

Donne's Imagery: Creating Riddles

Musarrat Shameem*

Abstract: In this article I am going to discuss some essential aspects of the images that Donne uses in his poems. The images that he uses create a riddle-like effect in the reader's mind as there are some deliberately missing links in them. So as readers of Donne's poems we get a unique pleasure when we are able to solve the riddles and understand their intended meaning. At the same time we feel like taking part in the creation of the poem since we have to fill up the gaps/missing links that are there in the poems. As a theoretical background of this process of creation the reader-response theory can be put forward which supports the role of the reader as a creator. My article is going to focus on this issue of riddles through a close reading of three poems by Donne, namely, "Air and Angels," "The Flea" and "The Ecstasy."

In the reader-response theory there are some basic aspects that give the reader of Donne a valid foundation on which s/he can establish his/her act of recreating the poem.

By privileging the reader and focusing on the process of reading, at least partially, as a construction of the text, the reader-response criticism has significantly contributed to discussions of issues such as the indeterminacy of meaning. Important contributions to this debate include Wolfgang Iser's *The Art of Reading* (1978), which sees readers as "actualizing" texts by filling in their "gaps" (logical and sequential holes that we must fill in) or indeterminacies (uncertainties) of meaning, and also Stanley Fish's *Is there a Text in this Class?* (1980), which gives the reader an even more active role as the text's true producer. All of these approaches recognize that when we read a work, especially for the first time, we do not simply move our eyes back and forth and wait for images and concepts to announce themselves, we also exert great energy, making surmises, arranging details into pictures, venturing and revising predictions. We stitch the clues together, closing up "gaps" and contending with "indeterminacies." We follow the text as if it were a shooting script for a film, trying to represent the action for ourselves on our mental screens (Henderson and Brown 2).

Since it's all about creation and recreation, making new meanings out of a single word, language becomes an element under close observation here. Donne's use of language, therefore, is a matter of probation and exploration. Here the post-structuralism study can be related to this issue.

* Musarrat Shamim, Lecturer, Department of English and Humanities, ULAB, Dhaka

Donne seems to challenge the notion that reading is a linear movement, an exploration of truth. The poems invite the reader to stop and ask himself questions again and again about the validity of the things read. Donne uses language as a system or structure. It is prepared for a special use, not for finding out any kind of truth.

Rajan, who studies "The Canonization" and other poems along this line, stresses that there is no opposition between false rhetoric and true rhetoric because "...for Donne paradox is ubiquitous. There is no language free of paradox and metaphor: to be committed to self-expression is, hence, to be caught in a language that calls itself into question" (52). As opposed to a quest for truth in poetry, Rajan says Donne rather concedes "the limitations of human [sic] language as a vehicle of truth" (53). Rajan writes: "Donne's poems are thus pervaded by a feeling that language is a protective fiction" (54). Donne's "vexacious contraries" thus are "integral to the process by which the poetry finally negates itself as a representation of truth" (53).

The frolic riddling and puzzling images of Donne's poems do not take us to a real discovery. At the end of the day we feel that we have experienced much of word gaming from the poems. Donne, in consciously playing with words upholds the poststructuralist notion of language as constructed and containing implicit hierarchies.

The rhetorical sleight of hand doesn't lead us to any reality beyond its own construction. The three poems under discussion in this article have a number of hierarchical images like male-female, virginity, marriage, sacredness, temple, soul-intelligence, body-sphere etc. In the use and explanation of these constructed terms Donne is always aware of the fact that all of them are certain to encourage the reader to associate some pre-channeled meanings to them.

If we look into the matter from another angle we will find that the activity of the reader in re-forming meaning of the text echoes the poststructuralist notion that discourses themselves can be put under another discourse.

The reader as an interpreter of the riddle created in Donne's poems can't possibly pursue a typical, structured interpretation because here s/he has to deal with the puzzle out of context. This unique contingent position of the reader places him/her in a position from where s/he sees things consciously or unconsciously from a post-structural viewpoint.

