

THE USE OF SOUND PATTERNS
IN SOME ENGLISH POEMS OF
JOHN DONNE

by

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INTRODUCTION

This work is primarily an analysis of Donne's use of sound patterns as illustrated by selections from his poetry. Since this is essentially an intrinsic approach, major attention is given to the sound patterns as they affect, modulate, or in some manner supplement prosodic patterns, ideational content, imagery, and syntactic arrangement. As a result of this intrinsic approach such items as historical anecdote or biographical data are minimized, chiefly because it is not within the scope of the purposes, and secondarily because so much extrinsic material concerning Donne is readily available for the interested student or scholar.

In developing a system of scansion for the analysis an attempt was made to keep the criteria to a minimum, since it is felt that beyond a certain number of criteria, any additions become a "catch-all" for doubtful scansion, as the triadic approach to simple reasoning sometimes says, "it is, it isn't or maybe." If this attitude conduces to didacticism and approaches the subjective, it is hoped that what is inevitably sacrificed in one respect, is gained in the scientific principle of consistency of application.

The two criteria to be used in scansion then are the historical fact of normal accent in pronunciation, and the principle of logical stress where, in certain monosyllabic word groupings, say three monosyllables in sequence as an example, two factors operate, both of these factors in a sense improved by the poet. These factors are the logical stress

imposed by the subject matter, and the predominant rhythm, say iambic as an example. The historical fact of accent will always give us then, "beautiful" as a dactylic foot, or the word "convey" as an iambus. Logical stress would give the following scansion in a series of monosyllables:

Life is a pure flame

A survey of several recognized prosodists reveals that they ordinarily use one or both of these criteria, i.e., normal pronunciation accent and logical stress, in testing a poem for scansion.¹ Research has borne out the fact that many words, especially Latinate words, have shifted accents between Donne's time and the present. These words are in the main disyllabic adjectives and participles before nouns accented on the first syllable. To avoid colliding stresses such as extreme unction, the poet may render the phrase extreme unction. Familiarity with Donne's verse suggests that he was not squeamish about such "colliding stresses", since there are in his poetry countless examples of "colliding stresses" on monosyllables. Also, Donne's tendency to disregard, in many instances, a metrical scheme in favor of logical or rhetorical stress obviates the necessity for considering these Latinate shiftings in scanning his verse. Therefore, contemporary pronunciation

¹The prosodists surveyed and their works are:
 E. Hamer, The Metres of English Poetry.
 Arnold Stein, "Donne and the Couplet", P.M.L.A., 1942.
 Arnold Stein, "Donne's Prosody", P.M.L.A., 1944.
 Robert Bridges, Milton's Prosody, 1921.

accents are used in the scansion, together with a consideration of logical and rhetorical stress.

A contemporary system of pronunciation is also used in discussing the "tone color" of certain sound groupings in Donne's poetry, since tone color is a matter of sound relationships.² To illustrate, an exclamatory expression such as "O God, O God" would, in Elizabethan pronunciation, be: [o:ɔd o:ɔd] but would very likely, in American pronunciation, be: [o:ɔd o:ɔd]. Analyzing the above expression with a contemporary system of pronunciation, however, would not destroy the validity of the assumption that here we have a melody created by the alternate grouping of "tight" and "lax" sounds [o:/ɔ] in the Elizabethan, or [o:/a] in contemporary American pronunciation. The relationship between "tight" and "lax" sounds is there in either case.

As was mentioned earlier, this thesis is an attempt to illustrate, by analysis, Donne's use of sound patterns. The proposition is that Donne used sound patterns to the extent that they affected the technic and artistry of his poems. This may seem a commonplace assumption in view of the fact that certain recognizable sound patterns prevail in all poetry, yet this assumption entails more than a simple illustration, for it will be shown that Donne, going beyond mere conventional use

²The phonetic system used here, and hereinafter to be in effect is that used by Albert Marckwardt, Introduction to the English Language, Oxford University Press, New York, 1951.

of sound patterns, demonstrably managed and depended upon them to effect certain artistic results. Some of the results are the noticeable melodies, rhythms, and tone colorings that the sound repetition helps create. Others are the supporting and making through sound repetition of certain images and ideas. That these results are important to the poet's artistry and technic is perhaps born out by the fact that pursuit of them noticeably affects his prosodic patterns and syntax, to the extent that a prevailing prosodic pattern is upset or reversed at a crucial sound repetition point, or that a normal syntactic pattern is reorganized on the basis of the poet's inclination to manage sound patterns. Other considerations such as Donne's use of the caesura, the verse foot, and the run-on line, all point to the conclusion that the poet perhaps used many of the artist's tools to enhance the effect of sound patterns.

This analysis then will have a three-fold purpose in pointing out the sound repetition patterns, in discussing what effects the pattern has on the verses, and in determining just what the poet did to achieve these effects. A simple illustration will reveal this three-fold analysis, beginning with the pointing out of the pattern in the particular verse lines:

What artist now dares boast that he can bring
 Heaven hither, or constellate anything.....

Effects: The sound pattern in these lines has upset the prevailing rhythm and created a melody.

How achieved: The prevailing rhythm in the above two lines is rising, yet Donne uses spondees to begin each line. The

spondee beginning the first line above is a result of rhetorical stress, since Donne is indignant with the artist who might be so presumptuous as to "bring Heaven hither, or constellate anything." This indignation is supported by the rhetorical stress with its spondee in the second line, since one ordinarily associates indignation with a halting, gasping response. It is these spondees which slow down the verse, that help support this response of indignation. Thus in the second line above the sound pattern (with its heavy stresses) supports the attitude, and makes both lines similar in opening heavy stresses.

The melody in the above lines is created by the b/b and h/h sound patterns, in that the first vowel sound in each of these alliterated pairs is laxer than its succeeding mate so that we have:

$$b[o:] / br[i] \qquad h[\epsilon] / h[i]$$

In conclusion, then, the sound patterns have:

1. Disrupted the prevailing rising rhythm, though made the two lines equal in opening.
2. Supported the sentiment of indignation through heavy stresses.
3. Provided the melody through the combination of tight lax vowels.

The analysis, as indicated by the above example, will not always be a matter of discussing a single effect upon a verse line or lines, since the effect of sound patterns upon verse is usually compound. A simple vowel sound in sequence will often both establish a rhythm and create a melody. Often, too, while

a sound repetition will establish a melody, it will also reinforce an image, or an argument, so that in the analysis at hand, the discussion will consist of the exposition of several effects at one time. Which of these effects is more basic or primordial is a moot question usually, because one cannot say that a poet established a rhythm, and the tone color followed incidentally, for this poet may have had tone color uppermost in mind, and to argue precedence for either poetic tool would be foolish. One can, on the other hand, observe the poet's rhythms, and notice how he established them with certain metrical feet, or with the caesura, or with logical or rhetorical stress. Since it is the time interval between metrical accents or stresses that is the chief contributing factor to rhythm, and certain words, say with equal sounds, fall on these stresses or accents, one can maintain that it is these words that are important in conveying the beat of the verse. On the other hand, if heavily stressed words, say words repeating a previous sound, upset a prevailing rhythm, then it is possible to conclude that the poet might be sacrificing prevailing rhythm for sound repetition. This upsetting a prevailing rhythm is not to be looked upon pejoratively, because certainly variety of rhythm is better than monotony of rhythm and this situation boils down to a poet's having somewhat of a unity through sounds concurrently with variant rhythms. Alexander Pope, often guilty of stiffness, is aware of this situation. In the Rape of the Lock he has the iambic rhythm:

Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-knots
 strive.....

This rhythm switches in the very next line on the
 alliterated "b's."

Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches drive.

Sometimes the sound repetition pattern itself will not
 upset the rhythm, yet the artistic use of sound will make the
 pattern less obvious as in the following use of sound chiasmus
 by Keats in the Eve of St. Agnes:

Numb were the beadsman's fingers while he told
 His rosary, and while his frosted breath....

Here we have schematically, b/f....f/b within the two
 lines. This is a device that Donne uses quite extensively,
 and probably for the same purpose, to make the sound pattern
 less monotonous and more artistic. Sometimes, as will be in-
 dicated later, sound patterns such as these are used by Donne
 to support and enhance images.

As was indicated earlier the analysis will involve pri-
 marily three steps, the presentation of the poem or lines within
 it illustrating the sound use, the effect of this sound use, and
 an analysis of just how this effect was produced. This analysis,
 while it involves three steps primarily, considers, in the main,
 two things, the effect of sound upon the technic of the verse,
 and the use of a technic to establish the sound. As an example
 a specific line may illustrate sound repetition that switches
 the rhythm of that line and we have sound affecting the technic
 of rhythm. The view, then, is sound as cause, and rhythm switch

as effect. On the other hand, if a specific line uses sound repetition, and to make it effective reverses a syntactic pattern, then one must look upon the technic (syntactic rearrangement) as the cause, and artistic sound repetition as the effect. This way of looking at the situation is not always as clear cut as this explanation might make it appear, and may in many cases be arbitrary as to which is cause and which is effect. At any rate, this viewpoint is offered the reader as a base point for seeing the method of analysis.

The preceding exposition of the steps involved in this work leads to the specific considerations that are involved throughout these steps. Although all these considerations do not come into play in each individual discussion, they are offered here together as an attempt to clarify the procedures of the whole work.

1. An analysis of the sound patterns as they affect the normal or prevailing rhythms.

If the prevailing rhythm is rising, and sound repetition engenders a switch to a falling rhythm, then it can be said that the sound repetition necessitated this switch. If the prevailing rhythm is due to disyllabic feet and sound repetition enforces a trisyllabic foot, again it can be said that sound affected the rhythm. There are many such considerations as the above two, but these are simply two examples. A consideration such as the above two examples represents an important aspect of the analysis since it offers in part an explanation of the "rough" qualities of Donne's accents or stresses.

2. An analysis of the sound patterns as they affect the tone coloring.

In orchestral music, because of the different tones of the various instruments one experiences certain tone colorings in the various musical selections. One experiences the same effect in instrumental music when the soloist manipulates or calls into play certain articulating organs, such as tongue and lips. Poetry is very much like instrumental music in that the different vowel tones of the words require certain manipulations of the articulating organs especially, of course, when read aloud. Of course the silent reader is conscious of the movements that are required since as a human, he is accustomed to speaking. It is the alternate succession of pleasant vowel sounds that creates the specific tone colorings of verse, and lends it its peculiar melody. It is the melody that is a notable aspect of Donne's poetry, and it is worth analyzing since it is so important a feature of his sound, and because it is a quality that is rare. As Charles Johnson speaks of melody he mentions this rarity:

This skill is inborn and rare...If this power is united with intellectual ability and keen perception of emotional suggestiveness of things, we have a poet of higher rank.³

3. An analysis of the sound patterns as they are affected by placement of the caesura, and their placement in certain feet.

