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VERSIONS OF THE APOCALYPSE
IN FOUR SEVENTEENTH CENTURY AUTHORS

by

Charles Ernest Watson
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Department of Comparative Literature

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

Date April, 1974

ABSTRACT

In the literature of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries poets felt a special affinity with the subject of the end of the world, and utilized visions of the apocalypse in their works. Examples of such descriptions of the final dissolution of the world are to be found in the major European literatures of the period. In order to stay within manageable limits, and since their works are representative of the treatment of this topic, this study involves an examination of the apocalyptic visions of Agrippa d'Aubigné, John Donne, Marc Antoine de Gérard Saint-Amant, and Richard Crashaw. Specifically the poems considered are d'Aubigné's Les Tragiques, Donne's "Anniversaries," Saint-Amant's "Le Contemplateur" and "La Solitude," Crashaw's adaptation of the Latin hymn entitled "The Hymn of the Church, in Meditation of the Day of Judgment, 'Dies Irae,'" and "The Teresa Poems."

In both the Jewish and Christian traditions there are apocalypses that reveal the nature of the end of things. The most well known of these apocalypses are the books of "Daniel" and the "Revelation of St. John." In this study the visions of the four authors are considered in the light of this tradition.

The critical approach in the first four chapters is the examination of each of the authors' poems separately, and the discussion of the primary features of their apocalyptic descriptions. This necessitates a consideration of the author's

attitude toward his artistic purpose, his conception of his source of inspiration, his exact use of the apocalypse in the body of his poem, and the use of certain rhetorical techniques that are fundamental to the nature of an apocalyptic work. In the chapters on d'Aubigné and Donne the artistic purpose and use of the apocalypse is viewed as propagandist or seriously moral, the source of inspiration that of the man inspired by God, and the rhetorical method the exercise of cumulative piling, harangues, and spectacular language. Contrasted with the serious and universal function of the apocalypse in d'Aubigné and Donne, in the visions of Saint-Amant and Crashaw the source of inspiration emanates from the poets' own understanding of their imaginative state. The visions are seen as more personal, and in the case of Saint-Amant, as a necessary structural element. In both authors variations on the rhetorical techniques of the other authors are evident.

In the final chapter features of the authors' apocalyptic poems which are also found in either the Jewish or Christian traditions are assessed. Whereas the poems of d'Aubigné and Donne are seen as sharing the overall moral outlook and direction with these traditions, such as a prophetic source of inspiration and intent to console, the poems of Saint-Amant and Crashaw are not. They are described as introverted versions in which the personal and primarily aesthetic overrides the universal. The reasons for the appearance of the subject

in the authors are suggested in terms of the poets' individual motivations and a sceptical crisis in the period. Lastly, the suggestion is made that a definition and distinction be given to the genre and motif of the apocalypse.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION: THE END OF THE WORLD	1
CHAPTER I: D'AUBIGNE'S 'LES TRAGIQUES'	9
A. A Rhetorical Stance: The Activity of Exile ...	9
1. The Propagandist Intent	12
2. The Propagandist Technique	14
3. D'Aubigné's View of the 'Monde Cassé' ...	17
B. The Second Jonah	20
1. D'Aubigné's Gift of Prophecy	20
2. The Apocalypse: 'Au Giron de Dieu'	26
C. D'Aubigné's Choice of Genre and his Use of the Bible	32
CHAPTER II: JOHN DONNE'S 'ANNIVERSARIES'	38
A. John Donne: Introduction to the 'Anniversaries'	38
B. The Source of Inspiration	42
C. The Noblest Sense	47
D. Donne's Treatment of Evil	54
CHAPTER III: SAINT-AMANT'S 'LE CONTEMPLATEUR' AND 'LA SOLITUDE'	63
A. 'Le Bon Gros:' Introduction to 'Le Contemplateur'	63
B. The Experience of Solitude	67
C. The Final Synapse	73
1. The Element of 'Ut Pictura Poesis'	77
2. The Elements of Gongorism	81
3. The Bacchic Element	85
CHAPTER IV: CRASHAW'S POETIC VISION	89
A. 'Unum Ante Thronum'	89
B. "The Teresa Poems"	98

CONCLUSION	105
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	113
APPENDIX I	126

NOTE

Unless otherwise stated, reference throughout this study is to the following editions:

Aubigné, Théodore Agrippa d'. Oeuvres, ed. Henri Weber.
Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1969.

Crashaw, Richard. The Complete Poetry, ed. George Walton Williams. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1970.

Donne, John. Poetical Works, 1912. ed. Herbert J.C. Grierson. London: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Saint-Amant, Antoine Gérard, sieur de. Oeuvres. 4 vols.
ed. Jean Lagny. Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1967-71.

INTRODUCTION

THE END OF THE WORLD

Quite unexpectedly as Vasserot
The armless ambidextrian was lighting
A match between his great and second toe
And Ralph the lion was engaged in biting
The neck of Madame Sossman while the drum
Pointed, and teeny was about to cough
In waltz- time swinging Jocko by the thumb-
Quite unexpectedly the top blew off:

And there, there overhead, there, there, hung over
Those thousands of white faces, those dazed eyes,
There in the starless dark the poise, the hover,
There with vast wings across the canceled skies,
There in the sudden blackness the black pall
Of nothing, nothing, nothing- nothing at all.

Poets of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries would have felt a special affinity with the subject of this poem by the modern American poet Archibald MacLeish. It was John Donne who asked, "What if this present were the world's last night?" and gave, along with many of his contemporaries, a description of the world becoming "nothing at all."¹ Indeed, examples of poems that take the apocalypse as their major topic are to be found in many of the major European literatures of the period, and include works of Shakespeare, Milton, Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, Théophile de Viau, Saint-Amant, Agrippa d'Aubigné, Malherbe, Gryphius, Kuhlmann, and Greifenberg. Since my selection of authors' works has been dictated by a desire to keep the overall study within manageable limits, the scope of this study, albeit comparative, is narrower. I have limited

¹"Holy Sonnet XIII."

the extent of my study to selected works of two French and two English authors whose poems are representative of the treatment of the apocalypse in this period. These four authors are Agrippa d'Aubigné(1551-1630), John Donne(1572-1631), Marc-Antoine de Gérard Saint-Amant(1594-1661) and Richard Crashaw (1612-1649). The emphasis given to the apocalyptic poetry of Richard Crashaw is not found in the other comparative works that have dealt with this topic. Part of the reason for this situation is perhaps the present trend of critical opinion which finds the poetry of d'Aubigné, Donne and Saint-Amant interesting and worthy of study, but Crashaw's aesthetic essentially a "pandering to the basest emotions in the name of religion."² In spite of Bertolasco's defense of Crashaw's aesthetic, he is still regarded as a black sheep.³ For my purposes, however, an examination of Crashaw's apocalyptic poetry makes possible an interesting contrast with selected works of Donne and d'Aubigné, and reveals a certain similarity of style with the poems of Saint-Amant.

Some of the conclusions drawn by the few critics who have considered the apocalyptic settings of these authors seem to me generally unsatisfactory, and this sense of dissatisfaction has also influenced my specific choices. These critics have had clear-cut critical aspirations and methodologies, but have arrived at conclusions that often appear impressionistic. For instance,

²Quoted in M.F. Bertolasco, Crashaw and the Baroque (Montgomery: University of Alabama Press, 1971), p. 4.

³Ibid., esp. pp. 94-121.

Imbrie Buffum, in his otherwise excellent Studies in Baroque from Montaigne to Rotrou, tends to overplay the elements of baroque sensibility. Speaking of an apocalyptic setting in a poem by Saint-Amant he remarks: "To feel simultaneously wonder and agreeable terror- this is a state thoroughly congenial to the baroque mind."⁴ Placing similar emphasis upon the use of the concept of the baroque, Buffum concludes, in response to the question of the predominance of apocalyptic settings in late sixteenth and early seventeenth century poems, that:

The Christian and the baroque ethos are intimately connected; and it would be impossible to conceive⁵ of baroque art outside of Christian civilization.⁵

Likewise, Frank Warnke, in a rather free-wheeling description of the end of the world settings in many of the same works contends that:

These works participate in the mood of melancholy which is a recurrent feature of the literature of the period, but the apocalyptic preoccupation, as we encounter it in such lyric poets as Théophile de Viau, Saint-Amant(et al.), often communicates not a sentiment of regret but rather a feeling of enormous zest and satisfaction, as if the accuracy of the poet's imaginative picture of the world were somehow confirmed by the inclusion of that world's abolition.⁶

⁴Imbrie Buffum, Studies in Baroque from Montaigne to Rotrou (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 157.

⁵Ibid., p. 135.

⁶Frank Warnke, Versions of Baroque (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 205.

By choosing to deal with the same apocalyptic poems as these critics, I hope to justify and qualify a more clear-cut conception of the apocalyptic in the four authors.

In addition to having written apocalyptic poems, all of these authors, except perhaps Crashaw, lived eventful lives. The English authors were converts, and were ostracized for their religious beliefs. Crashaw, the son of a Puritan preacher, became a convert to Roman Catholicism in the early 1630's. From the outbreak of the English Civil War until his death, he lived in exile on the Continent, at first in Paris and then later as a member of the household of Cardinal Palotto, where he was attached to the shrine of Loretto in Italy. Donne, raised a Roman Catholic, and educated in theology and law at Oxford and Cambridge, abandoned Catholicism, and was converted to Anglicanism. After his ordination in 1615, he later became a famous Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral. The French authors also had lives full of incident and belonged to that breed of men who could combine, like Cervantes, letras y armas. Saint-Amant was active in military campaigns and was also an original member of the Académie Française. A free-thinker, or libertin, he saw his friend Théophile de Viau formally condemned for holding views similar to his own.⁷ Saint-Amant, who was more discreet, managed to

⁷For a discussion of the libertins, see Antoine Adam, Les Libertins au XVII^e siècle (Paris: Buchet-Chastel, 1964). Of Saint-Amant's part all we know for certain is that he sufficiently conformed to orthodoxy, cf. Samuel L. Borton, Six Modes of Sensibility in Saint-Amant (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1966), p. 129.

avoid similar condemnation. D'Aubigné at an early age joined the French Protestant army in its second war against the Catholics, and was for fifteen years an inseparable companion of the King of Navarre, later Henri IV of France. His devotion to Protestantism, which led to his break with Henri of Navarre upon the King's later abjuration of the faith, was also a factor in the palinode he wrote which rejected his earlier love poems (Les Tragiques, II, 69-76).

The term apocalypse is derived from the Greek apocaluphis (Latin revelatio) and means "an uncovering, a revelation." The term is flexible and can refer to the uncovering of anything that was previously hidden or obscured, or can be employed in the eschatological sense of an uncovering or revelation about the nature of the end of things. In both the Jewish and Christian traditions there are apocalypses in this latter sense. The most famous of the Jewish apocalypses are the books of "Daniel" (c. 6th. Cent. B.C.) and the Apocryphal "II Esdras" (c. 250 B.C.-150 A.D.); numerous other versions are found in the Pseudepigrapha.⁸ The book of "Daniel," which is accepted in the Jewish and

⁸The Apocryphal "II Esdras" or "IV Ezra," and all the other known Jewish apocalypses are to be found in The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, ed. R.H. Charles, vol. II (Oxford University Press, 1913, reprinted 1963), pp. 163-624. "II Esdras" is discussed by Bruce M. Metzger in An Introduction to the 'Apocrypha' (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 21-30.

Christian canons, is considered a precursor to the New Testament "Revelation of St. John" (c. A.D. 95) in the Christian tradition.⁹ Although "Daniel" and the "Revelation of St. John" share certain features with other ancient apocalyptic writings, they are considered in their traditions to be divinely inspired rather than artificially, that is, poetically prophetic. Throughout this study I will refer directly to these apocalypses, and will only use Apocalypse to designate the actual "Revelation of St. John." Those descriptions of the end of things in certain poems of d'Aubigné, Donne, Saint-Amant, and Crashaw will also be called apocalypses. The poems to be considered are d'Aubigné's Les Tragiques, Donne's "Anniversaries," Saint-Amant's "Le Contemplateur" and "La Solitude," Crashaw's adaptation of the Latin hymn "Dies Irae" entitled "The Hymn of the Church, in Meditation of the Day of Judgment, 'Dies Irae,'" and "The Teresa Poems." The noun and adjective "apocalyptic" will refer to those elements of description, purpose, and vision in the Jewish books, the "Revelation of St. John," or works of the four authors, that are linked with a conception of the dissolution of the world. The extension of the notion of apocalyptic literature by means or archetypes, as proposed by Northrop Frye, is useful in its own right, but is too all encompassing to be applied to the present discussion.¹⁰

⁹The few apocalypses attributed to New Testament personages can be found in The Apocryphal New Testament, trans. M.R. James (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1924), pp. 504-568.

¹⁰Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (New York: Atheneum, 1969), esp. pp. 141-162 and pp. 191-206.

My critical approach in the first four chapters is to examine each of the authors' poems separately. My intention is to characterize the primary features of their apocalyptic descriptions. In order to do this I examine the author's attitude toward his artistic purpose, his conception of his source of inspiration, his exact use of the apocalypse in the body of his poem, and the use of certain rhetorical techniques that are fundamental to the nature of an apocalyptic work. All of these features involve the author's ethos or persona.¹¹ In modern literary criticism the term persona has been liberally employed, and is often used in a broad sense to mean the mask "through which the poet learns to think and see," and through which the author can identify the "self with persona, not as a dramatist identifies himself momentarily with each character within a plot, but as the very substance of the poem itself."¹² I consider the author's persona to be the substance of his artistic purpose and methodology, and employ the term where it will help to facilitate a description of the author's artistic purpose and techniques. In the case of d'Aubigné I have substituted the term stance for the rhetorical concept of persona. I have here followed the example set by R.L. Regosin in his study of d'Aubigné's

¹¹For a discussion of the dramatic significance of the term, cf. C.S. Baldwin, Ancient Rhetoric and Poetic: Interpreted from Representative Works (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924), pp. 176-180.

¹²Christine Brooke-Rose, The Grammar of Metaphor (London: Secker & Warburg, 1958), pp. 312-313.

Les Tragiques.¹³

As Donald L. Guss has reminded us, "defining the tradition used by a poet is the most precise tool we have for distinguishing the immediate from the peripheral in his art."¹⁴ In the final chapter those features of the authors' apocalyptic poems which are also found in either the Jewish or Christian traditions of the apocalypse are assessed. I suggest that whereas the poems of d'Aubigné and Donne share certain conceptions and techniques with these traditions, such as a prophetic source of inspiration, a necessary treatment of evil, an intent to console, and a cumulative rhetorical technique, the poems of Saint-Amant and Crashaw do not. These different uses of apocalyptic materials in the four authors are categorized as the traditional mode on the one hand, and the structural or personal and primarily aesthetic mode on the other. Finally, I consider what justification there is for employing apocalypse as a genre designation with reference to an author's artistic intent and method.

¹³Richard L. Regosin, The Poetry of Inspiration: Agrippa d'Aubigné's 'Les Tragiques,' University of North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures, No. 88 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), pp. 67-78. The term is also introduced in a study of Donne's "Anniversaries" by B.K. Lewalski, Donne's 'Anniversaries' and the Poetry of Praise: The Creation of a Symbolic Mode (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), esp. pp. 11-41.

¹⁴Donald L. Guss, John Donne: Petrarchist (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, p. 15.

CHAPTER I

D'AUBIGNE'S 'LES TRAGIQUES'

A. A Rhetorical Stance: The Activity of Exile

The rhetorical stance assumed by d'Aubigné in his epic Les Tragiques can be seen as that of an observer of the world who will not hide his feelings, and who will actively seek to interpret what he can absorb through his senses. The poet's attitude toward his position as an observer is disclosed early in the epic. In his "Préface" d'Aubigné recounts, with a few alterations, a Roman legend in which a young girl tries to visit her imprisoned mother, yet dies of starvation before passing the iron railing of the cell.¹ Although neither an exile, nor in prison at the time, the poet used the anecdote to characterize himself as a kind of Protestant exile who is forced by circumstance to write from a state of anonymity and solitude.

Encores vivrai-je par toi,
Mon fils, comme tu vis par moi;
Puis il faut, comme la nourrice
Et fille du Romain grison,
Que tu allaicte et tu chérisses
Ton pere, en exil, en prison.
(7-12)

Si en mon volontaire exil
Un juste et severe sourcil
Me reprend de laisser en France
Les traces de mon perdu temps:
Ce sont les fleurs et l'esperance
Et ceci les fruits de mes ans.
(85-90)

¹Gallimard ed., p. 899, n.2.

Employing a motif of separation and solitude,² by focusing on his own emotional state ("mon fils," "par moi," "mon...exil," "mon perdu temps," "mes ans"), d'Aubigné accounts for his voluntary "exile" as a time of active searching to discover the real state of the world, and allegorically, the state of the Protestant faith. This examination of the world's condition is set forth in the multitude of situations observed by the poet, and in the many verbs of sensing and feeling:

Je sens ravir dedans les cieux
 Mon ame aussi bien que mes yeux,
 Quand en ces montagnes j'advise
 Ces grands coups de la verité
 Et les beaux combats de l'Eglise
 Signalez à la pauvreté.
 Je voi les places et les champs
 Là ou l'effroi des braves camps,
 Qui de tant de rudes batailles
 R'apportoyent les fers triomphans,
 Purent les chiens de leurs entrailles,
 Deffaicts de la main des enfans.
 (187-198)

Je voi venir avec horreur
 Le jour qu'au grand temple d'erreur
 Tu feras rire l'assistance;
 Puis, donnant le dernier effort.
 Aux deux colonnes de la France,
 Tu te baigneras en ta mort.
 (319-324)

In these descriptive passages d'Aubigné imparts his own joy and horror at what he has found (e.g. "...j'advise...les beaux combats de l'Eglise/Signalez à la pauvreté"; "Purent les chiens

²This is a standard motif often associated with the landscape of Nature: cf. E.R. Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 83-85.

de leurs entrailles,/Deffaicts de la main des enfans"; "Je voi venir avec horreur"). In the first of these passages the poet balances a description of the part that he himself will play ("je sens," "je advise") with that of the role to be taken by the Church ("grands coups...", "les beaux combats").

A major feature of d'Aubigné's language is the use of adjectives to convey the immensity and grandeur of the situations of the protagonists of the epic. "Grands" and "beaux" are typical terms used to qualify "verité" and the Protestant Church; these adjectives are almost tepid compared with the pejorative terms which describe activities of the Catholic Church. Both passages illustrate d'Aubigné's opinion of what he is to observe as a "combat" or "bataille." In the second passage the poet's first statement is general and binary, and is followed by a typically vivid horror scene. D'Aubigné delights in the idea of "les chiens" (the Catholics) as being disemboweled by "les enfans" (the Protestants).³ He also introduces certain images, like "les fers," which take on a symbolic significance in later passages of the epic. They become symbolic of destruction and unavoidable evil, while at the same time becoming representative of the power and virtue of the Protestant cause and martyrdoms. Likewise, in the second passage the poet creates a symbolic and temporal landscape to

³See VII, 944; VII, 1033 for "les chiens" as the image of the spiritually lost Catholics.

introduce France's situation, and verify how involved he is with all that is able to be imagined and observed; the poet's "horreur" is correlated with the "mort" of the country.

As the judgments and dispensations of God are inherently rigorous, as we shall observe shortly, the poet implies that his own thoughts and interpretations of events are to be severe and critical. The poet's will, imbued with the privilege and ability to reveal the truth, assumes the task of uncovering the genuine condition of the world:

Je n'excuse pas mes escrits
Pour ceux-la qui y sont repris:
Mon plaisir est de leur desplaire.
Amis, je trouve en la raison
Pour vous et pour eux fruit contraire,
La medicine et le poison.

