In doing so he points up the sense in which his friend may perhaps more legitimately be classed with Homer and Virgil--they share the

same noble literary tradition. Suckling is too often, as here, content to be amiably witty. Carew offers both wit and substance and consequently, his poem more truly honors his friend's accomplishment.

Carew's critical credentials are more fully established in two other commendatory poems honoring D'Avenant's dramatic works. These are more formal, public statements and in both of them Carew sharply censures contemporary public taste--or lack of it. In "To the Reader of Master William Davenant's Play" (97) he says very little about the play (The Witts, produced in 1634) but a great deal about informed criticism. In doing so, he employs the gustatory imagery first developed by Horace and used by Jonson in his prologue to Epicoene.[33] This image suggests that playwrights are like cooks, serving up dramatic feasts which, if they are to please the diners, must offer a variety of taste sensations; in short, the playwright must "cook" for the palates of his "guests" rather than his own taste. Jonson discovered the flaw in this analogy when he served up The New Inne and his guests rudely spat it out. In his "Ode to Himself" he scathingly proclaims the futility of concocting cates for swine. Carew too

rejects the image as inadequate though with far more composure and less heat than Jonson. His poem begins:

> It hath beene said of old, that Playes are Feasts,
> Poets the Cookes, and the Spectators Guests,
> The Actors Waitors: From this Similie
> Some have deriv'd an unsafe libertie
> To use their Judgements as their Tastes, which chuse
> Without controule, this Dish, and that refuse:
> But Wit allowes not this large Priviledge . . .

Carew points out that, though critics may differ in their preference for "sharpe or sweet," educated palates will recognize which is which, and will acknowledge what is excellent in each category despite personal tastes. The poet insists that, just as all palates are not equally refined, so not all who sample a playwright's fare are equally qualified to judge. Those who have "that sense imperfect" are advised not to advertise their weakness by proclaiming their opinion, but rather to defer to those of more sensitive taste. The poet is obviously enjoying his conceit; but he is also stating sound critical principles. The Horatian image is, of course, ideally suited to Carew's particular talent for sensuous imagery, and he gets a great deal of mileage out of it.

Eventually Carew does get around to commending D'Avenant's play; he pronounces it a gourmet's delight:

> But if, as in this Play, where with delight
> I feast my Epicurean appetite
> With rellishes so curious, as dispence
> The utmost pleasure to the ravisht sense,
> You should professe that you do nothing meet
> That hits your taste, either with sharpe or sweet,
> But cry out, 'tis insipid; your bold Tongue
> May doe it's Master, not the Author wrong;
> For Men of better Pallat will by it
> Take the just elevation of your wit.
> (ll. 21-30)

Had Carew written today, he would surely have been known as "the sensuous critic!"

In his poem (45) on D'Avenant's play The Just Italian (1630), Carew adopts a harsher attitude toward the inadequacy of the critics, a fact which is probably explained by the miserable reception the play was accorded. Carew offers no criticism of the play itself beyond calling it a "triumphant worke" and mentioning its "cleere, yet loftie straine." He may well have felt he could speak more sincerely and encouragingly if he focused on the deplorable ignorance of critics who could not judge wisely and yet would speak. Carew is eloquent on the subject.

> the sullen age
> Requires a Satyre. What starre guides this soule
> Of these our froward times, that dare controule,
> Yet dare not learn to judge? When didst thou flie
> From hence, cleare, candid Ingenuitie?
> I have beheld, when pearch'd on the smooth brow

> Of a faire modest troope, thou didst allow
> Applause to slighter workes; but then the weake
> Spectator, gave the knowing leave to speake.
> Now noyse prevailes, and he is taxd for drowth
> Of wit, that with the crie, spends not his mouth.
> Yet aske him reason why he did not like;
> Him, why he did; their ignorance will strike
> Thy soule with scorne, and Pity:
> (ll. 4-17)

No one can doubt, reading these lines, that Carew was the heir of Jonson. Yet he does not simply sit on his inheritance, but puts it to work in the service of his own particular talents. If some of Jonson's stringency and clarity of line has disappeared, the loss is more than atoned for by the added smoothness and sweeter music of Carew's softened tones.

Carew comforts D'Avenant by reminding him that, in failing to please popular taste, he is in good company. Such men as Beaumont and Jonson have met the same abuse. Nor is it only the artists who are the victims of uninformed criticism; statesmen and politicians are plagued by it as well.

> Repine not Thou then, since this churlish fate
> Rules not the stage alone; perhaps the State
> Hath felt this rancour, where men great and good,
> Have by the Rabble beene misunderstood.
> So was thy Play; whose cleere, yet loftie straine,
> Wisemen, that governe Fate, shall entertaine.
> (ll. 33-38)

The optimism of the last line is touching, if unconvincing; one wonders if Carew still held the same belief a decade later. Certainly the wise men in whom he placed his faith did not overturn the opinion of D'Avenant's audience in regard to The Just Italian. But then, "Raptures of the braine," as Carew calls his friend's fancies at one point, have never been as popular as the kind of raptures he himself described. (The "Rabble" may not have known anything about art, but it knew what it liked.) Carew, like all critics who attempt to educate the public taste, was fighting a losing battle. Undoubtedly he realized this and was thus content to let history be the final judge of his friend's work.