Since it is the time interval between the stresses and

³Charles F. Johnson, Forms of English Poetry, pp. 26-27.

accents as they occur in the feet that is the basis for a rhythm, the placement of sounds in certain prominent feet, usually the first or last foot, results in the effective manipulation of rhythms.

Since the caesura is an internal pause, it too is effective in manipulating rhythms, and in giving prominence to words. Donne's extravagant use of caesuras is well known, and since his use of these is so closely related to sound prominence, there is reason to believe that there again, sound is indirectly related to the roughness of Donne's poetry, especially because of the irregular use of the caesura. English poetry from Anglo Saxon times on uses the caesura chiefly as a medial pause, with some variations of course.⁴ But no English poet up to the time of Donne used the shifting caesura as much as he did. Now, of course, it is prominent in free rhythm poetry, and it is noticeable in the romanticists beginning with Wordsworth. A study of a more or less definitive edition of Wyatt, the A.K. Foxwell edition, reveals that he does not use the shifting caesura as frequently as Donne.⁵ This is notable in that Helen Gardner suggests that Donne follows Wyatt in the form of the sonnet he employs, particularly in the use of long lines.⁶

Latin quantitative verse uses the shifting caesura as B.R. Lewis points out.⁷ He also points out that Latin popular

⁴B. Roland Lewis, Creative Poetry, pp. 280-284.

⁵A.K. Foxwell, The Poems of Sir Thomas Wiat, Volumes I, II.

⁶Helen Gardner, John Donne, The Divine Poems, p. 55.

⁷Lewis, op. cit., p. 281.

church hymns and French carols have influenced English poetry.⁸ Donne's close affiliation with the church could possibly have influenced him here.

4. A discussion of sound patterns as giving prominence to certain alien or recondite words and images.

Most Donne scholars are aware of the striking word choices that seem quite startling in the context of certain poems, and how certain semantic spheres, geography and science as examples, were used to convey images entirely unrelated to these spheres. Sometimes words with amorous connotations were used to convey pious moods, as in some of the Holy Sonnets. Obviously this usage is partly a result of a poet's struggling against certain stereotyped words which had lost their evocative power during the popularity of Petrarch in England.

Since many sounds are closely related to certain words suggesting the same action, state, or condition such as the [i:] sound in cheap, peep, scream, squeal, or squeals, or the [u:] sound in gloom, doom, loom, the latter all suggesting a certain eeriness, the poet must be aware of these suggestive sounds, as they tend to become outworn unless they are given a new context in less familiar words. As D.I. Masson points out, these less familiar words can often become dormant in the poetic context unless given prominence. "Acoustic associations are often dormant unless activated by the proximity or lexical

⁸Ibid., pp. 258-275.

existence of similar patterns."⁹ The words mentioned above have lexical existence, i.e., are familiar in an active vocabulary, or in certain contexts. Many of Donne's words do not exhibit this lexical existence, particularly since they are used in alien situations, but they do often have proximity with similar sound patterns in that Donne quite frequently repeated the sounds of these alien words. An example is found in the following lines:

She to whom this world must it selfe refer,
As Suburbs of the Microcosme of her....

The world must consider itself as a "Suburb" of this lady in the above elegiac passage. "Suburb" is the alien word in these lines, being a geographic word used in a comparison. The word is given prominence through alliteration with the word "selfe." This practice is frequent in Donne, and another example of his dependency upon sound.

5. A discussion of the effect of sound repetition on syntax.

Certain normal syntactic patterns are established through usage, and of course the poet can arrange his syntax according to artistic propriety, yet when this rearrangement is obviously supporting the sound pattern the poet has set for himself, then we can say the sound pattern is the cause of this rearrangement. Donne often rearranges syntax to carry through a sound pattern.

6. A discussion of sound patterns as they affect the

⁹D.I. Masson, "Vowel and Consonant Patterns in Poetry," The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, December 1953, 12:222-223.

purpose at hand.

This category is often related to No. 5 above yet it differs somewhat in that it is not so much syntactic arrangement as it is object arrangement within sound patterns, so that certain objects may be alliterated with verbs or other parts of speech, or so that shifting points of view fall within different sound groups. Many times these situations are a result of Donne's highly dialectal verse wherein certain terms appear twice in two aspects of the argument.

As the analysis unfolds within each poem, the three-step procedure of illustration, effect, and cause will not always be adhered to in that order, since the cause sometimes carries more weight than the effect that Donne has achieved, or vice versa. At any rate, the analyses should be systematic and complete for the purpose at hand.

The poems chosen are more or less random choices in that most of Donne's poems exhibit the features being discussed. The choices are selective, though, as far as dating, form, and type are concerned, proving, it is hoped, that poem form and the writing date are not concerned in this persistent phenomena of sound repetition.

The text used for Donne's poems is the standard edition edited by Grierson. The text is listed in the bibliography of this work.

A vocabulary of terms used in this thesis is included for the purpose of clarification of definitions used.

The other noticeable effect in this poem is the control exercised over the list of girls whom the poet is capable of loving. This effect is achieved by switching from the pronoun "who" to "whom" or vice versa as the different type of girl is described, and the practice is essentially a matter of controlling ideas with sound patterns. In the fourth line Donne discusses the girls of different geographical locations:

Her whom the country form'd, and whom the town...

The next line switches to a different category of girls and now the pronoun "who" is used:

Her who beleeves, and her who tries...

The sixth and seventh lines maintain the "who" repetition:

Her who still weepes with spungie eyes,

And her who is dry corke, and never cries...

The above two lines give two abstruse images violently anti-Petrarchan in their lack of sensuous beauty. These images are typically cold and intellectual types offered by Donne. The image of the girl with the "spungie" eyes is given prominence through alliteration with the word "still." The image of the girl "who is dry corke" is made prominent through the word "corke" alliterating with the word "cries."

In these first six lines Donne has used sound repetition to help achieve the effect of the haughty, supercilious lover through the opening trochaic feet:

Her whom...

Her who...

Her whom...

Her who...

He used the alternate sound repetition of who and whom
in cataloging the girls.

whom...whom...

who...who...

whom...whom...

who...who...

who...who...

He has used alliteration, the choriambus base (classic base), stress, and caesura placement to give prominence to two violent images:

Her who still weeps // with spungie eyes

And her who is dry corke, // and never cries...

One other noticeable effect of this poem is seen in the example of how Donne is guided by sound patterns, but permits himself the extravagant use of feminine rime and extrasyllabic line length. In the early Elizabethan period the feminine rime was frowned upon in non-dramatic verse. Daniel said that the feminine rimes were "fittest for Ditties."¹¹ Puttenham said that rimes falling upon the ante penultimate were "fitter for the Epigrammatist or Comicall Poet."¹² With these attitudes prevailing it is very likely that the feminine rime is going to be used sparingly in non-dramatic verse, and such seems to be the case, since Jonson and Herrick use it sparingly as does Shakespeare in his non-dramatic verse. Stein suggests that the growth

¹¹Arnold Stein, "Donne and the Couplet", P.M.L.A., 1942, 57:676-677.

¹²Ibid., p. 676.

of dramatic blank verse and the lyric influenced its rapid growth in usage.¹³ In Donne, though, the feminine rime is quite prevalent as can be seen in the following lines:

- 10 Will nō other vice content you?
 11 Will it not serve your turn to do, as did your mother?
 12 Or have you all old vices spent, and now would finde out others?
 13 Or doth a feare, that men are true, torment you?

The notable thing about these lines is how sound and rhythm control the unrolling of ideas. In lines 10 and 11 the "Will" questions open on trochaic feet; in lines 12 and 13 the nature of the questioning changes on the corollary "or have", "or doth" questions, and now the rhythm is iambic. One difficult thing to accept in these lines is the weak endings falling at the end of questions, which ordinarily call for a rising intonation. To scan these endings as spondees would call for wrenching of accents.

¹³Ibid., p. 677.

The Will

Important though this poem is for revealing some contemporary personal glosses on Donne's part toward various institutions and practices, it must, nevertheless, be considered as a technically artistic poem as far as sound management is concerned.

The chief effect of this poem is the artistry with which Donne handles the satirizing of love through the paradoxes. The artistry is handled through very effective sound repetitions, and caesura placement which narrows the argument down to a series of short, choppy sense groups which are anything but smooth from a metrical standpoint. Each sense group, with its heavy stresses, is marked by the free use of the caesura.

Thou love//taught'st me, //by appointing mee'
 To love there, //where no love received can be,
 Onely to give to such as have an incapacie.

Also a noticeable effect in this line is the melody, created by the vowel and consonantal coloring, and certainly enhanced by the caesura. The consonant management may be seen by the following schematic arrangement by caesura. The single diagonal is the line end.

L//M//M/L//

This arrangement of consonants can be termed sound chiasmus, or, as some refer to it, cross alliteration. This is a technic for handling consonants without making the alliteration monotonous. The use of the bi-labials "l", and "m", both flowing sounds,

takes some of the edge off the choppy effects of the short sense groups, allowing them to flow somewhat into one another.

The vowel coloring of these lines has also contributed to the melody. The technic used is that of alternating lax and tight vowels. A schematic arrangement of caesura (double diagonal), and line end (single diagonal) shows us this technic.

$$L[\wedge] // M[i:] // M[i:] / L[\wedge]$$

The next paradox presents us much the same effects of melody enhanced by caesura placements and consonantal and vowel tone coloring. Using the same schematic system as above, there is, combining the consonants and vowels:

$$L[\wedge] // M[i:] // M[x], M[i:] / L[\wedge], // L[\wedge]$$

The verse lines for the above scheme are:

Thou love taughtst me, by making mee

Love her that holds my love disparity....

The following stanza, having another paradox, continues the effect of melody caused by sound repetition and enhanced by stress, and caesura placement. Donne changes the consonant pattern here:

Thou love by making me adore

Her, who begot this love in mee before...

The words "begot" and "before", though not alliterated, are prominent in the rhythm scheme. The schematic arrangement of the important consonants and vowels gives:

The fifth stanza adds still another paradox to the series, and again changes the consonantal coloring:

Thou, Love, by making me love one
 Who thinks her friendship a fit portion
 For younger lovers, dost my gifts disproportion....

L[ʌ]//M[e:],M[i:], L[ʌ]/Fr[ɛ],F[I]/L[ʌ]//d[ɔ:],d[I]

The first line above begins with a lax vowel in the word "Love", and then there are two words beginning with "m", balanced against one another, one vowel being tighter than the other; then there is a return to the still more lax word, "Love." This movement up and down the vowel scale continues in the next two lines with Fr[ɛ],F[I] and d[ɔ:],d[I], giving these lines a distinctive melody. The interpolation of the word "Love" in the above lines is very effective as can be seen by the scheme. The word occurs before the caesura in the first foot, and in the last foot of the first line, and immediately before the caesura in the second line.

