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David Reid

Royalty and Self-Absorption in Drummond's Poetry



One of the ideas Christopher Hill throws off in *Milton and the English Revolution* is that Milton was brought up on a tradition of political dissent in poetry.¹ He suggests that Milton's headmaster, Alexander Gill, saw to it that the boys of St. Paul's formed their taste in English poetry on Spenser and the Spenserians, Drayton, Giles and Phineas Fletcher, Browne and Wither. The Spenserians in the reign of James—and this is a story recently told at greater length and with more nuance in David Norbrook's *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*—the Spenserians were poetically out. In style and in politics they looked back to the previous reign. What was in was above all Ben Jonson, who contrived a sort of emperor worship for James in his masques. Jonson's was the style of the Jacobean peace; the Spenserians' was the style of the Protestant jingoism of Elizabeth's poets and of the Leicester party, if not of Elizabeth herself.

Norbrook distinguishes the Spenserian and the Jonsonian styles as follows. The Spenserians "attempted at times to achieve a prophetic strain which Jonson normally denied himself."² They "tended to adopt a style which drew attention to its own artifice and thus highlighted the inability of language fully to embody transcendent truths; where Jonson's verse

¹(London, 1977), p. 19, 59-62.

²Norbrook, (London, 1984), p. 200.

gives the impression that ideals can be organically embodied in existing institutions and linguistic formulations, Spenserian verse constantly confesses to its inadequacy.³ The Spenserians “frequently associate God and poetic inspiration with light and water, infinite and indeterminate essences; they do not share Jonson’s fondness for imagery of organic growth.”⁴ They write a poetry of transcendence that tends to apocalyptic themes.⁵

Though Norbrook has an axe to grind, these distinctions are handy enough and aptly suggest a Spenserian genealogy for the politically discontented Milton of “Lycidas” from whom the Milton of *Paradise Lost* is clearly emerging. But they put Drummond in odd political company. We may not want to call Drummond’s poetic style Spenserian exactly; it owes more to Sidney than to Spenser. But that is a detail. If we want to place Drummond among the English poets of the seventeenth century, in his Arcadian style and the forms he uses he looks back to the Elizabethans as the Spenserians are supposed to. His poetry has almost all the characteristics that Norbrook says distinguish the Spenserians—imagery of light and water, a transcendental impulse, and a use of artifice that points by its stylization to the ineffable ideas it cannot adequately realize. Only the tendency to prophecy and apocalyptic themes is missing, except in “The Shadow of the Iudgement,” which is incomplete. On the whole, though he longed to leave the world by dying or living as a recluse, Drummond was too conservative and too self-preoccupied to look forward to an overturning of the human order and an end to the world that would involve other people.

The absence of the prophetic strain and the insignificance of apocalyptic themes point us to a more considerable difference between him and the English Spenserians. Stylistically his affinities may be with them but politically there is nothing to suggest that he was critical of the policies of James, during whose reign most of his poetry was written.⁶ He did share some of the general irritation with Charles. Like most Scots, he

³*Ibid.*

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 201.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶On Drummond’s politics, see Thomas I. Rae, “The Political Attitudes of Drummond of Hawthornden,” in *The Scottish Tradition: Essays Presented to R.G. Cant*, ed. G.W.S. Barrow (Edinburgh, 1974), pp. 132–46. See also David Stevenson, “‘The Letter on Sovereign Power’ and the influence of Bodin’s Political Thought on Scotland,” *Scottish History Review*, 61 (1982), 40, who points out that Drummond’s conservatism owes something to Bodin.

complained that the country could not support Charles's taxes.⁷ Like most of his class, he was upset by the way Charles's Laudian policies advanced the interest of the clerical estate and promoted bishops to jobs in the government that had traditionally gone to the aristocracy and gentry.⁸ And he seems to have been vexed by a heraldic slight to the house of Drummond.⁹ He was critical of Charles as he had not been of James. But criticism of Charles did not mean disaffection and Drummond remained a steady, if somewhat retiring, royalist throughout the Civil Wars. He expressed his views on the course of the Scottish Revolution in a series of pamphlets, which he didn't publish, though he probably circulated them in manuscript among his friends. "Irene," the best known of these, celebrates the peace and order he hoped Charles's statesmanship would bring about. It is true that the piece of statesmanship was actually a compromise with the Covenanting rebels and it is true that Drummond repeats the sentiment of "Forth Feasting," "No Guard so sure as loue vnto a Crowne," (l.246), and both of these might suggest reservations about how the king's sovereignty should be exercised.¹⁰ But the general drift of the tract is to warn the three estates of the kingdom of the dangers of rebellion and to recommend unlimited obedience to the sovereignty of the king whom God has appointed. When every allowance has been made for rhetorical occasion and for arguments for the king's authority based simply on expediency, Drummond's political principles still emerge very close to those James himself put forward in *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* or his *Speech to Parliament* of 1609.

