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David W. Atkinson

William Drummond as a Baroque Poet

It is a critical commonplace to acknowledge William Drummond as one of the great imitators of his day, or as Matthew McDiarmid pointedly says, "one of the most thorough and successful exponents of the Renaissance practice of literary plunder."¹ Critics have not only demonstrated Drummond's extensive use of European models, but have further indicated his dependence on Scottish sources, in particular William Fowler and William Alexander.² Drummond remains, however, a curiously enigmatic figure, despite Robert MacDonald's aim in his edition of Drummond's *Poems and Prose* (1976), to overcome the unjustifiable neglect of "the best poet in Scotland . . . between Douglas and Ramsay."³ It has been nearly fifteen years since the publication

¹Matthew P. McDiarmid, "The Spanish Plunder of William Drummond of Hawthornden," *Modern Language Review*, 44 (1949), 2.

²See "Introduction," to *The Poetical Works of William Drummond of Hawthornden*, ed. L. E. Kastner, STS, 2nd Series, 3-4 (1913), I, xxii-xxiii; R. D. S. Jack, *The Italian Influence on Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh, 1972), pp. 113-4; "Drummond of Hawthornden: the Major Scottish Sources," *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 6 (1968), 36-46; Edwin Morgan, "Gavin Douglas and William Drummond as Translators," *Bards and Makars*, ed. A. J. Aitken, et al. (Glasgow, 1977), pp. 194, 198-200.

³Robert H. MacDonald, Introduction, *William Drummond of Hawthornden: Poems and Prose*, ed. Robert H. MacDonald (Edinburgh & London, 1976), p. ix. Unless other-

of MacDonald's edition, yet Drummond still remains outside the mainstream of Scottish literary studies. The reasons for this neglect are those that have always hurt his reputation. Writing in English rather than Scots, Drummond is identified with an English literary tradition, and, in being grouped with the Spenserians rather than the Metaphysicals, he is considered out of step with his time, and therefore of little seminal importance in the Scottish tradition. Finally, Drummond's "conversations" with Ben Jonson, which are usually mentioned to indicate Jonson's admiration for Drummond, continue to reduce Drummond to being a footnote to his more famous English contemporary.

These claims are not unjustified. It would be quite wrong to group Drummond, as either a poet or a thinker, with such major English figures as Spenser, Drayton, or Donne. Drummond, moreover, might have used Scottish models, but, as MacDonald notes, Drummond also "consciously, if not always successfully, endeavoured to erase Scotticisms from his verse."⁴ Drummond was, as well, suspicious of change; his scorn of the metaphysical poets is obvious when, in extolling poesy as "the language of the Godes," he observes how "in vaine have some men of late . . . consulted upon her reformation, and endeavored to abstract her to metaphysical Ideas and Scholastical Quiddities."⁵ Finally, Drummond is an uneven poet, capable at times of remarkable poetic eloquence, while at other times producing little more than rhymed doggerel, although it should be stressed that Drummond never intended much of his poetry for public scrutiny. Two things are striking about how critics have approached Drummond. First, in being preoccupied with what is derivative in Drummond's poetry, critics have missed its distinctive features, and failed to appreciate Drummond's own poetic sensibilities. Second, in being too quick to dismiss Drummond as a pale imitation of his English brethren, critics have not given sufficient attention to where Drummond stands in relation to his age.

In connection with art and architecture, and to a lesser extent music, the period from about 1570 to 1650 is often termed Baroque, although one tends not to see this term employed in connection with literature, despite the exis-

wise specified, all subsequent references to Drummond's poems and poetry are taken from this edition. They will appear in the text.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. xv. Along similar lines, Kurt Wittig argues that Drummond's poetry "hardly contains anything Scottish," *The Scottish Tradition in Literature*, (Edinburgh and London, 1958), p. 129; and John Speirs refers to the "purely English imitation work of Drummond of Hawthornden," *The Scots Literary Tradition* (1940; rpt. London, 1962), p. 94.