Literary texts do not exist on bookshelves: they are processes of signification materialized only in the practice of reading. For literature to happen, the reader is quite as vital as the writer of the text. In recent decades a growing number of theoreticians now assert that there is no such thing as a pure, or neutral, encounter with a text. Every work is read—or "constructed"—differently (Henderson and Brown 1).

Here we have the post-structuralist interpretation of the reader-response theory

In various sorts of post-structuralist reading the reading process may involve the reader's countering and/or re-interpreting prevailing views, depending on various things, including the force of the direction of the text to the reader, the potential reconceptualization, freeing-up of meaning the text can effect, the openness to the play of language and meaning of the reader. The text may 'deconstruct itself', i.e. the reader may experience or see that the language of the text implicitly undermines its own assumptions—the real agent here as in all post-structuralist positions being the reader, open to polysemy (multiple meanings and the sliding and interplay of signs)—in her own (socially shared) world of discourse, in a world discursively and socially constructed (Lye 3).

Stanley Fish believes that interpretive communities, like languages, are purely conventional, that is, arbitrarily agreed upon constructions. The way a community lives is in no way a reflection of some higher reality, it is rather a construction, or edifice that has been erected by consensus. This holds true for the interpretive strategies a culture or an institution employs as well as their notions of right and wrong. A culture's morality is no more founded in any external reality than in its language. Nor is it possible to specify how language correlates with the external world. Language and its usage are arbitrary decisions made by convention as is the fact that we call north "North" instead of something else (Lang 5).

The post-structuralist analysis of Donne's poems shows how the riddles of his language lead to the discovery of a wonderful linguistic sleight.

John Donne loves to play with words. The best thing about him is that he can diffuse this game to the readers as well. Reading a poem by Donne sometimes becomes a game for the readers. It offers us a chance to solve the riddle that Donne creates by using diversified imagery in his poems. In my writing I want to discover the ways through which Donne assimilates concrete and abstract imagery to produce a kind of mystery and complexity in his poetry. But before moving on to that point I would like to focus on some facets of imagery and how they work in a reader's mind.

Writers use images to help themselves express a thing more clearly. At the same time it gives the reader a certain pleasure. In my writing I will say something about this pleasure as a supplementary issue. Before moving to that issue, I feel like saying something about image as it is used by writers.

Images in a literary work give the readers an opportunity to use their creativity. They can exercise their power of cognition and imagination while thinking about an image. To connect an image with the text and the outside world you have to think about it. After completing the process of connection you feel a certain

pleasure of creation. Behind this pleasure the things that are at work are our brain and mind. A combined work of our brain and mind produces a wholesome understanding of an image. In this case Donne's images, in both his poetry and prose, give the readers more opportunity than many other writers. I will try to show some reasons for this in my writing. As an introduction to this work I want to focus on some of the extraordinary aspects of Donne's images first.

John Donne loves to play with both words and ideas. He creates confusion and difficulty in his writing by his technical use of imagery. Many of his poems are like riddles. For this reason readers can take an active part in solving the riddles while reading the poem. I think this is a unique kind of pleasure for a reader because it gives the reader an opportunity to play an active part in the making of the poem. As a player of words Donne also becomes an adept image maker. The best thing about him is that he leaves something unfinished for his readers. After finishing a poem by Donne we have to think about it to get the meaning. The complicated use of imagery and their connection with the material world makes Donne's poems quite challenging for the readers. A successful reading of any Donne poem brings the pleasure of connecting missing links. In the next paragraph I will elaborate on this issue.