If the Prince hold not his crown of [his peers] but of God (who distributeth honours as seemeth best unto him) and the auncient lawes of his kingdom; if his crown be not by election but by a lineall succession; if he be not a conditionall Prince but an absolute sovereign; if hee be lawfully invested, anointed and

⁷"An Apologetical Letter," *The Works of William Drummond of Hawthornden*, ed. J. Sage (Edinburgh, 1711), p. 133. The statement of Jove in "The Entertainment," ll.46-48, that Charles will not plunder his subjects with unjust taxes sounds like respectful protest. On dislike of Charles's taxes, see Gordon Donaldson, *Scotland: James V-James VII* (Edinburgh, 1971), pp. 302-3. On Drummond's "Apologetical Letter," see David Masson, *Drummond of Hawthornden: The Story of his Life and Writings* (London, 1873), pp. 239-40.

⁸"Apologetical Letter," p. 134; Masson, p. 240, comments on anti-episcopal implications.

⁹See "Considerations to the King," *Works*, pp. 129-31; Masson, pp. 215-23.

¹⁰"The Love of the People is the surest Guard of a Prince," "Irene," *Works*, p. 164; All citations of Drummond's poetry, unless otherwise noted, are to *The Poetical Works of William Drummond of Hawthornden*, ed. L.E. Kastner, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1913).

crowned. Why should ye servants give a law to your maister? ("Irene," *Works*, p. 168)

That surely commits Drummond to absolute monarchy and the divine right of kings. One recalls that in 1617 in "Forth Feasting" Drummond calls James "that Man divine" (l.17) and that in the "Entertainment" he devised for Charles's entry to Edinburgh in 1633 he has Caledonia exhort the Scots: "God's sacred picture in this man adore" (l.85).

Because Drummond deprecates extremes and recommends moderation and toleration it is easy to think that he was a middle-of-the-way man in politics. In fact he was a moderate only in the sense that he believed with James that the sovereign exercise of power was to moderate, to keep order in the state by tempering extremes.¹¹ He thought all political blessings flowed from the sun-king:

For as Moones splendor from her brother springs,
The peoples welfare floweth from their Kings.
("The Entertainment," ll.89-90).

If he criticized Charles's policies, it was because he thought they undermined the monarchy by contradicting the principle that the sovereign power should moderate the kingdom. By that principle, for example, Charles was wrong to have given so much power to churchmen, for in doing so he upset the balance between the three estates, which his power should have maintained and indeed rested on. Drummond was, in short, a thorough-going Jacobean monarchist of the school of Napier.¹² And when it came to the Civil War, he sided consistently with the king (at least in private), on whose sovereign power the political frame of the country as he saw it depended.

Drummond's politics, then, his glorifying of the monarchy and his sharing the ideals of the Jacobean peace set him apart from the Spenserians with whom on stylistic grounds we might wish to group him. And yet he wrote on occasions and on subjects that particularly excited Protestant jingoism and dissatisfaction with the court. The death of Prince Henry in 1613 was an occasion for a remarkable outburst of poetic grief. Among those who were discontented with James and his pacific ways the hope had been that Henry would lead Britain into glorious Protestant wars. Norbrook thinks it significant that the unofficial poet laureate, Jonson,

¹¹Cf. Rae, p. 143, on Drummond's irenicism.

¹²"Practice, Sir, the temperat Government": "A Letter of 1641" clearly written by Lord Napier to Charles but wrongly attributed by Mark Napier, *Memorials of Montrose and his Time* (Edinburgh, 1848), I, 270, to Montrose. See Stevenson "'The Letter on Sovereign Power,'" pp. 25-43.

ignored the occasion, while the Spenserians Browne and Wither made much of it.¹³ Drummond in his elegy, "Tears for the Death of Moeliades" is with the Spenserians, not just in style, but in politics. He deplores among other things that Henry died too young to make good his promise of becoming a Christian hero leading crusades against the Turk and Rome. The same enthusiasm for Protestant warfare informs his "Paraineticon," or exhortation, a short poem prefixed to Sir Thomas Kellie's *Pallas Armata* of 1627, which urges armed intervention on the side of Elizabeth of Bohemia in The Thirty Years' War.¹⁴ And finally Drummond pinches some conceits from Donne's "The Crosse" and turns them into anti-Catholic abuse in a commendatory poem prefixed to the equally abusive *True Crucifixe for True Catholikes* of 1629 by Sir William Mure whose religious, or at least ecclesiastical, feelings led him later to side with the Covenanters.¹⁵

Drummond then appears to be an anomaly. His poetic style links him with the Spenserians but he did not share their discontent with James. He not only recommended the divine right but celebrated the divine nature of James and Charles. And yet at the same time he expressed wishes for militant Protestant action characteristic of the political opposition and characteristic also of the poetical opposition of the uncourtly Spenserian poets.