⁵"A Letter on the True Nature of Poetry, Addressed to Dr. Arthur Johnston," in *William Drummond of Hawthornden: Poems and Prose*, p. 191.



William Drummond of Hawthornden

tence of a number of significant critical studies.⁶ While the term "Baroque" is not used without difficulty, it is a term that can be used in the same way one uses such period terms as "Renaissance," "Neoclassicism," and "Romanticism."⁷ Or, as Daniells indicates, Baroque is "a comprehensive art-form based upon a specific artistic sensibility, which in turn springs from a general sensibility."⁸ Appealing about the term "Baroque" is that it designates an inclusivity joining the Spenserians with the Metaphysicals, and both of these in turn with the Neoclassicists. It is, moreover, a term ideally suited to Drummond, for, in explaining much of what occurs in his poetry and his prose, it places him at the center of European literary development rather than at the periphery as an eclectic imitator.

Baroque is most typically contrasted with Renaissance in representing "a perpetuation of . . . traditional forms accompanied by a reaction against them."⁹ While there is continued argument about the source of this aesthetic impulse, there is general agreement that it grew out of what Hobbes identified as the "unlimited self-confidence" of the Renaissance "to accomplish the impossible in all directions."¹⁰ The Baroque, according to Stechow, expresses a "basically new and optimistic equilibrium of religious and secular forces" that "tended to harmonize the humanistic, the religious, and the scientific realms into one integrated whole, deliberately, yet often with a passionate zeal and dynamic power of which the Renaissance had not been capable."¹¹ There is in this regard a preoccupation with "the contradictions of

⁶Important works include J. M. Cohen, *The Baroque Lyric* (London, 1963); Roy Daniells, *Milton, Mannerism and Baroque* (1963; rpt. Toronto, 1964); Imbrie Buffum, *Studies in the Baroque from Montaigne to Rotrou* (New Haven and London, 1957); Lowrey Nelson, Jr., *Baroque Lyric Poetry* (1961; rpt. New Haven and London, 1963); Murray Roston, *Milton and the Baroque* (Pittsburgh, 1980); Frank J. Warnke, *Versions of Baroque: European Literature in the Seventeenth Century* (1972; rpt. New Haven and London, 1975); *European Metaphysical Poetry* (1961; rpt. New Haven and London, 1974); Austin Warren, *Richard Crashaw: A Study in Baroque Sensibility* (University, LA, 1939).

⁷Frank J. Warnke, *European Metaphysical Poetry* (1961; rpt. New Haven and London, 1974), pp. 3-4.

⁸Roy Daniells, "Baroque Form in English Literature," *The University of Toronto Quarterly*, 14 (1944-5), 397.

⁹Daniells, *Milton, Mannerism and Baroque*, p. 54.

¹⁰Quoted in Roston, *Milton and the Baroque*, p. 4.

¹¹Wolfgang Stechow, "Definitions of the Baroque in the Visual Arts," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 5 (1946), 114.

experience,"¹² and an obsessive struggle to reduce the multiplicity of experience to one. At the same time, however, this desire to reconcile opposites is never fully accomplished, as the Baroque becomes a "dissolution of healthier Renaissance terms."¹³ Thus the extravagance and incongruity so often associated with the Baroque signal a failure of the unifying impulse central to Renaissance thought and imagination. To this end, Fritz Strich observes that the Baroque "shows us the temporal world in its fleeting, changeable and transitory aspects. . . . Not, as the Renaissance believed, a sovereign, self-governing, harmonious, cosmic entity, a self-reliant independent being, but a shadow, a fading music, a passing wave, a reed tossing in the storm."¹⁴ The optimism of the Renaissance was compromised by a questioning of the perfectibility of the individual, just as the Platonic idealism of Ficino and Pico was replaced by a view of the world as passing appearance, and by the recognition that the best the artist and poet could do was hint at the reality behind this appearance.