Ben Jonson censured Donne in saying "That Donne, for not keeping of accent, deserved hanging."¹⁴ This censure is justifiable for one who is looking for the iambic rhythms of a metrically even line, yet it does not consider rhetorical stress and sound patterns which quite often must "crack" the prevailing rhythms.

Grierson takes a much more liberal view of the situation in signifying that line or phrase discords in Donne's poetry are

¹⁴J.E. Spingarn, Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century, P. 211.

resolved in the rhetorically effective harmony of the whole of the poem.¹⁵ The "wrenching of accent" often has a "rhetorical and harmonious justification."¹⁶

This harmony is seen in the tuneful sounds of the melody in the lines just analyzed, and yet if one judges these lines from Jonson's standards, or Elizabethan standards in general, then they are defective. The phrase "friendship a fit portion" has given us a trisyllabic third foot, ending in a feminine rime as has the phrase "dost my gifts disproportion." These are both alliterated phrases, adding to the melody established, yet feminine rimes, as stated earlier, were held in disrepute by Elizabethan critics.

The last stanza in "The Will" sums up the paradoxes, and in it, Donne has the actions of the beloved annihilate Love, the lover, and herself. Again a definite melody is detected:

Thou Love//taughtst mee, //by making mee
 Love her, //who doth neglect both mee and thee,
 To'invent, and practice this one way, to'annihilate all
 three.

L[ʌ] τ[ɔ:], M[i:], //M[e:], M[i:]

L[ʌ] //d[ʌ], b[o:], M[i:], [ði:]

τ[un] //τ[un]

¹⁵H.J.C. Grierson, Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century, p. XXIII.

¹⁶Ibid., p. XXIV.

Several conclusions can be reached concerning the above analysis of "The Will", as it fits into the conception that Donne used sound patterns to the extent that they affected the artistry and technic of his poetry beyond what is normally expected in poetry in general:

- a. Sound is used to effect certain melodies.
- b. Sound patterns often disrupt a prevailing rhythm.
- c. Sound patterns sometimes result in feminine rims.
- d. The caesura is effectively used in these sound patterns.
- e. Prominent metrical feet, the first foot, the last foot, or the foot next to the caesura, are used to make certain words more effective.

CRANES CREST

THE SATYRES

Most authorities are in agreement with George Saintsbury, who suggests that the Satyres are some of the roughest, metrically, of Donne's poems.¹⁷ Saintsbury, like Ben Jonson (on the basis of his short criticism of "Satyre VII") is looking for the iambic line. The "Satyre", be it Donne's or not, is not in the canon of Donne's poems as edited by Grierson, the standard edition.¹⁸ The fact remains, though that Saintsbury along with Jonson is correct in suggesting that Donne's meters are rough. Saintsbury states that the "deliberate licence and roughness of the Roman satirical writers" was perhaps "copied by their English imitators."¹⁹ Though there are no doubt some cacophonous lines in Donne's poetry, one should, it seems, look for some rhetorical justification, though certainly some of his lines are not justifiable by any means except poetic propriety.

Donne, in managing his sound patterns, is quite often led into extrasyllabic lines, feminine rimes, rhythm shifts, and syllabic syncopation. Extrasyllabic lines are those having more than the normal ten syllables, and in the "Satyres", ten syllables seems to be the norm, with extrasyllabic lines occurring without any apparent regularity. Syllabic syncopation, or the omission

¹⁷George Saintsbury, A History of English Prosody, Volume II, pp. 160-161.

¹⁸H.J.C. Grierson, The Poems of John Donne, New York: Oxford University Press.

¹⁹Saintsbury, Op. Cit., p. 129.

of certain syllables of a word so as to adhere to the prevailing rhythm, or the prevailing number of syllables, is noticed by comparing the same word in several lines in the Donne concordance.²⁰ Syllabic syncope is not actual omission of the syllable of a word as in elision, which it must be distinguished from, but the omission of a syllable as far as number is concerned. An example is the phrase "be'ing bold."²¹ If a poet had eleven syllables in a proposed pentameter line, he could syncope one of the syllables in the word "being", and his last two words would be scanned, be'ing bold instead of be'ing bold, the latter being one syllable too many. Donne often gives different syllabic numbers to words interchangeably, and because this is noticed in conjunction with lines illustrating sound management, then one must consider the practice as related to sound management rhythm, and line length control.

Satyre I

The situation in this poem is that of the poet railing at the fickle "motley humorist." The poem provides many instances of digressions or philosophizing, and many instances of the effect of sound on poetic artistry and technic.

The first twelve lines, uneven metrically, are more or less

²⁰Homer C. Combs, and Zay R. Sullens, A Concordance to the English Poems of John Donne.

²¹The word "phrase" hereinafter will be used to denote any word or group of words which are dependent upon other elements for their full meaning.

controlled by the harsh voiceless palatal velar [k], and the voiced palatal velar [g] sounds.

- 1 A'way thou fondling motley humorist,
 2 Leave mee, and in this standing wooden chest,
 3 Consorted with these few bookes, let me lye
 4 In prison, and here be coffin'd, when I dye;
 5 Here are Gods conduits, grave Divines; and here
 6 Natures, Secretary the Philosopher;
 7 And Jolly Statesmen, which teach how to tie
 8 The sinewes of a cities, mystique body;
 9 Here gathering Chroniclers and by them stand
 10 Giddie fantastique Poets of each land.
 11 Shall I leave all this constant company
 12 And follow headlong, wild uncertaine thee?

As Grierson suggested one must look to the whole of the poem quite often to find the harmony of Donne's poems. Following this suggestion one can see a certain unity in rhythms in the above metrically uneven lines.

Line 2: The line begins on a trochaic foot which disturbs the rhythm of the rest of the line, yet this first foot has a partner in the last foot (trissyllabic) of the third line. Though metrically uneven with the remainder of their respective two lines, these two phrases taken together are melodious:

Leave mee....let me lye

[[i:] M [i:] ... L [ɛ] M [i:]] L [aɪ]

These phrases are each effectively placed, the first phrase

in the first foot before the caesura, the next phrase in the last foot after the caesura. The foot "let me lye" has another counterpart in line 4 in "when I dye", also after a caesura.

Lines 3-5: These lines taken singly are metrically uneven, yet rhetorical stress on like sounds has unified the lines so that the following isolated rhythms of lines 3, 4 and 5 fall together through attraction of like sounds:

Consortēd
 bē Coffin'd
 Gods conduits, // Grave Divines

The fifth line is an example of Donne's intellectual images, Divines as conduits, and it falls in the [K] [9] sound pattern, thus gaining prominence.

Lines 6-12: Taking isolated phrases using similar sounds in these lines one has the following more or less consonant rhythms:

Natures Secretary
 And Jolly Statesmen
 The sinewes of a cities

All the "s" sounds here have important stresses. The word Statesmen occurs before the caesura, thus gaining prominence, as does the word "Secretary." The first syllable of the word "sinewes" is in the first foot, and gains further prominence through alliteration with the word "cities." The word "sinewes", a medical term no doubt, has gained prominence through alliteration, probably Donne's favorite device for activating "new" words. The eighth line is extrasyllabic and ends in a feminine rime, a

practice into which Donne sometimes fell in his sound pattern usage.

Some conclusions to be reached through these twelve lines are:

1. The unity of the single line is sacrificed to the unity of several lines; prominence is gained through sound patterns.
2. Caesura, prominent feet, and stress help to form this unity of several lines.
3. A correspondance between sound patterns and feminine rimes and extrasyllabic lines is found.

A conclusion such as number one above is demonstrable elsewhere as in the following metrically uneven lines of the same poem:

Great traine of blew coats, twelve, or fourteen strong,
Will thou grin or fawne on him, or prepare....

The consonant and vowel pattern here creates a melody in the two lines. The sound resemblances between the following isolated phrases is strong.

Great traine...fourteen strong

Grin or fawne

G_r[e:]... F[o]

G_r[ɪ]... F[ɔ]

Each "g" sound above has a relatively tighter vowel than has each following "f" sound and a melody results, even though there is metrical unevenness in the single line.

Two other examples in "Satyre I" illustrate the concurrence between extra syllables and sound patterns:

Line 40: Of thy plump^le muddy^l whore, or prostitute^l boy....

Line 58: The Infanta^l of London, Heire^l to an India....

In line 58, the two words, "Infanta", and "India", though not alliterated, are similar enough in spelling and number of syllables to gain the attraction of the ear.

Lines 73 and 74 present, respectively, an example of syntax arrangement for sound purposes, and a relaxing tone through three successive words.

Line 73: He^l them^l to^l him^l with^l amorous^l smiles^l allures....

The syntax has three pronouns grouped together with a preposition. The verb is displaced to the end of the line, possibly for riming reasons, but also for purposes of prominence with the word "amorous."

Line 74: And^l grins^l smacks^l, shrugs^l, and^l such^l an^l itch^l endures...

The sounds of this series of verbs are not consonantly similar, yet their vowels go right down the vowel scale and each is more relaxed than its predecessor:

G_r[ɪ], S_M[æ], S_hr[ʌ]

The above two lines provide still further evidence of Donne's sound management. In line 73 Donne has achieved the sound pattern through syntax arrangement, in line 74 through alternate word arrangement.

Satyre II

The general situation in this satyre is that of Donne attacking the weak spots of poets or writers.

In lines 15 and 16 Donne provides an image of the writer who gives the "idiot actors meanes." The latter is presented as a passive individual dependent upon the writer:

As in some Organ, Puppits dance above
 And bellows pant below, which them do move....

Donne, because of his sound patterns, quite often could make an homogenous whole of two lines because he used a similar melody in two lines, depending upon this similarity to give the lines a point in common. The simple sentence "Puppits dance above", together with the simple sentence "And bellows pant below", form a compound sentence, and though logical movement carries the sense over into the second simple sentence, there is vowel melody and consonant patterns making this movement artistic and melodious:

P[ʌ] d[æ] Ab[ʌ]
 B[ɛ] P[æ] B[ɛ]

Each simple sentence begins with a lax sound followed by a tighter sound, and ends with a lax sound. The "p", "b" plosives beginning each melody have achieved prominence through stress and important placement, the word "Puppits" immediately after a caesura, the stress syllable of the word "bellows" within the first foot.