There is an obvious way of dealing with the first contradiction, the one between his Spenserian poetic style and his unSpenserian Stuart royalism. We had better not think of Drummond as an English Spenserian, in spite of his literary correspondence with Drayton. We should think of him rather as a Scots Elizabethan, only his Elizabeth was James. He was the last and most refined of the Scots who tried to do what the English had done a generation or so earlier, the translation in the widest sense of the word of the European Petrarchan movement. In this he succeeds naturally the courtier poets of James's Castalian band. Left behind in Scotland, he was bent on wringing a few lilies from the acorns they had scattered. And so when he wrote in a mode no longer fashionable at the English court, he

¹³Norbrook, pp. 206ff.; "Teares," ll.46-7, Kastner, I, 76.

¹⁴Kastner, II, 167-68; See Norbrook, p. 217, for poetic enthusiasm for Elizabeth of Bohemia in the early 1620s. By 1627 the political situation had admittedly changed.

¹⁵Kastner, II, 168. Though "The Crosse" does not appear among Drummond's transcriptions of Donne's poems (National Library of Scotland, MS. 2067), it does appear among the Donne poems in the commonplace book of Sir John Wedderburn (National Library of Scotland, MS. 6504). Alan MacColl "A New Manuscript of Donne's Poems," *RES*, n.s. 19 (1968), 294, argues that the poems in the Wedderburn MS. were most probably transcribed from the same source as Drummond's copies, and if he is right, Drummond would have seen "The Crosse" there.

was in no sense expressing a distaste for the Stuart regime or casting a invidious backward glance at the reign of Elizabeth. In Scottish terms his was the style of James's court, only the court had left the country.

But if there is no contradiction between post-Castalian style and monarchocentric politics, there remains the discrepancy between Protestant jingoism and the ideals of the Jacobean peace. Here again, though, the Scottish context of Drummond's poetry does away with what *would* have been a discrepancy in an English writer. James, at least as king of Great Britain, supplied Scotsmen of Drummond's political views with the ideal of protestant monarch. The Elizabethan myth was not a Scottish story. It would not have seemed to Drummond that James, or even Charles, had fallen away from an Elizabethan ideal of making war on Spain. And so when Drummond dallies occasionally with the idea that the Stuarts might lead the Protestant cause, he is not muttering, as an Englishman probably would be, that James or Charles is truckling to Spain. He could in all innocence and loyalty celebrate the glories of the king's peace and yet occasionally wish for the glories of Protestant war.

Drummond's politics, especially under Charles, are almost sure to be more complicated than I have allowed. But I think the outline I have given of his royalism does justice to the main points. I want now to turn to some of the oblique ways in which Drummond's poetry conforms to the monarchical idea.

The same imaginative cast, the same turns of poetic idealizing, serve Drummond whether he is writing about his love, his God, or his prince. Drummond is not a fertile author. He copied others and he copied himself as well. But I don't think he copied himself only to make a meager store of ideas go as far as possible. He copied himself in love, politics and religion because conventional idealizing drew correspondences among the three realms of experience. And then within the conventions, his working and reworking of the same ideas brings his poetry to a certain intensity, an aesthetic not an emotional intensity, that somehow stays in the mind as a distinct coloring. He made his favorite themes his own to the point where they suggest a cast of mind, where they set up his peculiar tonality as a poet, the inner signature of his writing.

This cast of mind is intuned and self-absorbed. Self-absorption is standard among love poets and religious poets. In Spenser the concerns of even the political man are involved with the concerns of the inner man. So there is nothing unusual in tying up love, religion and politics together subjectively. But amidst so much that is highly conventional, the quality of Drummond's self-absorption seems to me curious, and that and the way the royal idea enters into it are what I shall discuss first before turning to more obvious expressions of his royalism.

Everyone agrees that Drummond's poetry is peculiarly literary. He says so himself: "I first beganne to reade, then loue to write."¹⁶ The world in which he pictures himself in love or grieving for the death of Prince Henry or celebrating James's visit to Scotland, as also the universe of his religious poems, are poetic otherworlds imagined out of books, not experience. The bay, the palm and the myrtle grow in Fife.¹⁷ The Forth rushes among her Cyclades—Drummond means the Isle of May and Inverkeithing.¹⁸ And the landscape is haunted by Mediterranean supernaturals. He adds the merle and the daisy of the medieval tradition to the hyacinth and the nightingale of the classical one.¹⁹ In one place he describes 'the Lockes of Amber/Of new-bloom'd Sicamors.'²⁰ Though hardly the product of an eye on the object, this is not, as far as I know, a detail he borrowed from someone else. Drummond has at least noticed a sycamore in flower and his opportunity to work it into the conventional idiom of amber locks. That is about as far as he goes in letting what he saw intrude on his poetry. Generally the setting of his poems is an Arcadia where rivers and sometimes mountains have Scottish names but the rest of Scotland has been kept out. Sir William Alexander compares the labyrinth of love he finds himself in to the links of Forth.²¹ The Spenserians, Browne and Wither, enliven their pastorals with imagery of the English scene. Browne for example notices a dog purging itself with grass or a girl's difficulty in learning to play the virginals.²² But no such lively notice of the world around him comes into Drummond's poetry. Nor does he make any of the teasing play between fantasy and fact that one can find in Spenser or Drayton.