Thomas May's comedy The Heire (1620) met a better fate on the stage than D'Avenant's loftier work. Consequently Carew, in his commendatory poem to the author (92) has no conflict with the public and confines himself to praising the play. Here, more than anywhere else, he expounds his critical principles, praising qualities in the play "Such as best writers would have wished their owne." He comments first on May's excellent consonance of language and form:

> You shall observe his words in order meet,
> And softly stealing on with equall feet
> Slide into even numbers, with such grace
> As each word had been moulded for that place.
> (ll. 13-16)

The plot, which centers around "an amorous passion, spunne/Into so smooth a web," could not but please Carew's taste. But its careful structure and delicate humor also earn the critic's praise:

> The whole plot doth alike it selfe disclose
> Through the five Acts, as doth the Locke that goes
> With letters, for till every one be knowne,
> The Lock's as fast, as if you had found none.
> And where his sportive Muse doth draw a thread
> Of mirth, chast Matrons may not blush to reade.
> (ll. 23-28)

The combination-lock image seems particularly apt for the critic's purpose. Though it is not at all startling, its use reveals that Carew was heir to Donne as well as Jonson.

How thoroughly he had studied these two masters is demonstrated fully and finally in the verses he addressed to each of them and it is on these two poems that his reputation as a critic truly rests. Each is an artful imitation of the style developed by the man to whom it is addressed; and it is imitation in the most complimentary sense. The poems, as Martz puts it, reveal "Carew's critical ability to enter the very world created by other

poets, to absorb them, understand them, and recreate them in his own mind--surely the basic quality that one expects in any good critic."[34]

The occasion which elicited Carew's verse letter to Jonson was not an auspicious one. When, following the failure of his play The New Inne in 1629, Jonson indulged in that unfortunate literary tantrum, "Ode to Himself," blasting the public's ignorance and threatening to take his talent and go home, Carew took it upon himself to urge Jonson to see the situation in a calmer, more rational light. He does not, as in his poem to D'Avenant on a similar occasion, simply seek to soothe his friend by assurances that the inadequacy of the critics was indeed responsible for the fiasco. He pays the master the tribute of an honest judgment of his performance, asserting in doing so those critical and moral principles which Jonson himself had taught him. Carew's poem is entitled "TO BEN JOHNSON. Upon occasion of his Ode of defiance annext to his Play of the new Inne" (64). Though rather long, it must be printed here in full so that its ingenuity and perception may be fully appreciated.

Tis true (deare Ben:) thy just chastizing hand
Hath fixt upon the sotted Age a brand
To their swolne pride, and empty scribbling due,
It can nor judge, nor write, and yet 'tis true
Thy commique Muse from the exalted line
Toucht by thy Alchymist, doth since decline
From that her Zenith, and foretells a red
And blushing evening, when she goes to bed,
Yet such, as shall out-shine the glimmering light
With which all stars shall guild the following night.
Nor thinke it much (since all thy Eaglets may
Endure the Sunnie tryall) if we say
This hath the stronger wing, or that doth shine
Trickt up in fairer plumes, since all are thine;
Who hath his flock of cackling Geese compar'd
With thy tun'd quire of Swans? or else who dar'd
To call thy births deformed? but if thou bind
By Citie-custome, or by Gavell-kind,
In equall shares thy love on all thy race,
We may distinguish of their sexe, and place;
Though one hand form them, & though one brain strike
Soules into all, they are not all alike.
Why should the follies then of this dull age
Draw from thy Pen such an immodest rage
As seemes to blast thy (else-immortall) Bayes,
When thine owne tongue proclaimes thy ytch of praise?
Such thirst will argue drouth. No, let be hurld
Upon thy workes, by the detracting world,
What malice can suggest; let the Rowte say,
The running sands, that (ere thou make a play)
Count the slow minutes, might a Goodwin frame
To swallow when th'hast done thy ship-wrackt name.
Let them the deare expence of oyle upbraid
Suckt by thy watchfull Lampe, that hath betray'd
To theft the blood of martyr'd Authors, spilt
Into thy inke, whilst thou growest pale with guilt.
Repine not at the Tapers thriftie waste,

That sleekes thy terser Poems, nor is haste
Prayse, but excuse; and if thou overcome
A knottie writer, bring the bootie home;
Nor thinke it theft, if the rich spoyles so torne
From conquered Authors, be as Trophies worne.
Let others glut on the extorted praise
Of vulgar breath, trust thou to after dayes:
Thy labour'd workes shall live, when Time devoures
Th'abortive off-spring of their hastie houres.
Thou art not of their ranke, the quarrell lyes
Within thine owne Virge, then let this suffice,
The wiser world doth greater Thee confesse
Then all men else, then Thy selfe onely lesse.