An image is an intangible thing. It has no concrete existence. It has its existence in our imagination only. A writer uses one thing from the outside world and connects it with another thing or mood to clarify his/her meaning. Actually there is no practical connection between these two things. But the writer places the things in such a way that it is always possible for the readers to find and create a connection between them. So this connection takes place inside our brain and not in the outside world. Our imagination is at work as we comprehend the images of a literary piece and try to make a connection between the world of ideas and the concrete world around us. When we read a poem by Donne we cannot make the connection very easily as the association of the material and the immaterial is often very complicated in it. There are some links between the tenor and the vehicle which are missing. So it becomes the reader's duty to discover those missing links for a successful reading of the poem.

Now we can take a poem by Donne for close inspection to prove the statement:

Air And Angels

Twice or thrice had I loved thee,
 Before I knew thy face or name;
 So in a voice, so in a shapeless flame
Angels affect us oft, and worshiped be;
 Still when, to where thou wert, I came,
 Some lovely glorious nothing I did see.
 But since my soul, whose child love is,

Takes limbs of flesh, and else could nothing do,
 More subtle than the parent is,
 Love must not be, but take a body too;
 And therefore what thou wert, and who,
 I bid love ask, and now
 That it assume thy body, I allow,
 And fix itself in thy lip, eye, and brow.
 Whilst thus to ballast love, I thought,
 And so more steadily to have gone,
 With wares which would sink admiration
 I saw I had love's pinnace overfraught;
 Every thy hair for love to work upon
 Is much too much, some fitter must be sought;
 For, nor in nothing, nor in things
 Extreme, and scatt'ring bright, can love inhere;
 Then as an angel, face, and wings
 Of air, not pure as it, yet pure doth wear,
 So thy love may be my love's sphere;
 Just such disparity
 As is 'twixt air and angel's purity,
 'Twixt women's love and men's will ever be.

(*John Donne's Poetry*, Norton Critical Editions, 1966)

In the first stanza of the poem we see a number of images. Let us talk about the major image first. A relationship is formed here among the body, soul and love. Love is the soul's child. But the soul cannot live without a body. So love, being the soul's child, must follow the parent and take a body too. The idea behind this relationship seems to be pretty complicated. Donne here uses an extended image to assimilate the three different aspects within one frame. The main purpose of the first stanza is to establish the fact that the body is equally important in love though love is supposed to be purely spiritual. Love is like the child of the soul. Actually there is nothing that extraordinary in this assumption. The striking factor is the extension of the image. As the soul needs a body for existence, so love also needs a body to survive. The ingenuity of Donne's logic is reflected here. He retains his pretension that he believes in the purity of spiritual love, but at the same time he understands that it is not possible for love to survive without the support of the body. The concrete image of the body and the abstract image of love converge to a concrete thing, the image of a child, and the conversion makes the whole thing really complicated and challenging for the readers. If we look at the beginning of the poem we will see another implied comparison between an angel and the beloved. The idea is like he had a prior image of the beloved in his heart which resembles an angel. The phrase "shapeless frame" indicates that angels don't have a concrete bodily existence. So here again we see

that the beloved was imagined by the poet like an angel even before he met her. This proposition becomes more complicated as the speaker imagines the shape of the beloved without even seeing her. This blending of solidity with fluidity creates a kind of magic in the language of the poem. It is somewhat like the fairy-tale where the prince becomes a frog by magic.

The second stanza presents an even more complicated circle of imagery. I call it a circle because there are folds of images, compiled one upon another, making layers, to produce a circle of mental pictures. There are three major images here—boat, air and angels. The idea is to make an amalgamation of both the natural and the supernatural. While the nautical image talks about ballasting love with physical aspects, the supernatural image talks about the degree of purity in air and angels. Air is pure, but when angels assume the airy body to appear before men, it does not remain so pure. Through this example Donne's main purpose is to prove that just as there is a subtle difference between air and angels, there is a difference between women and men's love. Here we see Donne typically advocating men's superiority over women. But the presentation of the theory is so complex that it looks like something else. Moreover, the use of the scholastic doctrine about angels makes the theory more critical giving it an obscure and abstract touch.