(367-372)

This intent is also brought out in many passages of the "Préface" which have been referred to:

Je pense avoir esté sur eux
Et pere et juge rigoureux:
L'un à regret a eu la vie,
A mon gré chaste et assez beau;
L'autre ensevelit ma folie
Dedans un oublieux tombeau.

(79-84)

1. The Propagandist Intent

In all the books of Les Tragiques d'Aubigné maintains his position as observer and voluntary exile. This position allows him certain technical advantages, but even more importantly, it is a major feature of a propagandist technique in the poem. As the poet states in the "Préface," he intends to describe and

ultimately reverse the world's scandalous order of events:

Du milieu, des extremités de la France, et mesme de plus loin, notamment d'un vieil pasteur d'Angrongne, plusieurs escrits secondoyent les remonstrances de vive voix par lesquelles les serviteurs de Dieu lui reprochoyent le talent caché, et quelcun en ces termes: "Nous sommes ennuyés de livres qui enseignent, donnez-nous en pour esmouvoir, en un siecle où tout zele chrestien est peri, où la difference du vray et du mensonge est comme abolie, où les mains des ennemis de l'Eglise cachent le sang duquel elles sont tachees sous les presens, et leurs inhumanitiés sous la libéralité."⁴

Placed in the context of the confused religious climate of the latter half of the sixteenth century, which culminated in a series of religious wars between Catholics and Huguenots, Les Tragiques is meant to lead up to a "victory of the true Church, unattainable on the battlefield and in the court of France," yet a successful campaign in a "world of art."⁵ The propagandist element is clearly evident; the poet is writing with the intention of moving his audience in favor of the Protestant cause, and relies on the descriptive passages to incite emotions and to instruct. The epic "instructs in order to bring consolation and joy to the faithful, to awaken sorrow and pity in the hearts of the indifferent, to arouse terror in the breasts of the iniquitous."⁶ D'Aubigné's intent is to instruct as well as to console: "Misères," "Les Feux," and "Les Fers"

⁴Gallimard ed., "Aux Lecteurs," p. 3.

⁵R.L. Regosin, op. cit., p. 14.

⁶Ibid., p. 31.

include material intended specifically to arouse compassion, as "Vengeance" and "Jugement" are meant specifically to arouse terror through the concluding description of the Last Judgment and the apocalyptic vision.⁷

2. The Propagandist Technique

In terms of both characterization and tone the poet's stance as an observer makes it possible for d'Aubigné to create a vivid tableaux of the major personages and supernatural forces involved in the conflict between the religious groups. As he focuses, through the use of metaphor, on certain characters that are repugnant, he occasionally is able to blur the distinction between the satirical or sarcastic elements and the actual or real by creating an illusion of disinterested observation, or by piling up metaphors until the reader is overwhelmed by the cumulative effect. Many examples could be drawn from each of the books of the epic to illustrate d'Aubigné's rhetorical technique in this sense. A typical passage is the poet's invective against the Pope which is found in "Jugement:"

Voici donc, Antechrist, l'estraict des faits et gestes:
 Tes fornications, adulteres, incestes,
 Les pechés où nature est tournée à l'envers
 La bestialité, les grands bourdeaux ouvers,
 Le tribut exigé, la bulle demandee
 Qui a la sodomie en esté concedée;
 La place de tyran conquise par le fer,
 Les fraudes qu'exerça ce grand tison d'enfer,
 Les empoisonnemens, assassins, calomnies,

⁷Cf. "Aux Lecteurs," pp. 6-7 for d'Aubigné's own description of the content of the various books, and his comment that "Il ya peu d'artifice en la disposition" (p. 7).

Les degats des païs, des hommes et des vies
 Pour attraper les clefs; les contracts, les marchés
 Des diables stipulans subtilement couchés.
 (VII, 811-822)

The effect of the author's cumulative technique is similar to that achieved in a biblical passage found in Paul's "Epistle to the Romans" (c. A.D. 56). Describing the result of the Gentiles' universal scepticism Paul contends that men are:

...filled with all unrighteousness,
 fornication, wickedness, covetousness,
 maliciousness, full of envy, murder, strife,
 deceit, malignity; whisperers,
 Backbiters, haters of God, insolent,
 proud, boasters, inventors of evil things,
 disobedient to parents;
 Without understanding, covenant
 breakers, without natural affection,
 implacable, unmerciful.
 (Rom. 1:29-31)

Such a long compilation of atrocities, in d'Aubigné's passage and that of Paul fill the reader with a sense of horror and repulsion. The author is aware that all of the elements in his description have been chosen for either associative reasons ("diables," 822; "Antechrist," 811; "fer," 817), or purely emotive reasons ("fornications, adulteres, incestes," 812: "Les empoisonnemens, assassins, calomnies," 819), and that the list has been accumulated to persuade the reader to believe in a description that he would otherwise reject. By the effective employment of the trappings of rhetoric, d'Aubigné is also able to partially conceal his own intense prejudice from the reader.

D'Aubigné's descriptive passages are often transformed into apostrophic sections or harangues for propagandist

reasons.⁸ The poet hopes that the reader will be moved by the elements of his visions through their sheer cumulative power. D'Aubigné is able to attain such charged descriptive effects in the book "Princes," which illustrates the foppishness of court life and the lascivious circle of Henry III, or "Les Feux," a book which surpasses many medieval poems in its extended use of personification or allegory, and its catalogues of horror. The alternation between apparently unbiased observation and apostrophic comment and elaboration is found in the description of the martyrdom of Bainam, although the details were partially supplied by Crespin's L'Histoire des Martyrs:⁹

Là on vid un Bainam qui de ses bras pressoit
 Les fagots embrasez, qui mourant embrassoit
 Les outils de sa mort, instruments de sa gloire,
 Baisant, victorieux, les armes de victoire.
 (IV, 91-94)

Another representative observational and propagandist passage is manifest in:

Là un prestre apostat, prevoyant et rusé,
 Veut, en ployant à tous, de tous estre excusé:
 L'autre, pensionnaire et valet d'une femme,
 Employe son esprit à engager son âme;
 L'autre fait le royal et, flattant les deux parts,
 Veut trahir les Bourbons et tromper les Guisards;
 Un charlatan de cour y vend son beau langage,
 Un bourreau froid, sans ire, y conseille un carnage,
 Un boiteux estranger y bastit son thresor.
 (II, 535-543)

⁸Examples of harangues can be found in II, 9-31; IV, 1193-96; and V, 719-730.

⁹Cf. Gallimard ed., p. 988, n. 2.

In the first passage one antithetical or paradoxical element echoes another (e.g. 92-93), as in the second passage crime echoes crime. Hatzfeld and Buffum have labelled "echo device" this repetition of a key word in a passage, and find that it is closely allied to a fondness for verbal conceits and puns.¹⁰ D'Aubigné often repeats the key offenses of court members or religious personages to create an impression of tedious immorality. In the second passage the less than admirable activity of "un prestre apostat" is echoed by that of other such men. Some terms used in this passage to illustrate their activities (e.g. "flattant," "trahir," "tromper"), their character (e.g. "charlatan," "pensionnaire"), and their major interests (e.g. "thresor," "femme") are employed in other diatribes throughout the epic, and are in a limited sense symbolic of types of moral weakness. In context with the rest of the epic these sections are introduced as moral asides, and function like dramatic monologues or soliloquies to justify for the reader the denunciations of the final books.

3. D'Aubigné's View of the 'Monde cassé'

D'Aubigné's views of the body politic as evidenced in his portraits of the protagonists of the epic are not only connected to a specific propagandist purpose, but to the author's vision

¹⁰Imbrie Buffum, Agrippa d'Aubigne's 'Les Tragiques': A Study of the Baroque Style in Poetry (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951), esp. pp. 22-28. See the repetition of "les feux" in I, 55-58.

of the world in chaos.¹¹ There are several distinctive features of this conception. Using the violence of Cain as a basis for his argument the poet argues that with his crime "Nature has ceased to be herself (Nature desnaturée), everything has become topsy-turvy, things are not what they seem to be, their roles and those of human beings have become interchanged to the detriment of creation."¹² Nature is depicted as having become "blind with the vanishing of justice and faith."¹³ Although according to traditional biblical exegesis in Adam's fall we sinned all, d'Aubigné's choice of the Cain-Abel episode as its equivalent is connected with the stress on violence and unnaturalness that pervades the epic.¹⁴ One of the main themes developed in "Jugement" is that the role of Cain, and that of other members of the monde desnaturé will be reversed:

Ils le virent lié, le voici les mains hautes,
 Ses severes sourcils viennent conter leurs fautes;
 L'innocence a changé sa crainte en majestés,
 Son roseau en acier tranchant des deux costés,
 Sa croix au tribunal de presence divine;
 Le ciel l'a couronné, mais ce n'est plus d'espine.
 Ores viennent trembler à cet acte dernier
 Les condamnés aux pieds du juste prisonnier.
 (VII, 747-754)

¹¹Cf. Curtius, op. cit., pp. 94-98 for a historical and literary survey of the topos of the world as chaotic, and the use of the basic formal principle of stringing together impossibilities (ἀδύνατα, impossibilia).

¹²Agrippa d'Aubigné, Les Tragiques, ed. I.D. McFarlane (University of London: The Athlone Press, 1970), "Introduction," p. 29.

¹³Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁴See VII, 1127, 1139 for references to Adam.

D'Aubigné's view of Nature engenders his attitude toward Christ ("Ils le virent lié), and members of the Catholic cause ("les tyrans violens;" Préface, 265). His attitude toward the Catholic Church is clearly made known:

O Desert, promesse des cieux,
 Infertile mais bien heureux!
 Tu as une seule abondance,
 Tu produis les celestes dons,
 Et la fertilité de France
 Ne gist qu'en espineux chardons.
 (Préface, 169-174)

In the final culmination of themes in "Jugement," a portrait of the world and Nature is painted in which "man's civilized mask has been removed to reveal his essential barbarism. For the orthodox, it is the end of secular unity."¹⁵

In all the sections of his epic d'Aubigné imagines himself as alone capable of conceiving the true state of the world; he alone can see the actual perspective of things and events. Morally the tableau painted of the world is inspired by a severe examination of the poet's own conscience and his propagandist intent. Stylistically, this effect is achieved through the predominance of cumulative and echo techniques, and the verbs of sensing and feeling. Through his examination of the world the poet prepares a bridge from his description of those unjustly accused, the martyrs of "Les Feux," to a final

¹⁵McFarlane, op. cit., p. 25.

prophetic and apocalyptic vista in "Hierusalem qui es Babel ensanglantée" (VII, 272). An understanding of the poet's rhetorical stance as observer is thus fundamental to a discussion of the poet's notion that his source of inspiration and artistic direction is derived from God Himself.

B. The Second Jonah

1. D'Aubigné's Gift of Prophecy

Illustrations of the poet's part as a trumpeter and prophet of God's will are found in numerous apocalyptic allusions in the epic, but especially in the fully developed Last Judgment and end of the world settings of "Jugement."¹⁶ D'Aubigné's insistence upon his prophetic ability is a major aspect of his rhetorical position,¹⁷ and combines with his view of himself as an observer in order to further the propagandist and artistic direction of the epic.

D'Aubigné's affirmation of his unique gift of prophecy is clearly evident in "Misères" where the author will "[briser] les rochers et le respect d'erreur"(7), and affirms that:

¹⁶Albertino Mussato (1261-1329), author of the Latin tragedy Ecerinus, states in his seventh epistle that "the old poets were prophets of God and that poetry is a second theology," cf. Curtius, op. cit., p. 216.

¹⁷Cf. V, 572 ("la trompette"); V, 948 ("De trompette"); VII, 699 ("la trompette sonne"); VII, 1053 ("des trompettes le bruit") for use of the trumpet as a symbol of the poet's prophetic powers.

dessous les autels des idoles j'advise
 Le visage meurtri de la captive Eglise
 Qui à sa delivrance (aux despense des hazards)
 M'appelle, m'animant de ses trenchans regards.
 Mes desirs sont des-ja volez outre la rive
 Du Rubicon troublé.

(I, 13-18)

This passage suggests Christ's expulsion of the merchants from the temple, a scene that was popular in baroque art, and would hint at a kind of quasi-saviour role on the part of the author.¹⁸ The poet's appreciation of his own significance in this regard is indicated by the manner through which d'Aubigné often pretends to relay messages from heaven and its angels to the reader. For example, in "Les Fers" the poet describes a vision in which an angel of God has unlocked heaven's secrets to foretell the approaching damnation of the iniquitous:

Voy de Jerusalem la nation remise
 L'Antechrist abattu, en triomphe l'Eglise.
 (V, 1413-14)

Although d'Aubigné invokes the grace of Melpomene (I, 79), the muse of tragedy, he later calls upon the divine assistance and blessing of God:

Condui mon oeuvre, ô Dieu! à ton nom, donne moy
 Qu'entre tant de martyrs, champions de la foy,
 De chasque sexe, estat ou aage, à ton saint temple
 Je puisse consacrer un tableau pour exemple.
 (IV, 19-22)

In "Vengeances" d'Aubigné's task is made analogous to that of Jonah, the biblical prophet.¹⁹ It is interesting to note that

¹⁸See, for example, El Greco's "Expulsion of the Merchants from the Temple" (London, National Gallery, c. 1600).

¹⁹Regosin, op. cit., p. 51.

both hesitate to answer the call of God: "Je m'enfuyois de Dieu" (VI, 115).²⁰ Both have been stirred or awakened by God: "Le doigt de Dieu me leve et l'ame encore vive/M'anime à guerroyer la puante Ninive" (VI, 137-38). And both carry messages of doom. As Jonah was to warn ancient Nineveh, d'Aubigné intends to warn France of its imminent destruction. Indeed, Paris is the seat of corruption in France according to the poet, and is considered the modern counterpart of Nineveh: "Ainsi les visions qui seront ici peintes/Seront exemples vrais de nos histoires saintes" (VI, 89-90).²¹ As the poet's task is to announce the fate of Paris and France, he is also assigned the task of voicing the plight of the "modern chosen people," as d'Aubigné regards the Huguenots, and of giving utterance to the fate of both the elect and damned in a vision of the Last Judgment and apocalypse.²²

In the major part of "Jugement" d'Aubigné relates step by step the activity and significance of the Last Judgment. He recalls the tale of Gideon, which is intended as a reminder

²⁰This hesitation is often an aspect of the topic of affected modesty, see Curtius, op. cit., pp. 83-85.

²¹Jonah is summoned by God (Jonah 1:1-2), hesitates to do God's will (1:3), isolates himself (1:5-6; 1:17), has communion with God during his isolation (2:1-10), prophesies (3:3-4), and finally observes the fulfillment of the prophecy (3:5).

²²Regosin, op. cit., p. 14. Regosin suggests that the source for d'Aubigné's correlation between the Huguenots and the tribes of Israel is to be found in Henri Bullinger's sixteenth century treatise Cent Sermons sur l'Apocalypse (cf. pp. 61-67).

that God differentiates between the elect and the damned. In cosmological terms this ordering of the spiritual world is shown in a spacial organization of the celestial abode in which the good are stationed on the right hand of God, and the wicked on the left.²³ The scene also represents the elevation of the Protestants to a state of bliss:

Telle est du sacré mont la generation
 Qui au sein de Jacob met son affection
 Le jour s'approche auquel auront ces debonnaires
 Fermes prosperitiés, victoires ordinaires;
 Voire dedans leurs lits il faudra qu'on les oye
 S'essayer en chantant de tressaillante joye.
 (VII, 63-68)

In some of d'Aubigné's prophetic passages the rhetorical device of accumulating verbs, or descriptive nouns and adjectives is still prominent (e.g. "ces debonnaires/Fermes prosperitiés, victoires ordinaires"), although the temporal phase here is the future ("auront," "faudra"). The feeling of immediacy which is part of many of the previous descriptive passages is replaced by a tone of assurance and resolution about eventual reward and retribution. There is a marked difference in the tone of the first five books, and that of the final sections of "Vengeance" and "Jugement" resulting from this shift from the observation of the present ills of the Protestants to the affirmation of divine retribution and the last days. In passages relating the future of the Protestant cause the vocabulary of horror is replaced by the language of victory (e.g. "joye," "prosperitiés,"

²³Cf. "L'un reçoive le prix, l'autre le chastiment" (III, 51), and "A prononcer des bons et mauvais la sentence" (VII, 504).

and "victoires").

In an antithetical manner d'Aubigné prophesies what is to become of the antagonists in Les Tragiques and makes a judgment regarding the justness of the retribution:

Ils [Protestants] auront tout d'un temps à la bouche leurs chants
 Et porteront au poing un glaive à deux tranchans
 Pour fouler à leurs pieds, pour détruire et desfaire
 Des ennemis de Dieu la canaille adverse
 Voire pour empoigner et mener prisonniers
 Les Empereurs, les Rois, et princes les plus fiers,
 Les mettre aux ceps, aux fers, punir leur arrogance
 Par les effects sanglans d'une juste vengeance;
 Si que ton pied vainqueur tout entier baignera
 Dans le sang qui du meurtre à tas regorgera,
 Et dedans le canal de la tuerie extreme
 Les chiens se gorgeront du sang de leur chef mesme.
 (VII, 69-80)

As in harangues directed at the Catholics the language is that of horror and violence. In the contrast that is established between "leurs chants" (69) and the fate of the "ennemis de Dieu" (72), a vivid picture is created of the kind of vengeance d'Aubigné envisions (e.g. "le sang," "les effects sanglans," and "les chiens se gorgeront du sang de leur chef mesme"). All the guilty, whether from the court or Church, are taken prisoner. The neatness of the internal parallels and binary structure of the passage marks the definitive nature of ultimate Protestant retribution.

In addition to sections that are a pragmatic confirmation of various stages of the final Judgment, these sections also serve to disseminate Protestant dogma; d'Aubigné acts as a kind of spiritual interlocutor between the dispensations of God and the suffering Protestants who are depicted as being without the

support of an affirmation of faith. The crux of d'Aubigné's clarification of doctrine concerns the resurrection of the body, and begins:

N'apportez point ici, Sadduciens pervers,
 Les corps mangés des loups: qui les tire des vers
 Des loups les tirera. Si on demande comme
 Un homme sortira hors de la chair de l'homme
 Qui l'aura dévoré...

(VII, 341-345)

Energetic and charged language can be traced throughout the long section on the resurrection of the body since this is an interlude in d'Aubigné's diatribe against the Catholics, and he must sustain the correct emotional tone. The poet employs an echo technique with the key word "loup:" in the context of his epic the "wolf" is symbolic of the moral nature of the Catholic as the "lamb" is representative of the Protestant.²⁴ The use of the word colors the tone of the passage in light of what has come before, just as "pervers" is a generalized echo of the nature of the Catholics' involvement in the religious conflict. As prophetic, the purpose of this passage is also meant to reaffirm that the cause of the Catholics will be destroyed, just as the state of the monde cassé is to be inverted:²⁵

L'Eternal jugera et les corps et les âmes,
 Les bénis à la gloire et les autres aux flammes.
 (VII, 327-28)

D'Aubigné, after having prepared the tone and atmosphere for the setting of the Last Judgment, and having elaborated on

²⁴Cf. VII, 5; VII, 946.

²⁵See pp. 5-6 in this study.

the change in the moral and cosmological order that is to take place, leads into and prophetically interprets the last sequence of events which is to take form in the apocalypse. His vision culminates in a profound description of the merveilleux.