In lines 34 to 38 Donne has a series of the harsh consonants, appropriate enough for the situation, for he is in the midst of vehemently attacking the writer "who doth chaw other wits fruits." He says that these do him no more harm than others he knows:

34 Who with sinnes all kinde^s as familiar bee
 35 As Confessors: and for whose sinfull sake,
 36 Schoolmen new tenements in hell must make:
 37 Whose strange sins, Canonists could hardly tell
 38 In which Commandments large receipt they dwell.

Again it is the isolated phrases that give a unity to the several lines, but which lack unification with their own individual line. The prevailing rhythm in line 34 is iambic, yet the line opens with a stress syllable; the phrase this syllable opens has an equivalent phrase in the chaotically unmetrical line 37, and almost equal counterpart from line 35:

Who with sinnes
 Whose strange sins
 Whose sinfull sake

Donne has certainly softened the harsh "k" sounds in these lines by intermingling them with the "s" sounds in the above phrases, yet some of these "k" sound phrases find unity only beyond the single line, as did the "s" sound phrases. The rhythm of line 37 is interrupted after the caesura with the word "Canonists." If one begins reading here, one gets perfect trochaic rhythm to the end of line 38, a rhythm strongly controlled by the "k" sounds.

...Canonists could hardly tell / In which Commandments
 large receipt they dwell.

Several conclusions again can be reached on the basis of the above lines.

1. The unity of larger elements than the single line is sought.
2. This unity is achieved through like sounds occurring in isolated phrases.
3. These sounds sometimes disrupt the rhythm of their own lines.
4. These sounds create their own rhythms.
5. Melody continues to be a factor in sound usage.

Satyre II continues to show a correspondance between sound pattern usage and extrasyllabic lines:

49 A motion, Lady; Speake Coscus: I have beene
 50 In love ever since tricesima of the Queene,
 51 Continuall claimes I have made, injunctions got....

Line 51 is extrasyllabic, and the rhythm of this line is disturbed by inverting the syntax, the object "claimes" coming before the subject. Hypothetically, if the line had somewhat a normal syntax we would have a perfect trochaic rhythm:

I have made continuall claimes, injunctions got....

It seems though that the "k" sound of the word "Queen" has carried over into line 51. There is a normal rhythm in the phrase:

Queene, Continuall claimes....

The sound management in this instance has affected both

syntax and rhythm, and possibly was a factor in the line being extrasyllabic.

It is difficult to assign a certain number of syllables to certain of Donne's words, for if one compares, using the Donne concordance, different lines using the same word, one must sometimes syncopate this word in order to achieve the correct numbers. This seems to be the case of the word "Poetrie" in the following lines:

- (/ ~ /)
- 61 When sicke with Poëtrie, and possesst with muse
62 Thou wast, and mad, I hop'd; but men which chuse...

If Donne treated the word "Poetrie" in line 61 above as a trisyllabic word, as he did in four other instances, then this line is extrasyllabic; if he didn't then obviously he is going against his norm in this case to keep numbers. The point of interest though, is that the word in point is one of the "p" pair, and one must conclude that sound play will lead to difficulty.

Another notable example of sound usage occurs in this poem, and that is of sound used as a unifying element, in tying ideas together as in the following two and a half lines:

- 74 Bastardy abound not in Kings titles, nor
75 Symonie and Sodomy in Churchmens lives
76 As these things do in him....

In these lines the three important words, "Bastardy", "Symonie", and "Sodomy", all end in the [i:] sound. A point to notice also is that these lines are extrasyllabic, indicating, perhaps, that sound is the important consideration rather than

numbers.

Satyre III

Though Donne was not free to vary his rhythms as much as did Milton in Paradise Lost, since he accepted the rime scheme, which appears, many times, to have unduly hampered his energy and his inclination to move, tack about, and change swiftly, he nevertheless was able to do an admirable amount within the confines of rime that he chose for himself.

It is just these isolated rhythms, spoken of previously, rhythms guided in the main by sound patterns that can be unified when taken together, rather than in their own lines, that make Donne, in a way, sound like Milton.

Saintsbury, in a commentary on Paradise Lost, Book I, offers a criticism that at times could be applied aptly enough to some of Donne's verse. He states that one will find:

That the sense is "variously drawn out from one verse to another," after the most artful fashion, and that thus, by "verse periods," there is fashioned a "verse paragraph," which according to choice, may be extended to the whole forty-six lines as printed in the original, or broken at pleasure into a minor paragraph and a kind of coda.²²

It is into a kind of coda that one can fit Donne's "extraneous" rhythms, rhythms extraneous to their own line or to a normal line where either the rising or falling rhythm predominates.

In "Satyre III", perhaps the most famous of the five "Satyres" accepted in Grierson's canon of Donne, the situation is that of

²²Saintsbury, op. cit., p. 239.

Donne attacking restricted religious views, and offering a plea for tolerance. This poem offers an example of the Miltonic-like rhythms which fall into a kind of goda:

- 17 Dar'st thou aÿd mutinous Dutch, and dar'st thou
lay
18 Thee in ships wooden Sepulchers, // a prey
19 To leaders rage, to stormes, to shot, to dearth?
20 Dar'st thou dive seas, // and dungeons of the earth?

The chief effect is that of rapid, indignant speech, achieved by the voiced consonant "d", which is harsh, and clipped, having a tendency to shorten words. Again Donne has used the technics of foot placement and caesura, the "d" sounds falling near a caesura or in a prominent foot. The prominent "s" sound falls within the verse lines above helping to smooth some of the harshness so that we get the following relative placement illustrating sound chiasmus within line groups:

- 17 d...d//d
18 ...s...s
19 ...s...d
20 ...d...d...s...d

Again it is the unity of separate rhythm groups that is noticed, rather than the unity of the line group. A new rhythm is started in line 17 after the caesura, ending in the second "s" sound. A similarity in sound and rhythm is noticed in the following isolated phrases:

- 17 Dar'st thou aÿd mutinous Dutch....
17-18 dar'st thou lay thee in ships

20 Dar'st thou dive seas....

The above examples continue the conclusions reached for "Satyre II" so that one may state:

1. The larger unity of several lines is maintained,
2. Two lines may be "knit" together by beginning a different rhythm in the same line and carrying it over into the next.
3. Sound is used to achieve the unity of these isolated rhythms.
4. Caesura and foot placement help establish these sounds.

This process of knitting lines together is very important to the artist who is seeking a sense of continuity. This continuity is sometimes very difficult to achieve when one is using rimes, yet the following short lines show how Donne is able to do this through sound and rhythm groups:

60 Tender to him being tender, as Wards still
 61 Take such wives as their Guardians offer, or
 62 Pay valeses....

The phrase "tender to him", has a rhythm similar to the element "being tender, as Wards" in that each has a pyrrhic in it, yet one cannot stop on the word "Wards", for one must go to the next line to find its verb, and this is made much easier by the subject alliterating with the object "wives." The word "Wards", then, is part of this base: / x x /, attracting it to the choriambus in the first phrase, and part of the w/w alliteration.

As in the other "Satyres", there continue to be the

extrasyllabic lines demonstrating sound patterns. It is worth mentioning that in line 54, as in instances of normal syllabic lines using sound patterns, Donne seemingly does not try to avoid the feminine rime:

54 No wenchēs wholesome, bŭt course country drudgēs
 103 As streames are, Power is; those best flowers that
 dwell....

Satyre IV

Longest of the "Satyres", this poem presents Donne's attacks on the courts and court life, and also one of the most unrhythmic series of lines demonstrating sound usage:

78 From King to King and all their kin can walke
 79 Your eares shall heare nought, bŭt Kings; your
 eyes meet
 80 Kings only; The way, to it, is Kingstreet.
 81 He smack'd, and cry'd, He's base, Mechanique,
course....

Line 78 is a normal iambic pentameter line, and it sets the "k" sound pattern for the ensuing lines. In line 78 the "k" sound patterns fall evenly enough on the rhythmic beat to make them prominent. Yet Donne, apparently fascinated with the sound, goes to extremes in the next two lines in trying to make the "k" sound prominent. In line 79 he sets off the phrase "but Kings" with a caesura and comma both. In line 80, he has reversed the syntax so as to put the word in the prominent first foot, upsetting what would have been a normal rhythm in

"your eyes meet only Kings." But using the word "kings" in the first foot makes it a much more attractive alliterative mate for the word "Kingstreet" in the prominent last foot. These lines taken as a whole should be considered as an example of sound adversely affecting the rhythm. There is a certain unity in the sounds, yet, unlike sound usage elsewhere, there is not that unity in the individual phrases.

Time and again Donne is seemingly fascinated by a sound and will repeat it, even to the extent of allowing feminine rimes to creep into the sound pattern. The following series of lines is much like those above, in that certain sounds seem to have suggested themselves to Donne, and then he exploits them in the ensuing lines. In this instance it is the "l" sound which he couples with the "n" sound in the word "knows."

- 97 More then ten Hollensheads, or Halls, or Stowes
 98 Of triviall household trash he knowes; He knowes
 99 When the Queene frown'd, or smil'd and he knowes
 what
 100 A subtle States-man may gather of that;
 101 He knowes who loves; whom; and who by poyson
 102 Hosts to an Offices reversion;
 103 He knowes who hath sold his land, and now doth beg
 104 A licence....

The "h" sounds in line 97 set the pace for the ensuing lines, no doubt suggesting the continued prominent usage of this sound. The chief effect to be noticed is in lines 98 and 99 when Donne ends these lines on the element "He knows." Both these lines are

run-on and carry the sense over to the next line, and sound usage is important in this flowing effect since there is a similarity in "He knowes what", and "he knowes when." The ear catches the first of these sense groups, beginning in line 98 and carrying over to line 99. The ear picks up the beginning of the next sense group beginning "he knowes", and because of the previous impact of the first sense group having already been completed, must go on to line 100 and complete the second group, so that there are now two complete and whole sense groups. This situation is probably a matter of Gestalt psychology which suggests that the mind seeks wholes of things, and in the instance above the ear catches the first sense group, gets part of the second in line 99, and must go on to get the second whole sense group in line 100. No doubt the sound similarity in these two sense groups has helped the situation.

In line 101 and 103 Donne reverses this procedure and now has, "He knowes", at the beginning of the line, thus slowing the pace set in the two run-on lines. The interesting thing about the whole of the above lines is that the word "knowes" is always in the first or last foot, except in line 98 where it occurs once immediately before the caesura. This situation gives further support to the conclusion that to Donne, foot placement is important in sound management. It is known that time or duration is important to rhythm, and in Donne's case the time is between one last foot and the next last foot, or between two first feet in respect to the word "knowes", and its occurrence at more or less equal intervals helps establish a rhythm, and a rhythm

somewhat lacking in the single line.

There are three single examples in this poem that make it obvious that sound, as pleasant as it may be, attracted Donne into the unfortunate usage of the feminine rime which was so reprehensible to Elizabethan critics. That Donne allowed himself this liberty seems to suggest that sound patterns were an important consideration.