¹⁶Sonnet i, *Poems*, Pt.1, Kastner, I, 3.

¹⁷Song i, ll.23, 24, 84, *Poems*, Pt. 1, Kastner, I, 10-11. See also Sonnet xv, *Poems*, Pt.1, Kastner, I, 20.

¹⁸"Teares for the Death of Moeliades," l.77, Kastner, I, 77.

¹⁹Daisy: Song i, l.107, *Poems*, Pt.2, Kastner, I, 58. Merles: Song i, l.101, *Poems*, Pt.2, Kastner I, 58. Nightingales: Song ii, l.6, *Poems*, Pt.1, Kastner, I, 32. Hyacinth: "Teares," l.127, Kastner, I, 79.

²⁰Song i, ll.52-3, *Poems*, Pt.1, Kastner, I, 10.

²¹*Aurora*, Song 3, *The Poetical Works of Sir William Alexander*, ed. L.E. Kastner and H.B. Charlton (Edinburgh, 1921), I, 463.

²²*Britannia's Pastorals*, Song 5 (dogs: ll.426-78; virginals: ll.622ff.), *The Poems of William Browne of Tavistock*, ed. Gordon Goodwin (London, 1894), vol.1.

Arcadian or pastoral worlds picture landscapes of the mind. Those who feel these need defending say that the imaginary world may simplify but does not abolish the troubled nature of human experience. With Drummond, however, the simplification has gone too far for that defense to sound convincing. His is an Arcadia for himself, not for other people. It contains no pastoral society. He addresses one sonnet in the poems on the Auristella affair to Sir William Alexander under the name of Alexis, and in "Teares on the Death of Moeliades" Alexis hangs up his shepherd's pipe and with his tears makes the River "Doven great to be" somewhere near Menstrie.²³ Otherwise Drummond's Arcadian Scotland is a rural solitude apart from Auristella herself, the occasion of his love poems. She is barely present in them, though sometimes addressed. She comes in mostly as a dream while she is alive and a spirit when she is dead. Even in "Forth Feasting" it is Scottish geography not Scottish people that rejoices at James's return. And the blazon of James's virtues stands by itself as a portrait in a landscape that symbolizes loyalty and devotion without the help of any human figures.

It is typical of Arcadian or pastoral worlds that they reflect human feeling. As landscapes of the mind they answer to states of mind.²⁴ And so Drummond's poetry abounds in pathetic fallacy. Drummond's Tweed floods with tears for the death of Prince Henry and the Forth billows with joy at James's return.²⁵ The rose, "whose Blush makes blushe the morne," is to wear funeral purple for Prince Henry's death.²⁶ And so on. These are entirely conventional ways of turning inside out, of making a world sympathetic to human feeling. What is perhaps unusual about Drummond's Arcadian Scotland is its solitariness, its having to answer only to his mind.²⁷

Poe thought melancholy the most poetic of emotions. It is certainly Drummond's favorite. Sir William Alexander praises him quite rightly for making sorrow a pleasure.²⁸ The pleasure Drummond extracts from

²³Sonnet xlvi, *Poems*, Pt.1, Kastner, I, 41; "Teares," l.94.

²⁴See Helen Cooper, *Pastoral: Medieval into Renaissance* (Ipswich, 1977), p. 106.

²⁵"Teares," ll.80-86; "Forth Feasting," l.41.

²⁶"Teares," l.126.

²⁷Renato Poggioli, *The Oaten Flute: Essays on Pastoral Poetry and the Pastoral Ideal* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), pp. 182ff., remarks that solitude was not part of the pastoral tradition before the seventeenth century.

²⁸Then thou so sweetly *Sorrow* makes to sing,
And troubled Passions dost so well accord,

melancholy is unsociable. The relish of self-absorption in melancholy is most obvious in those many love sonnets in which as it were he stares at himself in a mirror and draws a picture of what Auristella is doing to him.²⁹ But even when, mourning Auristella, he seems to leave himself out and let the countryside express sadness, there remains something reflexive about the feeling. The feeling and so the feeler, not the object or cause of the feeling, are the real object of his attention. In the following passage this self-absorption, or more simply sentimentality, arises from a certain aesthetic refinement.