As Joseph Summers remarks, the poem constitutes "a reproof which is so completely Jonsonian in its precision, measure, 'justice,' and values that it must have made Jonson wince."[35] Carew's frankness is combined with tact, his negative comments softened by his eloquent recognition of his friend's exceptional achievements. Still, the pill is not exactly sugar-coated and Jonson must have found it hard to swallow. Carew's references to his declining Muse, his "immodest rage," and worst of all, his "ytch of praise" from vulgar tongues, must have rankled even more than other, less judicious criticisms prompted by his outburst.[36] Though he might not agree that his Muse had anything to blush about, he could scarcely rail against a criticism rendered in such strict accordance with his own precepts.

Carew's criticism of the impropriety of Jonson's attack on the public is made more palatable by the construction he puts on it. Decorum demands that Jonson, noble artist that he is, ignore the taunts and challenges hurled at him by common detractors who are not of his rank. His satisfaction must be taken in the knowledge that his blue-blooded, "exalted" line will survive long after his critics' inferior strains have perished. Since Jonson is, in fact, in a class by himself, he is his own sole acknowledgeable rival--a fact which the "wiser world" (the literary aristocracy) recognizes and which Jonson should too. Carew is, in effect, asking Jonson to be more conscious of his station.

Of the poem's last lines, Selig writes:

> Carew points out that the wiser world holds Jonson in the highest possible esteem and that the only man who has a higher opinion of Ben Jonson than the wiser world is Jonson himself. Thus with a supreme compliment, and a supreme rebuke, the poem comes to a close . . . .[37]

This seems to me a misreading both of the line and of the tone with which the poem closes. Surely Carew, having criticized the master rather painfully, ends on a note of conciliation: though Jonson's latest work has been judged

inferior, the wiser world, of which Carew is an inhabitant, recognizes that it is so only in comparison to Jonson's other works. Even in decline his star outshines all others.

It is worth noting, for those who feel that Jonson's influence on Carew's poetry was so profound as to make Donne's negligible, that while the poem's structure and style, with their stress on balance and proportion, their simplicity of diction and meter, are Jonsonian, Carew's 'metaphysical' heritage is not completely submerged. It asserts itself in his frequent inversions and suspensions of syntax; in the paradox of "thriftie waste"; in the "learnedness" of his imagery drawn from ornithological, legal, and geographical spheres; in the sustained geneological conceit which spans the entire poem; and in the extravagant wit which conceives of Jonson as the relentless pursuer of classical "martyrs" (who had successfully hidden until his "watchful lampe" discovered them), betraying their secrets, and writing in their blood. Donne's influence can not be shaken off, even when Carew is consciously attempting to model his work on Jonson's.

Though the classical strain predominates, we are constantly reminded in the poem of Carew's mixed heritage.

The balance is reversed in Carew's tribute to Donne which, though it is written as a funeral elegy, is nevertheless his most penetrating piece of criticism. The poem is both too long and too well known to justify being reproduced fully here. A few passages will suffice to remind the reader how expertly and effectively Carew imitates Donne's style, not merely recalling, but recreating, his distinctive contributions to English poetry.

> Can we not force from widdowed Poetry,
> Now thou art dead (Great Donne) one Elegie
> To crowne thy Hearse? Why yet dare we not trust
> Though with unkneaded dowe-bak't prose thy dust,
> Such as the unciser'd Churchman from the flower
> Of fading Rhetorique, short liv'd as his houre,
> Dry as the sand that measures it, should lay
> Upon thy Ashes, on the funerall day?
> Have we no voice, no tune? Dids't thou dispense
> Through all our language, both the words and sense?

Anyone conversant with Donne's poetry can not but be dazzled by the number of Donnean traits Carew has compacted into these opening lines. The dramatic immediacy of Donne's openings, with their almost instantaneous establishing of scene and situation is vividly reproduced, as is the impassioned rhetoric which seems to flow unchecked

from the speaker's intense involvement. Here too are the complex and knotty syntaxes which, with their pauses and suspensions, override the metrical form, and the "unpoetic" colloquial diction. One marks the witty ambiguity in the use of "flower" (flour) which functions in two separate images and yokes them together, and the "masculinity" of tone and language.