One could hardly find a better description of Drummond's sensibility. Elsewhere I have argued that Drummond's *A Cypress Grove*, while beginning as a rumination on death in a manner typical of the medieval *memento mori*, opens out at its end to celebrate the inconceivable glories of heaven¹⁵ where "that earnest appetite of the Understanding, content it selfe, not seeking to know any more" experiences "the vision of the Divine essence" (p. 169). This conclusion was premature, for *A Cypress Grove* concludes, in fact, with Drummond's heavenly vision suddenly ended, as he is rudely returned to the world of time and change. The glorious prose, in which Drummond talks directly and passionately about "that infinite and all-sufficient Good; which being fully knowne, cannot . . . but be fully and perfectly loved" (p. 169), is replaced with a discursive philosophical explanation of human limitation and of how God purposefully "never brought forth all that it can, for then were it bounded and no more infinit" (p. 171). Drummond may direct his attention in *A Cypress Grove* to heaven, but his real concern is with the transitoriness of the world and the incompleteness of his own vision. His frustration is obvious when he says:

¹²Warnke, p. 22.

¹³Roston, p. 177.

¹⁴Quoted in Cohen, *The Baroque Lyric*, p. 15.

¹⁵D. W. Atkinson, "Tradition and Innovation in Drummond of Hawthornden's *A Cypress Grove*," *Scottish Language and Literature, Medieval and Renaissance*, ed. Dietrich Strauss and Horst W. Drescher (Frankfurt am Main, 1985), 467-85.

Who can bee great on so small a Round as is this Earth, and bounded with so short a course of time? How like is that to Castles or imaginarie Cities raised in the Skies by chauce-meeting Cloude? or to the Gyantes modelled (for a sport) of Snow which at the hote lookes of the Sunne melt away and lye drowned in their owne moisture? Such an impetuous Vicissitude towseth the Estate of the World! Is it Knowledge? But wee have not yet attained to a perfect Understanding of the smallest Flower, and why the Grasse should rather bee greene than red. (p. 154)

Much has been made about the Baroque awareness of death, which one is tempted to see as a continuation of medieval attitudes. The distinction to be made is that, while the fabric remains, the Baroque preoccupation with death has a quite different motivation than that of earlier times. During the Middle Ages, the passing of earthly glory had a distinctly religious significance, and was intended as a reminder that one should prepare for one's final judgement. By contrast, the seventeenth-century concern with death becomes a Baroque lament for the fleeting nature of life, focusing as it does on life as a series of "temporary appearances and passing expressions."¹⁶ These themes of changeability, relativity, and ambiguity produce, as Strich remarks a picture of the world "as a passing show, which the spectator may enjoy only for a moment."¹⁷ There is no question that in *A Cypress Grove* Drummond repeats many of the long-held and often repeated commonplaces concerning death: that death, although the "sade Estranger of acquaintance" (p. 148), frees one from the "woefull Hospitall of the World" (p. 155), and that, as the "Disposition and Rule" of God, death is a part of divine plan and necessarily good. At the same time, however, Drummond recognizes that it is not really "of Death . . . that we complaine, but of Tyme, under the fatall shadow of whose winges, all things decay and wither" (p. 165). This is the Baroque concern, and also the Baroque dilemma, that humankind quests after "an immortal, unchangeable, impassible, all-sufficient kinde of life" (p. 165), even while lamenting the need to give up a world which possesses its own glory and wonder.

Thus in many of Drummond's references to death is a concomitant awareness of the fleeting beauty of the world; there is a sense of pathos and loss when he writes:

Looke how the Flowre, which lingringlie doth fade,
The Mornings Darling late, the Summers Queene

¹⁶Cohen, p. 33.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 69.