That *Zephyre* euerie Yeere,
So soone was heard to sigh in Forrests heere,
It was for Her: that wrapt in Gownes of Greene,
Meads were so earelie seene,
That in the saddest Months oft sung the Mearles,
It was for Her: for her Trees dropt foorth Pearles.
That proud and statelie Courts,
Did enuie those our Shades, and calme Resorts
It was for Her: and she is gone, ô Woe!
Woods cut, againe doe grow,
Budde doth the Rose, and Dazie, Winter done,
But wee once dead no more doe see the Sunne.
(Song, 1, ll.96-108, *Poems*, Pt. 2)

Drummond supposes Auristella causes various happy springtime things but these are turned by the memory of loss into sadness. The repeated half-line, "it was for her," reminds him of his loss with a sort of sob. But even the happy things sound a bit sad before loss makes them sad. The zephyrs sigh. In four heavy monosyllables the trees drop pearls, perhaps of gum, perhaps of honeydew, but rather like tears. The shades the courts envy are in Drummond always ambivalent between peace and melancholy. The blackbirds that sing in winter ought to promise spring but somehow suggest desolation as well. The past happiness remembered is already deliciously tinged with sadness and the present consciousness of loss is absorbed into that deliciousness. Drummond produces not a simple feeling of loss but a double feeling in which pleasure and pain are held in suspension and instead of directing the mind to their objects arrest the attention in the state of mind itself, "my rare mind" as Drummond

That more *Delight Thy* Anguish doth afford,
Than others *Joyes* can Satisfaction bring.

From the sonnet prefixed to "Teares for the Death of Moeliades," Alexander, *Poetical Works*, II, 539.

²⁹Consider, for example, sonnets iv, xvi, xxiv, *Poems*, Pt.1, Kastner, I, 5, 20-21, 26.

elsewhere calls it.³⁰ And the reminiscence of Catullus or Horace (“wee once dead no more doe see the Sunne”) helps to detach the state of mind from any specific thing by speaking of a universal sadness in things. The same arrest of feeling in its own sensation occurs in Song ii, “Phoebus arise,” in which Drummond eagerly awaits Auristella, only to say in the last line that she has not turned up.³¹ This preserves the feeling of expectation from the fulfillment that would end it. It pickles it in regret. This is the song that contains the remarkable line about Zephyr “Kissing sometimes these purple Ports of Death” (l.37). The purple ports are Auristella’s lips. Drummond thinks he would die if he kissed them, probably according to the platonic theory that his soul would come out at his mouth and expire into hers; that is why her lips are gates of death.³² But the line not only expresses rather complicated feelings about kissing and indeed about death (one recalls another remarkable line: “I long to kisse the *Image of my Death*”).³³ It fixes the feelings in a puzzle. It takes us a moment to think what he means; the image does not give way immediately to its tenor. And what makes the image particularly stick out is that the song is full of color words, often rather choice ones, like “sable” and “ensaffroning.” We are made sensitive to color effects and consequently the ports of death bloom with a purpleness almost Swinburnian. The preciousness here, the exaggeration of the image and its aesthetic effect together with the curiosity of being attracted by death, has a way of arresting the ostensible love expectation, even before the last line preserves it in Auristella’s absence. Even in this apparently eager song Drummond manages to brood on his feelings and give them an introverted twist.

Perhaps Drummond’s fondness for reflections in water goes with the way his poetry turns outside in. Reflections in water are commonplace in

³⁰Sonnet iv, *Poems*, Pt.1, Kastner, I, 5. Ruth Wallerstein, “The Style of Drummond of Hawthornden in Relation to his Translations,” *PMLA*, 48 (1933), 1091, notes the static quality of Drummond’s writing.

³¹Song ii, *Poems*, Pt.1, Kastner, I, 32-33.

³²On the kiss see Castiglione *The Courtier*, Bk.4, trans. T. Hoby (London, 1588), Do 4v; and compare Drummond’s sonnet xli, *Poems*, Pt.1, Kastner, I, 36; “The Qualitie of a Kisse,” “Madrigalls and Epigrammes,” xiv, Kastner, I, 105; “Desired Death,” Madrigalls, xvii, Kastner, II, 157; Madrigal viii, *William Drummond of Hawthornden: Poems and Prose*, ed. Robert H. MacDonald (Edinburgh, 1976), p. 76.

³³Sonnet IX, *Poems*, Pt.1, Kastner, I, 7. Cf. Song ii, l.14, *Poems*, Pt.2, Kastner, I, 65.

Arcadian poetry but in Drummond they seem more common than usual.³⁴ One use of reflection is to imprint a loved person on the Arcadian landscape and so suggest a special sympathy between them. This is a special case of the way the world reflects the poet's mind in Arcadia. For example the Forth shares Drummond's grief for Prince Henry because she received his image when as a boy he used to look into her from the bank; she used to smile "oft on her Glasse/To see [him] gaze" ("Moeliades," 71-2). Again in "Forth Feasting" the Forth is overcome with joy to see James's "Lookes/Which with Delight wont to amaze my Brookes" (ll. 15-16). The most exuberant mirroring, however, is the Ore's, an obscure tributary of the Leven but Auristella's native stream. There in a dream Drummond sees her, or at least her inviting side, bathing naked and transfers his wishes to the water:

Draw thousand Pourtraits of Her on your Face,
 Pourtraits which in my Heart be more apparent
 If like to yours my Brest but were transparent.
 (Song i, ll.158-60, *Poems*, Pt.1)

Drummond by no means limits himself, though, to reflections of those he loves. He seems to like reflections for their own sake. In Sonnet xxii of the *Poems*, Part 1, he talks of "Ideal Woods in euery Crooke" of the stream.³⁵ The phrasing of that may suggest a reason for his liking. Arcadia is a landscape of the mind. Reflection is already a step towards dematerializing the world, turning it to an effect of light and water, making it an ideal thing.