But when we have noted all this, we still have not done. The real "star" of the production is the dynamic, yet seemingly offhand image of the first line--"widdowed poetry." The metaphor is less startling than most of Donne's but no less multi-functional. The image establishes instantaneously Donne's unique poetic status; he was the spouse of Poetry, the only one, of all the thousands who have sought to embrace her, to have made her his own. But the image is not merely complimentary. It serves to explain why Carew has dared to "break with untun'd verse" (line 71) the silence that has attended Donne's death. (Dunlap notes that Carew's elegy does seem to predate all the other poetic commemorations of Donne's death.)[38] For the unnatural reaction of the widow, who has produced no sign of grief, not a single wreath for

her husband's coffin, is unseemly. Carew would undertake to force some response from her, but then understands that Donne's death has left her bereft of even the rudiments of expression. Thus the conventional protestation, which so often accompanies an elegy, of the poet's incapacity to do justice to his subject is given the same new vigor and freshness which marked Donne's handling of all staid conventions.

One other fact remains to be noted about this remarkable passage. The image of the humble, plain-spoken churchman forced to rely on fading rhetoric for his flat, unmemorable prose reminds us that it is not only Poetry but the Church that has been bereft by Donne's death of the power to move men through words. Thus both of Donne's functions, both themes which will be developed by Carew throughout the elegy have been introduced in his opening passage. And the reader, at the same time that he admires Carew's skillful utilization of images, is made to remember that it was Donne who taught him how.

On the first reading of the poem, delight in the dexterity with which Carew mimics Donne's style may prevent the reader from fully realizing the astuteness of his

criticism. It is only upon re-examination that one fully appreciates the brilliance of such passages as this on Donne's power to fuse sense and thought, to apprehend sensually:

> But the flame
> Of thy brave Soule, (that shot such heat and light,
> As burnt our earth, and made our darknesse bright,
> Committed holy Rapes upon our Will,
> Did through the eye the melting heart distill;
> And the deepe knowledge of darke truths so teach,
> As sense might judge, what phansie could not reach;)
> Must be desir'd for ever. (ll. 14-21)

or this on his mastery of the unwieldy English language, less tamely adaptable to poetry than the softer, more docile Greek and Latin of his classical predecessors:

> Yet thou maist claime
> From so great disadvantage greater fame,
> Since to the awe of thy imperious wit
> Our stubborne language bends, made only fit
> With her tough-thick-rib'd hoopes to gird about
> Thy Giant phansie, which had prov'd too stout
> For their soft melting phrases. (ll. 47-53)

It is difficult to find anything to say about Carew's achievement that has not already been noted by scholars and critics far more authoritative than myself. Rufus Blansahrd pronounced Carew's poem "The best piece of Donne criticism of the seventeenth century";[39] George Williamson calls it "an abler and more modern analysis than

either Dryden or Johnson achieved";[40] and Louis Martz widens the field to include the Moderns and still awards Carew the trophy:

> . . . Carew sums up Donne's achievement with a critical acumen never surpassed in later critical writings: if we grasp the poem we grasp Donne. Carew saw, as well as T. S. Eliot, Donne's power of feeling his thought as immediately as the odor of a rose; he saw as well as Grierson Donne's immense power of "passionate ratiocination" where image and argument are compressed in one dramatic moment . . . .[41]

In the face of such testimonials, it would be superfluous for me to elaborate further on the incisiveness of Carew's criticism or on the success with which he recreates Donne's style. It is important to note, however, that despite the thorough understanding of, and sincere admiration for, his poetic achievement, Carew was not a true disciple of Donne; his apostasy is apparent even in this poem which is no more totally Donnean than the preceding poem was Jonsonian. Though he commends Donne's rough masculinity, his rigorous language, his exiling of the classical gods and goddesses, he does not conform to these "strict laws" in his own poetry--not even in this poem. The "soft, melting Phrases" that characterized classical

poetry have too strong an appeal for him, and he grants all too ready asylum to the exiled gods and goddesses. References to Prometheus, Apollo, Orpheus, the Muses are sprinkled throughout the poem; and in numerous lines one feels his natural preference for the softly sensuous and musical phrasing of language "whose tun'd chime/More charmes the outward sense" (l. 46). Carew ceases all attempts to imitate Donne's example in the last four couplets of the elegy and in the epitaph which he attaches to it. It is somewhat ironic that in this concise and lovely summation of Donne's dual ministry, Carew violates most of his precepts:

> Here lies a King, that rul'd as hee though fit
> The universall Monarchy of wit;
> Here lie two Flamens, and both those, the best,
> Apollo's first, at last, the true Gods Priest.

There is no inconsistency or disrespect in this abrupt departure from Donne's teachings. It simply supports Carew's prediction (ll. 62-70) that the end of Donne's reign would result in a repeal of his strict laws and a return to the old, easy habits of "idolotry" and imitation. His complete "lapse" into these customs thus proclaims as emphatically as his words that indeed the King is dead.

It would seem that Carew is as adept in the critic's role as he is in the lover's. Perhaps this is because both roles involve the appreciation of Beauty immediately apprehensible, at least partially, by the senses, though both critic and lover are concerned with abstract qualities as well, with excellence of 'content' as well as pleasing form. Though it may be a defect in his talent or his nature, Carew seems to require a sensual stimulus to provoke him to the poetic heights he is capable of achieving. It is perhaps this characteristic that sets him apart most firmly from Donne and Jonson and prevents him from equalling the scope of their poetic achievements. But it is this same sensitivity and responsiveness to sensory stimuli that enables him to surpass both men in the recreation of the appeal of earthly beauty and the pleasure to be found therein.