2. The Apocalypse: 'Au Giron de Dieu'

D'Aubigné's program for the final books of his epic follows the general order of events in the "Revelation of St. John:" the vision of the Son of Man (VII, 895-902; Rev. 1:16) is followed by the opening of the sixth seal (VII, 903-931; Rev. 6:12-17), the throne judgment (VII, 727-31; Rev. 20:11-12), the opening of the book of life (VII, 797-802; Rev. 20:12), the second death (VII, 935-46; Rev. 21:8), the eternal suffering of the iniquitous (VII, 1014-28), establishment of a new Jerusalem (VII, 1057-62; Rev. 21:1 - 22:5) and the marriage of the Lamb (VII, 1167-1170; Rev. 19:7-9).²⁶ Apparently peculiar to d'Aubigné's vision of the apocalypse is a scene in heaven where various members of the Protestant faith appear before the Judgment seat to testify against the evil doers who have used them for their own vile purposes.²⁷

The visions of the apocalypse do not stand out as the only

²⁶For a discussion of some of the structural problems associated with the order of events in the "Revelation of St. John," see André Feuillet, The Apocalypse, trans. T.E. Crane (Staten Island: Society of St. Paul pub. 1964), pp. 23-36, and Austin Farrer, The Revelation of St. John the Divine (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 19-23.

²⁷Cf. VII, 770-778.

examples of the extremely vivid use of metaphor and imagery, nor are they the only instances of d'Aubigné's communication of the spectacular or merveilleux in Les Tragiques. Sufferings of the Protestant martyrs in "Les Feux" are described in the same kind of terms. The exceptional effectiveness of the apocalyptic episodes in carrying out the author's propagandist intent are linked with the emphasis that has been directed toward the creation of dramatic action. D'Aubigné's apocalypse is intended as a theatrical representation of the last days in which the reader will be overwhelmed by the final sequence of events, and convinced that the poet has resolved the moral conflict of the protagonists. The poet's rhetorical method is to develop conflict by means of metaphor, verbal emphasis, personification, and dialogue.

As d'Aubigné often employs a cumulative technique within individual passages, the action of the apocalypse becomes progressively more dramatic. In one of the first apocalyptic episodes the poet focuses on the terror kindled in the hearts of the iniquitous by the appearance of the Son of Man:²⁸

Il sort un glaive aigu de la bouche divine,
L'enfer glouton, bruyant, devant ses pieds chemine.
D'une laide terreur les damnables transis,
Mesmes des le sortir des tombeaux obscurcis
Virent bien d'autres yeux le ciel suant de peine,
Lors qu'il se preparoit à leur peine prochaine;
Et voici quels yeux virent les condamnés

²⁸For a discussion of the "Son of Man," cf. D.S. Russell, The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), pp. 324-352.

Les beaux jours de leur regne en douleurs terminés.²⁹
(VII, 895-902)

The directness and spectacle of the opening description, and the personification of "l'enfer" intensify the conflict of the passage. The multitude of verbs (e.g. "sort," "bruyant," "transis," "sortir," "virent," "se preparoit," "virent"), and references to the eyes (899, 901) and pain (897, 899, 900) heighten the feeling of spectacle.

D'Aubigné's attempt to create a visual spectacle becomes even more obvious in the vision of the throne of judgment:

Toutes âmes venues
Font leurs sieges en rond en la voute des nues
Et là les Cherubins ont au milieu planté
Un thrône rayonnant de sainte majesté
Il n'en sort que merveille et qu'ardente lumière.³⁰
(VII, 727-31)

The poet seems to direct the reader's attention to that spot in the spectacle ("Et là") where the merveilleux dominates in terms of radiance and majesty. The interaction between heaven and earth of the preceding books is here replaced by the mutual interaction between heavenly Cherubs and all men who are brought before the throne. D'Aubigné's style has its characteristic prophetic stamp. He elaborates upon the imagery suggested by

²⁹Cf. Rev. 1:16: "And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in its strength."

³⁰Cf. Rev. 20:11-12: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works./ And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hades delivered up the dead that were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works."

the Bible, and considers himself capable of combining all the elements into a "theatrical canvas."³¹ The only thing that is missing to make his vision even more spectacular in visual splendour and emotional power is dialogue. As the tone of immediacy and impending triumph become central to the description, dialogue is indeed more frequent:

Mais plus, comme les fils du ciel ont au visage
 La forme de leur chef, de Christ la vive image,
 Les autres de leur pere ont le teint et les traits,
 Du prince Belzebub veritables portraits.
 A la premiere mort ils furent effroyables,
 La seconderedouble, où les abominables
 Crient aux monts cornus: "O monts, que faites-vous?
 Esbranlez vos rochers et vous crevez sur nous;
 Cachez nous, et cachez l'opprobre et l'infamie
 Qui, comme chiens, nous met hors la cité de vie;
 Cachez nous pour ne voir la haute majesté
 De l'Aigneau triomphant sur le throsne monté."
 (VII, 935-946)³²

The recurrent images of "les fils du Ciel," "Christ," "Du Prince Belzebub," "les abominables," and "L'Aigneau" culminate in the triumph of the Lamb. The poet's resolution of the moral dilemma is also found in the invocation to the heavenly Jerusalem where a state of natural order is established in honor, peace, and happiness:

Et la nouvelle terre, et la neufve cité,
 Jerusalem la sainte, annoncent ta bonté!
 Tout est plein de ton nom. Sion la bien-heureuse
 N'a pierre dans ses murs qui ne soit precieuse,

³¹The term is suggested by I. Buffum, Agrippa d'Aubigné's 'Les Tragiques': A Study of the Baroque Style in Poetry (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951), p. 58.

³²Cf. Rev. 21:8: "But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and the fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Ni citoyen que Sainct, et n'aura pour jamais
 Que victoire, qu'honneur, que plaisir, et que paix.
 (VII, 1057-1062)

Likewise, hyperbolic language appears in the description of the Lamb:

Nul secret ne leur peut estre lors secret, pource
 Qu'ils puisoyent la lumiere à sa premiere source:
 Ils avoyent pour miroir l'oeil qui fait voir tout oeil,
 Ils avoyent pour flambeau le soleil du soleil.
 (VII, 1167-1170)³³

While heralding the triumph of the Lamb and Jerusalem d'Aubigné informs the reader about what will happen to Protestants under this new moral order. They will, like the heavens themselves, return to a state of natural order and perfection, and will be ruled by God's divine love:

Tous nos parfaicts amours reduits en un amour
 Comme nos plus beaux jours reduits en un beau jour.
 On s'enquiert si le frere y connoistra le frere,
 La mere son enfant et la fille son pere,
 La femme le mari; l'oubliance en effect
 Ne diminuera point un estat si parfait.
 (VII, 1105-1110)³⁴

On the purely personal and privileged level, the poet is now silent, and is led on his own ascent to heaven:

Mes sens n'ont plus de sens, l'esprit de moy s'envole,
 Le coeur ravi se taist, ma bouche est sans parole:
 Tout meurt, l'ame s'enfuit, et reprenant son lieu
 Exstatique se pasme au giron de son Dieu.
 (VII, 1215-18)

It is fitting that the poet's "Bouche est sans parole" since

³³"Ils" (1168ff.) refers to the companions with Christ in the tribulation.

³⁴Protestants will also be ruled by perfect memory (VII, 1145-50) and perfect knowledge (VII, 1141-42).

all human activity ceases with the last stage of the apocalypse, and since all that the poet has vowed to accomplish in his epic has been fulfilled. As divine epic or tragedy the poet has brought about the success of the Protestant cause, and has thus restored France to her proper place of honor. France, once portrayed as desolate in "Miseres "³⁵

O France desolee! ô terre sanguinaire,
Non pas terre, mais cendre! o mere, si c'est mere
Que trahir ses enfans aux douceurs de son sein
Et quand on les meurtrit les serrer de sa main,
(I, 89-92)

is revived before the apocalyptic sequence by a kind of dramatic peripeteia of the Protestants' situation.³⁶ In moral terms, the overweening pride or hubris of the Catholics, most fully revealed in the gilded spectacle of "La Chambre Doree," has been destroyed.³⁷ Thus, in the poet's final union with God, which is drawn in sensual imagery (e.g. "Exstistique se pasme au giron de son Dieu," VII, 1218), the prophetic cycle is complete and an absolute state of moral normality restored to the universe.

³⁵ France is described, paradoxically, at once as a victim, and as responsible for her own situation, cf. I, 333-62; I, 423-24; I, 179-90; I, 683-88.

³⁶ Aristotle, De Arte Poetica (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1965), see 1452:22 for a definition of peripeteia.

³⁷ D'Aubigné originally intended to call this book of his epic "Ubris," cf. Regosin, op. cit., p. 44.

C. D'Aubigné's Choice of Genre and his Use of the Bible

The development of d'Aubigné's rhetorical stance was assisted by his choice of genre, and the use of biblical parallels and analogies. Although d'Aubigné died in 1630, before criticism of the epic, and especially the biblical epic, reached an apogee, he seems to have perceived certain technical advantages of the genre which are highlighted by this later criticism. Using this seventeenth-century criticism as a touchstone the advantages of the genre that d'Aubigné must have envisioned can be seen.

In the middle of the seventeenth century Chapelain affirmed the predominant attitude of French critics toward the requirements of the epic as a literary genre by emphasizing its special moral task or function. To Chapelain, Marolles, and numerous other French critics, an epic poem was "principalement celle qui chante les heros...cherche à elever les coeurs aux actions extraordinaires."³⁸ In contrast to tragedy, the epic was not to be concerned "with the purging of evil passions but with the inspiration of good."³⁹ According to these critics such an incitement to goodness was to be either predominantly political or moral; Marolles voiced the theory that the effect should be political, whereas Chapelain thought that the epic should serve

³⁸Quoted in R.A. Sayce, The French Biblical Epic in the Seventeenth Century (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1953), p. 8. Cf. also pp. 7-8 on the possible high esteem in which the epic was held.

³⁹Ibid., p. 8.

"sur tout a faire concevoir une haute idée de l'amour de son pais et des respects qui sont dubs aux Loix divines et humains."⁴⁰

In either case, both views tended to weaken the dicta of Horace and Aristotle that the epic should necessarily incite pleasure in the reader's mind by its magnification of the concept of utility. For d'Aubigné, years before criticism of the genre reached its dogmatic stage, the epic genre was chosen because it allowed him to elaborate upon both the moral and political elements in his work. The narrative possibilities of the genre were an ideal vehicle for relating the intrigues of Henry III, Catherine de Medici and the French court. The genre allowed d'Aubigné to portray and satirize aspects of the political situation on a large scale. Secondly, the epic was ideally suited to the poet's conception of himself as a kind of harbinger and prophetic voice of the Protestant victory; the genre, by definition, would permit digressions on such topics as the resurrection of the soul within the frame of an 'epic' spiritual journey to God Himself.⁴¹

In addition to the utilitarian advantages of the epic, d'Aubigné seized upon the use of the merveilleux for establishing

⁴⁰Quoted by Sayce, op. cit., 7-9.

⁴¹Curtius, op. cit., pp. 119-20. Alan of Lille's Anti-claudianus de Antirufino (c. 1182 or 1183) is discussed as the first of the philosophical-theological epics, a genre that is distinguished from the scientific or didactic poem by its use of epic action.

the form of several books in Les Tragiques, especially that of "Princes" and "Les Feux." Although seventeenth-century critics of the genre did not emphasize the element of the merveilleux to the extent that Tasso implied, they "all believed the merveilleux to be an integral part of the epic which helped to give it its special form."⁴² D'Aubigné's use of the merveilleux have been discussed in the apocalyptic passages, and are found in the numerous descriptions of the martyred Protestants and lascivious court members in the other books. In one of the most gruesome scenes of "Misères" the author relates how a peasant begged him to kill him as quickly as possible, and how he found the man's wife beaten to death and her child nearly dead from starvation. The gruesomeness of the description is clearly evident:

...l'horrible anatomie
De la mere assee: elle avoit de dehors
Sur ses reins dissipez trainé, roulé son corps,
Jambes et bras rompus, une amour maternelle
L'esmouvant pour autrui beaucoup plus que pour elle.
A tant ell'approcha sa teste du berceau,
La releva dessus; il ne sortoit plus d'eau
De ses yeux conumez; de ses playes mortelles
Le sang mouilloit l'enfant.

(I, 414-422)⁴³

⁴²Sayce, op. cit., p. 12. In seventeenth-century criticism Boileau objected to the merveilleux chrétien since he thought that Christianity was weakened by "contact with the fiction which is essential to the epic," and his belief that Christian miracles were either "dull or ridiculous." Critics, like Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin objected to such an opinion on the grounds that as the ancients celebrated their own gods, Christians should examine their own religion for an element of the marvelous. Cf. also I Buffum; op. cit., p. 55 for Boileau's probable opinion of Les Tragiques.

⁴³Also quoted by I. Buffum, Agrippa d'Aubigné's 'Les Tragiques', p. 35.

Such suffering is dramatically opposed to life of members of the court of Henry III:

Là un prestre apostat, prevoyant et rusé,
Veut, en ployant à tous, de tous estre excusé;
L'autre, pensionnaire et valet d'une femme,
Employe son esprit à engager son ame;
L'autre fait le royal et, flattant les deux parts,
Veut trahir les Bourbons et tromper les Guisards;
Un charlatan de cour y vend son beau langage
Un bourreau froid, sans ire, y conseille un carnage,
Un boiteux étranger y bastit son tresor...
(II, 535-543)⁴⁴

Le tiers par elle fut nourri en faineant,
Bien fin mais non prudent, et voulut, l'enseignant
Pour servir à son jeu, luy ordonner pour maistre
Un sodomite athee, un maquereau, un traistre.
(II, 865-868)⁴⁵

Another seventeenth-century criterion for the epic, the introduction of specifically Christian material, is significant in the context of d'Aubigné's Les Tragiques. The logical result of the arguments for Christian material is that the source of this material should be the Bible, since it is there that the heroic and miraculous elements of the Christian religion are to be found: R.A. Sayce further points out, "the majority of critics took this view and used only biblical examples to support their arguments."⁴⁶ In addition to the use of a central biblical analogy, passages to support a particular point of

⁴⁴See Gallimard ed., p. 940, notes 6-7.

⁴⁵See Gallimard ed., p. 947, n.4.

⁴⁶Sayce, op. cit., p. 17. J. Trenel devotes an entire book to L'Element biblique dans l'oeuvre poétique d'Agrippa d'Aubigné (Paris: L. Cerf, 1904), and cf. also M.P. Hagiwara, French Epic Poetry in the Seventeenth Century (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1972), pp. 204-206.

doctrine or conception of Nature, and the influences of biblical stylistics, which have been discussed, d'Aubigné used the Bible for making other character analogies. The Roman Catholic Church is called Babylon:

"Sion ne reçoit d'eux que refus et rudesses,
Mais Babel les rançonne et pille leurs richesses:
Tels sont les monts cornus qui, avaricieux,
Monstrent l'or aux enfers et les neiges aux cieux."
(I, 1301-04)

The Pope becomes the beast who fights with the Lamb, and is associated with Apollyon, the king of the abyss:

Appollyon, tu as en ton impure table
Prononcé, blasphémant, que Christ est une fable;
(VII, 839-40)

Drawing his imagery at random, but mainly from the Old Testament, d'Aubigné generally correlates his protagonists with biblical counterparts.⁴⁷ The Evangelical Church, like the tribes of Israel, becomes a pregnant woman who is forced into the desert to escape her oppressors:

Ou soit lors que de luy elle fuyoit enceinte
Aux lieux inhabités, aux effroyans deserts,
Chassee, et non vaincue, en despit des enfers;

⁴⁷Certain passages are simply reminiscent of biblical events. The first of the strictly apocalyptic passages, in Chambre Dorée, in which God descends to earth amidst terrestrial confusion in response to the prayers of the persecuted Huguenots, recalls to mind the devastation brought about by the seventh bowl of the wrath of God in Revelations (Rev. 16:17-21):

Perça, passa son chef; à l'esclair de ses yeux
Les cieux se sont fendus; tremblans, suans de crainte,
Les hauts monts ont croulé: cette Majesté sainte
Paroissant fit trembler les simples elements,
Et du monde esbranla les stables fondements.
(III, 140-144)

La mer la circuit, et son espoux luy donne
 La lune sous les pieds, le soleil pour couronne.
 (VI, 150-154)

The Bible was the ever-present source in d'Aubigné's mind for making an efficacious correlation between historical-religious materials.

To sum up, d'Aubigné had a firm grasp of the nature and possibilities of the epic genre which he used to establish his stance as a poet, and fulfill his propagandist intent. The poet's use of apocalyptic references in his epic, and the apocalyptic power of "Jugement" are an integral part of d'Aubigné's prophetic position and lead to the logical culmination of the themes of his epic. But, in spite of a propagandist intent, clearly revealed through the rhetorical techniques of the echo, cumulative piling, verbs of violence, and elements of spectacle, d'Aubigné's epic perhaps approaches closer to the grandeur of Paradise Lost and the Divina Commedia than any other epic in French literature.⁴⁸ Rosemund Tuve's statement concerning Elizabethan authors is justified with reference to d'Aubigné's work, and for the discussion in the following chapter of Donne's "Anniversaries:" "But, even so (in spite of their didactic intentions), poet differed from propagandist less in aim than in the depth and scope of his vision, and his methods differed less in kind than in subtlety and power."⁴⁹

⁴⁸For the esteem in which d'Aubigné's epic has been held, cf. Hagiwara, op. cit., pp. 219-223.

⁴⁹Rosemund Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1947), p. 116. See also I. Buffum, Agrippa d'Aubigné's 'Les Tragiques', p. 11.

CHAPTER II

JOHN DONNE'S "ANNIVERSARIES"

A. John Donne: Introduction to the 'Anniversaries'

In length alone, the "Anniversaries" are greatest among Donne's poems and the most complex of the metaphysical poems. They have been the subject of much literary criticism concerning the nature of the author's artistic intent or purpose, the significance of "Shee," and their formal or structural organization. Indeed, it is probably the difficulty over motive that has proved the most serious obstacle to a proper understanding of the poems. Unless this question is resolved, "Shee" or Elizabeth Drury can possibly be seen as the object of Donne's servile flattery. But the critic Frank Manley argues that Donne "was never a servile dependent flattering the memory of his patron's daughter to secure a roof over his head, as is often believed."¹ Quite apart from this question of motive there is also a difficulty in finding a consistent structure in the poems; they have been seen as diffuse and carelessly linked works by several critics.

Manley contends that everyone agrees that the "Anniversaries" have something to do with religion, and that they are in some way a bridge between Donne's early and late verse, his love poetry, and the "Divine Poems."² They are also occasional poems

¹John Donne: The 'Anniversaries,' ed. Frank Manley (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1963), p. 5.

²Ibid., pp. 9-10.

which were written at the request of the Drury family and are in the elegiac conventions of the day.³ In this sense, they were meant to praise the dead Elizabeth Drury as openly and copiously as possible, and thus help to assuage the grief of her family. Of course, Donne's use of the elegiac genre would not necessarily mean that Donne felt any deep, personal grief for Elizabeth Drury, or that he could not have incorporated a philosophical or symbolic significance into the "Shee" of the poems.⁴ E. Hardy has even stated that "Elizabeth Drury's death and the barrenness of the world are mere pegs upon which to hang all the manner of things which interest Donne- his scholastic knowledge, his struggling philosophy, his nascent religion and admonitions to his own soul, as well as his keen observation of all that was new and startling in current science."⁵ In his brief consideration of the "Anniversaries" R. E. Hughes has confidently argued yet inadequately supported the belief that the poems were only provoked by the death of

³See R.C. Bald, Donne and the Drurys (Cambridge The University Press, 1959), pp. 67-70.