Spoyl'd of that Juice, which kept it fresh and greene,
As high as it did raise, bowes low the head:
("No Trust in Tyme," ll. 1-4; p. 89)

And in this context, Drummond is less than satisfied with an argument that justifies mutability as an expression of divine providence; his scepticism is obvious when he questions:

Doth then the world goe thus, doth all thus move?
Is this the Justice which on Earth we find?
Is this that firme decree, which all doth bind?
Are these your influences Powers above?
("In Pious Memorie of Euphemia
Kynninghame," VI, ll. 1-4; p. 132)

Much of what Drummond expresses, though, is the frustration of not being able to grasp and hold on to life. The very deftness of his touch, for example, suggests the insubstantiality of what we hold most valuable:

*Life a right shadow is,
For if it long appeare,
Then is it spent, and Deathes long Night drawes neare;
Shadows are moving, light,
And is there ought to moving as is this?
When it is most in Sight,
It steales away, and none can tell how, where,
So neere our Cradles to our Coffines are.*
("The Permanencie of Life," ll. 1-8; p. 89)

Indeed, some of Drummond's finest poems dwell on this theme, drawing on unusual, or certainly unanticipated images:

*This Life which seemes so faire,
Is like a Bubble blowen up in the Aire,
By sporting Childrens Breath,
Who chase it every where,
And strive who can most Motion it bequeath:
And though it sometime seeme of its owne Might
(Like to an Eye of gold) to be fix'd there.
And firme to hover in that emptie Hight,
That only is because it is so light,
But in that Pompe it doth not long appeare;
For even when most admir'd, it in a Thought
As swell'd from nothing, doth dissolve in nought.*
(Madrigal I; p. 56)

Given Drummond's preoccupation with change and loss, one might expect in his poetry some attempt to identify an unchanging reality in the face of life's vicissitudes, as indeed is the case in *A Cypress Grove*. But Drummond, as a man of considerable religious refinement, does not always find consolation in promises of something better to come in heaven. A characteristic expression of this disaffection is the first sonnet of *Flowres of Sion*. Drummond stresses in the first twelve lines of the poem how even the greatest human accomplishments fade away in time:

Triumphant Arches, Statues crown'd with Bayes,
Proud Obeliskes, Tombes of the vastest frame,
Colosses, brasen *Atlas* of Fame,
Phanes vainelie builded to vaine Idoles praise;
States, which unsatiate Mindes in blood doe raise,
From the Crosse-starres unto the Articke Teame,
Alas! and what wee write to keepe our Name,
Like Spiders Caules are made the sport of Dayes:
All onely constant is in constant Change,
What done is, is undone, and when undone,
Into some other figure doeth it range;
Thus moves the restlesse World beneath the Moone:
(*"The Instabilitie of Mortall Glorie," ll. 1-12; p. 88*)

And, then, in the concluding couplet, he tries to find solace "above Time, Motion, [and] Place" (l. 13) in "Steppes, not reach'd by Nature trace" (l. 14). There is an obvious discordancy between the couplet and what comes before, as the intellectual sophistication of the first twelve lines is answered by the commonplace. One gets a similar sense from Drummond's long untitled dream poem, in which he presents himself being chastised by "*A Virgine in the Blooming of her Prime*" (Song II, l. 21) to give up his self-serving sorrow for his lost loved one, and to find solace in how she is free from "*lothsome Dayes*" (l. 61), this "*filthie Stage of Care*" (l. 63). But the poem is stilted and unconvincing; indeed one is left with the impression that Drummond is really trying to convince himself but is not being very successful:

*O leave that Love which reacheth but to Dust,
And in that Love eternall only trust,
And Beautie, which when once it is possesst,
Can only fill the Soule, and make it blest.*
(*ll. 197-200; p. 70*)

The poem is a catch-all of well-used images, which themselves suggest Drummond's own lack of engagement with the ideas he expresses. His reference to "ideal beauty" filling out the human soul is a vague abstraction and

little more than an empty echo of Plato. In the end, the poem's failures are a telling signal of where Drummond's sentiments lie.