- 72 Better pictures of vice, teach me virtue....
 201 Making them confesse not only mortal....
 242 With Macchabees modestie, the knowne merit....

Satyre V

This poem is the shortest of the "Satyres", and from the standpoint of sound management, offers the fewest examples of any of the "Satyres", yet there continues to be an adequate sample of instances to show the effect of sound on Donne's poetry.

One of the most persistent effects of sound usage in the poems is that of the interrupted rhythm. A line of poetry will continue along in an iambic rhythm, and then the pace will change on a repeated sound. Often the sound will carry over into the next line, and disrupt it. The first line of the "Satyre", an attack on usury, illustrates this change of pace from iambic to anapaestic rhythm in the third foot.

- 1 Thou shalt not laugh in this leafe, Muse, nor they...

In the long poems Donne does not pay too much attention to the individual rhythms of the line, and so a disrupted rhythm

is not so noticeable as it is in the shorter poems, or those of stanzaic division as in the following examples:²³

146 By our cōnnivēnce, or slāck companie....

151 And cast rēproach on Christianity....

Man as a microcosme was perhaps Donne's favorite idea, and he weaves it into various images throughout his poetry. The images are quite often strange, and sometimes nearly specious. The following image is the backbone of "Satyre V", presenting the picture of the creditor and debtor:

13 Then man is a world; in which, Officers
 14 Are the vast ravishing seas; and Suiters,
 15 Springs; now full, now shallow, now drye; which, to
 16 That which drownes them run: These selfe reasons do
 17 Prove the world a man, in which, officers
 18 Are the devouring stomacke, and Suiters
 19 The excrements, which they voyd. All men are dust...

One might say that these are two images above, yet the single idea is there and it seems that there are two view points of the same idea; in any case there are two comparisons. The interesting thing about the lines above is how Donne has "knitted" together the two terms of his comparison, "Officers" and "suiters", with the "s" sound. That this practice occurs twice makes its usage noticeable. The "Officers" are "ravishing seas", and the "Suiters" are "springs." The descriptive attribute "ravishing seas", ending in an "s", links up with the "s" in "suiters."

²³Taken from "The Litanie."

This practice occurs again in line 18 where the officers are "the devouring stomacke", the "s" sound in "stomacke" linking with the same in the word "suiters."

These lines 13 to 19 represent sound patterns serving ideational content. That is, two terms of the comparison, "Officers" and "Suiters", though unlike in sounds, are united by giving the former a descriptive attribute, thus giving the two terms a sound in common. Since this practice occurs twice there is reason to believe that Donne is managing his ideas with sound patterns.

The usual places for a rhythm shift in poetry are in the first foot or after the caesura. Donne avails himself of this practice, but the notable thing about his particular usage is that these shifts are ordinarily a concomitant of his sound patterns; that is, rhythm shift and sound patterns go hand in hand. The result is quite frequently the knitting of the two half lines together. The practice is quite extensive with Spenser, but seems to be implicitly frowned upon by Shakespeare in "Loves Labour Lost." That is, Shakespeare tends to frown on excessive alliteration, which in essence is what this practice results in. No doubt the origin in English poetry is the heavy alliteration in Old English poetry as exemplified by "Beowulf", and continued in Middle English poetry as can be seen in two representative lines from "Piers the Plowman":

In a / somer / seson, whan / soft / was the / sonne
I shope / me in / shroudes / as I a / shepe / were....

SOME HOLY SONNETS

Holy Sonnet XIV

This sonnet is chiefly notable for the vigorous emotions expressed by the poet in a supplication to God to give an ever stronger assurance of his love. The vigorous emotions are manifestly supported by the "b" plosive sound which is used in vital rhetorical words such as "batter", "breath", "break", and "blow". The "b" plosive is recognized as a sound requiring great expenditure of energy in articulation, and though this might not be the case in every context, it nevertheless seems to hold true for this poem since the emotion is strong. At least it does not seem impertinent to suggest that the emotion of anger is associated with great energy expenditure, and that this energy expenditure is released on sounds requiring it. It is this "b" plosive that opens the supplication on a strong rhetorical note:

- 1 Batter my heart, // three-personed God, // for you
- 2 As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
- 3 That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
- 4 Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.

The first line does not divide easily into feet, but noticeable are the two caesuras that separate two tetrasyllabic rhythms from what might be considered the last foot. This last foot in the first line begins the rising rhythm which prevails through the remaining three lines. This last foot links the first line with the second, the [j] glide alliterating with the

same in the word "yet." Then comes a series of heavy stresses on the words "knock", "breathe", and "shine", which are effective in that they become progressively tighter in their vowels, producing somewhat of a grave and expansive melody:

K_n[a], B_r[e:] , S_h [a:]

No doubt if one were to read the above words aloud, the intonation would progressively rise through these three words, reaching its highest pitch on the word "shine."

This rising melody becomes more significant when we compare it with the melody of the "b" sound words in the next line, which are just the opposite in that their vowels become progressively more lax, and would probably call for a falling intonation when read aloud:

B[æ], B[ɔ:], B [ɜ]

Another melody is begun in this fourth line after the caesura, with the word "make", assonating with the word "break":

M[æ], M[i:], N [ɪ^u]

Donne uses assonance to tie the half-lines together in the final couplet. The last line demonstrates his practice of making words strange to the context (in this instance the word "ravish") prominent through sound repetition:

...for I
Except You enthrall me, never shall be free
Nor ever chaste, except You ravish me.

One may question whether or not Donne assonated "chaste" with "ravish", since the former has the [e:] sound today, yet

the following lines seem to suggest that he did:

To teach by painting drunkards, doth not last
Now; Aretines pictures have made few chast....²⁴

Holy Sonnet XIX

Though Donne sometimes plays with words and sounds in an almost peurile fashion one can rarely question the integrity of the emotion involved. Yet a poem such as this sonnet must have been what Ben Jonson and others had in mind when they refer to Donne's "not keeping of accent." In it Donne displays the conflicting emotions that no doubt often beset him, and he gets into technical difficulty in so doing. The first five lines demonstrate this difficulty:

- 1 Oh tō vex mē, contrāries meet in one,
- 2 Inconstāncy unāturally/hath begot
- 3 A constant habit; that when I would not
- 4 I change in vowels and in devotions
- 5 As humorous is my contritions....

Of first notice is the [i:] melody that Donne has evoked in line 2. It has made the line extrasyllabic though melodious. The shift from the iambic rhythm to the trochaic rhythm after the caesura in line 2 also is noteworthy in that it no doubt was necessitated by the "h" sound alliteration on "hath", and "habit", so that there is a sound pattern changing the rhythm.

²⁴Taken from "Satyre IV". The sound as in "last" is a fairly stable sound, suggesting that Donne pronounced it as we do and that he rimed it with "chast" in this example.

Although the element "hath begot" switches the rhythm and changes the sound pattern from the [i:] sound to the [h] sound, it is nevertheless joined to the first part of line 2 as its verb, and to line 3 as the first mate of an alliterative group. The result is the unition of two lines through sound usage in spite of the shift from rising to falling rhythm.

In line 4 Donne makes use of the significance between [vavwz] and de[vo:ʃən], and as scansion reveals, it ends in a feminine rime, riming with line 5. Also, the line has only nine syllables as scanned, and one is led to believe that it should be scanned tetrasyllabically as *dévotione*, since ten syllables is the norm. If one doesn't scan this word as four syllables how is one to account for the following lines which are only nine syllables without the word "devotion" as a four syllable word?

Who kept by *diligent dévotion*²⁵

Dissemblers feigne *dévotion*. Then turne....²⁶

These two lines would be normal iambic pentameters with one more metrical accent on the word "devotion", and yet Donne did use the word trisyllabically:

As worthy of all our Soules *dévotion*....²⁷

And do all honour and *dévotion* due....²⁸

The conclusion that one is forced to is that Donne, in using a word, varied the syllabic numbers to fit the norm of ten

²⁵Taken from "Second Anniversary", line 455.

²⁶Taken from "Holy Sonnet VIII", line 12.

²⁷Taken from "Satyre III", line 6.

²⁸Taken from "To the Lady Bedford", line 17.

syllables, and that the reader unaware of this usage would fall into difficulties. That this freedom with syllables often falls within a line using sound patterns is significant in that it suggests sound management was a factor in this technical difficulty, especially since it is a word within the sound pattern that must be considered as the variant. One must agree with Jonson that Donne did not keep his accent, yet there is still artistry in sound usage. The problem is a matter of time and taste, though, and in Jonson's time evenness of accent and number no doubt was of primary concern, and harmonious sound was apparently thought of as a concomitant of evenness of verse.

Holy Sonnet IX

Rhythmic shifts within a line of poetry or within the poem as a whole are variations from the prevailing or base rhythm. The rhythmic shift should never glut the poem so that the prevailing rhythm is difficult to detect, otherwise measured prose is about all that exists. In most good poetry there is consistency in variation so that one familiar with poetry is able to see a pattern in the rhythmic variations. One of these, which no doubt developed through usage, has established the rhythmic shift in either the first foot or after the caesura.²⁹ This pattern is by no means mandatory, but has simply established itself through usage to the extent that a reader ordinarily detects a variation from it as noteworthy. It is rather ironic

²⁹Bright and Miller, op. cit., p. 75.

that a variation from the base rhythm has become a pattern in itself, and doubtless the poet detects this situation and strives for still newer variations. If the poet strives for newer variations, obviously the metrical accent or logical stress will be affected since they provide the beat for the rhythm. These variations in rhythm in turn will affect the numbers, since the laws of chance will ultimately force a poet into a hypometric or hypermetric line, because he will be using feet of different numbers. Obviously, too, in the case of Donne where sound is seemingly important, accent and stress cannot always fall evenly or in some ordered sequence, since it is the similar sound which has the regularity of occurrence rather than the accent or stress; the similar sounds do not always have equal numbers, so that persistency in sound pattern usage will result in persistency in unequal numbers. Sometimes the poet can alter accent, stress, and numbers through syncopation and appropriation, though in most cases this proves difficult for the trained ear, like Jonson's, to accept.

The ninth "Holy Sonnet" illustrates the effects of sound patterns on stress and numbers. The sound patterns in this instance, though somewhat effective in themselves, have caused irreparable technical difficulties which cannot be obviated by any harmonious sound pattern:

- 1 If poy^ˈson^ˈous^ˈ min^ˈeralls, and if that tree,
- 2 Whose fruit threw death on else immor^ˈtal us,
- 3 If lecher^ˈous goats, if serpents en^ˈvius

4 Cannot be damn'd; Alas; Why should I bee?

It is the "-ous" sound that no doubt attracted Donne in the above four lines. Its occurrence is noticeable in each of three "if" clauses which lead up to the question being asked. The words "lecherous" and "envious" can be treated several ways as indicated in the parentheses above, and if one is adhering to the ten syllable line, one of these must be a disyllable, while the other is a trisyllable. The situation suggests that the word "envious" is a disyllable ending in a weak syllable, since the weak syllable carries the run-on line into the opening trochaic foot of line 4 better than would an accented syllable.