Now we can think about the effect which this image creates in the mind of a reader. As I said at the beginning, the image comes here in the guise of a riddle. We as readers feel that we know what is behind it, but still we have to think deeply to get the exact meaning. When we are successful in solving the riddle we get pleasure. The more difficult the problem is, the greater the pleasure. In the context of this poem the readers have a very turbulent experience. We are taken from one place to another so rapidly that at times we run the risk of losing track. The first stanza, by yoking together the material and immaterial aspects of love, very cleverly shows that love must take a bodily shape for its survival.

The last stanza reverses this resolution. It says that too much concentration on body will infringe upon the intensity of love. Though body is essential for love, only outward beauty is not adequate to accommodate it (love). "things / Extreme and scatt'ring bright" are not enough to accommodate the comprehensive diversity of love. But Donne characteristically remembers to say that as far as women are concerned, love will always be connected with body. This is the basic difference between the purity of women's love and of men's. So the whole poem creates a kind of bewilderment because after the amalgamation of all incorporeal and material aspects we expect a philosophical exhortation. But underneath this presentation we have a typical Donne move. A rereading of the poem may prove to us that the poem is capable of creating a new interpretation. Because we can never grasp the total idea behind it, it is always possible to be distracted, and rethink the poem.

Toeing this thought, Judith Scherer Herz says about the the endings of Donne's poems that they "require us to re-begin, both those poems where endings do not seem particularly troubling and those that send us, off balance, back to the start, wondering how we got from there to here and back again, and those where the endings flummox us entirely" (113).

If the poem only produces perplexity, then what about the pleasure that I was talking about at the beginning? As a reader I must say that in spite of all this confusion the poem has immense attraction. It has a fairy-tale like quality. The frequent tossing of the subject matter from natural to supernatural, from concrete to abstract creates fluidity in the poem. It takes us beyond the mundane routine of our day to day life and it opens a new dimension that gives us opportunity for imagining a magical world. In the magical world transformation is a very easy thing. Solidity and fluidity, and the concrete and the abstract merge here so naturally that it doesn't arouse any question in our mind. There are some missing links in the poem, as I said before. In the first stanza the comparison between the beloved and the angel is vague. The same thing we again see in the idea that love is the soul's child. The last stanza offers even more missing links. The comparison between a boat and love is quite challenging. The last comparison among air, angel, men and women's love is totally perplexing. In filling up all these missing threads and organize those into a plausible pattern the reader has a tough time. But when he/she comes to the end successfully, that is, when a comprehensive meaning can be achieved, the reader feels elated. This experience exercises both our intellect and imagination.

The second poem that I want to discuss is *The Flea*.

The Flea

Mark but this flea, and mark in this
 How little that which thou deny'st me is ;
 It sucked me first, and now sucks thee,
 And in this flea our two bloods mingled be;
 Thou know'st that this cannot be said
 A sin, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead,
 Yet this enjoys before it woo,
 And pampered swells with one blood made of two,
 And this, alas, is more than we would do.
 O stay, three lives in one flea spare,
 Where we almost, yea more than married are,
 This flea is you and I, and this
 Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is;
 Though parents grudge, and you, we're met
 And cloistered in these living walls of jet.

Though use make you apt to kill me,
 Let not to that, self-murder added be,
 And sacrilege, three sins in killing three.
 Cruel and sudden, hast thou since
 Purpled thy nail in blood of innocence?
 Wherein could this flea guilty be,
 Except in that drop which it sucked from thee?
 Yet thou triumph'st, and say'st that thou
 Find'st not thyself, nor me, the weaker now.
 'Tis true; then learn how false fears be;
 Just so much honour, when thou yield'st to me,
 Will waste, as this flea's death took life from thee.