One finds much the same views expressed in Drummond's long poem, "An Hymne of the Fairest Faire." It is true that the poem embodies many of the conventions used by others in addressing the same subject. Spenser's "Hymn to Heavenly Beautie" most immediately comes to mind. Quite intentionally philosophical, Drummond's poem draws on a combination of Platonic idealism, the notion of God as the architect of an ordered universe, and the fairly standard theory of correspondences in which earthly things are used to speak of heavenly. Indeed all these elements lie behind Drummond's sometimes irritating habit of referring to God as the great "All." While Drummond's vision is upward, however, he cannot escape his clay feet, and the changeable world that confronts him; thus he writes:

Thrust from our first estate wee live exil'd,
Wandring this Earth, which is of Death the Lot,
Where he doth use the Pow'r which he hath got,
Indifferent Umpire unto Crownes and Kings,
The supream Monarch of all mortall things.

("An Hymne of the Fairest
Faire," ll. 258-62; p. 124)

Drummond's poem, in focusing on the duality of appearance and reality, epitomizes an attitude central to the Baroque.¹⁸ Drummond finds no ultimate resolution between what he knows and loves of the world, which is but appearance, with what he hopes he will eventually know of heaven. As a number of commentators have remarked, the extravagance of Baroque may well stem from something as simple as the need to overcome such limitation. Thus the sometimes labored quality of "An Hymne of the Fairest Faire" may be seen as representing the futility of such efforts. As well, one might point to Drummond's specifically religious poems, in which he speaks about the divine in various ways, which together suggest a mind that allows for no absolutes, even in how one talks about God,¹⁹ and that recognizes that anything humankind says of God is an imposition of human limitation on that which is unlimited.

One further poem deserves mention in this regard. In the second of the *Urania* poems, Drummond expresses his frustration with a world that lacks

¹⁸Frank J. Warnke, *Versions of Baroque: European Literature in the Seventeenth Century*, pp. 21-51.

¹⁹David W. Atkinson, "The Religious Voices of Drummond of Hawthornden," *Studies in Scottish Literature*, XXI (1986), 197-209.

finality. He bemoans, "Too long I follow'd haue my fond Desire / And too long painted on the *Ocean Streams*,"²⁰ to conclude, with the especially effective image, "I found all but a Rose hedg'd with a Bryer, / A Nought, a Thought, a Show of mocking Dreames" (ll. 7-8). Again Drummond conveys the dilemma of being drawn to a world that is impermanent, yet being unconvinced by the Christian insistence that a good death demands a willingness to give the world up. There is a hollowness in his reference, "Hencefoorth on thee mine *only Good* I'll thinke, / For only thou canst grant what I doe crave" (ll. 9-10), which is made even more so by his transparently studied reference to Christian grace, "Thy Naile my Penne shall bee, thy Blood mine Inke" (l. 11).

The Baroque is, of course, frequently associated with the religious, although in Warnke's words, Baroque devotionism is neither "simple praise of the deity" nor "simple exhortation of the faithful"; rather it is "the confrontation of the infinite by the finite on terms of the greatest intimacy and immediacy."²¹ Again, however, the Baroque is dominated by a sense of inherent frustration, as, driven by paradox and inconsistency, it attempts to explode past the ordered categories of conventional understanding; or, as Drummond remarks of God in one of his sonnets, "The more I search of thee, The lesse I know."²² Drummond is most effective when he moves away from or changes the commonplace, suggesting in so doing that, while the earthly might well be predictable, the heavenly is not circumscribed by human experience and logic. While Drummond's description of the divine in "An Hymne of the Fairest Faire" begins with a standard Platonic expression of "that Essence which not mov'd makes each thing move, / Uncreat'd Beautie all-creating Love" (ll. 5-6), he eventually resorts to the vocabulary of logical contradiction, talking of God as transcending "Heaven's wide Vastes, the Boundes of nought" (l. 25). There is, as well, a sense of intellectual extravagance about Drummond's writing, as he struggles to express what exists in divine time and space, even while recognizing the impossibility of his task:

Whole and entire all in thy Selfe thou art,
All-where diffus'd, yet of this *All* no part,
For infinite, in making this faire Frame,
(Great without quantitie) in all thou came,

²⁰"Vrania or Spirituall Poems," II, ll. 1-2, *The Poetical Works of William Drummond*, ed. Kastner, I, 87.