It is chiefly these earthy pleasures which occupy the poet in his celebrations of the virtues of country estates. Carew wrote two "country house" poems, both of which owe a great deal in their construction to Jonson's "To Penshurst," though the heavy stress placed in these verses on luxuriant physical comforts and beauties

appreciated for their own sake is peculiarly Carevian. "To Saxham" (27), which celebrates the glories of the Crofts family estate is a rather obvious imitation of Jonson's poem and, inevitably, inferior to it.

> To Penshurst . . . presents in concrete terms a whole and consistent view of life in which not only man's relation to man, but also to God on the one side and to nature on the other, are given due place. It is not merely a complimentary poem about a house and a family, it is a poem about a way of life, which is embodied in the house and expresses itself through it.[42]

To portray such an ideal aesthetically and convincingly is beyond the scope of Carew's talents and, perhaps, his interests. The moral mean, the temperate zone between the extremes, has no real appeal for him. He can and does recognize such virtues of the Crofts' home as generosity and congeniality to stranger and friend alike; but these are virtues immediately translatable into sensuous images--a table overflowing with delicacies, a warm "cherishing" fire. The poem is pleasing, competent, but in no way unique, and not really illustrative of Carew's best work.

His particular talents are far more ably demonstrated in "To my friend G. N. from Wrest" (86), a poem which combines the country house tradition with that of

the colloquial verse letter. Believed to be Carew's last poem, it is perhaps most interesting for the picture it reveals of the poet in his last days, still absorbed in the earthy beauties and pleasures which engrossed him throughout his life. Carew was writing from Wrest Park, the Bedfordshire estate of the DeGrey family. The "G. N." to whom the poem is addressed has not been definitely identified though he was probably Gilbert North, who served with Carew as a gentleman of Charles' privy chamber.[43] The last lines of the poem suggest that G. N. also participated in the Scottish expedition of 1639 to which Carew's opening lines allude. The poem is too long (110 lines) to be reproduced in its entirety. Much of its celebration of Wrest Manor is chiefly of interest in demonstrating how thoroughly Carew follows Jonson's model, adapting the latter's form, images, and ideas to his own characteristic interests and themes. But there <u>are</u> elements not derived from Jonson, lines of lyric intensity and sensuous richness such as Jonson could not equal. The opening passage, with its warm personal flavor, its passionate relief at being once again in his natural element, is both poignant and eloquent.

I Breathe (sweet Ghib:) the temperate ayre of Wrest
Where I no more with raging stormes opprest,
Weare the cold nights out by the bankes of Tweed,
On the bleake Mountains, where fierce tempests breed,
And everlasting Winter dwells; where milde
Favonius, and Vernall windes exilde,
Did never spread their wings: but the wilde North
Brings sterill Fearne, Thistles, and Brambles forth.
Here steep'd in balmie dew, the pregnant Earth
Sends from her teeming wembe a flowrie birth,
And cherisht with the warme Suns quickning heate,
Her porous bosome doth rich odours sweate;
Whose perfumes through the Ambient ayre diffuse
Such native Aromatiques, as we use
No forraigne Gums, nor essence fetcht from farre,
No Volatile spirits, nor compounds that are
Adulterate, but at Natures cheape expence
With farre more genuine sweetes refresh the sense.

It is as if his exposure to the frigid climate of the North and of war had generated in the poet a fuller sensitivity to the beauties of the Southern spring and of peace. The contrast has made him more fully aware of the blessings of nature in which he completely immerses himself. Such images as "steep'd in dew," "pregnant Earth," "teeming wombe," and earth's "porous bosome" which sweats rich odors, convey an impression of luxuriant, bursting overabundance that is almost overwhelming. The air may be temperate but little else is. Carew seems to find in Nature's indulgence the example as well as the justification for his own intemperence. The ecstatic pleasure recreated here is no less

sensuous than the sexual rapture of his earlier poem though many will find his love affair with Nature less offensive.

The images of teeming life, inexhaustible delights, continue throughout the poem, despite Carew's attempts to portray Wrest as a comely rather than a sumptuous house, designed for use and hospitality rather than show. The simplicity and plainness of the structure (like the bleak and frozen scenes of the North) only serve to increase the relish with which he enjoys its natural bounties.