Arcadian or pastoral fiction has perhaps a tendency to multiply images of the world it pictures. It has already produced an other world and the process of othering repeats itself. In Spenser's "Colin Clout's Come Home Again" Cynthia has a kingdom of land shepherds and another kingdom of shepherds of the sea. The process of othering is certainly at work in Drummond. In "Teares for the Death of Moeliades" heaven is another Arcadia, only better: "Other *Hilles* and *Forrests*, other sumptuous *Towres*/Amaz'd thou find'st" (ll.171-72).³⁶ Again when Auristella returns

³⁴They are common among the Castalian Band, e.g. Alexander, sonnet 98 and song 3, ll.25-8, *Aurora, Poetical Works*, II, 515, and Fowler *Tarantula of Love*, xxii, *The Works of William Fowler*, ed. Henry W. Meikle (Edinburgh, 1914), I, 156.

³⁵Kastner, I, 24.

³⁶The otherness formula for the heavenly Arcadia seems to have originated in Eclogue 5 of Sannazaro's *Arcadia*.

as a spirit after death to tell Drummond of the next world, her explanation involves, not just two, but three worlds.³⁷ She imagines a submarine world with caves, “dampish Bowres” (1.150), flowers and flocks and compares the astonishment of an inhabitant of that world on visiting the land world to what a land dweller would feel if he found himself in heaven. And there are other minor examples of the multiplying of worlds.³⁸ Noticeably in the examples I have given, the worlds are arranged in a hierarchy of ideality. The more ideal the copy the better. The most ideal copy is heaven, except that by a platonic reversal, the heavenly ideal version is held to be the true version and the earthly one an insubstantial copy. At the center of this ideal world in “Teares on the Death of Moeliades” is the mirror whose reflections are no longer images of things but their actual essences, “Where seene is all that *shall be, is, or was/While shall be, is, or was* doe passe away” (11.186-187). This mirror is God and since God contemplates his own perfections, Drummond calls him in a surprising conceit, “*Narcissus* of himselfe himselfe the *Well./Louer, and Beautie*, that doth all excell” (11.183-84). He copies the idea in “An Hymne of the Fairest Faire” where God looks into a mirror held up by Truth: “Here thou beholdst thy self, and (strange) dost proue./At once the Beautie, Louer and the Loue” (11.65-66). And here, absorbed in this mirror of the deity, the mind that has withdrawn into itself can rest in completeness.

There are at least six other references to Narcissus in Drummond’s slender oeuvre.³⁹ Apart from the epigram, “Narcissus,” none of these is as striking as the ones I have just quoted, but cumulatively and in the context of Drummond’s self-absorption I think it is fair to say that the Narcissus figure is central in his poetry. Strikingly the most resounding reference,

altri monti, altri pianni
 altri boschetti e rivi
 vedi nel cielo e più novelli fiori;
 altri Fauni e Sylvani
 per luoghi dolci estivi
 sequir le Ninfe in più felice amori.
Opere Volgari, ed. Alfredo Mauro (Bari,
 1961), p. 37-8.

³⁷Song ii, *Poems*, Pt.2, Kastner, I, 68-70.

³⁸Eg. the commendatory sonnet “Of my Lord Galloway his Learned Commentary on the Reuelation,” ll.9-12, Kastner, II, p. 64. See also “Forth Feasting,” l.319 ff., for a prophecy of another Scotland on the other side of the Atlantic.

³⁹Song i, l.56, *Poems*, Pt.1, Kastner I, 10; sonnet xx, *Poems*, Pt.1, Kastner, I, 23; “Madrigals and Epigrammes,” ix, MacDonald, p. 76; Madrigalls and Epigrammes,” xiii, Kastner, II, 154; “Posthumous Poems,” I, xxv, Kastner II, 195.