The reader no doubt becomes irritated when he must give different numbers to words which could all be disyllabic:

poys¹onous....leche¹rous....envi¹ous

In line 2 above there is a sound correspondence between [frut] and [gru], no doubt balanced by the "l" and "s" sounds in the second half of the line where the word "else" has a mate in the natural liason between "immortall" and "us." But the reader might find this first sound combination difficult with the "t" and "th" sounds coming together, since the former plosive sends the tongue back in the mouth, from whence it must come back quickly to form the interdental .

Situations like the above two, where sound affects stress and ease of pronunciation, are not uncommon with Donne, and their persistent occurrence adds to the concept that Donne's use of sound affected the artistry and technic of his poetry. The total effect is to make Donne's poetry sometimes harmonious and

sometimes unhappy.

Holy Sonnet VIII

Donne seems to be much smoother when he's not exercising an indignant or fervent passion, though the moments are rare when he's not either indignant or fervent. This sonnet provides such a smoothness in sound which carries over from line to line:

- 1 If faithful soules be alike glorifi'd
 2 As Angels, then my fathers soule doth see,
 3 And adds this even to full felicitie,
 4 That valiantly I helpe wide mouth o'rstride:

The most noticeable effect of these lines is the "f" sound that they have in common, yet there is still the [i:] sound melody that Donne achieved through syntax and caesura. Lines 2 and 3 rime on the [i:], which is carried over to line 4 in the word "valiantly." This latter word is made prominent through the caesura, as it is through syntactic arrangement since it is usually more appropriate elsewhere.

As has been mentioned, persistence in sound pattern usage will ultimately lead to unevenness in numbers, and this it does in this relatively smooth sonnet:

- 9 They see idolatrous lovers weepe and mourne....

Here are 11 syllables spread over a relatively even line of poetry. The rising rhythm is maintained and the trisyllabic rhythm of the third foot is noticeable in that it includes part of both of the words in the "l" sound pattern.

Line 12, used in an earlier reference, is hypometric,

unless one is expected to wrench another syllable out of "devotion", thus giving it an Italianate or French equivalent in pronunciation:

12 Dissemblers feigne dévotion. Then time....

Lines 9 and 12 above exemplify two persistent patterns of evidence indicating sound pattern usage as a factor in the technic and/or artistry of Donne's poetry:

1. A word or words in the sound scheme will ordinarily be the element guilty of appropriation.
2. This element (word or words) must appropriate an extra syllable to fill the number requirements of the lines, and ordinarily, the rhythmic requirements too.

Holy Sonnet V

This sonnet is not much unlike a good many of Donne's shorter poems, in that one can find a sound repeated in every line. The poem is a most notable example of rhythm shifts unquestionably necessitated by the sound patterns:

1 I am a little world made cunningly
 2 Of Elements, and an Angelike spright,

Again Donne uses his favorite image of man as a microcosm, this time begun favorably enough within the iambic rhythm; this rhythm is interrupted after the caesura, shifting to two anapaestic feet in the second line. The cause of this shift is no doubt in part due to the pattern of successive "a" sounds, and the sound similarity between "...like" and "spright." This rhythm shift is certainly not arbitrary, but rather delightful,

especially since it maintains the rising rhythm. The third line demonstrates much the same thing, a shift necessitated by a sound pattern, this time the "b" sound:

3 But black sinne hath betraid tō endlesse night....

Line 7 demonstrates the shift to maintain the "m" sound pattern; this shift is doubly effective since the pyrrhic propels the movement of the run-on line as no iambic rhythm could:

7 Poure new seas in mine eyes, that so I might

8 Drowne my world with my weeping earnestly

The "w" sound pattern is maintained in line 8 above; the result is the stress shift in the third foot.

This continuous management of sound with the resultant shifts in stress is not always such a happy result if one adheres to numbers:

10 But oh it must be burnt! // Alas the fire

11 Of lust and envie have burnt it heretofore

In a line like 11 above, perhaps Donne wrote with a mind to colloquial expression, thus allowing liason which could have reduced the numbers to ten. At any rate, a careful articulation such as Ben Jonson might have given it would have detected the excess of a syllable. Line 14 is much the same case:

13 And burne me O Lord // with a fiery zeal

14 Of thee and thy house, which doth in eating heale

No doubt in shifting to the anapaestic second foot, Donne was anticipating its mate "heale" in the last foot; at least this assumption seems justifiable when one considers that both sounds fall at a kind of terminus; the first sound at the end

of the half line, the second at the end of the complete line. Again there is a resultant eleventh syllable in line 14.

Line length variation is without question justifiable in poetry; but like stress shifts, a certain orderedness, a certain regularity, in short, an appropriate motive is much more conducive to the success of line length variation than is its haphazard birth on various occasions. A variant line, be it long or short, will lose itself in the poem unless there is something singular about it as to its motive for being there. Mere length or shortness will not attract the average reader. A short man, simply dressed, will attract no prolonged attention; the same man dressed as a clown would no doubt attract undue notice, because of size and dress. This is much the situation with Donne's line length variation, because many of the Alexandrines or just simple extrasyllabic lines of poetry are lost but for the effectiveness of sound repetition. If a line of poetry cannot be justified in one respect then the critic should take another look and see if it may be justified on other principles. If the critic must squint to find beauty, order, or some other artistic principle in a line of poetry, then there is little question but that the line has no justification, since mere "being" justifies nothing. This is again the case of Donne, for if he does not keep accent or numbers, he will be harmonious, and if he's not harmonious, then the critic must squint.

In coming to a justifiable estimate of the "Holy Sonnets" one must admit that Donne did not keep accent, but that as Grierson suggested, there is often an "harmonious justification."

The "Sonnets" offer much the same general evidence as did the longer "Satyres"; that is, that Donne is apparently inclined to manage his sounds, consciously or otherwise, and that these sounds considered as a cause will have the following effects:

1. There is a stress shift within the line, or thought group.
2. There is a deficiency in the numbers unless an accent is wrenched to repair this deficiency. (Appropriation)
3. There is an excess of numbers unless repaired by the reader through syncopation.

These effects are all technical considerations of Donne's poetry, and viewing the poetry from the perspective of artistry one can very well state that:

1. The stress shift is artistic in that it avoids the monotony of one rhythm.
2. Appropriation is often inartistic to the average ear.
3. Syncopation is artistically attractive to the colloquial ear, or unattractive to the fastidious ear.

The stress shift is ordinarily an attractive device for minimizing monotony, but if it occurs arbitrarily, or at points where the ear isn't accustomed to picking it up, then it is distasteful to the fastidious reader, and the 17th century reader can be fastidious if he is accustomed to Jonson or Herrick.

Syncopation, though attractive in its ability to render language more informal, becomes less attractive if its principles are not applied consistently within the same poem. The average individual will syncopate in rapid or informal speech,

but ordinarily does not vary between syncopation and full articulation in short sense groups. That it is distasteful to vary between formal articulation and syncopation within one poem can be seen in the endless and thus irritating possibilities opened to the reader who scans a poem with the words "lecherous", "envious", and "peysonian" in them and must treat them differently as to numbers.

The law of compensation works in Donne's case, because, for the most part, though he does not always keep accent or numbers, he will be harmonious, especially in the "Sonnets", and as Jonson admitted, Donne was "the first poet in the world in some things."³⁰

³⁰Spingarn, loc. cit.

GRANVILLE CREST

SOME ELEGIES

Elegie II

Saintsbury classes the "Elegies" along with the "Satyres" as being some of the "roughest" of Donne's poems. No doubt by "roughest" he refers to numbers, accent, and his general distaste for poets who display discordant emotions in discordant verse as did the Roman satirists. It is obvious that Saintsbury, like Ben Jonson, is a conservative critic, looking for certain standards of orderliness in numbers, and accent, and like Jonson he is right in insisting that Donne's poems are lacking in certain respects. But again it must be insisted that there are other standards of criticism that must hold in viewing Donne's poetry, and these are the general felicity in the harmony of sound patterns, and the general ability of sound patterns to create their own rhythms. Viewed from these two principles Donne's "Elegies" are not wholly chaotic.

The chief effect of the second Elegie is the sly impertinence with which Donne rehearses the "virtues" of Flavia. No doubt this effect is achieved through the repetition of similar sounds:

- 3 For, though hēr eyes bē small, hēr mouth, is great,
 4 Though they bē Ivory, // yet hēr teeth bē jeat,
 5 Though they bē dimme, yet she is light enough
 6 And though hēr harsh haire fall, hēr skin is rough
 7 What though hēr cheek bē yellow, hēr haire's red

Lines 5 and 6 are the only metrically even lines of the

above five. Line 3 is perfect except for the word "For" which is an example of anacrusis; the prevailing rhythm (rising in this case) is begun on the second word "though." Line 4 is imperfect because of the three successive unaccented syllables. Line 7 shifts in rhythm after the caesura; the elision of the word "is" in this line keeps the numbers to ten but destroys two iambic feet as indicated by the hypothetical stress in parentheses.

These minor technicalities are obviated by the effective use of sound patterns which unite all of these lines. Lines 3 and 4 are united through rime; lines 4 and 5 through the "yet" clauses both ending in monosyllabic words beginning with the "r" sound.

It is apparent through these observations that sound patterns are important, and that a full consideration of their artistry is only fair to a poet who is so often judged on technicalities alone.

Elegie XIII

Nothing seems to be as indicative as the wrenching of accents that sound repetition, at any cost, was an important consideration to Donne, the poet, for he continually places himself in precarious difficulties which thwart the artistry of his verse. In this elegy, which is more properly a satire, since Donne vehemently attacks the envious Julia, one has a notable example of "wrenching of accent":

1 Harke newes, deny[˘] thou shalt heare descry'd

2 My Julia; who as yet was ne'r envy'd

The above scansion is based upon the principles set forth in the introduction to this work, yet from all indications it appears arbitrary on the basis of what Donne has in these two lines. Line 1 begins a perfect iambic rhythm which carries over to line 2 up to the word "was." It seems that Donne wanted to carry out this iambic scheme that he had set for himself, yet to do so would be to impair the correct accent for the word "envy'd":

My Julia; who as yet was ne'r envy'd

Scanning the line in this manner maintains the iambic rhythm and eliminates the female-male rime, yet it wrenches the accent to the last syllable of the word "envy'd." One is reduced to two alternatives, the female-male rime in the first scansion or the wrenching of the accent in the second scansion.