⁴For a discussion of various possibilities and manifestations of "Shee" in the "Anniversaries," as 'Lady Virtue,' 'Lady Wisdom,' 'Lady Justice' or 'Astrea' in symbolic terms, and in historical terms as the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen Elizabeth, and finally the young and innocent Elizabeth Drury, the last Ideal Woman in the world, see P.J. Mahony, "A Study in Donne's 'Anniversaries'," (unpub. diss., N.Y.U., 1963), pp. 19-29. Also Tuve, op. cit., pp. 41-44; 149-50.

⁵E. Hardy, Donne, A Spirit in Conflict (London: Constable & Co. Ltd., 1942), p. 133.

Elizabeth Drury.⁶

Whatever the sincerity of his grief, it is evident that Donne was carrying out a moral mission in the "Anniversaries." In "The first Anniversary" he refers to the "opinion" which has caused him to write:

He spake
To Moses to deliver unto all,
That song, because hee knew they would let fall
The Law, the Prophets, and the History,
But keepe the song still in their memory:
Such an opinion (in due measure) made
Me this great Office boldly to invade.
(462-468)

The reference to Moses suggests that Donne has anatomized the world in "The first Anniversary" in order to expose its weaknesses.⁷ He relates the horrors and decrepitude of the old world, and thereby expresses the true value of things:

This new world may be safer, being told
The dangers and diseases of the old:
For with due temper men doe then forgoe,
Or covet things, when they their true worth know.
(87-90)

Donne hopes that his "anatomy" will contend against the world and protect mankind from "outward stormes."⁸

Secondly, the introduction of Moses is significant in relation to the Jewish tradition of the apocalyptic. After the

⁶R.E. Hughes, The Progress of the Soul: The Interior Career of John Donne (New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1968), pp. 196-202.

⁷Manley, op. cit., see the "Commentary," pp. 167-68.

⁸Mahony, op. cit., p. 50.

3rd century B.C. these apocalypses were pseudonymous, and attributed their authorship to various Old Testament prophets among whom Moses was a prophet without equal. Indeed, an entire line of Jewish apocalypses bore the name of Moses, or Ezra, "the second Moses." One of these traditional writings is "The Assumption of Moses."⁹ Donne intends to partake of the prophetic characteristics of Moses; he can derive part of his authority from his association with such a biblical figure.

Thirdly, reference to Moses should be viewed in light of the nature of "The second Anniversary." As d'Aubigné combined the use of the prophetic and apocalyptic in "Jugement," Donne associates himself with a biblical prophet in order to prepare the reader for an apocalyptic-prophetic vista in the second half of his work. What has been described in "The first Anniversary," in limited apocalyptic terms, will be translated into a new idiom in "The second Anniversary."¹⁰ Hence, in the second half of the "Anniversaries" Donne is assigned a divine commission:

Since (God's) will is, that to posteritie,
Thou should'st for life, and death, a patterne bee,
And that the world should notice have of this,
The purpose, and th'Authoritie is his;
Thou art the Proclamation; and I am
The Trumpet, at whose voyce the people came.
(523-28)

Donne's attitude toward this commission, and his attitude toward

⁹See Dictionnaire Encyclopédique de la Bible, ed. Alexandre Westphal (Valence-sur-Rhône: Imprimeries réunies, 1956), vol. 1, pp. 68-69. For information regarding the second line of the Jewish apocalyptic tradition, which bore the name of Moses or Ezra, see Russell, op. cit., pp. 113-14.

¹⁰Cf. R.E. Hughes, op. cit., pp. 200-201 for the use of "idiom" in a different sense.

himself as poet, are described as conventional by Rosemund Tuve.¹¹ But it is just this reference to divine commission, and the movement in the "Anniversaries" from a worldly focus to a heavenly focus that makes one possible method of interpretation of the moral element in Donne's work an examination of the author's apocalyptic consciousness. The major features of this consciousness are reflected in the nature of Donne's source of inspiration and his treatment of evil.

B. The Source of Inspiration

One of the recurrent symbols used throughout the Bible is that of the trumpet. In a non-apocalyptic context, the trumpet is designated by God in the Old Testament as the instrument to be used in the calling of assemblies and the announcing of alarms. The sound of trumpets on these occasions, and when blown over sacrifices is intended to be a symbolic representation to God of the faith of the tribes of Israel.¹² In the Bible the trumpet appears frequently as a harbinger of doom. The most famous Old Testament instance of this occurrence is the tale of the destruction of Jericho. After the signal is

¹¹Tuve, op. cit., pp. 178-179. Tuve does not read this as irony: "Like most Elizabethan comment, it asks us to read poems as though language were not a tool for announcing facts about a particular thou or I in their character of particular phenomena, but a medium for intimating and ordering significances which particulars shadow forth (p. 179)."

¹²See Num. 10.

given by the trumpets, the Israelites are commanded to shout in unison, and thus hasten the destruction of the city.¹³

The seven trumpet judgments in the "Revelation of St. John" are also representative of this use of the instrument.¹⁴ Donne himself calls the trumpets forth in his "Holy Sonnet VII:"

At the round earths imagin'd corners, blow
Your trumpets, Angels, and arise, arise
From death, you numberlesse infinities
Of soules, and to your scattred bodies goe.
(1-4)

Closely allied with an actual apocalyptic setting, yet as part of prophecy, is the use of the trumpet as a sign of the prophet called to a state of inspiration. Moses is summoned by a trumpet (Exod. 19:12:19). The clear and brilliant sound of the trumpet (spargens sonum) is understood in the Bible as a sign that "he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation, and comfort" (I Cor. 14:3). Paul, in his discourse on prophecy as a superior gift, stated that the prophet's voice must not be uncertain or hesitant:

And even things without life,
giving sound, whether flute or
harp, except they give a distinction
in the sounds, how shall it
be known what is piped or harped?
For if the trumpet give an uncertain
sound, who shall prepare
himself to the battle?
(I Cor. 14:7-8)

¹³Josh. 6:4-6; cf. the decisive victory of the tribes of Israel over the Midians in Jud. 7:16.

¹⁴Rev. 8:7-19.

Donne's belief that other men were incapable of perceiving the real disorder of the world, and could not assume the task of exhorting and consoling is clearly evident in the reference to Moses at the conclusion of "The first Anniversary:"

He spake
To Moses to deliver unto all
That song, because hee knew they would let fall
The Law, the Prophets, and the History.¹⁵
(463-465)

Donne considers himself capable of assuming such a task. The "great Office" taken up by Donne finds its source of inspiration in the symbolism of the trumpet as a figure of a personal and quasi-prophetic mission. The responsibilities that Donne envisions as part of his divine commission are interestingly close to those described for Ezekiel, the New Testament prophet and "watchman:"

Again the word of the Lord
came unto me, saying,
Son of man, speak to the children
of thy people, and say unto them,
When I bring the sword upon a land,
if the people of the land take a man
of their borders, and set him for
their watchman;
If, when he seeth the sword come
upon the land, he blow the trumpet,
and warn the people,
Then whosoever heareth the
sound of the trumpet, and taketh
not warning, if the sword come, and
take him away, his blood shall be
upon his own head.
(Ezek. 33:1-4)

¹⁵Cf. p. 40 in this study.

Like d'Aubigné, Donne combines the prophetic with the apocalyptic function in the sense that he is the watchman who treats the disorder of the world, and is ultimately responsible for calling all men to a general resurrection. The use of the past tense in the last lines of the "Anniversaries" is curious, but expresses the fulfillment of Donne's mission in a general resurrection:

Thou art the Proclamation; and I am
The Trumpet, at whose voyce the people came.¹⁶
(527-8)

Donne regards his moral task as a necessary duty. Although the general state of the world is viewed as not worth "our travaile, griefe, or perishing" ("The first Anniversary," 432), the qualities of "Shee," who possessed "those rich joyes" that are no longer found in the world, must be proclaimed. Thus, Donne's mission is also drawn partly from the qualities that are inherent in "Shee," and from the significance of her position as an intermediary between himself and God:

So these high songs that to thee suited bin
Serve but to sound thy Makers praise, in thine.
(*"To the Praise of the Dead,"* 35-36)

On this level of inspiration, "Shee" becomes a type of poetic Muse who is capable of infusing Donne's spirit with a sense of direction:

Yet how can I consent the world is dead
While this Muse lives? which in his spirits stead

¹⁶See Hardy, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

Seemes to informe a World; and bids it bee,
 In spite of losse or fraile mortalite?
 ("To the Praise of the Dead," 7-10)

Yet in this deluge, grosse and generall,
 Thou seest me strive for life; my life shall bee,
 To be hereafter prais'd, or praying thee;
 Immortall Maid, who though thou would'st refuse
 The name of Mother, be unto my Muse
 A Father, since her chast Ambition is,
 Yearely to bring forth such a child as this.
 ("The second Anniversary," 30-36)

Donne also considers the death of "Shee" as adventitious. The significance of the "Anniversaries" is enhanced by not considering the death of Elizabeth Drury simply as a subject of a funeral elegy, but as an opportune moment to reveal the secrets of the world's condition. The poet's attitude toward the "Shee" of the poems thus shares a belief in a sense of opportune revelation as found in the Jewish apocalyptic tradition. These writings often claim to be disclosures or revelations of divine secrets concerning the state of the world which are made at the right time for the instruction and encouragement of the people.¹⁷

In conclusion, Donne imagines a mutual interaction between "Shee," who acts as an intermediary between himself and God's divine inspiration, and his own poetic ability as it is to be fashioned after his love for "Shee:"¹⁸

¹⁷Russell, op. cit., p. 107ff.

¹⁸Cf. Mahony's attitude toward the nature of Donne's moral task: "Donne's moral mission is formidable: to return humanity to the Ideal Woman and goodness," Mahony, op. cit., p. 49.

And thou the subject of this welborne thought,
 Thrice noble maid, couldst not have found nor sought
 A fitter time to yeeld to thy sad Fate,
 Then whiles this spirit lives, that can relate
 Thy worth so well to our last Nephews eyne,
 That they shall wonder both at his and thine:
 Admired match! where strives in mutuall grace
 The cunning pencil, and the comely face.
 ("To the Praise of the Dead," 11-18)

In his interpretation of the devotional character of the "Anniversaries," P.G. Stanwood has also described the inspirational force of her virtuous soul upon Donne: "Donne, who speaks for his own and the world's soul, sees the lesson to be learned: she who has shown us the way must inspire us to work even harder, for the knowledge that grace increases in Heaven should move us toward realizing the grace here within us all the more."¹⁹ Donne is bound to his moral task:

Two soules move here, and mine (a third) must move
 Paces of admiration, and of love.
 (1-2)

C. The Noblest Sense

Donne's treatment of evil is one of the main keys to gaining an understanding of the "Anniversaries." The two poems constitute an investigation of evil in terms of its causes, its various manifestations, and the possible solutions or remedies to its existence.²⁰ Such a concern with the nature of evil, which is one of the most disturbing problems of philosophy, is also an integral element found in apocalyptic literature, and

¹⁹P.G. Stanwood, "'Essential Joy' in Donne's 'Anniversaries,'" Texas Studies in Literature and Language 13 (1971), 233.

²⁰Mahony, op. cit., p. 57.

is one of the major features that distinguish Donne's "Anniversaries" as apocalyptic.

Donne's concern with the topic of evil can be seen in the emphasis that he places on the sense of sight, and on several levels of perception. As d'Aubigné's rhetorical stance involves an aspect of the poet as observer, in which the poet becomes capable of realizing the existence and character of injustice, so Donne considers the visual sense of primary importance in uncovering the operation of evil in the world. Both vision and perceptions need "continual refocusing in order for man always to see himself as clearly as he can."²¹

In contrast to evil, "Shee" is characterized by Donne as the hallmark of virtue. Only by striving to imitate the goodness and gain the perspective of "Shee" will a man be able ultimately to observe the nature of Ideal Goodness as exemplified in "Shee:"

(Because since now no other way there is,
But goodnesse, to see her, whom all would see,
All must endeavor to be as good as shee,
("The first Anniversary," 16-18)

Unencumbered sight is necessary for establishing a basic level of perception which includes the knowledge that the soul exists.²² Without establishing its existence, there can be no

²¹Joan Webber, Contrary Music, (Madison: The Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1963), p. 76.

²²See Arnold Stein, John Donne's Lyrics: The Eloquence of Action (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1962), pp. 55ff.

"progresse." Donne emphasizes the active part that vision plays in the progress of the soul, and the uselessness of vision if it is not accompanied by reflection and searching:

(For who is sure he hath a Soule; unlesse
It see, and judge, and follow worthinesse,
And by Deedes praise it? hee who doth not this,
May lodge an In-mate soul, but 'tis not his.)
("The first Anniversary," 3-6)²³

Donne has partially illustrated and hinted at the sententious quality of this statement by separating it off by means of parentheses. He intends the reader to grasp the importance of the first half of the statement as it is qualified by the stress upon "Deedes" rather than simply words. Throughout "The second Anniversary" Donne will give an emphasis to the deeds or active progress of the individual soul which will counteract "motion in corruption"(22). His mood, interrogatory and descriptive in "The first Anniversary," will now become imperative. Donne will consistently use commands to direct himself and mankind toward the steps of progress: "Look upward,"(65), "remember then"(122), "But up unto the watch-towre get,"(294), "Returne not, my Soule"(321), "Up, up my drowsie Soule"(339), "But pause, my soule; And study, ere thou fall"(383), and "Then, Soule, to thy first pitch worke up againe"(435). The most striking use of the imperative mood is the passage in "The second Anniversary" in which death is meant to be personified by all mankind

²³Cf. Mahony, op. cit., p. 65 where he states that "see" and "judge" stand for the activities of memory and understanding respectively, and that "follow" and "praise" indicate the activities of the will.

as "but a Groome,/which brings a Taper to the outward roome"
(85-6):

Thinke thee laid on thy death-bed, loose and slacke;
And thinke that, but unbinding of a packe,
To take one precious thing, thy soule from thence.
Thinke thy selfe parch'd with fevers violence,
Anger thine ague more, by calling it
Thy physicke; chide the slacknesse of the fit.
Thinke that thou hear'st thy knell, and think no more,
But that, as Bels cal'd thee to Church before,
So this, to the Triumphant Church, calls thee.
(93-101)

In this passage the author has employed the cumulative technique of piling up imperatives; such a technique has the effect of hammering home the point and echoing the meditative atmosphere. This device is effective in amplifying the uncertainty of mankind's predicament, and prepares the way for the progress-directed imperatives which have been mentioned. That Donne capitalized on the advantages of this technique is also observed in its place in his prose style.²⁴ The rhetorical device of cumulation and amplification here serves in passages that act as "both an emotional declaration of man's misery," and as "an intellectual statement of the futility of intellect in an unthinking, physical world."²⁵

Although motion is central to "The second Anniversary,"

²⁴Webber, op. cit., p. 191; see pp. 189-191.

²⁵Use of cumulative piling is also at work in Donne's "Holy Sonnet VII:"

'All whom the flood did, and fire shall o'er throw,
All whom warre, dearth, age, agues, tyrannies,
Despaire, law, chance, hath slaine.'
(5-7)

in "The Harbinger to the Progresse" Donne qualifies the progress that the soul is able to attain because of man's mortality:

No soul (whilst with the luggage of this clay
It clogged is) can follow the halfe way;
Or see [her] flight, which doth our thoughts outgoe
So fast, that now the lightning moves but slow.
(9-12)

The worldly focus will be adjusted in "The first Anniversary" by making a detailed observation of the world, yet Donne again qualifies the potential of sight by discussing the shortness of life. Mankind, which once enjoyed longevity, has now only a very limited life span. By drawing an analogy from astronomy, Donne marks man's shortness of sight as a natural result of diminishing lifetimes and statures:

When, if a slow pac'd starre had stolne away
From the observers marking, he might stay
Two or three hundred years to see't againe,
And then make up his observation plaine;
When, as the age was long, the sise was great;
Mans growth confess'd, and recompenc'd the meat;
So spacious and large, that every Soule
Did a faire Kingdome, and large Realme controule:
And when the very stature, thus erect,
Did that soule a good way towards heaven direct.
Where is this mankinde now?
(117-27)

This element of hopelessness is compounded by the knowledge that the very nature of the world, which vision is capable of perceiving, may in itself be illusory:

Sight is the noblest sense of any one,
Yet sight hath only colour to feed on,
And colour is decai'd: summers robe growes
Duskie, and like an oft dyed garment showes.
(353-356)

Here Donne has in mind Aristotle's definition of color,

which asserted that color was the entire surface of the body, and necessarily included form. In seventeenth-century belief this form, and hence color, were considered to be in a stage of decay.²⁶ The import of this belief is far-reaching. In Donne's imagination color, "beauties other second Element" ("The first Anniversary," 339), embraces "all beauty discernible by sense; color is the property of things chosen to represent this beauty because it is the primary stimulus" of the sense of vision.²⁷ Hence, the decay of beauty in terms of color leads to the logical distrust of the visual sense. But, even though the colors in Nature are decayed, Donne still recalls the memory of "Shee,"

in whom all white, and red, and blew
(Beauties ingredients) voluntary grew,
As in an unvext Paradise; from whom
Did all things verdure, and their lustre come,
Whose composition was miraculous,
Being all colour, all Diaphanous,
(For Ayre, and Fire but thick grosse bodies were,
And liveliest stones but drowsie, and pale to her).
(361-368)²⁸

The potential of sight which is restricted by man's mortality, the limitation of an earthly focus, the decayed state of the world and by the death of "Shee," finds its dimmest and most

²⁶For the sources of this belief, see Manley's "Commentary," op. cit., pp. 158-160.

²⁷Charles M. Coffin, John Donne and the New Philosophy (New York: The Humanities Press, 1958), p. 270; cf. Mahony, op. cit., p. 63.

²⁸The colors of "Shee" also represent those of the theological beauties, cf. Manley's Commentary," p. 160.

brilliant light in this memory.

In addition to the two basic levels of perception derived from the use of the visual sense Donne tells us that, just as men observe the mutations of a material world, so "Shee" oversees mankind's progress, and has the ability to assess its universal problem:

She whom wise nature had invented then
When she observ'd that every sort of men
Did in their voyage in this worlds Sea stray,
And needed a new compasse for their way.
(223-226)

The author employs a nautical reference that suggests the Christian symbolism of the turbulent sea as representative of the sinful condition of the world, and the true "compasse" as a sense of spiritual direction that can guide the "ship" of mankind.²⁹ Thus, Donne foreshadows the importance that "Shee" will take as a "new compasse" in establishing the heavenly focus of "The second Anniversary." He prepares the reader for a more detailed explanation of her role in the working out of the individual soul's progress.

Donne conceives of Elizabeth Drury's soul "as endowed with 'Magnetique force'" that is able "to draw, and fasten sundred parts in one."³⁰ Donne was very familiar with William Gilbert of Colchester's book De Magnete (1600), from which he

²⁹See H.C. Combs and Sullen, A Concordance to the English Poems of John Donne (Chicago: Packard and Co., 1940), p. 57, the compass entry. This is Donne's only use of the image in such a sense that I have found.

³⁰Coffin, op. cit., p. 86.

undoubtedly took the idea that "a magnetick vigour exists then in the earth just as in the terrella," and suited it to fit his conception of Elizabeth Drury's soul:

The language of the poet describing the virtue which Elizabeth Drury's death has taken from the world, is not unlike that of the scientist when considering "grand magnetick nature of the earth" as a power 'innate and diffused through all her inward parts.'³¹

The poet's "aspiring thoughts"(31) concerning the soul of "Shee" draw from her potential to incite change, and make it possible for the world soul to enjoy a "noble progresse"(28). In spite of the pessimistic character of "The first Anniversary" Donne describes the soul of "Shee" as constantly hopeful and aspiring to goodness:

And yet moves still, and still aspires to see
The worlds last day, thy glories full degree.
("The Harbinger to the Progresse," 5-6)

The poet envies such a state of aspiration:

I envie thee (Riche soule) I envy thee
Although I cannot yet thy glory see.
("The Harbinger to the Progresse," 17-18)

D. Donne's Treatment of Evil

The manner in which Donne conceives the world soul, and his concern with the visual sense and levels of perception are integral features of his actual treatment of evil.³² Throughout

³¹Coffin, op. cit., p. 86. See pp. 84-87 for a fuller discussion of Gilbert's work.