> Amalthea's Horne
> Of plentie is not in Effigie worne
> Without the gate, but she within the dore
> Empties her free and unexhausted store.
> Nor, croun'd with wheaten wreathes, doth Ceres stand
> In stone, with a crook'd sickle in her hand:
> Nor, on a Marble Tunne, his face besmear'd
> With grapes, is curl'd uncizard Bacchus rear'd.
> We offer not in Emblemes to the eyes,
> But to the taste those usefull Deities.
> Wee presse the juycie God, and quaffe his blood,
> And grinde the Yeallow Goddesse into food. (ll. 57)

In a way, this disdainful contrast between the cold and sterile symbols erected by other mansions and the substantial realities of Wrest strikes to the very core of Carew's nature and his poetry. Symbols, ideals, myths, with their cold, and perhaps empty, promises of fulfillment,

he has never been able to wholly believe in. Other, less earth-bound poets might find in them greater inspiration, truer pleasure and beauty than reality affords. For Carew there is only the substantive now, the solid, earthy, sensuous reality which can be pressed, ground, tasted, caressed. Not for him the watery wine and thin wafer of pure religions; his Hedonism is celebrated in a more full-bodied, pagan sacrament and sacrifice. Though this occasion marks the poet's final "appearance" before his death, he has never seemed more completely, vitally alive.

In none of the other occasional verses is the personal element so dominant as in this, Carew's swan song. Most of these poems are more controlled, their statements more reserved; subjective feeling is held in check by an awareness of the larger, anonymous audience and by a sense of what is due the occasion. Nevertheless, beneath the more consciously public voice of the elegist, the King's servant, the critic, one hears always the voice of the lover crying "Seize the day!" Carew's complete and intense absorption in earthly pleasures, in all the joys which this world has to offer, made him all too keenly aware of how brief a period we have to enjoy them. And it

is this awareness which imbues even these, his occasional poems, with a depth of feeling beyond that which the occasion by itself might evoke. There is too little time, these poems say, to waste it in wars, in ignorant squabbling about politics or art, in bewailing what has been lost already. All around us--in Nature, in literature, in our loved ones, in the solid physical comforts of food, drink, warmth, sex--beauty and happiness reside. But they are temporal, fragile, easily lost, and we must cherish them while we can. This is the poet's message to monarch and subject, to playwright and critic, to newlyweds and readers of tombstones, as well as to lovers.

And yet Carew does not preach. He makes us aware of Beauty by creating it, and of the importance of Pleasure by pleasing. Wise Hedonist that he is, he knows that these can not be amiss on any occasion.

For those who find his consistent earthiness distasteful or ignoble, Carew will always remain a negligible poet. But despite all our grand and noble ideals, all of us have our roots in the earth. Realistic readers who acknowledge how much of life's goodness derives from simple, sensuous pleasures, from transient and even trivial

delights, will find Carew's poetry refreshing and vital. We do not need him to teach us what earthly beauties, sensuous pleasures exist. But we do need to know that these things are good, that our pleasure in them is legitimate and needs no apology. And we need as well his worldly-wise warning that too complete an abandonment to such pleasures is unwholesome and defeating, destructive of the happiness we desperately pursue.

Granted that such beauty as Carew celebrates decays, such pleasures pale, such happiness dissolves with time; so does life itself, yet we do not for that reason treasure it the less.

# NOTES

NOTES

## Introduction

1. For a concise history of Thomas Carew's literary reputation, see Rhodes Dunlap, ed., The Poems of Thomas Carew with his Masque Coelum Britannicum (Oxford, 1949), pp. xlvi-li. In this study, all quotations from and references to the poetry of Carew are based upon Dunlap's text.

2. "Introduction," p. 1.

3. See, for example, George Williamson, The Donne Tradition (Cambridge, 1930) and Alfred Alvarez, The School of Donne (London, 1961).

4. The Donne Tradition, pp. 209-10.

5. A History of English Poetry, III (1903; rpt. London, 1924), pp. 244-45.

6. Revaluation: Tradition & Development in English Poetry (New York, 1947), p. 15.

7. Metaphysical Lyrics & Poems of the Seventeenth Century (Oxford, 1921), p. xxxv.

8. Minor Poets of the Seventeenth Century (London, 1931; rpt. New York, 1966), p. xi.

9. The Flourishing Wreath (New Haven, 1958), pp. 14-15.

10. Hugh Kenner, ed., Seventeenth Century Poetry: The Schools of Donne and Jonson (San Francisco, 1964), p. 333.

11. "The Poetry of Thomas Carew," Renaissance and Modern Studies, XII (1968), p. 57.

12. Cavalier Poets, Bibliographical Series of Supplements to 'British Book News' on Writers and Their Work, No. 117 (London, 1960), p. 16.

13. Howarth, p. 40.

## Chapter I

1. Ben Jonson, Vol. VII, ed. C. H. Herford, Percy and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford, 1941), pp. 148-153.

2. Charles I (New York, 1968), p. 111.

3. King James VI and I (London, 1956), p. 191.

4. Hibbert, p. 27.

5. Willson, p. 194.

6. Hibbert, pp. 26-7.

7. The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641 (Oxford, 1965), p. 394.

8. Hibbert, p. 111.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., pp. 11-12.

11. "Introduction," p. xxxv.