the conceit about God as "Narcissus of himself," crops up in a poem on a royal figure, Prince Henry. Nothing could bring out more emphatically how thoroughly the royal idea entered into the recesses of Drummond's self-absorption. Prince Henry indeed plays the part of psychopomp or initiator of Drummond into those mysteries of the universe that most concern himself. In "A Cypresse Grove," a prose meditation on death, Drummond has a vision of the universe in which the spirit of Prince Henry appears and discourses to him on the vanity of earthly life and on the life of the soul released by death.⁴⁰ In his elegy on Prince Henry written about the same time, Drummond follows Prince Henry's spirit up through the universe to heaven and takes his heavenly view of earthly things. It seems that Drummond felt that the son of James, whose majesty he speaks of as sacred, was especially suitable to mediate between himself and the supernatural realm and lead him to the mirror of mirrors, the Narcissus of himself. And yet Drummond, copying himself again, has Auristella's spirit also initiate him in the mysteries of the soul and repeat some of the arguments of "A Cypresse Grove" about the vanity of earthly life.⁴¹ This self-copying, however, points us in the same direction as the printing of the images of king, prince and Auristella on their native streams. The same form of idealizing served for royalty and mistress. Drummond made the same sort of religion of both. And just as Elizabethan poets could celebrate Gloriana and their mistresses in the same terms without feeling they were being disloyal to either, so Drummond could express his devotion to the Stuarts and to Auristella in the same language and imagery without any feeling of incongruity, or even perhaps of having spread himself rather thin. He might indeed have felt that the one attachment was a metaphor for the other and that together they stood in his oeuvre as one of those mirrorings he was so fond of.

The typical figure for royalty in Drummond, however, leads outwards from the inturned preoccupation with darkness and death and the light that can paradoxically be fetched from them. This is the figure of Phoebus, the sun-god, patron of prophecy and of poetry, of both the oracle at Delphi and the Castalian well nearby. Sir William Alexander has a sonnet which celebrates James as prophet and poet:

⁴⁰Kastner, I, 97 ff., and his note to line 942 on p. 353. See also Robert Ellrodt, ed., *A Midnight's Trance* (Oxford, 1951), pp. xiii-xiv. In this context Drummond's curious stress on the beauty of the image of God in "the Prince, that vital Spirit of the Commonwealth, which giveth Life to so many Millions of Lives, the Fairest Image of God upon Earth" ("Irene," *Works*, p. 164) seems appropriate to his idealizing.

⁴¹Song ii, *Poems*, Pt.2, ll.35ff., Kastner, I, 22.

He (eminent in Knowledge as in State)
 What might occur oraculously told;
 And when far rais'd from this Terrestrial Round,
 He numbrous Notes with measur'd Fury frames,
 Each Accent weigh'd, no Jarr in Sense, or Sound,
 He *Phoebus* seems, his Lines *Castalian* Streams.⁴²

I have not discovered a general cult of Apollonian majesty among the Castalians. But certainly the sun king figures largely in Drummond's poems. In "Forth Feasting" James appears as another sun, his absence being compared to winter or an arctic night (*ll.*21-2, 75-9), his return bringing forth a new spring (*ll.*33-4), and the reflection of his royal gleams in the tributaries of the Forth lending them the glory of more famous streams (*ll.*101-07). Similarly in "Teares for the Death of Moeliades," Prince Henry is the bright day star of the west (*l.*3); his death is like the eclipse of the sun (*l.*25-6); and much of the other figuration of the poems turns on an implied sun metaphor. By now it will come as no surprise that what does for royalty will do also for religion and love. And so in "An Hymne of the Resurrection" Drummond uses much the same sun imagery for Christ's death and resurrection as he did for the absence and return of that other man divine, James: Christ rises like a second sun (*ll.*13ff.); at his coming nature renews herself and the landscape rejoices (*ll.*95ff). And finally Drummond uses the sun as a figure for Auristella. Like the sun king, like Christ as the risen sun, the sun woman is a highly conventional image. Shakespeare's mistress's eyes were nothing like the sun only because everyone else's mistress's eyes were like it. Auristella's eyes, though green, are all that they should be in point of radiance.⁴³ They are "Sunnes which shine as cleare/As thou [that is, Phoebus] when two thou did to Rome appeare."⁴⁴ The affinity with the sun goes further than eyes. In the same poem, Phoebus with golden hair and blushing beams looks something like Auristella's twin (*ll.*9-10, 25). In Sonnet xiii Drummond apostrophizes the "Sacred Blush impurpling Cheekes pure Skies/With crimson Wings which spread thee like the *Morne*" and in Song i he describes "Her haire more bright than are the Mornings Beames" (*l.*109).⁴⁵ And everywhere connections are made between Auristella and the sun. Appropriately his last vision of her "vanish'd up in *Titans* Light/Who guilding with his Rayes each Hill and Plaine/Seem'd to have brought the

⁴²Alexander, *Poetical Works*, II, 541.

⁴³Sonnet xviii, Madrigal ii, *Poems*, Pt.1, Kastner, I, 22.

⁴⁴Song ii, *ll.*29-30, *Poems*, Pt.1, Kastner, I, 32.

⁴⁵*Poems*, Pt.1, Kastner, I, 19, 12.