³²I am indebted in my discussion of Donne's conception of the levels of evil to Mahony, op. cit., pp. 57-75.

"The first Anniversary" Donne establishes the apocalyptic background by developing a tripartite conception of the origins of evil that has an emotional effectiveness as powerful as the descriptions of corruption which precede most visions of the apocalypse.³³ The various descriptions of the "Sicke World"(55), with reference to the shortness of life and stature(112-171), the decay and deformity of Nature(199-304), and the utter state of disorder in the world(304-434), are in the same morbid cast as the visions of the seal-plagues, trumpet-plagues, and bowl-plagues in "The Revelation of St. John."³⁴

Donne prepares a tableau of primal corruption, sinfulness, and spiritual desolation. Occasionally he employs harangues that are expected to awaken the reader to his spiritually weakened condition; such a device is strictly didactic.³⁵

Thou might'st have better spar'd the Sunne, or Man.
That wound was deep, but 'tis more misery,
That thou hast lost thy sense and memory.
'Twas heavy then to heare thy voyce of mone,
But this is worse, that thou are speechless growne.
Thou hast forgot thy name, thou hadst; thou wast
Nothing but shee, and her thou hast o'rpast.
(26-32)

The major cause of evil, which Donne views as primal corruption, has started a chain reaction:

Then, as mankinde, so is the worlds whole frame

³³For a reference to Donne's tripartite 'spiritual effort,' see Hughes, op. cit., p. 201.

³⁴Rev. 6; Rev. 8-9; Rev. 16.

³⁵Cf. also ll. 243-46, and cf. Chapter I, p. 17.

Quite out of joynt, almost created lame:
 For, before God had made all the rest,
 Corruption entred, and deprav'd the best:
 It seisd the Angels, and then first of all
 The world did in her cradle take a fall
 And turn'd her braines, and tooke a general maime
 Wronging each joynt of th'universall frame.
 The noblest part, man, felt it first; and then
 Both beasts and plants, curst in the curse of man.
 So did the world from the first hour decay.
 (191-201)

Just as the destruction and judgment of the world is carried out with terrible swiftness in the "Revelation of St. John," Donne writes in an authoritative tone to describe the logical and unavoidable chain of events that have left the world in a state of unnaturalness and chaos. Even Donne's choice of images to connote the world's condition, in their extended development and elaboration, become authoritative and symbolic: the world is a "cripple"(238), a "monster"(326), and a "Ghost"(370). The world is viewed as upside down: "Tis all in peeces, all cohaerence gone"(213).

The first reason Donne gives for the unnaturalness and corruption of the world is coupled with the second cause of evil in actual sin.³⁶ Because of those sins that have been committed since the first fall from grace, the world:

to a fever turn'd,
 And so the world had fits; it joy'd, it mourn'd;
 And, as men thinke, that Agues physick are,
 And th'Ague being spent, give over care,
 So thou sicke World, mistak'st thy selfe to be
 Well, when alas, thou'rt in a Lethargie.
 (19-24)

³⁶"Actual sins are those committed by all men since the first fall from grace." Mahony, op. cit., p. 58.

The failure of the world to grasp its actual condition is similar to the unawareness of the churches in Smyrna, Pergamum, and Thyatira, which are addressed in the "Revelation of St. John," and have "to a fever turn'd"(19). Most of mankind too has had the moral sense deadened by actual sins, and is deceived into believing that all will receive the "crown of life." But in the Apocalypse not all men will inherit such a crown: "Behold, the devil shall cast some...into prison."; St. John advises, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). Part of the immediacy and forcefulness of Donne's argument and the vision of St. John is derived from the prophetic awareness allowed the authors concerning the natural results of actual sin and faithlessness. Donne and St. John offer at once a warning and a revelation to mankind.

Thirdly, Donne attributes evil in the world to the death of "Shee" who has taught mankind

that thou art
Corrupt and mortall in thy purest part.
(61-62)

A final feature of Donne's overall treatment of evil is the transition from a state of apocalyptic gloom in "The first Anniversary" to the state of hope and resolution that is established in the second. This note of consolation is struck in the opening lines of "The second Anniversary," and extends into a statement of faith and confidence in the progress of the soul.

The skepticism of "The first Anniversary," with its reference to the insecurity ushered in by "the new Philosophy"(205), is replaced by an affirmation of faith:

Nothing could make me sooner to confesse
That this world had an everlastingnesse
Then to consider, that a yeare is runne,
Since both this lower world's, and the Sunnes Sunne,
The lustre, and the vigor of this All,
Did set; 'twere blasphemy to say, did fall.
(1-6)

The pessimistic tone in "The first Anniversary" is too sustained, and the moral scope too broad, for us to attempt to neglect the aspects of Donne's apocalyptic consciousness. His treatment of evil naturally leads into "The second Anniversary," which fits the strict definition of an epitaphium anniversarium, yet can be viewed as a consolatory sequel to the preceding dooms-day tableau.³⁷ As in the Jewish apocalypses, which were written in the forward-looking and precarious intertestamental years, Donne has portrayed the world's misery in order to offer up a universal and consolatory sign of hope.³⁸ Like these works he has given a kind of pessimistic historical survey which is in need of a transcendental element to make such a survey of uni-

³⁷For the definition and sources to the genre, see Manley's "Commentary" pp. 119-20. Donne did not always respect the "precise distinctions of the rhetoricians and writers of artes poeticae prescribing the focus and decorum of a poem of praise . . .," see Lewalski, op. cit., p. 43.

³⁸For hope as a product of persecution, see Russell, op. cit., p. 17. For a discussion of the milieu, cf. pp. 28-33.

versal significance. In the Jewish apocalypses this transcendental feature is found in the belief in the transcendent being called "the Son of Man," and in the idea that there is a life after death with its various levels of Hell, Gehenna, Paradise, and Heaven. At the same time there is an "increasing significance of the individual in resurrection, judgment and eternal bliss."³⁹ In Donne a transcendent movement is initiated by the poet himself. He blasts away the skepticism of "The first Anniversary," and calls forth

the note of hope, at least, the note of courageous striving for the assurance and faith-inspired vision which had been eclipsed by doubt in "The first Anniversary." For the successful development of this theme the matter of the new philosophy, with its disconcerting connotation, can make no contribution. It is true that there is a repercussion of the doubt and uneasiness pervading "The first A.," but over the conditions inducing the former skepticism there triumphs an expression of positive and constructive faith.⁴⁰

Donne's transcendent movement also can be interpreted in light of the "Revelation of St. John." In the Apocalypse, St. John envisions the destiny of the world under the hand of Providence, and relates his own visionary experiences. Although there is not an easily discernible formal pattern to the "Revelation," the author's visions become increasingly frantic, and culminate in a vision of the total conquest of the earth

³⁹Russell, op. cit., p. 105. Such beliefs were suited to the purposes of doctrinal propaganda, see p. 32.

⁴⁰Coffin, op. cit., p. 138.

by heavenly grace. In the "Anniversaries" Donne, through his visionary experience, offers the consolatory information that thou "shalt see the blessed Mother-maid"(341). The dismal view of the potential of sight in "The first Anniversary" is removed. Donne charges the reader to strive for a position of righteousness, the crown that will refute the evils of the world:

Up to those Patriarchs, which did longer sit
 Expecting Christ, then they've enjoy'd him yet.
 Up to those Prophets, which now gladly see
 Their Prophecies growne to be Historie.
 Up to th'Apostles, who did bravely runne
 All the Suns course, with more light then the Sunne.
 Up to those Martyrs, who did calmly bleed
 Oyle to th'Apostles Lamps, dew to their seed.
 Up to those Virgins, who thought, that almost
 They made joyntenants with the Holy Ghost,
 If they to any should his Temple give.

(345-355)

He thus paves the way for the culmination of his own vision in the doctrine of grace. Donne, who has been given the prophetic power "to say this"(522) by the grace of God, leaves the reader on a final and joyful apocalyptic chord:

Only in Heaven joyes strength is never spent;
 And accidentall things are permanent.
 Joy of a soules arrivall ne'r decaies;
 For that soule ever joyes and ever staies.
 Joy that their last great Consummation
 Approaches in the resurrection;
 When earthly bodies more celestiall
 Shall be, then Angels were, for they could fall;
 This kinde of joy doth every day admit
 Degree of growth, but none of losing it.

(487-496)⁴¹

⁴¹The imperativeness of progressing to such a state of grace is seen in "Holy Sonnet VII" where Donne reflects that at the end of the word "Tis late to aske abundance of [God's] grace."

The difficulties over the structure and intent of Donne's "Anniversaries" can be remedied by stressing the purpose of the poet to console and instruct in terms of a doctrine of grace. Viewed in such a light, the "Anniversaries" are two distinct yet integrally related poems.⁴² "The first Anniversary" deals with the particulars of the world's condition and is made up of imagery which is decorous with a skeptical and apocalyptic conception of the world's state. The imagery must be vivid, and the treatment harsh, since the outlook of the poet toward the universe is in itself dismal. But Donne does not leave the reader with a picture in which all must be called in doubt. In "The second Anniversary" he indicates how the reader is to conceive and make sense of the particulars already presented, and leads up to a statement of a universal truth. This truth finds its crux in the doctrine of grace. All just men will be freed of the sinful state of the world and their actual sins by the apocalyptic forcefulness of Donne's entire vision, and will open up their hearts to God's mercy. The language in "The second Anniversary," with the emphasis upon the imperative,

⁴²Many critics have argued for a strong correspondence between the two "Anniversaries;" cf., for instance, P. Mahony, "The Structure of Donne's 'Anniversaries' as Companion Poems," *Genre*, 5(1972), 235-56; A.E. Voss, "The Structure of Donne's 'Anniversaries,'" *English Studies in Africa*, 12(1969), 1-30; and Louis L. Martz, "Donne's 'Anniversaries' Revisited," in *That Subtile Wreath: Lectures Presented at the Quartercentenary Celebration of the Birth of John Donne*, ed. M.W. Pepperdene (Agnes Scott College, 1972), 29-49, esp. p. 41.

is congruent with the import of mankind's progress. Donne has worked out a chain of being and becoming in which the lowliest state of man's existence is seen translated to the highest rung of glory. Those critics who would question Donne's method in poems that are openly categorized as funeral elegies belittle the part that the poet can take in any genre. Surely it cannot be argued that "Shee" is not of central importance to the poems. By integrating the qualities of "Shee" into his vision of God's own universal goodness and hopefulness the poet's task is completed.

CHAPTER III

SAINT AMANT'S 'LE CONTEMPLATEUR' AND 'LA SOLITUDE'

A. 'Le Bon Gros:' Introduction to 'Le Contemplateur'

Having examined two major works in which the moral content is universal, the source of inspiration that of the poeta vates, and the use of the apocalyptic completely integrated with the philosophic intent, I propose to turn now to several poems of an author whose disposition and attitude toward his craft are dissimilar- "Le Bon Gros" Saint-Amant.¹

The poetry of Saint-Amant has generally been met by two kinds of response: a sense of delight or an attitude of disdain. In spite of the appreciation for the author's work during his own time by Faret, Tellemant des Réaux, and Théophile de Viau, judgments no doubt tempered by personal piques and friendships, Boileau played a decisive role in establishing an unfavorable attitude toward the verse of Saint-Amant in the 17th century. Undaunted by any arguments to the contrary, Boileau, not uncommonly, rejected completely the method and results of the poet's efforts. One example of such criticism was Boileau's use of Longinus' De Sublime to attack Saint-Amant's verse for its preoccupation with detail, a kind of descriptive richness that has since been acclaimed as the poet's real forte. It is due to the publishing of Théophile Gautier's Les Grotesques (1853) that we owe the rediscovery of

¹See the impressionistic and brief biography of the poet by Pierre Varenne, Le Bon gros Saint-Amant 1594-1661 (A. Rouen: Lecerf fils, 1917).

the poet's work after the almost total silence of the eighteenth century. Gautier confidently opposed Boileau's assessment by proclaiming that "Saint-Amant est à coup sûr un très grand et très original poète, digne d'être cité entre les meilleurs dont la France puisse d'honorer."² He was assisted in his defense by the timely edition of the poet's works by Charles Livet which gave Sainte-Beuve occasion to reevaluate Saint-Amant's poetry.³ The tendency toward reevaluating and reexamining the author's work has continued down to the present day, and is evidenced by an ever-expanding contribution to Santamantiana.

Although much of Boileau's criticism should probably be dismissed, there are certain disturbing aspects of the verse of Saint-Amant. The reader is struck by the author's seemingly serious concern with superficial subject matter, as in the "gastronomical" poems:⁴

Quelle odeur sens-je en cette Chambre?
 Quel doux parfum de Musc et d'Ambre
 Me vient le Cerveau resjouir,
 Et tout le Coeur espanouir?
 Ha bon Dieu! j'en tombe en extase;
 Ces belles Fleurs qui dans ce Vase
 Parent le haut de ce buffet,
 Feroient-elles bien cet effet?
 ("Le Melon," 1-8)

²Théophile Gautier, Les Grotesques (Paris: M. Lévy, 1853), p. 157.

³Cf. "Summary of Scholarship" in Samuel Borton, Six Modes of Sensibility in Saint-Amant (Paris: Mouton & Co., 1966), pp. 14-40.

⁴Françoise Gourier, Etude des Oeuvres Poétiques de Saint-Amant (Paris: Librairie Minard, 1961), pp. 85-91.

Such an opinion is not "complètement injustifiée" since "plusieurs protecteurs du poète furent aussi ses compagnons de débauche."⁵ Indeed, certain of the author's poems are unnerving in their tendency to servile flattery, as in "Epistre, a Monsieur Le Baron de Melay, Gouverneur du Chasteau-Trompette, A Bordeaux," their treatment of debauchery ("La Débauche," "Le Cidre") and their celebration of the bacchanalian ("Bacchus Conquérant"). Certain readers might also question the author's pervasive use of archaic and grotesque language, an apparently unsystematic poetic method, a mixing of genres and especially the extended descriptive passages of the satiric and burlesque.⁶

All of these elements are of especial significance in relation to Saint-Amant's religious poetry. Only three of the author's works are purely religious: "Le Contemplateur," the "Moyse Sauvé," and the "Fragment d'une Méditation sur le Crucifix."⁷ Of these, "Le Contemplateur," composed in 1629, has been seen on the one hand as a poem in which "theme leads to theme, not in accordance with any systematic plan but following the free play of a lively mind" where the moral purpose is of secondary consideration,⁸ and on the other hand as a work in

⁵Gourier, op. cit., p. 85.

⁶These problems are brought up by most critics, but see especially Alice W. Rathé, "La Poétique de Saint-Amant" (unpub. diss., U. of T., 1964), pp. 11-24.

⁷Gourier, op. cit., p. 185.

⁸I. Buffum, Studies in the Baroque from Montaigne to Rotrou, p. 151.

which "contemplative inquiry leads to a state of self-hypnosis or trance, a condition of confused yet sublime consciousness."⁹ In the latter case, the author's purpose is to impart his religious concerns and to express man's ethical and moral relationship to God.¹⁰ According to which definition one accepts, the apocalypse near the conclusion of "Le Contemplateur" is either simply another theme, or a device calculated to strengthen the author's expression of an ethical-moral relationship. Though both of these views have been argued on the basis of the text, the nature of the author's philosophical and aesthetic intent is clarified by an examination of two major facets of Saint-Amant's poem. These facets reveal the author's attitude toward self-revelation and experience as initiated in "La Solitude" (1617), and the connection between sight, imagery, and ideas in the author's vision. The relationship between sight, imagery, and ideas involves the theory of ut pictura poesis, features of Gongorism, and a Bacchic element. Such a study reveals first that, whereas d'Aubigné and Donne use apocalyptic material for a didactic and universal end, Saint-Amant's apocalyptic vision represents the culmination of the poet's discovery of his own emotionally charged state which cannot be didactic in a moral sense for all of mankind. Secondly, the apocalyptic is used in Saint-Amant's poem to give

⁹Samuel L. Borton, op. cit., pp. 130-31.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 128, 135.

a sense of ending or synaptical completeness to an otherwise discursive train of images, and is hence a crucial technical device.

B. The Experience of Solitude

"La Solitude"(1617) is considered to be Saint-Amant's first poem, and opened the volume of the poet's works which first appeared in 1629.¹¹ The scene of the composition of the poem was Belle-Isle-en-Mer, an island off the southern coast of Brittany where the poet occasionally accompanied the Duc de Retz. As the title suggests, "La Solitude" is an ode in praise of solitude, and is a record of the sights, discoveries and adventures that the poet made during one of his sojourns on the island. This initial production of the poet shares several motifs and poetic techniques with "Le Contemplateur," and might even be considered a preface to the entire contents of the later poem.

Critics of Saint-Amant's poetry have shown a particular fondness for "La Solitude" and have stressed the poem's uniqueness.¹² Théophile Gautier has remarked that "vous ne trouverez rien dans les poètes dits classiques...qui ait cette fraîcheur

¹¹Several Latin translations were published, and a number of French imitations, cf. J. Lagny, "Autour de la 'Solitude' de Saint-Amant: les traductions latines," Bulletin du Bibliophile et du Bibliothécaire, 25(1956), 110-126.

¹²For example, Buffum, Gautier, de Mourgues, Borton, and Rathé.

de coloris, cette transparence de lumière, cette rêverie flottante et mélancolique."¹³ Interpretations of the poem's origins in literary and cultural sources have been numerous, although most critics have argued for French or Spanish sources of its inspiration. For instance, R. Mazzara has found a certain similarity between "La Solitude" and the traditional Portuguese saudade or Spanish soledad which express "disappointment, frequently an unrequited or absent love or other worldly desengaño."¹⁴ Saint-Amant's desengaño, his own spirit of agitation, disappointment, and unrequited self-searching, is expressed by the French inquiétude:¹⁵

O que j'ayme la Solitude!
Que ces lieux sacrez à la Nuit,
Esloignez du monde et du bruit,
Plaisent à mon inquietude!
(1-4)

Since the poet stands aloof in "La Solitude" Mazzara suggests that Góngora, the poet's Spanish contemporary, is the closest parallel. Both have written poems in which the poet strolls through nature, and offers descriptions of nature in its various forms and colors.¹⁶ Góngora's "Las Soledades" have little

¹³Gautier, op. cit., p. 168.

¹⁴R.A. Mazzara, "Italian and Spanish Influences in the Life and Works of Saint-Amant" (unpub. diss., U. of Kansas, 1959), p. 38.

¹⁵The word appears in "La Metamorphose"(121), "Les Visions à Damon"(161), "La Jouyssance"(59), "Epigramme à Monseigneur le Chancelier"(31), "Deux Couplets à Insérer"(2), Bailbé, Jacques and Jean Lagny, ed. Saint-Amant Oeuvres, 4 vols. (Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1967-1971).