12. Perez Zagorin, The Court and the Country (New York, 1970), p. 71.

13. Hibbert, p. 138.

14. Ibid., p. 129.

15. Ibid., p. 129.

16. Zagorin, p. 42.

17. P. 273.

18. Hibbert, p. 129.

19. For a complete account of Carew's abortive relationship with the Carletons, see Dunlap's "Introduction," pp. xvii-xxviii.

20. The Complete Poetry of Ben Jonson, ed. William B. Hunter, Jr. (New York, 1963), p. 147.

21. A History of English Poetry, p. 244.

22. The Heirs of Donne and Jonson (New York and London, 1970), pp. 72-73.

23. P. 73.

24. P. 138.

25. P. 59.

26. See Mercury's denunciation of Hedone in Carew's masque, Coelum Britannicum, ll. 809-835.

## Chapter II

1. "Introduction," p. lii.

2. The Great Assises Holden in Parnassus by Apollo and his Assessours (1645), p. 27.

3. Pp. 236-37.

4. The School of Love: The Evolution of the Stuart Love Lyric (Princeton, N.J., 1964), pp. 57-59.

5. "The Argument of Marvell's 'Garden'" (1952), rpt. in Seventeenth Century English Poetry, ed. William R. Keast (New York, 1962), p. 293.

6. Ibid., pp. 294-95.

7. Ibid., p. 294.

8. "The Poetry of Thomas Carew," pp. 65-66.

9. Cf. Donne's "The Dampe," ll. 9-12.

10. Dunlap, p. 259.

11. The Wit of Love (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1969), p. 101.

12. Minor Poets of the Seventeenth Century, pp. xii-xiii.

13. The Proper Wit of Poetry (Chicago, 1961), p. 53.

14. The Life of Edward Earl of Clarendon . . . Written by Himself (Oxford, 1827), p. 36.

15. "Introduction," p. xli.

16. The Divine Poems of John Donne, ed. Helen Gardner (Oxford, 1952; rpt. 1969), p. 2.

## Chapter III

1. Minor Poets of the Seventeenth Century, p. xvii.

2. "Thomas Carew: Son of Ben or Son of Spenser?," Discourse: A Review of the Liberal Arts, I, No. 1 (1958), pp. 9-10.

3. "The Strategy of Carew's Wit," Review of English Literature, V, No. 3 (July, 1964), p. 42.

4. P. 46.

5. Charles I as Patron of Poetry and Drama (London, 1936), p. 29.

6. Cavalier Poets, p. 16.

7. The School of Love, p. 15.

8. Ibid., p. 110.

9. Cf. Henry King's "Sonnet" beginning "Tell me no more how fair she is," and Cartwright's "No Platonic Love" which begins, "Tell me no more of minds embracing minds." Richmond (p. 110) suggests that Tennyson's lyric in The Princess ("Ask me no more; the moon may draw the sea") likewise imitates Carew's formula.

10. The Proper Wit of Poetry, p. 49.

11. P. 265.

12. The Metaphysical Poets (1957; Revised Ed., Baltimore, 1966), p. 21.

13. Johnson: Prose and Poetry, ed. Mona Wilson (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pp. 794-95.

14. The School of Love, p. 14.

15. "The Poetry of Thomas Carew," p. 57.

16. Richmond (pp. 50-51) quotes this couplet in his discussion of the theme of mental communion of lovers. His comment that "Many of Carew's contemporaries surpassed him in analyzing the resistance of lovers to absence" seems an amusing understatement.

17. P. 215.

18. "Thomas Carew and the Cavalier Poets," Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy, XLIII (1954), pp. 97-106.

19. The Flourishing Wreath, p. 69.

20. "The Poetry of Thomas Carew," p. 63.

## Chapter IV

1. The Flourishing Wreath, p. 97.

2. "Thomas Carew and the Cavalier Poets," p. 97.

3. The Heirs of Donne and Jonson, p. 68.

4. The Elegies and Songs & Sonnets of John Donne, ed. Helen Gardner (Oxford, 1965), p. 42.

5. Ibid., p. 12.

6. "Thomas Carew and the Cavalier Poets," p. 99.

7. The School of Love, pp. 205-207.

8. See Dunlap's note, p. 222, in which he quotes from Thomas Stanley's translation of Pico della Mirondola's A Platonick Discourse Upon Love in reference to this image.

9. The School of Love, p. 206.

10. Revaluation, pp. 15-16.

11. The School of Love, p. 96.

12. Flourishing Wreath, p. 95.

13. Howarth, p. 203.

14. Flourishing Wreath, p. 95.

15. "Thomas Carew and the Cavalier Poets," p. 101.

16. P. 221.

17. The School of Love, p. 70.

18. P. 216.

19. Anticipating the decay of a lady's beauty is a popular device in Renaissance poetry, but it is nearly always a retaliation for her scorning of the poet's love. Perhaps the most devastating example is to be found in Drayton's sonnet #8 of Idea: In Sixty-Three Sonnets.