It is normal for a reader to be taken up with the iambic rhythm, and try to subject the remainder of the sense group to this rhythm, and then object to having to wrench accents. This is no doubt the experience that Jonson had, who, with an anticipation or a mind set for a perfect rhythm would probably not admit the pyrrhic in the first scansion. At any rate, the lines are either an example of imperfect rhythm and female-male rime, or perfect rhythm and wrenched accent, and the conclusion to be reached is that the reader dislikes such alternatives, even though Donne's play with the sound and sense is intriguing.

Donne completely castigates Julia in a bold image making effective use of the "m" sound. Like most of Donne's images,

this one is relatively free of metrical defects:

- 11 ...Would tō God she were
 12 But half so loath, tō act vice as tō heare
 13 My Milde reproofe. Liv'd Mantuan now againe
 14 That foemall Mastix, tō ligme with his penne
 15 This she Chymera, that hath eyes of fire,
 16 Burning with anger, anger feeds desire,
 17 Tongued like the night-crow, whose ill boding cries
 18 Give out for nothing but new injuries....

The most notable use of sound is between lines 13 and 15 where the "m" sound sequence, knitting the halves of 13 and 14 together, finally fuses with the palatal sounds [ʃ] in line 15 where we have:

[ʃi:] [ʃɪmra]

The repeated sounds give a continuity to the lines allowing them to flow freely over the mixed disyllabic and trisyllabic rhythms so that there is unity in sound if not rhythm:

- 12 ...half...heare
 16 ...Anger...anger
 17 ...crow...cries
 18 ...nothing...new

There are not many major studies which give an objective analysis of sound, and what it does for poetry. Even the laboratory studies of sound where different sounds of the speaking voice are subjected to scientific instruments to determine the relative duration of the voiced and unvoiced consonants are open

to question, since the human voice is bound to give a different length to the same consonant in various phonetic environments.³¹ Gummere says, "The combination of sounds in verse is a matter for which no definite rules can be given--the cadence of poetry is easier to feel than to explain."³²

In scanning verse, however, one is able to see a relationship between sound, numbers, and stress. If a sound pattern upsets a prevailing rhythm, striking out to produce its own unique rhythm within its confines, then one can justifiably state that sound is an important factor in rhythm. Or, if a word within sound pattern must be synocopated to keep within numbers, then sound is affected by numbers or vice versa. These considerations are important in this study, and seem to be one of the few ways of studying sound and its effect upon poetry.

In applying these considerations to one line, line 12, of this "Elegie XIII", one can state that the "h" sound pattern begun in the first foot was a factor in causing the trisyllabic last foot where the sound occurs again and completes the pattern.

This approach to Donne's poetry through sound is important in that it offers a considerably less strictured viewpoint than one which considers only accent or stress, and does not consider the raison d'etre of such accent or stress.

³¹See in this respect, Henry Lanz, The Physical Bases of Sound, 1931.

³²As quoted by Minoru Yoshida, "Word-Music in English Poetry", The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 12:151-152.

Elegie XIV

That Donne allows himself variations from the iambic norm for purposes of sound scheme can be demonstrated in this "Elegie." If the reader is listening for evenness of rhythm as Jonson may have done, then he will be disappointed. If the reader allows Donne a little freedom for his sound schemes then he will not be disappointed. In the following lines the play with the "r" sound and "s" sound is obvious.

50 Though many stoutly stand, yet proves not one
 51 A righteous pay-master. // Thus ranne he on
 52 In a continued rage: so void of reason
 53 Seem'd his harsh talke, // I sweat for fear of
 treason.

The difficulty in the above lines is in the scansion of the rhythm of the first half line of 53. Donne has begun an iambic rhythm in line 51, and the normal reaction for the reader is to expect this rhythm to carry on to line 53, especially since line 52 is run-on ending in an unaccented syllable. But this expectation leads to an impossible scansion:

(a.) ...so void of reason
 Seem'd his harsh talke...

The only alternative is to allow a pyrrhic:

(b.) ...so void of reason
 Seem'd his harsh talke...

One could not allow line 53 to be iambic for this would be too difficult to accept since line 52 ends with an unaccented

syllable:

(c.) ...s^o void of reason
Seem'd his harsh talke...

The appropriate practice is the trochee following the line ending in an unaccented syllable:

Words, and sweetnesse, and be scant
Of true measure,
Tyran Rime hath so abused....³³
And though reward exceedeth thy aspiring,
Live in her love, and die in her admiring.³⁴

If one accepts the opening trochaic foot, then example (b.) above is the only possibility, since (a.) is difficult to accept. Acceptance of example (b.) also gives the "s" sound in line 53 two stresses:

Seem'd his harsh talke, I sweat for fear of treason.

The foregoing analysis of lines 50 to 53 leads to several conclusions that are consonant with earlier conclusions in this work:

1. Though there be rhythmic shifts within the sense groups, sound is a factor ordering the unity of the lines.
2. The sound factor gives unity to the lines because it gives them a point in common.
3. Expectation of a continuous rhythm and unity is not feasible.

³³Ben Jonson, "A Fit of Rime against Rime."

³⁴Phineas Fletcher, "Piscatorie Eclogues."

SOUND PATTERNS AND IMAGES

Donne did not choose to follow the Petrarchan convention of sentiment and sensuous suggestion in the use of imagery. His images are lucid and intellectual, although strange. Though his images are much the same as to pictures, they are different as to conception, and vehicle or terminology which convey this conception. Donne called upon his vast and divergent experiences and knowledge to form these images. To convey these in terms somewhat alien to the Petrarchan minded England of his time, he had to be careful that these images would not be lost in the context because of the abstruseness of the terms he chose. He seems to have been aware of this danger of burying his images in the context, for he made them prominent through sound patterns. Had he not done so the images might not have been so striking to the senses, for a reader without Donne's experiences or knowledge is bound to fumble with images related in terms uncommon to him. As it is, though, Donne forces these images upon the reader with his sound patterns, not allowing him to lose sight of them.

If D. I. Masson's assumption is correct, then Donne did the right thing in making his images prominent through sound patterns, because alien words will be lost in a context which does not give them prominence.³⁵

Two long poems, "The Progresse of the Soule" (the one in stanzaic form), and "The First Anniversary" offer an abundance

³⁵In this respect see the quotation of D. I. Masson in the introduction.

of these images within sound patterns. These two poems are chosen because of the abundance of examples offered, and because they are different in general make-up, tone, and purpose from the poems discussed up to this point. Most of the poems offer the same evidence of images and sound patterns.

Progresse of the Soule

Donne, his mind active and energetic, believed that reason was sometimes static and unproductive. He called it a "heretiques game", and in a vivid image recalling some of his diatribes on Aristotle, takes reason to hand:

114 Though with good minde; their reasons, like toyes
 115 Of glassie bubbles, which the gamesome boyes
 116 Stretch to so nice a thinnes through a quill
 117 That they themselves breake, do themselves spill:

This image of reason as a bubble which breaks when stretched, becomes particularly vivid in line 115 with the g/b...g/b sound pattern. In line 116 the image continues, but the sound pattern changes to s/s...th/th. The extravagant use of "th" sounds in lines 116 and 117 seems to be an implicit condemnation of the extravagance to which sophisticated reasoning can be carried. This practice suggests Shakespeare's implicit condemnation of extravagant alliteration in "Loves Labour's Lost." Line 116 has two "s" sounds which unite it both in sense and in sound with line 117 which ends in two strong "s" sounds:

Stretch to so...thinnes through...
 That... themselves spill

The two verbs, "stretch" and "spill", are the two successive sequences that reason goes through if carried too far; since the verbs are sequential as to time they bring lines 116 and 117 together because the time between stretching and spilling is very short.

The above image is very compact and vivid and is so because of the sound, and not the rhythm which is rather uneven as can be seen by the scansion.

Donne went on the famous Cadiz expedition with Essex and Raleigh in 1596, and no doubt this accounts for his lucid description of the whale in "The Progresse of the Soule." Donne was a churchman and thus probably familiar with the high architecture of his times. In the whale image he seems to be joining these two disparate experiences of sea life and architecture, making the image prominent through sound usage:

His ribs are pillars, and his high arch'd roofo
Of barke that blunts best steel, is thunder-proofo.

Donne was interested in court life, but never did get preferment. His lack of experience in court life probably accounts for the lack of specificity of detail as he continues the whale image in court terms given prominence through sound repetition:

He hunts not fish, but as an officer,
Stays in his court, at his own net, and there
All guitors of all sorts themselves enthrall...

Donne next turns his attention to the soul inside the whale, keeping his court terms, and maintaining sound repetition:

And like a Prince she sends her faculties
To all her limbs, distant as provinces...

Images using sound repetition such as the above examples

are not isolated examples from Donne's poetry. They are simply representative of what occurs in the majority of Donne's images. That sound repetition should occur so frequently in the images gives weight to Masson's assumption that sounds must have lexical existence (existence in the average vocabulary) or proximity of similar patterns. Since Donne's terms are strange to the context they might not evoke a response from a reader who can't unite the disparate experiences as Donne did. Yet Donne did use similarity of sound patterns, making the images prominent and forcing them upon the attention of the reader who might be handicapped because of his lack of experiences.³⁶

The First Anniversary

In this long poem Donne speaks for the most part of the deformity of the world and offers praise of Elizabeth Drury, the daughter of a close friend. In a very imposing image of the sun he calls into play his knowledge of astrology, again using sound

³⁶To test the validity of this argument one may take the last image above and rid it of the sound repetition, rendering it less sharp and almost unintelligible:

And like a Noble she sends her faculties
To all her limbes, distant as provinces.

This experiment doesn't seem to have the same dulling effect on a more familiar image:

My luve is like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June.

My luve is like a vermillion rose
That's newly sprung in June.

repetition:

263 They have imapl'd within a Zodiake
 264 The free-borne Sun, and keepe twelve Signes awake
 265 To watch his steps; the Goat and Crab controule
 266 And fright him backe, who else to either pole...

Very many of Donne's images are like this one, in that the important subject, in this case, the Sun, determines the environmental sounds. In this case Donne has the "Sun" and its "steps" and the "Crab" and its verb "controule" together with its other object "Goat", which has simply the voiced velar palatal sound, the counterpart to the "k" sound in the words "Crab" and "controule". Although Donne's use of sound is sometimes relentless and too imperious he nevertheless is able to develop patterns that knit the lines together in an ingenious manner as he does in lines 264 and 265 with sound chiasmus:

(S)ignes awake / To (w)atch his (s)teps...