(*John Donne's Poetry*, Norton Critical Editions, 1966)

In this poem the use of the image is particularly important as the speaker has to win over the beloved through his well planned argument. With this purpose in mind, he uses some extravagant imagery to make intercourse look like a very trivial and simple matter. So he converts the flea into their marriage bed and doesn't stop until giving it the honour of their marriage temple. The brilliant side of this comparison, even after knowing its absurdity, is that none can but appreciate the precision which it brings forth. Alex Millan has the following to say about the advantages of making the flea the central metaphor: "A flea is an ordinary object that is familiar. This familiarity makes it a good choice as a metaphor, since it is able to be understood to the connections that Donne draws" (3).

Remembering the medical theory of that time we cannot contradict the speaker's triumphant claim. The medical theory proposed that intercourse meant mixing of blood. The argumentative pattern of this poem heavily depends on this key image, the flea. All other seductive apparatus can be called branches of this main idea. Now again a puzzle or riddle is at work here. From the empirical flea he quickly jumps to the world of ideas to question the sense of morality and certain accepted values. He questions the social and moral views about virginity. Also, by proving that they have already consummated in "these living walls of jet," he tries to stop the woman from killing the flea, reminding her of the immensity of a sin like this. These sudden shifts from reality to complex ideas give the reader a jerk. S/he has to be alert to weave the intended missing threads to connect the material and the immaterial. In the last three lines of the poem another surprise waits for us. The speaker insists on the triviality of having sex by comparing it with the triviality of the flea's death to the extent it represents the woman's death also. The last line comes as a great riddle because it connects two very distant things. One is loss of honour and the other the death of the flea. The loss of honour and the flea is of similar importance. So the flea is brought down from its

previous magnanimous position. But this change of status is not a problem; the real complexity lies in the statement "as this flea's death took life from thee." Here it is difficult to see how the flea's death takes life from the lady; and how this taking of life can be insignificant. The lady didn't die with the flea, but a small part of her perished with it, as it contained her blood. This is also suggested earlier in the poem in the phrase "self-murder." But the twist in the end makes it difficult for us to assimilate this idea with its succeeding link. Unlike "Air and Angels" we have fewer abstractions in "The Flea." Nevertheless, the few complex hypotheses that the poem contains engage our imagination by giving us a number of distant and seemingly absurd but interlaced images. In this poem also the prevalent image is circular as everything revolves around it—the flea and its relationship with physical love.

I have chosen "The Ecstasy" as the last poem to be discussed here.

The Ecstasy

Where, like a pillow on a bed
 A pregnant bank swell'd up to rest
 The violet's reclining head,
 Sat we two, one another's best.
 Our hands were firmly cemented
 With a fast balm, which thence did spring;
 Our eye-beams twisted, and did thread
 Our eyes upon one double string;
 So to' intergraft our hands, as yet
 Was all the means to make us one,
 And pictures in our eyes to get
 Was all our propagation.
 As 'twixt two equal armies, Fate
 Suspends uncertain victory,
 Our souls (which to advance their state
 Were gone out) hung 'twixt her and me.
 And whilst our souls negotiate there,
 We like sepulchral statues lay;
 All day, the same our postures were,
 And we said nothing, all the day.
 If any, so by love refined
 That he souls' language understood,
 And by good love were grown all mind,
 Within convenient distance stood,
 He (though he knew not which soul spake,

Because both meant, both spake the same)
Might thence a new concoction take
And part far purer than he came.
This Ecstasy doth unperplex,
 We said, and tell us what we love;
We see by this it was not sex;
 We see we saw not what did move:
But as all several souls contain
 Mixture of things, they know not what,
Love these mix'd souls doth mix again,
 And makes both one, each this and that.
A single violet transplant,
 The strength, the colour, and the size,
(All which before was poor, and scant)
 Redoubles still, and multiplies.
When love, with one another so
 Interinanimates two souls,
That abler soul, which thence doth flow,
 Defects of loneliness controls.
We then, who are this new soul, know
 Of what we are composed, and made,
For the atomies of which we grow
 Are souls, whom no change can invade.
But oh, alas, so long, so far,
 Our bodies why do we forbear
They're ours, though they're not we, we are
 The intelligences, they the spheres.
We owe them thanks, because they thus
 Did us to us at first convey,
Yielded their forces, sense, to us,
 Nor are dross to us, but allay.
On man heaven's influence works not so,
 But that it first imprints the air;
So soul into the soul may flow,
 Though it to body first repair.
As our blood labors to beget
 Spirits as like souls as it can,
Because such fingers need to knit
 That subtle knot which makes us man:

So must pure lovers' souls descend
 To affections, and to faculties,
 Which sense may reach and apprehend,
 Else a great Prince in prison lies.
 To our bodies turn we then, that so
 Weak men on love reveal'd may look;
 Love's mysteries in souls do grow,
 But yet the body is his book.
 And if some lover, such as we,
 Have heard this dialogue of one,
 Let him still mark us, he shall see
 Small change, when we're to bodies gone.

(John Donne's Poetry, Norton Critical Editions, 1966)

This poem is heavily loaded with images from diverse sources. The very title is an amalgamation of both the physical and the metaphysical. Here Donne is attempting to imagine and make intellectually conceivable the Neo-Platonic conception of ecstasy as the union of the soul with the object of its desire, attained by the abandonment of the body. To unfasten this quite confusing concept of the title is almost a challenge. So even before going into the poem, we feel like being at the entrance of a maze.

In the first four lines the swelling bank's resemblance to a pregnant woman and the violets, seen as resting children, are natural and picturesque and without complexity. The next eight lines introduce two comparisons which are interlaced and somewhat circular. I say this because both of them talk about the same thing--intermingling of the lovers' souls. Seemingly these comparisons are all about bodily connection. But Donne suggests that through this connection they are actually trying to transcend their bodies and seeking to unite their souls to achieve ecstasy. In other words, mingling of bodily organs leads to a spiritual union.

The following six lines explicate the idea of ecstasy by using far more perplexing imagery. The lovers' souls are like two equal armies trying to win over each other, while their bodies are like lifeless statues, motionless. This movement of the souls and their holding a 'negotiation' endow separate entities to them. They are made independent from the body like two beings, having substance and solidity to be able to stay 'hung' outside their respective bodies. This embodiment of the soul is legitimized by the Neo-Platonic theory of ecstasy, and it becomes very comfortable for Donne to adopt it because he has always been doing something similar in his poems so far.

Then the poem talks about redoubling of souls which is comparable to the transplantation of violets. Here the invisible mixing of souls and the effect of it is

visualized by the comparison of it to hybrid violets. The soul is called a prince and the body a prison. The body is also called the love's book. So in this poem frequently tangible and intangible things replace each other. They interchange places so often that at the end of the poem this ceases to strike the reader as something unusual.

Now I want to go back to my original proposition. As readers we experience like untangling a complex knot while reading a typical Donne poem and get cerebral pleasure, the thrill of discovering something on our own. How far has it been achieved in this particular poem? To find an answer to this question I have to quote Helen Gardner, who says that "Although it has fine lines and fine passages, it lacks, as a whole, Donne's characteristic *élan*, and at times it descends to what can only be described as a dogged plod" (240).

It insists too much on proving its point. For this reason it makes curious reading for those who are interested in the cross-word puzzle-like effects of Donne's poetry.

In the next few lines a very complex idea is unfolded:

As our blood labors to beget
Spirits, as like souls as it can,
Because such fingers need to knit
That subtle knot which makes us man,
So must pure lovers' souls descend
T' affections, and to faculties,
Which sense may reach and apprehend,
Else a great prince in prison lies.

The souls must come down to the sensitivity of the physical faculties while the body must rise up to the level of the spirit to make their union complete. This union is essential as neither the body nor the spirit can work without mutual association of each other. In these lines both the tangible and the intangible are blended to produce a concoction of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy of spirit and body. From the Platonic idea of inferiority of the body to the spirit Donne comes to a balanced state between them, which is closer to Aristotle. As Aristotle puts more emphasis on things that have real existence, like the body, which can be perceived through sense organs, so Donne, in this extract, tries to show that body is also important in forming knowledge.