> There's nothing grieves me but that age should haste
> That in my days I may not see thee old,
> That where those two clear sparkling eyes are plac'd
> Only two loopholes then I might behold;
> That lovely, arched, ivory, polish'd brow
> Defac'd with wrinkles that I might but see;
> Thy dainty hair, so curl'd and crisped now,
> Like grizzled moss upon some aged tree;
> Thy cheek, now flush with roses, sunk and lean;
> Thy lips with age as any wafer thin,
> Thy pearly teeth out of thy head so clean
> That when thou feed'st, thy nose shall touch thy chin.
> These lines that now thou scorn'st, which should delight thee,
> Then would I make thee read but to despight thee.

While appropriate to Drayton's vindictive mood, such ruthless reminders of the ravages of time seem ill-suited to a seducer's designs.

20. P. 216.

21. Ibid.

22. Comus, John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Hughes (New York, 1957), pp. 106-7.

23. P. 107.

24. The Poems and Masque of Thomas Carew (London, 1893), p. 223.

25. P. 266.

26. Kenner, pp. 286-87.

27. Heirs, p. 75.

28. See Dunlap's note, p. 220.

## Chapter V

1. "Introduction," The Cavalier Poets (London, 1970), p. 24.

2. The Cavalier Mode from Jonson to Cotton (Princeton, 1971), pp. 43-84.

3. P. 44.

4. Pp. 250-305.

5. Cf. "The Extasie," ll. 31-35.

6. Dunlap, pp. 235-36.

7. Donne, in particular, offends. He seems unable to deny death a part in the proceedings. His "metaphysical" conceits usually seem inappropriate to the genre. The 'wit' that describes the wedding guests as "dust and wormes" and the silk and gold donned by the bride as "the fruits of wormes and dust" ("Epithalamion," ll. 151-54) is unwelcome. And his description of the bride waiting in bed "Like an appointed lambe, when tenderly/The priest comes on his knee t'embowell her" ("Epithalamion Made at Lincoln's Inn," ll. 89-90), is repulsive.

8. Dunlap, p. 254.

9. Dunlap, p. 270.

10. P. 271.

11. See Miner's chapter on "The Ruins and Remedies of Time," pp. 100-155.

12. Dunlap notes, p. 223, that the lady's reputation was far from saintly, her affair with the Earl of Dorset being common knowledge in court circles. Assuming that Carew was acquainted with the gossip, his references to the "saint" and her "votaries" may be tongue-in-cheek.

13. Willson, p. 387.

14. Ibid., p. 388.

15. See Dunlap's commentary, p. 227.

16. Dunlap, p. 247.

17. History of English Poetry, p. 244.

18. "Thomas Carew and the Cavalier Poets," p. 100.

19. "Thomas Carew: Son of Ben or Son of Spenser?," p. 20.

20. Heirs, p. 70.

21. See Dunlap's commentary, pp. 239-40. According to the records, Christopher Villiers pre-deceased his daughter by several months, a fact which is inconsistent with Carew's assertion that the child's parents laid her to rest. It does not seem unlikely to me that Carew sacrificed complete accuracy in order to preserve the simplicity of the description of her burial. He could hardly say "her mother" buried her without making her father's absence conspicuous and necessitating an explanation.

22. "Thomas Carew and the Cavalier Poets," p. 102.

23. The Wit of Love, p. 94.

24. England in the Seventeenth Century (Baltimore, 1952; rpt. 1968), p. 50.

25. The Court and the Country, p. 59.

26. King James VI and I, p. 386.

27. Hibbert, p. 105.

28. P. 258.

29. Hibbert, p. 146.

30. Metaphysical to Augustan: Studies in Tone and Sensibility in the Seventeenth Century (London, 1955), p. 25.

31. Wit of Love, p. 100.

32. Howarth, p. 197.

33. Dunlap, p. 261.

34. Wit of Love, p. 101.

35. Heirs, p. 64.

36. Dunlap notes (p. 246) that the "Ode to Himself" elicited immediate response "in the form of satirical rejoinders by Jonson's ill-wishers . . . ." That even his friends were not above snide references to Jonson's haughty outburst is evidenced by Suckling's "A Session of the Poets" in which, having rebuked Jonson's presumption in pressing his claim to be laureate, Apollo attempts to soothe his choler by making him "mine host of his own New Inn" (l. 36).

37. The Flourishing Wreath, p. 156.

38. Pp. 249-50.

39. "Thomas Carew and the Cavalier Poets," p. 97.

40. The Donne Tradition, p. 56.

41. Wit of Love, p. 97.

42. G. R. Hibbard, "The Country House Poem of the Seventeenth Century," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, 19 (1956), p. 165.

43. Dunlap, pp. 256-7.

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