¹⁶Mazzara, op. cit., p. 48.

narrative appeal, and have been described as merely convenient pegs "on which Góngora could hang his superb descriptions, elaborated by all the arts of metaphor and hyperbole, and interspersed with beautiful lyrics."¹⁷ Indeed, "La Solitude" of Saint-Amant is to be seen as a reflection of an emerging awareness on the poet's part of the natural world where his own self-revelations are translated into lyrical form.¹⁸

The location of the poet's wanderings in "La Solitude" is a grotto: the poet's eyes

sont contents
De voir ces Bois qui se trouverent
A la nativité du Temps,
Et que tous les Siecles reverent,
Estre encore aussi beaux et vers,
Qu'aux premiers jours de l'Univers!
(5-10)

The garden-grotto, which had its origins in Italy, and became the location for the construction of all kinds of fanciful naturalistic ornaments and details, is the perfect type of environment for the poet to discover an awareness of his inmost sensibilities.¹⁹ The strange and awesome rock formations ("Ces Monts pendans en precipices," 26) and the fiercely flowing streams ("ces fiers Torrents vagabonds," 32) lead the poet to

¹⁷The Solitudes of Don Luis de Góngora, trans. E.M. Wilson (Cambridge: The University Press, 1965) "Introduction," p. xv.

¹⁸Saint-Amant's friend Théophile de Viau also wrote an ode "La Solitude" about the same date. The element of literary exercise in the poems should not be overlooked, cf. Théophile de Viau: Sélections ed. Rémy de Gourmont (Paris: Société du Mercure de France, 1907), pp. 24-31.

¹⁹See S.L. Borton, op. cit., pp. 49-60.

discover settings far more imaginative and surrealistic. The stroll through the grotto and the kind of meditations that are triggered in the poet's imagination by such an adventure, leave their impression not only on the poet, but have provided a common adjective of the romance languages: grotesque.²⁰

Looking back from the modern vantage point, the very nature of a grotto experience may seem "grotesque" in its artificiality.²¹ In "La Solitude" the delightfulness of the grotto setting, and the kind of effect that it has upon the poet's mind, depends on illusion. The poet is convinced into conceiving wonders that are only restrained by his own imaginative capacities. These fictional representations of what he observes are, on one level, mythological:

Un gay Zephire les ["ces Bois", 5] caresse
D'un mouvement doux et flatteur;
Rien que leur extremesme hauteur

²⁰Derived from the Italian grotta and grottesca, the term accompanied the arrival of the feature it described. The Italian word probably derived in turn from the Vulgar-Latin: "'Grotte' was the popular name in Rome for the chambers of ancient buildings which had been revealed by excavation, and which contained those mural paintings that were typical examples of 'grotesque,'" A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles, ed. J.A.H. Murray (Oxford: The Univ. Press, 1901), vol. 4, pp. 448-49.

²¹Many examples of such artificiality could be cited; consider the water-surprise gardens mentioned in "Las Soledades" which are still to be found in Spain. "Some unsuspecting person would be lured into the grotto and then mercilessly drenched with water from all sides." E.M. Wilson, op. cit., "Notes," p. 129. "Las Soledades," II, ll. 213-222. The same effect was achieved in grottos in Italy and France.

Ne fait remarquer leur vieillesse:
 Jadis Pan, et ses Demy-Dieux (Satyrs)
 Y vindrent chercher du refuge,
 Quand Jupiter ouvrit les Cieux
 Pour nous envoyer le Deluge.
 (11-18)

On another level, the poet's wanderings support a vision of
 Nature's own unlimited abundance:

Là, cent mille Oyseaux aquatiques
 Vivent, sans craindre en leur repos,
 Le Giboyeur fin, et dispos
 Avec ses mortelles pratiques.
 (51-54)

The poet associates the grotto atmosphere with visions
 of decadence, decay, and fear as well as with these exuberant
 visions of plenty. He views

la decadence
 De ces vieux Chasteaux ruinez,
 Contre qui les Ans mutinez
 Ont déployé leur insolence!
 (71-74)

Là se nichent en mille trous
 Les Couleuvres, et les Hyboux.

I

L'Orfraye, avec ses cris funebres,
 Mortels augures des Destins,
 Fait rire, et dancer les Lutins
 Dans ces lieux remplis de tenebres.
 (79-84)

Thus, Saint-Amant's reactions to the element of dissolution
 partially emanates from his thoughts or ideas concerning the
 institutions and status of mankind. This state of consciousness
 is founded in a realistic imitation of grotto details, whereas
 the references to "Les Demons"(76) and "le Ciel Juge equitable"
 (91) are purely extensions of the supernatural elements nurtured

by such realistic details. The supernatural element in his train of visions finds its apogee in the brief meditation on judgment:

Aussi le Ciel Juge équitable
 Qui maintient les Loix en vigueur,
 Prononça contre sa rigueur
 Une sentence épouvantable:
 Autour de ces vieux ossemens
 Son Ombre aux peines condamnée,
 Lamente en longs gémissemens
 Sa malheureuse destinée,
 Ayant, pour croistre son effroy,
 Tousjours son crime devant soy.
 (91-100)

Interesting is the mingling of Christian (91-94) and pagan (95-100) attitudes to suicide. Saint-Amant is fully conscious that the experiences of solitude in nature, which supply the realistic details and stimuli for his imaginings, are the source for his poetic inspiration and poetic instruction.²² Throughout the composition he anticipates each successive step of such instruction, and refers to his own pleasure in the source itself ("O que j'ayme la Solitude;" 1, 191) as well as in the specific imaginative scenes ("ma reverie," 24; "je prens de plaisir," 25; "Que j'ayme....," 41; "Que j'ayme a voir," 71; "Que c'est une chose agreable," 141). Since the emphasis in "La Solitude" is on personal revelation, rather than divine inspiration, Saint-Amant has endowed his visions with the force of his own furor poeticus. His verse

²²Borton, op. cit., p. 58.

is taken to be the product of his own genius, or daimon, and of the muse of poetry:²³

Je ne cherche que les deserts,
Où rêvant tout seul, je m'amuse
A des discours assez diserts
De mon Genie avec la Muse.
(175-178)

Saint-Amant's poetic spirit and sensibilities are liberated by such a state of inquiétude so that the results of the poet's visionary experience are indeed fantastic:

Tu vois dans cette Poesie
Pleine de licence, et d'ardeur,
Les beaux rayons de la splendeur
Qui m'éclaire la fantaisie:
Tantost chagrin, tantost joyeux,
Selon que la fureur m'enflame,
Et que l'objet s'offre à mes yeux,
Les propos me naissent en l'ame,
Sans contraindre la liberté
Du Demon qui m'a transporté.
(181-190)

In "La Solitude" the poet has established himself as personally inspired; in "Le Contemplateur" Saint-Amant reiterates the nature of the source of inspiration which he finds within himself. In his attempt to give a true imitation and presentation of his experiences, the poet follows his visionary stroll to its logical and most startling conclusion- an apocalypse.

C. The Final Synapse

In "Le Contemplateur" Saint-Amant probes beyond the level

²³Cf. "Le Melon:" - "Car le Roy d'Helicon (Apollo), le Demon de ma veine" (305), Bailbé and Lagny ed., vol. 2.

of description and reflection established in "La Solitude." He finds in himself the potential to unravel the diversity of nature's many forms and to comprehend "tout l'univers"(90) by a process of "recherche profonde"(89). As in Donne's "Anniversaries" observation is an important preliminary activity (e.g. "Je fains un portrait a mes yeux," 65; "J'appercoy," 143; "J'y voy...", 155; "Je l'observe," 305; "Je voy," 402) which precedes reflection or meditation. But there is a marked difference between the two works in terms of the nature of what follows the use of sight. In Donne we have seen that the author prepares the way for a universal and prophetic reflection, whereas in "Le Contemplateur" the poet finds his own impressive thoughts awakened by a number of disparate observations made on his return to Belle-Isle-en-Mer.²⁴ Nature supplies the poet with a diversity of seemingly visual phenomena. To use a biological analogy, each observation is established as a synapse, or point of contact between adjacent images, by the impulses sent out from the poet's own state of euphoria. In other words, in the highly personal experience of solitude, the poet goes through a three-fold experience of observation, suggestions of ideas triggered by his sight, and a concluding or personally ecstatic delight in each of the meditations. The poet's purpose, unlike that of Donne, is not seriously moral, but rather, a prolongation and suspension of individual

²⁴For the date and place of composition, see Borton, op. cit., pp. 128-29.

observations and reflections until the climax of the apocalypse.

Saint-Amant is aware of a three-fold creative process, which becomes, unlike in "La Solitude," often more conceptual than descriptive:

Je rends les premieres frivoles:
Voilà comme selon l'objét
Mon esprit changeant de projet,
Saute de pensée en pensée:
La diversité plaist aux yeux,
Et la veue en fin est lassée
De ne regarder que les Cieux.
(134-140)

Perhaps one of the finest examples of the poet's imaginative process is the scene in which the "flus et reflux" of the sea suggests the idea of ebb and flow of all created things:

Là, songeant au flus et reflux,
Je m'abisme dans cette idée;
Son mouvement me rend perclus,
Et mon Ame en est obsédée.
(91-94)

Each observation results in the conception of an idea that obsesses the poet's imagination. The simple observation of ships recalls in the poet's mind the fascinating properties of the mariner's compass(101-110) and leads to a frenzied state where reason is made subservient to the poet's emotions. At such moments Saint-Amant frequently expresses himself in exclamations (e.g. "O moeurs! dis je, ô monde brutal!," 115) or becomes highly interrogative(124, 127, 130):

Faut-il que le plus fier metal
Plus que toy se montre sensible?
Faut-il que, sans te réformer,
Une pierre dure au possible
Te fasse honte en l'art d'aymer?
(116-120)

Occasionally such ecstatic states cause the poet to revel in the marvellous properties of God Himself; but such exclamatory sections have all the characteristics of simply another rendering of the poet's personal and inward-looking progress:

O bon Dieu! m'escrîay-je alors,
Que ta puissance est nonpareille,
D'avoir en un si petit corps
Fait une si grande merveille!
O feu! qui tousjours allumé,
Brusles sans estre consumé!
Belle Escarboucle qui chemines!
(221-227)

Although "Le Contemplateur" was written for Philippe Cospeau, Bishop of Nantes, who became Saint-Amant's spiritual director, and was responsible for his conversion from Protestantism to Catholicism in the 1620's (whether his conversion was spiritual or expedient), I do not feel that one need effect the interpretation of passages like the above.²⁵ The poet's brief exposition on the properties of God is too connected with a rapid-fire set of other observations and reflections to be singled out as more significant than the others or of greater moral import. As Saint-Amant's contemplation of nature tends to heighten his sense of rapture, the brief

²⁵J. Lagny has argued that the underlying motivation behind "Le Contemplateur" is literary rather than religious: see J. Lagny, "Le Poète Saint-Amant et le protestantisme," Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire du Protestantisme Français, CIII (1957), No. 4 (oct.-déc.), 237-266.

contemplation of God functions in the same manner.²⁶ Likewise, even the potentially didactic device of an apocalyptic vision is really only the highest point in the poet's "tableau fantasque," and is ushered in by the same process of observation-reflection-state of ecstasy as we have just examined. The ideas of the Last Judgment and apocalypse arise from the observations of daybreak:

Tantost levé devant le jour,
Contre ma coustume ordinaire,
Pour voir recommencer le tour
Au celeste et grand Luminaire;
Je l'observe au sortir des flos,
Sous qui la nuit, estant enclos,
Il sembloit estre en sepulture;
Et voyant son premier rayon,
Beny l'Autheur de la Nature,
Dont il est comme le crayon.
(301-310)

That this setting is an aesthetic and emotional climax to the poet's own internal state of agitation is seen in several aspects of the apocalyptic imagery.

1. The Element of 'Ut Pictura Poesis'

The much quoted simile of Horace, ut pictura poesis, has been subject to successive interpretations from the beginnings of the Italian Renaissance to the present day with the result that the theory of the relationship between painting and poetry has become "more and more complex, more and more exaggerated."²⁷

²⁶C.D. Rolfe has commented that Saint-Amant was "rather too obviously trying to impress the Bishop of Nantes..." Saint-Amant and the Theory of Ut Pictura Poesis (London: The Modern Humanities Research Association, 1972), p. 23.

²⁷Ibid., p. 2.

In its original context in the Ars Poetica Horace's analogy was made to express the idea that in neither poetry nor painting is it justifiable to demand of the artist more than he intends to give. Since that time the theory of ut pictura poesis has been useful in discussing those works of literature in which the writer attempts to imitate the qualities or techniques of the "sister art" of painting.²⁸ As Wellek and Warren have commented, "though the amount of visualization in the reading of poetry is likely to be overrated, there were ages and there were poets who did make the reader visualize."²⁹ In a limited sense such a comment might be made of Saint-Amant's "Le Contemplateur."

Saint-Amant makes a direct reference in this poem to Michelangelo's "Last Judgment:"

L'immortelle et sçavante main
De ce fameux Peintre Romain,
N'a rien tracé d'émerveillable
Que ce penser de l'advenir
Plein d'une terreur agreable,
Ne ramene en mon souvenir.
(325-330)

One criterion that Saint-Amant appears to have established for his own visions of the Last Judgment and end of the world is that of creating "une terreur agreable." His imagery and descriptions are not "painterly" in the sense that they attempt

²⁸W.G. Howard, "'Ut Pictura Poesis,'" Publications of the Modern Language Association, xxiv (1909), 40-123.

²⁹Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1956, p. 126.

to reproduce the specific effects of the painter, the details of the scene, but in the sense that the poet wishes to impart a feeling of movement and massiveness to his visions. Unlike the last section of d'Aubigné's "Jugement" Saint-Amant's descriptions are not brilliant in terms of particulars, but are effective in conveying a generalized "impression" of the end of the world. As in a genre painting, Saint-Amant strives to create an atmosphere or feeling for the setting, and his descriptions should be adjudged by the criterion of their effectiveness in communicating the most terrible of the author's many visual and emotional experiences.³⁰ Consider the author's attempt to render the majestic unfolding of his final synapse:

Ainsi, mais plus clair et plus beau,
 Verra t'on comme ce Flambeau
 Monter au Ciel le corps du Juste
 Après qu'avecques majesté,
 Dieu seant en son trosne auguste
 L'aura par sa bouche arrêté.
 (315-320)

The references to "ce Flambeau," "le corps du Juste," and "son trosne auguste" are not elaborated upon since Saint-Amant is not piling up his imagery to make a powerful impression on the reader or to console by some kind of moral or spiritual revelation, but rather to record the condition and state of his own private vision. Even in the potentially powerful description

³⁰But the poet's "Le Contemplateur" is not a good example of the influence of the Flemish and Dutch genre painters. The apocalypse supplies only limited picturesque details. For the influence of such artists, cf. Rolfe, op. cit., pp. 61-77 and R.A. Sayce, "Saint-Amant and Poussin," French Studies, I(1947), 241-333.

of "Jesus au milieu du Soleil"(340) Saint-Amant only employs two imprecise adjectives "espouventable et magnifique"(339). Likewise, the typically vivid description of the state of the damned during the Judgment is undetailed and aloof in language:

Mais les meschans desesperez
 Pour qui desja sont preparez
 De l'Enfer les tourmens énormes,
 Ne se representent à moy
 Que si hideux et si difformes,
 Que mon Ame en transit d'effroy.
 (395-400)

Such a different perspective does not produce the horror discussed in d'Aubigné's Les Tragiques and Donne's "Anniversaries." D'Aubigné envisions himself rewarded in heaven after his prophetic mission has been fulfilled, while Donne credits himself with completing a prophetic task. But Saint-Amant sees the final end of the world as the conclusion to a personal visual experience, and begs to be spared on that terrible day:³¹

O Dieu! qui me fais concevoir
 Toutes ces futures merveilles
 Toy seul à qui pour mon devoir
 J'offriray les fruits de mes veilles,
 Accorde-moy par ta bonté
 La gloire de l'Eternité,
 Afin d'en couronner mon ame:
 Et foy qu'en ce terrible Jour

³¹In "La Solitude" the sensual imagery is employed to establish the relationship between the poet's introspection and his inspiration:

Mais quand je pense bien à moy
 Je la hay pour la raison mesme;
 Car elle ["Solitude," 191] porroit me ravir
 L'heur de te voir, et te servir.
 (197-200)

Je ne brusle point d'autre flame
 Que de celle de ton amour.
 (441-450)³²

Certain elements of Gongorism are also closely allied to Saint-Amant's visual experience.

2. The Elements of Gongorism

Two linguistic features of Gongorism are not emphasized in "Le Contemplateur."³³ The poem, unlike "Las Soledades," is not remarkable for a latinisation of vocabulary and syntax. Saint-Amant, who was assigned the task of compiling words that were "grotesque" for the Académie Française, did not capitalize on this element in "Le Contemplateur." Secondly, although Gongora took many syntactic liberties, and frequently used hyperbata, Greek absolutes and accusatives, and continually distorted normal Spanish word order, Saint-Amant's poem is not unusual syntactically.

The major characteristics which Saint-Amant's poem shares with Gongorism are the frequent repetition of a key word, the use of a single term or metaphor to encompass a variety of particular shades of meaning, and the expression of the visual with hyperbolic and exaggerated language. The finest example

³²Cf. p. 31 for d'Aubigné's joyful anticipation of his final union with God.

³³For my brief discussion of features of Gongorism, I am indebted to E.M. Wilson, op. cit., "Introduction," pp. xii-xxi; Elisha K. Kane, Gongorism and the Golden Age: A Study of Exuberance and Unrestraint in the Arts (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1928), pp. 24-41; and Lucien-Paul Thomas, Etude sur Gongora et le Gongorisme Tome VII (Bruxelles: Académie Royale, 1911, 2nd series), pp. 93-110.

of the repetition of a key word in "Le Contemplateur" is the author's use of tantost to lead from one visual and conceptual experience to another (ll. 141, 191, 195, 231, 241, 262, 265, 271, 281, 285, 291, 301):

Tantost faisant agir mes sens
 Sur des sujet de moindre estofe,
 De marche en autre je descens
 Dans les termes du Philosofe.
 (81-84)

Tantost nous allant promener
 Dans quelque chaloupe à la rade,
 Nous laissons apres nous traisner
 Quelque ligne pour la Dorade.
 (201-204)

The word appears for the last time to introduce the poet's description and thoughts on the Judgment and apocalypse. In this case tantost announces, like "la trompette Serafique"(337), the last of the poet's visionary and conceptual experiences.

The following passage illustrates two characteristics of Gongorism found in "Le Contemplateur:"

Les Estoilles tombent des Cieux,
 Les flammes devorent la terre,
 Le Mongibel est en tous lieux,
 Et par tout gronde le tonnerre:
 Le Salemandre est sans vertu;
 L'Asbeste passe pour festu,
 La Mer brusle comme eau-de-vie,
 L'Air n'est plus que souffre allumé,
 Et l'Astre dont l'Aube est suivie
 Est par soy-mesme consumé.

Les Metaux ensemble fondus
 Font des rivieres precieuses;
 Leurs flots bouillants sont expandus
 Par les campagnes spacieuses.
 Dans ce feu, le dernier des maux,
 Tous les terrestres Animaux

Se consolent en quelque sorte,
 Du Deluge à demy vangez
 En voyant ceux que l'onde porte
 Aussi bien comme eux affligez.
 (411-430)³⁴

There is a noticeably imprecise character to the language throughout this passage. Saint-Amant creates a feeling for the decay and chaos of the apocalypse not by dwelling upon the many particulars of each stage of dissolution, but by implementing a vocabulary that is generalized: no adjectives qualify "Cieux," the flames that devour the earth are simply flames. Indeed, the language is as basic as the four primary elements: "la terre," "La Mer," "Les Flammes," and "L'air." Nor are the adjectives striking in the second stanza: "precieuses," "spacieuses," and "terrestres." What could be more unspecific than "les terrestres Animaux"? Obviously the passages gain their exaggerated quality from the piling up of such a parallel group of generalized terms, and the plenitude of verbs meant to imitate the state of chaos the poet is imagining: included in the first stanza are "tombent," "devorent," "est," "passe," "brusle," "n'est plus que souffre allumé," and a final "est." The predominance in the first stanza of the verb "to be" coincides nicely with the general

³⁴"L'Etna: Les habitants le nomment le Mont-Gibel, & peut-être est-ce des Arabes qu'est venu le mot de Gibel." The ancients believed that the salamander could survive fire. Asbestos is an incombustible mineral. See edition vol. I, "Notes," p. 67. The references to Etna are common in Spanish love poetry.

nouns: the poet is restricting himself to creating the basic atmosphere. Also noticeable is the way in which the nouns, most of which have been a significant part of the poet's past experiences in solitude, are appearing for the last time. The poet, who has "chanté/De la Mer en ma Solitude"(151-2), now observes that the sea "brusle comme eau-de-vie." The ideas concerning the "Deluge"(62) and "Noé"(66) are seen in a new context of destruction. Saint-Amant, who has already celebrated many of the elements, "le plus fier metal"(116), now imagines them as ingredients in the apocalypse.