An anonymous writer thinks that knowledge gained through sense-perception, on which all learning is dependent, according to Aristotle, is therefore more reliable than any *a priori* concept of an ideal reality. (Theosophy 487)

Whereas Plato thought that there is a first principle, *a priori*, at work before a sensory perception is realized: "beyond all finite existences and secondary causes, all laws, ideas and principles, there is an *Intelligence*, or Mind, the first principle of all principles, the Supreme Idea upon which all other ideas are grounded, ... the ultimate substance from which all things derive their being and essence, the first and efficient Cause of all the order and harmony and beauty which pervades the Universe." This he called the "World of Ideas" (Theosophy 484).

But for a reader, even after having a thorough idea of all these conceptions, the extract presents a very intricate formula which is difficult to grasp. At last when we can weave all the missing links in this extract to finally associate the body and the soul, we really feel like unraveling a mathematical problem successfully.

This discussion mainly focuses on the extraordinary power of Donne's imagery to put the reader in the place of a discoverer. The use of images gives us an opportunity to make our comprehensive and imaginative faculties work rigorously.

As is said by Achash Guibbory: "Yet, lines or even poems remain uncertain, endlessly intriguing, like puzzles where a piece seems missing, or where there's a surplus" (133).

When we are successful in our attempt, we feel an elation that is akin to creation. We at the same time become both a reader and a writer of the poem as we read it. The best thing about this process is that it never becomes old. Newer meanings come out of the same poem with the re-readings of it. Reading is a changeable process. So are the faculties like imagination, thought and perception of the reader. Every new reading comes up with a new kind of realization. The riddles of Donne are inexhaustible in this sense. For the reader the poems are a source of limitless variety, infinite shades of hues—like life itself.

Works Cited

- Herz, Judith Scherer. "Reading and rereading Donne's poetry." *The Cambridge Companion To John Donne*. Ed. Achsah Guibbory. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 113.
- Millan, Alex. "The Source of John Donne's Persuasive power." *Spring 2007 pennstate deluge essay: millan 2* October 2007.
<<http://english.la.psu.edu/eng/297a/deluge/2/essays/millan.html>>
- Gardner, Helen. "The Argument About 'The Ecstasy'." *Donne: Songs and Sonets, Casebook Series*. Ed. Julian Lovelock. London, The Macmillan Press LTD, 1973. 240.
- Guibbory, Achsah. "Erotic poetry." *The Cambridge Companion To John Donne*. Ed. Achsah Guibbory. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 133

Lang, Chris. "A Brief History of Literary Theory III." *Xenos Christian Fellowship* 2008. 7 May 2008.

<www.xenos.org/essays/litthry4.html>

Henderson, Greig E. and Christopher Brown. "READER-RESPONSE CRITICISM." *University of Toronto English Library, Director: Ian LancashireHypertext and HTML by Cristopher Douglas*, last modified: March 31, 1997. 9 May 2008.

<www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/glossary/Implied_reader.html>

Lye, John. "Positions." *Department of English & Language Literature* last updated on April 30, 2008. 11 May 2008.

<<http://www.brocku.ca/english/courses/4F70/rr.php>>

Darius, Julian. "Some Notes to John Donne Studies." *a writing by Julian Darius, made available at persiancaesar.com on 16 October 2002*. 7 May 2008.

<www.persiancaesar.com/donne.htm>

"ANCIENT LANDMARKS," *THEOSOPHY*, Vol. 27, No. 11, September, 1939 (Pages 483-491; Size: 26K) (Number 55 of a 59-part series), 11 June 2008.

<www.blavalsky.net/magazine/theosophy/ww/additional/ancientlandmarks/Plato and Aristotle.html>