Gold-smiths World againe."⁴⁶ I note in passing that the golden age on earth in these lines is only an effect of art, of gilding, of the work of goldsmiths. The true golden world is now to be found in the supernatural platonic world of light that Auristella beckons Drummond towards.

Against all these images of the sun we may set images of shade. On the one hand Drummond opens himself outwards to the sovereign touch of the sun; on the other, he longs to retire into himself among trees. Like the other images we have looked at, shade turns up as a motif whether he is writing about love, religion, or the court. In Sonnet xvi after having addressed the brook in which he frequently gazes at himself weeping, he turns to the "high woods," "Shades which Phoebus neuer clears."⁴⁷ The shade that shuts him out from the sun is a figure for love desolation. Auristella will not let the light of her countenance shine on him. But shady woods are clearly congenial to him, a place to enjoy his sorrows and have dream visions of Auristella.⁴⁸ They are also a good place for religious melancholy. In his poetry John the Baptist and the saving remnant of Revelation live as hermits in the woods.⁴⁹ So does Peter when he repents of having betrayed Christ.⁵⁰ Drummond's religious happy man also lives there. The happiness is somewhat morose:

Thrice happie hee who by some shadie Groue
Farre from the clamorous World, doth liue his owne
Though solitarie, who is not alone
But doth converse with that Eternall Loue.⁵¹

⁴⁶Song ii, ll.246-68, *Poems*, Pt.2, Kastner, I, 72.

⁴⁷*Poems*, Pt.1, Kastner, I, 21.

⁴⁸E.g. from *Poems*, Pt.1: Song i, ll.50ff., Kastner, I, 10; sextain i, Kastner, I, 18; sonnet xvi, Kastner, I, 21; sonnet xxviii, Kastner, I, 28; sonnet xliii, Kastner, I, 38; from *Poems*, Pt.2: sonnet viii, Kastner, I, 60.

⁴⁹Sonnet xi, *Flowers of Sion*, Kastner, II, 12; "The Shadow of the Ivdgement," ll.369-72, *Flowers of Sion*, Kastner, II, 60.

⁵⁰"Saint Peter at the Denying of his Master," xvii, "Posthumous Poems," 2, Kastner, II, 214.

⁵¹"Praise of a Solitarie Life," sonnet xxii, *Flowers of Sion*, Kastner, II, 30.

Finally and most memorably sylvan shades offer a retreat from the court.⁵² It was a characteristic use of pastoral or Arcadian verse to picture an innocent country life in order to cast satirical or critical reflections upon corrupt court life. But not with Drummond. He never makes social criticism through his pastoral forms. There was indeed no court for him to long to escape from, let alone criticize. His turning away from the court then is a fiction, a pretext for burying himself in the woods so that he can be "his owne," which is more or less what he was doing at Hawthornden anyway.

The difficulty with a poetry such as Drummond's, so literary in its inspiration, is to know how significant details are. Everything must be taken with a pinch of salt. The recessive desire for a life among the trees, however, comes up too often in too many contexts not to say something about Drummond's poetic temper. And it goes with the reflective, self-absorbed nature of the poetry and its themes that I described earlier. The solitariness that figures so largely in Drummond's poetry involves more than literary traditions of love melancholy or pastoral withdrawal. Drummond uses these to express a rather solipsistic way of looking at things. That, however, seems to contradict the spirit of the pieces that celebrate royalty and the royalism of Drummond's imagination.

Perhaps the way to explain the contradiction is this. The moping quality typical of Drummond's verse, his attraction to solitude, shade and death, is a sort of response to the absence of the king. The kind of Castalian poetry he was writing was king-centered and the whole color of his verse is what we might expect of a Castalian who had been left behind, whether it rejoices in the king's return or turns inward in his absence.

Whether that sounds convincing or not, the king-centeredness of Drummond's poetry is striking. The image of solar majesty runs through his work. A royal figure enters his meditations on death and the absorption of the self into the divine Narcissus. If Drummond is a self-absorbed poet, his subjectivity, the language and imagery of his self-absorption, are royalist. A good deal of poetry of self-absorption and rural retreat was written in the seventeenth century. Vaughan uses metaphysical forms to express his self-communings and sense of exile. Poets of the Civil War, such as Lovelace, Cowley and Cotton praise rural life, though of a Horatian, not an eremitical, sort. Those poets had new forms for those themes. Drummond, as Jonson told him, wrote in old-fashioned forms.

⁵²Sonnet xliiii, *Poems*, Pt.1, Kastner, I, 38, like the "Praise of a Solitarie Life" prefers woods to courts: "Ah! if I were mine owne, your deare Resorts/ I would not change with *Princes stately courts*." The wish to be "mine owne" is clearly heartfelt and Auristella at once obstructs and furthers it. How he can prefer woods to courts when there was no court is puzzling. See also Song i, *Poems*, Pt.2, Kastner, I, 58.

But his poetry shows how Castalian forms and even a Castalian, king-centered mental set could stir with a rather new fashioned sensibility.

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