The reference to "eau-de-vie" in an apocalyptic setting, and the piling up of terms connected only for the sake of giving an impression or imitation of the apocalypse, lack the support of a prophetic doctrine as found in our other authors.³⁵ The final characteristic of the apocalyptic vision in "Le Contemplateur" which distinguishes the vision as a rather playful and personally aesthetic conception made by Saint-Amant is the

³⁵Cf. Théophile de Viau's "Ode" in the Sélections, op. cit., pp. 45-56:

Un corbeau devant moi croasse,
Une ombre offusque mes regards;
Deux belettes et deux renards
Traversent l'endroit ou je passe.
(1-4)

His poem illustrates the same kind of piling up of images without a doctrinal intent, and the use of the "grotesque" as found in Saint-Amant's "Solitude."

the presence of the Bacchic element.

3. The Bacchic Element

In "Le Contemplateur" apparently serious and frivolous details are occasionally combined. Borton's argument that the poem is seriously religious does not account for the manner in which Saint-Amant mixes the realms of the spiritual, a concern with religious subject matter in the Last Judgment and apocalypse, and the mundane, a treatment of such subject matter in a wildly ribald fashion.³⁶ In "Le Contemplateur" Saint-Amant quite naturally records both the serious and humorous details of his individual visions and meditations. For instance, the author's description of the struggling man whose head sticks out of the ground during the resurrection of the dead has a touch of the grotesquely comic. Such vividness surprises the reader's senses, and lends the vision a slightly humorous character:

L'un m'apparoist un bras devant,
L'autre ne montre que la teste,
Et n'estant qu'à moitié vivant,
Force l'obstacle qui l'arreste:
Cestuy-cy s'esveille en sursaut,
Cestuy-là joint les mains en haut
Implorant la faveur divine;
Et l'autre est à peine levé,
Que d'un coeur devot il s'encline
Devers l'Agneau qui la sauvé.
(351-360)

³⁶I. Buffum considers such a treatment as another aspect of the baroque mind, see I. Buffum, Studies in the Baroque, pp. 158-59.

In the passage directly following that quoted above Saint-Amant continues a description of the Second Coming that appears unsuited to the spiritual import of such an event. His picture is colored by allusions to incest and sexual love which normally would be considered inappropriate aspects of the situation:

Prés de là, le frere et la seur,
 Touchez de ce bruit dont tout tremble,
 D'estre accusez d'inceste ont peur,
 Pour se trouver couchez ensemble,
 Icy la femme et le mary,
 Objet l'un de l'autre chery,
 Voyons la clarté souhaitée
 Semblent s'estonner et gemir
 D'avoir passé cette nuictée
 Sans avoir rien fait que dormir.
 (361-70)

A final instance that should be cited concerning Saint-Amant's use of the unexpected is the anticlimatic conclusion to the poem. The author switches from making a prayer and supplication to God(441-454) and offers a humble prayer to his bishop:

Vous, dis-je, à qui j'escry ces Vers
 Où dans la mort de l'Univers
 Un haut renom s'immortalise,
 Veuillez estre leur Protecteur,
 Et permettez-moy qu'on y lise
 Que je suis vostre adorateur.
 (455-460)

The origin for such a combination of elements in one of Saint-Amant's few poems with a religious subject matter can be sought in the tradition of the comique burlesque or the bacchic.³⁷ Poems such as "La Desbauche," "Bacchus Conquerant," "La

³⁷The tradition of the comique burlesque and caprice are treated in Gourier, op. cit., pp. 119-140; Rathé, op. cit., pp. 78-113; R.A. Mazzara, "Saint-Amant, avant-garde précieux poet: 'La Jouyssance,'" Ball State Teachers College Forum, IV(1963), 58-63. In his discussion of Saint-Amant's modes of sensibility, Borton does not include the bacchic or capricious poems.

Naissance de Pantagruel," "La Vigne," "Le Cidre," and "Les Pourvens Bachiques" all reveal the picturesque richness of Saint-Amant's imagination, and his virtuosity in savoring the crude and vulgar. The humorous results of the poet's inclinations as written about in "La Naissance de Pantagruel":

Le sucre de Madere en poivre fut changé,
 Les gigots de mouton en Jambons de Majence,
 La Terre eut le hocquet, elle en cria vengeance,
 Et la Nature mesme en ardeur s'exhalant
 Se vit preste à mourir de la mort de Rolant;
 Si bien qu'à, mon exemple, ainsi que dit l'histoire,
 Par tout à gueule ouverte on demandoit à boire
 A BOIRE, A BOIRE,

(22-29)³⁸

partly accounts for the appearance of "eau-de-vie" and the other light-hearted aspects of "Le Contemplateur." It might be argued that Saint-Amant's real inclination was not directed toward the writing of deeply religious verse, but to the communication of the author's spirited character and thoughts. In "Le Contemplateur" Saint-Amant might have been writing out of an expedient conversion to Catholicism, which would argue for the insincerity of his religious interests in the poem, but his persona as seen in this poem is certainly consistent with that of the vigorous poet who affirmed

Nous perdons le temps à rimer
 Amis, il ne faut plus chommer,
 Voicy Bacchus qui nous convie
 A mener bien une autre vie,
 ("La Desbauche," 1-4)

³⁸Rabelais Oeuvres Complètes, ed. Pierre Jourda, tome II (Paris: Editions Garnier Frères), chapter II, pp. 36-39.

and announced that,

De Lauriers, de Charmes, de Buis,
De Cyprés, de fleurs, et de fruits,
Se forment des murailles vives.
("La Vigne," 39-41)

In both "La Solitude" and "Le Contemplateur" Nature has supplied the stimulus for the poet to build a "muraille vive" of his own imaginative adventures. The personality or persona of the poet has not really changed in these works; Saint-Amant integrates the capricious and bacchanalian as well as the more thoughtful and contemplative sides of his personality into his visions. But the actual development of thought in "Le Contemplateur," as seen in the anticlimatic prayer to the bishop, does not become more profound or religiously significant. They do, however, become more grandly visionary, and are aesthetically completed by a vision of the apocalypse.

Although my view of one of Saint-Amant's few "religious" poems might seem to place the poet in the rather maligned position of a libertin, I would suggest that his imaginative versions of the apocalypse and Last Judgment argue simply for a non-religious or undidactic use of these settings. The poet was honest and extremely serious about recording the nature of his own emotional-aesthetic experiences even if his religious beliefs are in doubt.³⁹

³⁹Rathé has an interesting discussion of Saint-Amant as "honnête homme" with respect to his theory of imitation and style, see op. cit., pp. 11-24.

CHAPTER IV
CRASHAW'S POETIC VISION

A. 'Unum Ante Thronum'

As we turn to the last of our authors we will find Richard Crashaw concerned with a similar personal rather than universal artistic goal although the persona behind his poems is closer to the agitated and ecstatic state of St. John of the Cross or Santa Teresa than that of the inquiétude of Saint-Amant.¹

Secular Latin poetry had reached its zenith before the early thirteenth century, but religious poetry in Latin had its most productive period in the thirteenth century. Among the many creations of this age, impressive in their solemnity and rhythmic power, is the "Dies Irae" of Thomas de Celano.² In this hymn the fear of impending judgment and the terror of the end of the world are communicated with a forcefulness that is rare in the other Latin hymns included in the liturgy, and perhaps only equaled in poetic beauty by certain of the Vulgate psalms. When one hears that

Tuba mirum spargens sonum,
Per sepulcra regionum
Coget omnes ante thronum,
(stan. 3)³

¹See James B. Anderson, "Richard Crashaw, St. Teresa, and St. John of the Cross," Discourse, X, iv (Autumn, 1967), 421-28.

²Curtius, op. cit., p. 318.

³See Appendix I for the full text of this hymn.

the famous "Requiem Mass" of Hector Berlioz comes to mind, in which trumpets are stationed at the "four corners of the earth," and are sounded in sequence during the "Dies Irae" section.

Crashaw translated or freely paraphrased six of the major hymns of the western Church: "Hymnus de Passione Domini," "Sancta Maria Dolorum," "Rhythmus ad Sacram Eucharistiam" and the companion "De Venerabili Sacramento in Festo Corporis Christi," "Prosa de Mortuis" or "Dies Irae," and "De Beata Virgine."⁴ Crashaw's renderings, which were published in 1648 and reprinted in 1652 are of representative pieces from both early and late medieval poetry, different schools of devotion, personal prayers or meditations, and various doctrinal sequences.⁵ All of the hymns can be used to exemplify the process in which Crashaw alters the sense from the universal and doctrinal or didactic to the affective and particular or personal. Sister Margaret Claydon has argued that the paraphrase of the "Hymnus de Passione Domini" is most changed in this respect, but perhaps more striking is the shift that is made from the universal to the personal in the paraphrase of the "Dies Irae."⁶ In his poem Crashaw displays "his propensity for nursing an emotion and savouring all the sweetness of grief," and his habit of

⁴See Francis E. Barker, "The Religious Poetry of Richard Crashaw," Church Quarterly Review, 46 (April, 1923), 39-65.

⁵Sister Margaret Claydon, op. cit., p. 136; Bertolasco, op. cit., pp. 74-76.

⁶Ibid., pp. 111-31. The "Dies Irae" is discussed pp. 78-99.

"worrying out of his conceits their emotional and sensational, rather than their intellectual implications."⁷

Crashaw establishes the introspective state and contemplative tone that he is to assume throughout "The Hymn of the Church, in Meditation of the Day of Judgment" in the first lines of the poem:

Hears't thou, my soul, what serious things
Both the Psalm and sybyll sings
Of a sure judge, from whose sharp Ray
The world in flames shall fly away.
(st. I)

The first part of the Latin hymn, which is a general and solemnized description of the eschaton, or events of the last days, is made less foreboding by the poet's introduction of himself into a poem through his invocation to his own "soul." Likewise, the adjectives "serious," "sure," and "sharp," associated with the happenings of the last days and the Judge who will preside over these events, are weak and inadequate in terms of the "dies irae" and "favilla" of the Latin. As the poem progresses Crashaw shifts from an emphasis on the "we" who will collectively face and suffer the "Horror of nature, hell and Death!" (5-28), to an elaboration of his own place and anticipations at such a time (29-68): "And thou wouldst be/ Even lost thy self in seeking me" (32), "And this lov'd soul" (35), "With my price, and not with me" (38), "Mercy (my judge)

⁷Joan Bennett, Five Metaphysical Poets: Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, Crashaw, Marvell (Cambridge: The University Press, 3rd ed. 1964), p. 92.

mercy I cry"(41), "my sin"(43), "O say the word my Soul shall live"(48), "Hope tells my heart, the same loves be/Still alive; and still for me"(52), "my Prayres and teares combine"(53), "they are mine"(55), "saving me"(56), "then call me"(60), "That I inheritt,"(64), and "My hope, my fear! my Judge, my Friend!/Take charge of me, and of my END"(67-8).

Crashaw's intent in his poem is to describe the emotional state and persona of a man contemplating the apocalypse who is actually concerned with the Christian concept of God's mercy. The poem is both a plea and a requisition. The poet weeps red tears to signify the ashy white contrition of his heart:⁸

Mercy (my judge) mercy I cry
With blushing Cheek and bleeding ey,
The conscious colors of my sin
Are red without and pale within.
(st. XI)

But the helpless and certainly pathetic state of the persona surprisingly becomes that of a man who directs God to show him mercy on the Judgment Day since a state of contrition is worthless in itself:

Though both my Prayres and tears combine,
Both worthlesse are; For they are mine.
But thou thy bounteous self still be;
And show thou art, by saving me,
(st. XIV)

Let those life-speaking lipps command
That I inheritt thy right hand,
(st. XVI)⁹

⁸Crashaw makes a bilingual pun on "contrite" in stanza XVII; "And crumbled into contrite dust." In Latin contritum means "crumbled into dust." See Williams, ed., "Notes," pp. 191, 193.

⁹Cf. p. 23 in this study.

My hope, my fear! my Judge, my Friend!
 Take charge of me, and of my END!
 (st. XVII)

Unlike d'Aubigné and Donne, Crashaw's consolatory hopes are personal. The more inclusive "we" of the first section are only seen participating in the trumpet and "Book" Judgment where "None can indure, yet none can fly"(20), and are not offered doctrinal or other consolation. Although the Latin hymn also involves the personal "me," Crashaw's first line eliminates the possibility that the poet intended his treatment of the topic of the apocalypse to afford universal consolation.

More than anything else the poet's own fears serve as the impetus for the thematic content, and arise out of the initial treatment of the Day of Judgment by means of a group of fervent apostrophes: "O that fire!"(5), "O those eyes!"(7), "O that trump!"(9), "O that Book!"(17), and "O that Judge!"(19).

Through these exclamatory statements the poet's emotional state is heightened. Each apostrophe is followed by an elaboration that intensifies the fearfulness of the final event, and prepares the way for the change to the interrogative character of stanza VI:

Ah then, poor soul, what wilt thou say?
 And to what Patron chuse to pray?
 When starres themselves shall stagger; and
 The most firm foot no more then stand,¹⁰

¹⁰Cf. Matthew 24:29- "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give its light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."

and the switch to the tone of the second section of the poem (29-68).

There is disagreement over Crashaw's skill in matching imagistic and logical interrelationships. There is even greater disagreement over the qualities of the poet's imagery. Marc F. Bertonasco offers perhaps the most sympathetic reading of the poems of Crashaw, and believes that his images are "more sensuous and more inherently emotional than Donne's;" they are not to be "visualized in all their particulars."¹¹ An opposing view argues that Crashaw loves to elaborate sensations which he often dwells upon unmercifully, and involves the intellect in his poetry "to give logical coherence to his perception of identity between these things (i.e. images)."¹² Another critic has suggested that Crashaw was "not often able to command his pen so well when he became excited about his God or his religion" and that his "constant shifting of metaphor" tends to mar some of the better known poems.¹³ In spite of the controversy over the merits of Crashaw's images and their logical interrelationships, it can be seen that at least in our poem the poet effectively communicates his emotional state, and has chosen his imagery and metaphors to connect logically with his

¹¹M.F. Bertonasco, op. cit., p. 9.

¹²Bennett, op. cit., p. 105. See pp. 92-108.

¹³G.W. Williams, Image and Symbol in the Sacred Poetry of Richard Crashaw (Columbia: U. of South Carolina Press 1963), pp. 3, 4.

intent to console himself by a faith in God's mercy. Consider his elaboration of one of the apostrophic and parallel settings:

O that fire! before whose face
Heavn and earth shall find no place.
O those eyes! whose angry light
Must be the day of that dread Night.
(st. II)

As to be expected Crashaw describes the Last Judgment in terms of light and dark. The idea that the light from the eyes of the "Judge" must become "the day of that dread Night" is not found in the Latin. But as the poem develops this contrast between light, representing the forces of goodness and just retribution, and darkness, the forces of evil and horror, becomes completely integrated into the first section: opposed to God's "sharp Ray" is a world in "flames;" the "circling Sun" will loom over "pale" mankind; all will come from their "caves of night" to answer the Judgment call; the "bright" pages of the "Book" will place the world in a "severe light;" the "eye (cf. stanza II) of God none can avoid."¹⁴ Crashaw's extended contrast of light and dark signals an inevitable division that will take place among mankind between the saved and the unsaved. Thus, having established the "facts" about the coming judgment, the poet asserts:

But thou giv'st leave (dread Lord) that we
Take shelter from thy self, in thee;
And with the wings of thine own dove

¹⁴For the imagery of light-dark in the other hymn translations or paraphrases see #79(55-56), #78(stanzas 1, 4, 5), #80(stanzas 3, 4), #82(3, 4, 21, 34, 35).

Fly to thy scepter of soft love.
(st. VII)

To reach God's "scepter of soft love" the poet's language and intent become highly personalized and introverted. The contemplation of an apocalyptic setting thus acts as the stimulus to incite the poet's thoughts and hopes concerning his personal relationship to Christ's merciful spirit.

In the second section of the hymn Crashaw goes beyond his conception of the fearful nature of Christ by introducing the imagery of the sheepfold and the market place. Through the development of both types of imagery Christ is conceived of as a "Friend" and "hope" as well as a Judge. In stanza VIII Christ is affectionately addressed as "Dear" as the author wishes to recall his own conversion in terms of the homely language of the good shepherd:

Dear, remember in that Day
Who was the cause thou came'st this way.
Thy sheep was stray'd; and thou wouldst be
Even lost thy self in seeking me.

The two attributes of Christ's being as stern Judge and good shepherd are played upon by the poet in the hope of gaining Christ's mercy:

O when thy last Frown shall proclaim
The flocks of goates to folds of flame,
And all thy lost sheep found shall be,
Let come ye blessed then call me.
(st. XV)

Crashaw's apparent tendency to elaborate upon his emotions is no doubt responsible for the typical yet not scatological directive to Christ to "let thine own soft bowells pay/Thy

self; And so discharge that day"(45-6).¹⁵ The poet's choice of a sensual approach to Christ's own affections stems from his supposition that "sin can sigh"(47) and "love can forgive" (47); because of Christ's all benevolent spirit, the poet's own soul should go free at His command.

The poet draws upon a limited compass of imagery and also imagines the interrelationship between himself and Christ in economic terms.¹⁶ Crashaw, in his contemplation of his own spiritual worthiness, alludes to the language of the good shepherd narrative:

Shall all that labour, all that cost
Of love, an ev'n that losse, be lost?
And this lov'd soul, judg'd worth no lesse
Then all that way, and wearynesse?
(st. IX)

Only stanza VI (Ah then, poor Soul, what wilt thou say?) is interrogative. Crashaw suggests that the problem of deciding upon his spiritual fate can be rationally resolved by equating the poet's spiritual worth with the bartering and final price of his original conversion (a process of spiritualization) rather than his own inherent nature or external signs of faith, such as prayers and tears, which "worthlesse are."

¹⁵Cf. Williams, ed., "Notes," st. XII, p. 191: "'bowells: the seat of the sympathetic emotions; 'soft bowells...discharge,' however, by the process of elimination, has quite a different meaning; it may be thought not in the best taste to introduce scatology into eschatology..." Surely Crashaw never intended this passage to be scatological or obscene.

¹⁶Among the other hymns such imagery is common, cf. #77 stanzas I, II ("transfer'd), III, V ("costly excellence), VI, VIII (inherit/That Kingdom..."); #78 stanzas III ("payes back"), IV ("borrowed sins), IX, X. See G.W. Williams, Image & Symbol, pp. 127-29.

Thus, Crashaw's contemplation of the apocalypse may be seen as a process through which the poet crystalizes his own hopes concerning the merciful nature of Christ as a Judge and Friend who will accept his spiritual price. The knowledge that Crashaw's mood is personal in this hymn, and that the poet is possessed by thoughts of self and sin, is prefatory to an appreciation of the poetic method in "The Flaming Heart" and "The Teresa Poems."