Donne's experiences are profound, and he never misses a chance to make use of them as in the following image of the world as a semi-precious stone which has lost "lustre" and "colour":

342 Were it a ring still, yet the stone is gone.
 343 As a compassionate Turcoyse which doth tell
 344 By looking pale, the wearer is not well,
 345 As gold falls sicke being stung with Mercury...

This image is almost incomprehensible if the sense is kept and sound repetition eliminated:

Were it a ring still, yet the gem is gone.
 As a merciful Turcoyse which doth signify
 By looking pale, the owner is not well,
 As gold falls sicke being nipped by Mercury.

This elimination of sound has voided the most significant

use of sound in the lines, line 343 which develops the "k" and "t" sound patterns:

..(C)ompassionate (t)ur(b)se which doth (t)ell

Another effective image is that of man controlling the stars. Here Donne calls into play, equestrian terms:

283 We spur, we reine the starres, and in their race
284 They're diversly content t'obey our pace.

This is a typical pattern of Donne, that of alternating sounds in a 1:2--1:2 scheme. It is somewhat different from sound chiasmus which is a 1:2--2:1 scheme. These two schemes are much more effective than a third scheme that Donne used, that being simply, 1:1--2:2.

Perhaps the most imposing image in "The First Anniversary" is that of the personification of the elements in which Donne uses physiological terms dealing with conception.

380 The father or the mother barren is.
381 The cloudes gonceive not raine, or do no powre,
382 In the due birth time, downe the balmy showre;
383 Th' Ayre doth not motherly sit on the earth,
384 To hatch her seasons, and give all things birth;
385 Spring-times were common cradles, but are tombes;
386 And false-conceptions fill the generall wombes...

Simple repetition of a sound is not quite as effective as a definitely conceived pattern. Two lines of the above image illustrate a definitely conceived pattern, line 382 the 1:2--1:2 pattern, and line 385 the sound chiasmus pattern of 1:2--2:1.

The prededing observations on Donne's use of sound repetition in his imagery lead to the general conclusion that sound was an important aspect in the artistry of Donne's images, and that it gave his images a prominence which forces them upon the

reader. It is also assumed that these images, because of the peculiar nature of their conception by Donne, and hence their general abstrusness, would probably have been more bewildering had they not been given this prominence.

CRANE'S NEST

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this work was to analyze representative poems of John Donne, to see just what effect his use of sound patterns had upon the artistry and technic of his work. The primary procedure used was scansion of the poems used, to break down the verse lines into their various component parts for minute observations of technics used by the author in establishing his sound patterns, and the resultant artistry or lack of it caused by these sound patterns.

The general conclusion attained through the above procedure is that sound patterns did conclusively affect the artistry and technic of Donne's poems.

This study validates Jonson's accusation that Donne did not "keep accents", and provides evidence which suggests that sound patterns were a partial factor influencing the "wrenching of accents." This evidence lay chiefly upon two considerations:

- (A.) Words within a sound pattern had to be syncopated, thus throwing the secondary accents askew and upsetting the rhythm.
- (B.) Words within a sound pattern had to appropriate additional syllables, thus wrenching their normal accent marks.

In addition to the above conclusions there are the following:

1. The reader of Donne's poetry must accept sound patterns as an organizing principle in his work.
2. It is inadvisable to look for separate rhythmic groups

within the lines of Donne's poems, for they are not chiefly end-stopped.

3. The reader of Donne's poetry must be prepared to accept a wide use of syncope which varies on the same word at times.
4. The reader must be prepared to accept the wrenched accents for the sake of rhythm, numbers and sound patterns.
5. The Donne critic, in order to do justice to the poet must assess him from at least two viewpoints, that of sound patterns (which is one of his chief virtues), and that of accent manipulation (one of his chief faults); the critic then should try to decide for himself which is most feasible, harmony of sound, or evenness of accent, metre, and numbers, in the event that all cannot be had.

VOCABULARY

Accent--an articulative effort giving prominence to one word or a group of words over adjacent syllables.

Anacrusis--the use of a syllable or more before the point at which the reckoning of the normal feet begins. eg. "Go: I said and then she went to Eire."

Anapaest--a foot of triple meter with a rising rhythm (\sim '), as in the phrase, in the end.

Appropriation--the opposite of syncopation, or the practice of giving more syllables to a word than normal English pronunciation requires as in *dévotion*, or giving major stress to secondary accents as in *lecherous*.

Caesura--the internal pause in a verse line.

Choriambus--a classical base, brought about by the juxtaposition of a trochee and an iambus ($/\sim/$) and frequent in Milton. A rising rhythm.

Dactyl--a foot of triple meter with falling rhythm ($/\sim\sim$), as in the name, *Marilyn*.

Foot--a unit of measurement in a line of verse.

Hypermetric--too many syllables for the meter scheme.

Hypometric--the opposite of hypermetric.

Iambus--a foot of duple meter often referred to as a rising rhythm (-') such as in the word, misdeed.

Ionic ^à majors--a classic base just the reverse of the minors, rendering (//--). A falling rhythm.

Ionic ^à minors--another classical base, brought about by the juxtaposition of pyrrhic and spondee (-//) and frequent in Milton. A rising rhythm.

Lax vowels--those vowels requiring lesser effort from the articulating organs than the tight vowels, and usually such vowels as [ə], [ɔ], [ɜ]; but again the same relative basis holds true for these in the discussion. *See "tight vowels."

Melody--a succession of pleasant sounds depending on such factors as tone color, time interval or arrangement.

Meter--refers to the measuring of the number and kinds of units in the verse line.

Metrical accent--that accent giving prominence to certain words over other words because of the metrical scheme. A question arises usually when there are successive monosyllables, but can usually be answered when the prosodist considers either pronunciation accent of neighboring words, the prevailing metrical scheme, logical stress, or all three of these items.

Numbers--refer to the number of syllables in a line of poetry. Since iambic pentameter is the norm in English poetry, ten syllables is the norm in reference to numbers. French poets of the late 16th and early 17th century laid great emphasis on numbers, and no doubt their insistences affected English critics and poets who in turn were quite concerned with numbers.

Prevailing, or predominant rhythm--the particular rhythm of a verse line or lines, being either rising or falling. If one has a verse line such as: $\dot{\sim}/\sim/\dot{\sim}/\dot{\sim}/\dot{\sim}/$ the prevailing rhythm is iambic, even though there is a trochaic foot opening the line. It is quite difficult to assign a name to Donne's meter, though he has many pentameter lines, because he is so often hypermetric, hypometric, or just simply varying the lines in his poetry.

Pronunciation accent--that accent due to the normal scheme of pronouncing words which always renders beautiful, or dispel, in normal situations.

Pyrrhic--two successive unaccented syllables as in the expression, "Henry is here."

Rhetorical stress--emphasis given certain syllables because of the emotional connotation of certain words made up of these syllables. Words conveying strong passions such as anger or fear enter in here. Logical and rhetorical stress are usually one and the same, although the former is usually a case of logical progression as opposed to the latter which is quite often sheer artistry and eloquence.

Rhythmic shift--a shift from a rising to a falling foot or the opposite; a shift from disyllabic to polysyllabic feet or the opposite.

Sound chiasmus--the use of sounds "A" and "B" in one instance, followed shortly by their reversal in "B" and "A". Probably most effective when occurring within one line. An example would be: "Since Christ embraced the crosse it selfe....", where there is s/c.....c/s.

Spondee--two successive accented syllables as in the expression "hot-headed."

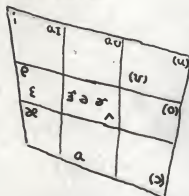
Syncopation--the cutting out of a syllable in a line of poetry so as to have the appropriate number of syllables called for.

Tight vowels--vowels that require greater dependency upon the articulating organs, especially the lips. These sounds are usually [i] , [e] , [æ] , [o] , [u] , yet on the relative basis the vowel sounds [i] and [e] occurring together in a line would have the former spoken of as tight and the latter as lax.

Tone color--a pattern of related sound values woven by language artistically arranged; it is often the important factor in melody.

Trochee--a foot of duple meter with falling rhythm (/ -) such as in the name "Peter."

Vowel scale--



This is the vowel scale used by Albert Marckwardt in the book previously cited, showing the relative positions between tongue and jaw for different sounds. Reference to the scale is important in determining the relative tightness or laxness in sounds.

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CRANE'S CREST

THE USE OF SOUND PATTERNS
IN SOME ENGLISH POEMS OF
JOHN DONNE

by

RALPH IRVIN JOHNSON

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AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

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CRANE'S CREST

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze some of Donne's English poems with a view to discerning the effect of sound patterns on the prosody, ideational content, imagery and syntactic arrangement of these poems.

The chief procedure used is that of scansion of some of the representative poems, so as to break down the verse lines into their various component parts for minute observations of the technics used by the author in establishing his sound patterns. The conclusions reached are that:

1. Donne used sound repetition to force his strange images upon the reader's attention.
2. Donne used sound patterns to enhance ideational content, as in the following example where a descriptive attribute added to the first object in a comparison unites the two objects in the comparison on the basis of a common sound:

Then man is a world; in which, Officers
Are the vast ravishing geas; and Suiters,
Springs; now full, now shallow, now drye....

3. The syntactic arrangement is notably changed to carry out a sound pattern as in the following example of reversal of subject and object to continue the "k" sound pattern:

49 A motion, Lady; Speake Cocus; I have beene
50 In love ever since tricesima of the Queene,

51 Cōntínuāl cláimes Ī hăve máde, ĩnjúnctiōns gót...

4. Adherence to sound patterns has resulted in disturbing the rhythm of the individual line as can be seen in line 51 above, which, had it not been for the reversed syntax to maintain the sequence of "k" sounds, would have been more evenly rhythmic as in the following hypothetical arrangement:

Ī hăve máde cōntínuāl cláimes, ĩnjúnctiōns gót.

5. Jonson was correct in asserting that Donne did not "keep accent." In several instances sound patterns are seemingly to blame, since words within the sound patterns must appropriate extra syllables to maintain the required number of syllables:

Ī chānge ĩn yōwes ānd ĩn dēyctiōns...

Other more general conclusions that have been reached are:

6. Sound patterns are an organizing principle in Donne's poetry which gives it unification in instances of un-rhythmic lines.
7. The reader of Donne's poetry must be able to accept a wide use of syncopation which varies on the same word at times.
8. The reader must be prepared to accept the wrenched accents for the sake of rhythm, numbers and sound patterns.
9. In order to appropriately assess Donne's poetry the critic must consider at least two viewpoints, that of

sound patterns (which is his chief virtue), and that of accent manipulation (one of his chief faults). The critic should then try to synthesize these two considerations, or balance them, one against the other, to see if Donne's virtues outweigh his faults.

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