B. "The Teresa Poems"

Crashaw chose as his patron St. Teresa of Jesus, of Avila, who was one of the most popular saints of the seventeenth century, and whose inspirational spirit perhaps "filled Crashaw's finest poetry and occupied his last poetic breath."¹⁷ The poet must have been acquainted with the autobiography of the Saint published in Spanish in 1588. English translations were published by William Malone in 1611, and by Sir Tobias Mathew in 1623 and 1642.¹⁸ That Crashaw drew heavily upon an interest in the Saint is reflected in the trilogy of "The Flaming Heart," "The Hymn to St. Teresa," and "An Apology for the fore-going Hymn" which he wrote in her honor. The three poems have been noted for their "spiritualization of sense which is condensed here in a portentous, dizzy soaring of red-hot images"¹⁹ and

¹⁷G.W. Williams, Image and Symbol, p. 6.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 8. Williams, ed., p. 61.

¹⁹M. Praz, The Flaming Heart (Garden City N.Y.: Doubleday, 1958), p. 262.

as giving an impression "at first reading of soaring rockets scattering balls of colored fire."²⁰ It is interesting to observe that critics of the poems, even the most sober, seem to be unavoidably touched by the "happy fire-works" ("The Flaming Heart," 18) of Crashaw's poetic style and write with an almost equal impressionistic gusto.²¹

"The Flaming Heart," seen traditionally as composed of three parts, is most allied to the paraphrase of the "dies irae" in the final section which is an exuberant invocation to the Saint.²² This section reveals most fully the poet's overwhelming interest in his own personal spiritual state and hopes for salvation:

O sweet incendiary! shew here thy art,
Upon this carcasce of a hard, cold, hart,
Let all thy scatter'd shafts of light, that play
Among the leaves of thy larg Books of day,
Combin'd against this Brest at once break in

²⁰Grierson, Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century Donne to Butler (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1958), 1st pub. 1921 "Introduction," p. xlvi.

²¹In a negative sense problematic poems like "The Weeper" have caused one critic to comment, "The white of the liquids, milk and cream, signifies the would-be-pure character of the Weeper. As cream rises to the top of milk, so the tears of the Saint rise above the Milky Way, being more excellent than it." Williams, op. cit., p. 100.

²²Lines 1-68 contrast the Seraph and the Saint, lines 69-84 mark a change in mood where the poet celebrates the progress of Teresa, while lines 85-108 offer an invocation to the Saint, see Williams, ed., p. 61; M.E. Rickey, Rhyme and Meaning in Richard Crashaw (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1961), p. 36; and A. Warren, Richard Crashaw: A Study in Baroque Sensibility (Louisiana State University Press, 1939), pp. 141-44.

And take away from me my self and sin,
 This gracious Robbery shall thy bounty be;
 And my best fortunes such fair spoiles of me.
 O thou undanted daughter of desires!
 By all thy dower of Lights and Fires;
 By all the eagle in thee, all the dove;
 By all thy lives and deaths of love;
 By all thy larg draughts of intellectuall day,
 And by thy thirsts of love more large then they;
 By all thy brim-fill'd Bowles of feirce desire
 By thy last Morning's draughts of liquid fire;
 By the full kingdome of that finall kisse
 That seiz'd thy parting Soul, and seal'd thee his;
 By all the heav'ns thou hast in him
 (Fair sister of the SERAPHIM!).
 By all of HIM we have in THEE;
 Leave nothing of my SELF in me.
 Let me so read thy life, that I
 Unto all life of mine may dy.
 (85-108)

In contrast to the adjectives "hard" and "cold"(86) meant to express the qualities of the poet's dead sensibilities is the invocation to the Saint as an inspirational source of spiritual desire and love. The most prominent rhetorical feature is the anaphora(94-105) which enumerates the dual attributes of the Saint as intellectual and emotional, and result in the poet's plea for the experience of "transverberation" between himself and the Saint.²³ The dual nature of the Saint is that of all-consuming purity ("Lights," 94) and inspirational vigor ("Fires," 94), spiritual strength ("eagle," 95; "intellectuall," 97) and love ("dove," 95; "lives and deaths of love," 96; "thirsts of love," 98; "feirce desire," 99; "draught of liquid fire," 100; "final kisse," 101). Crashaw's imagery is obviously obsessed here with the sensual rather than intellectual reference. In

²³See Williams, ed. p. 62; Saint Teresa's experience of transverberation is described in her The Flaming Heart, chap. XXIV (1642).

his apparent apocalyptic preoccupation with the fear of finding himself in a state outside of grace, the poet can hope for comfort by invoking her name and calling for a process that, in its very fulfillment, would be the sensual climax to the poet's existence:

Leave nothing of my Self in me.
 Let me so read thy life, that I
 Unto all life of mine may dy.
 (106-8)

Thus, the "gratious Robbery"(91), which would take away the poet's "self and sin"(90), is equivalent to the "Just mercy" (37) envisioned in the "Hymn to the Church in Meditation of the Day of Judgment" where the poet begs Christ to "Take charge of me, and of my END."(68) Both meditations find their real crux not simply in the invocations to Christ or Saint Teresa, but rather in the poet's thoughts of completion or dissolution which depend on the poet being granted an inheritance of mercy and forgiveness of sins. In his hymn "To the Name above every Name, the Name of Jesus" Crashaw gives utterance to the notion that the inevitable result of a failure to surrender the self to Christ's mercy and love is ultimate destruction:

Or if there be such sonns of shame,
 Alas what will they doe
 When stubborn Rocks shall bow
 And Hills hang down their Heavn-saluting Heads
 To seek for humble Beds
 Of Dust, where in the Bashfull shades of night
 Next to their own low Nothing they may ly,
 And couch before the dazeling light of thy dread majesty.
 They that by Love's mild Dictate now
 Will not adore thee,
 Shall then with Just Confusion, bow
 And break before thee.
 (228-39)

Crashaw comes closest to the use of an apocalyptic motive for didactic reasons, to teach those "sonns of shame," in the first "Hymn to Sainte Teresa" and "An Apologie for the foregoing Hymne." The poems, along with "The Flaming Heart," trace the glorious progress and final martyrdom of the Saint. But the poet's ecstatic admiration for the Saint also imparts the belief that "love is eloquence" ("An Apologie," 8) and that "Christ's faith makes but one body of all soules/And love's that body's soul, no law controulls" ("An Apologie," 17-18). Through the contemplation of the Saint's quest for the "unvalued Diadem"(48) of Christ's love in "The Hymn to Sainte Teresa" the reader is prepared for the command in the "Apologie" to "scorn the lazy dust, and things that dy,"(28), where the opening address of the "Hymn" to that "Love" which is the "Absolute sole lord/Of Life and Death"(1-2) is fully explicated. The reader, like the nascent Teresa, is taught "What death with love should have to doe" ("Hymn," 20).

In Crashaw's "Hymn" the imagery of destruction is opposed to that of joy.²⁴ Indeed, the images operate, by philosophical analogy, as thesis and antithesis which are synthesized in the message of love. The "guilty sword"(26) and "barbarous knife"(70)

²⁴Cf. "Tis Love, not Yeares or Limbs that can/Make the Martyr, or the man "(33-4).

are impotent against the powers of Christ's "Dart"(79ff.), "th'immortall instrument"(89). The "blood and sweat"(11) of the Saint's progress are contrasted with descriptions of her soul and being as milky or pure ("milky soul," 14; "white Mistresse," 123-4; "snowy family," 127). References to death ("Love, thou art Absolute sole lord,/Of Life and Death," 1-2; "Speak lowd into the face of death," 8)²⁵ culminate in the oxymoronic and paradoxical conception of a sweet death that is "more mysticall and high"(76):

When These thy DEATHS, so numerous,
Shall all at last dy into one.
(110-11)²⁶

Finally, Teresa's wounds or "bright scarres"(153) are healed by their own "Balsom"(109) and Christ's love.

From the outset of the "Hymn" the imagery associated with the Saint's martyrdom is martial(4ff.), whereas the relationship between the Saint and Christ is highly sensual and reminiscent of the language of the "Song of Songs"(114-28; 171-82):

SWEET, not so fast! lo thy fair Spouse
Whom thou seekst with so swift vowes,
Calls thee back, and bids thee come
T'embrace a milder MARTYRDOM.
(65-68)

Crashaw's description of the Saint's progress calls to mind Donne's "Anniversaries." Startlingly reminiscent of Donne's

²⁵See ll. 18, 20, 24, 28, 37, 38, 50, 54, 75, 79, 100, 101, 103, 104, 110, 116, 157, 181, 182.

²⁶The mystical union of the soul with God, See "Note to l. 76" Ed., p. 56.

repeated refrains for "Shee" are the lines in the "Hymn to Sainte Teresa:"

FAREWEL then, all the world! Adieu.
 TERESA is no more for you.
 Farewell, all pleasures, sports, and joyes,
 (Never till now esteemed toyes)
 Farewell what ever deare may bee,
 MOTHER'S armes or FATHER'S knee
 Farewell house, and farewell home!
 She's for the Mores, and MARTYRDOM.
 (57-64)

But, in spite of this thematic similarity between the works, Crashaw's poem is a celebration of the Saint's progress which does not offer a sustained treatment of evil for consolatory reasons. Crashaw is taught, and other men are potentially taught, the eloquence of love by the poet's own ecstatic and quasi-mystical, rather than quasi-prophetic, exaltation of her history:

Thus have I back again to thy bright name
 (Fair floud of holy fires!) transfus'd the flame
 I took from reading thee; tis to thy wrong
 I know, that in my weak and worthlesse song
 Thou here art sett to shine where thy full day
 Scarse dawnes. O pardon if I dare to say
 Thine own dear bookes are guilty. For from thence
 I learn't to know that love is eloquence.
 ("An Apologie," 1-8)

Surely Crashaw's verse can best be appreciated when viewed as a fair flood of holy fires in which the poet's passion for his subject has risen above all else. In "The Teresa Poems" the poet's religious enthusiasm, the holy martyrdom of the Saint, and the language of exuberance are harmoniously at one.

CONCLUSION

There are considerable differences in the perspective of the apocalypse in the poetry of d'Aubigné, Donne, Saint-Amant, and Crashaw. Not only do divergences of personal aesthetics permit each author to express his own emotional and intellectual attitude toward the subject, but there are also differences in artistic intent and motivation.

It has been pointed out that the apocalyptic in d'Aubigné and Donne shares certain features with that of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic. Both authors consider themselves as receiving their poetic inspiration from God; in "Les Feux" d'Aubigné calls upon divine blessing and assistance, while Donne associates himself with Moses, a biblical prophet, and contends that his commission to write the "Anniversaries" is God's will. In the Jewish and Christian apocalyptic traditions the poet-prophet was considered to be divinely inspired and directed. For an apocalypse to have any authority at all it was necessary to maintain a belief in divine inspiration on the part of the individual poet, or at least to accept his connection with a line of prophecy and prophets. D'Aubigné is more vehement than Donne in upholding his divine poetic authority, but both authors are traditional in their desire to connect themselves with a source of divine inspiration.

D'Aubigné and Donne both treat the subject of the disorder of the world, and provide explanations for the chaotic state of

the monde cassé. The treatment of evil pervades "The first Anniversary;" d'Aubigné devotes individual books of his epic to specific instances of Catholic injustice in martyrdoms and court offenses. This thematic element is necessary to the authors' individual apocalypses, but is also an integral part of the traditional apocalyptic. In the troubled intertestamental period, and during the time of the writing of the New Testament apocrypha, writers drew upon all of the political and intellectual clashes of their day. Such conflicts became the substance of their visions.

In traditional apocalyptic writings treatments of evil are accompanied by a consolatory intent: the present body politic and world will go through an ominous period of judgment and final dissolution. The vanquished, to whom these writings are addressed, are offered the consolation and hope of final retribution. This intent is obviously one of the directing forces behind d'Aubigné's "Jugement" where Protestants are prophetically assured of the destruction of the Catholic hierarchy. A thread of retribution runs throughout Les Tragiques, but culminates in the triumphant scenes of the final book. Likewise, in "The second Anniversary" the reader is offered the hope of attaining a higher spiritual plane.

The real force of the apocalypse is not to be found in a fantastic vision, but in the many particular descriptions of evil intended to prepare the way for a solution to the

world's topsy-turvy condition. D'Aubigné's compilation of a list of atrocities, and the extended description of the world's diseased and grotesque state in Donne, expressed mainly through verbs of violence and elements of spectacle, are among the most important techniques by which the authors hammer home their visions of an immoral world. Later sections of their works clear away this state of evil.

Since Les Tragiques and the "Anniversaries" are predicated on the poets' prophetic abilities, and on their intent to console, the apocalyptic elements in these works can be placed alongside the ancient tradition of such writings. Both works, in scope and depth, are motivated by similar artistic and philosophic goals. I suggest that they be considered as belonging to a traditional mode of such writings,

A wide gap separates the treatment of the apocalypse in the works of d'Aubigné and Donne, and the more personal rendering of the topic in Saint-Amant and Crashaw. No longer is the moral content universal, or the source of inspiration that of the divinely inspired and directed poet. Rather, in Saint-Amant and Crashaw the poem becomes a vehicle through which the poet can release his emotional fervor, and create a highly charged vision of his own imaginative state. Both poets portray themselves as inspired by personal emotion; Saint-Amant, in a moment of inquiétude, can sound the depths of his own intellectual and emotional experiences. He is able to induce a series of contemplative-imaginative happenings,

and he is interested in following such presentations to their logical end. Crashaw, even more than Saint-Amant, is an introspective poet. Whereas there is a good deal of the playful in the intellectual wanderings of Saint-Amant, Crashaw looks into his own spiritual state with a serious eye. Crashaw's verse can instill in the reader a feeling for a man who fears that he is totally devoid of grace, and utterly dependent on God's mercy. In the presence of "serious things" that "both the Psalm and sybyll sings," and the Day of Judgment, he worries out his personal grief and hopes of his own seat at Judgment.

In the poetry of Saint-Amant and Crashaw the consolatory hopes offered are personal rather than universal. Neither poet claims to express a universal message or ideal. Their work is composed, rather, of personal incidents and thoughts. Saint-Amant, especially, is prone to a flight of fancy. At the conclusion of "Le Contemplateur," where the poet's adventures draw to a close, Saint-Amant is "rewarded" for the imaginative renderings of all that he has taken in by the senses. Even though sensuous imagery also appears in the final lines of Les Tragiques, d'Aubigné is permitted to ascend into the midst of Heaven and the bosom of God as a divine reward for having fulfilled a prophetic and universal task. D'Aubigné has created a panorama of the last days in which all things are set right for mankind.

I have argued that the apocalypse appears specifically in "Le Contemplateur" as a structural device. Although Borton contends that the poem illustrates Saint-Amant's discovery of his spiritual capacities, his verse is more realistically viewed as a "muraille vive" of the poet's imaginative adventures. Saint-Amant was fond of the exuberant, grotesque, and occasionally ribald; he naturally seized upon the apocalypse as a useful topic to satisfy such inclinations. To Crashaw, however, the apocalypse is not a structural device, but rather a way to make known his own spiritual hopes and expectations.

The growth of scepticism in France and England is, in part, responsible for such apocalyptic visions. In England maladjustments in the economic and political systems, growing out of the development of capitalism and industrial enterprise, were influential in creating a mood of disenchantment among the populace. The theories of the new science also weakened the belief in earlier systems which dealt with the nature of man and the universe. Thirdly, Machiavelli's amoral and naturalistic political philosophy could not help but have had an effect on the intellectual climate of England. His spirit of scepticism and introspection culminated in the philosophy of that bête/noire, Thomas Hobbes, and was ultimately challenged by Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and other British moral sense

philosophers. In France a similar sceptical crisis is evident in the rise of that libre pensée which we have encountered in Saint-Amant and Théophile de Viau, and which was fueled by the sceptical examination of the human personality by Montaigne. In both France and England this increase in scepticism and introspection perhaps influenced the choice and content of poetic visions of the apocalypse. Nonetheless, such a tendency to sceptical thought and subject matter, closely associated with a tendency (especially in Jacobean literature) to the melancholic, can also be dismissed as a passing fashion and literary exaggeration. From the viewpoint of literary styles, the particular nature of baroque art and sensibility, which has been convincingly described by Buffum, de Mourgues, Raymond and others, can also partly account for the fondness in the topic. This source of motivation is, however, no more decisive a factor than sceptical fervor or concern over the new science.

When the compelling motivations behind individual descriptions of the end of the world during the period are seen to be established, and certain basic features of style and intent held in common with such artistic goals, there is adequate justification to employ the apocalypse as a genre of didactic literature. If the poet's work manifests the intent or techniques of the traditional mode already discussed, he is working with a form of writing that has distinctive

philosophic and technical characteristics. In the case of d'Aubigné and Donne, the demands made on the poets are obviously not those of form so much as philosophic intent, the attitude toward the source of inspiration, and the view of evil. In these instances the genre designation is dependent upon the introduction of such didactic material. In order to determine if a poem is apocalyptic in this sense the work must not simply have a vision of the dissolution of the world, but must also exhibit the presence of a persona inseparable from a seriously propagandist or doctrinal intent. However, in light of literary history, there may be limitations to such a view of genre that would demand a more archetypal set of criteria, or use of the term within the confines of traditional genres of epic, anniversary, lyric poem, and translation.

The use of the apocalypse must also be accounted for in a tepid Christian as Saint-Amant. The appearance of a structured and personalized apocalyptic vision in his poem, and the self-oriented vision of Crashaw, argues for the employment of a particular motif which, by definition, is operative in the more personal, structural, and often frivolous visions. "Le Contemplateur" of Saint-Amant, especially, drew upon the matter, but not the spirit, of the traditional apocalypses.

Having examined several apocalypses of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the reader can sense the almost perverse delight in describing the disorder of Nature and impending doom of the world that pervades these works.

The vigorous language, the elements of the grotesque and often the macabre, and the return to or hint of the consolatory, should receive a sympathetic reading from critics in the present age of anxiety.

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APPENDIX I

"Prosa de Mortuis" or "Dies Irae Dies Illa"

1. Dies irae, dies illa,
Solvat saeculum in favilla,
Teste David cum Sibylla.
2. Quantus tremor est futurus,
Quando iudex est venturus,
Cuncta stricte discussurus?
3. Tuba mirum spargens sonum,
Per sepulcra regionum,
Coget omnes ante thronum.
4. Mors stupebit et natura,
Cum resurget creatura,
Iudicanti responsura.
5. Liber scriptus proferetur,
In quo totum continetur,
Unde mundus iudicetur.
6. Iudex ergo cum sedebit,
Quidquid latet, apparebit,
Nil inultum remanebit.
7. Quid sum miser tunc dicturus,
Quem patronum rogaturus,
Cum vix iustus sit securus?
8. Rex tremendae maiestatis,
Qui salvandos salvas gratis,
Salva me fons pietatis.
9. Recordare, Iesu pie,
Quod sum causa tuae viae:
Ne me perdas illa die.
10. Quaerens me sedisti lassus.
Redemisti crucem passus:
Tantus labor non sit cassus.
11. Iuste iudex ultionis,
Donum fac remissionis
Ante diem rationis.
12. Ingemisco tanquam reus,
Culpa rubet vultus meus:
Supplicanti parce Deus.

13. Qui Mariam absolvisti,
Et latronem exaudisti,
Mihi quoque spem dedisti,
14. Preces meae non sunt dignae,
Sed tu bonus fac benigne,
Ne perenni cremer igne.
15. Inter oves locum praesta,
Et ab hoedis me sequestra,
Statuens in parte dextra.
16. Confutatis maledictis,
Flammis acribus addictis;
Voca me cum benedictis.
17. Oro supplex et acclinis,
Cor contritum, quasi cinis:
Gere curam mei finis.