²¹Warnke, pp. 130-31.

²²"Mans Knowledge, Ignorance in the Misteries of God," p. 107.

All filling all, how can thy State admit,
Or Place or Substance to be voide of it?

.

O only blest, and Author of all blisse,
No Blisse it selfe, that all-where wished is,
Efficient, exemplarie, finall Good,
Of thine owne Selfe but onely understood;
(*ll.* 285-90; 299-302; p. 125)

The metaphysical incongruity of Drummond's poem, then, points to the impossibility of any complete experience of divine glory, and thereby exemplifies Wolfflin's contention that in the Baroque there "is a change from absolute clarity, in which explicitness is the chief aim to relative clarity in which . . . beauty is perceived in the very darkness which modifies forms."²³ More than this, there is the implicit recognition that Christian commonplaces had exhausted themselves, and that they no longer spoke to a religiosity that went beyond merely praising the deity or exhorting the faithful. Thus, as Warnke suggests, the Baroque recognized the shifting nature of religious experience, and provided a way to engage the individual in "a personal and intense relationship" with God.²⁴ It is to this end that Drummond's language and tone often strike a discordant note that signals the special circumstances of the experience being described. Drummond's sonnet "For the Magdalene" is a good example:

These Eyes (deare Lord) once Brandons of Desire,
Fraile Scouts betraying what they had to keepe,
Which their owne heart, then others set on fire,
Their traitrous blacke before thee heere out-weepe:
These Lockes, of blushing deedes the faire attire,
Smooth-frizled Waves, sad Selfes which shadow deepe,
Soule-stinging Serpents in gilt curls which creepe,
To touch they sacred Feete doe now aspire.
In Seas of Care behold a sinking Barke,
By windes of sharpe Remorse unto thee driven,
O let mee not expos'd be Ruines marke,
My faults confest (LORD) say they are forgiven.
Thus sigh'd to JESUS the Bethanian faire,
His teare-wet Feete still drying with her Hair.
(p. 94)

²³Quoted in Daniells, "Baroque Form in English Literature," p. 306.

²⁴Warnke, p. 131.

Three things are striking about this sonnet. First is the sense of drama in Mary's self criticism, which exemplifies the Baroque tendency to draw the reader directly into the speaker's experience. Drummond does not write a poem about Mary Magdalene, but a poem in which Mary expresses her own sense of remorse. Recounted in the present tense, her experience is transformed into an immediate and powerful encounter with God. Second is how Mary speaks candidly, even brutally, and how one is struck by the power of Drummond's images ("Brandons of Desire," "Smooth-frizled Waves"). Finally is the poet's presence in the final couplet, which is there to remind the reader, in a way consistent with the oblique nature of the Baroque, that one is "overhearing" a communication directed to God.

These distinctive Baroque features figure, as well, in *A Cypress Grove*. Although Drummond's essay is highly contrived, it is also an intensely personal work, as signalled by the constant reference to "I" and the internal dialogue of the essay. That *A Cypress Grove* draws on traditions that are part of the warp and woof of seventeenth-century European literature hardly needs repeating. Beyond this, though, *A Cypress Grove*, in staying away from a distinctly Christian fabric, suggests that religious experience is so personal that it transcends theological boundaries; Drummond says as much when he refers to the "one generall Judgement Throne," which allows for all kinds of "expiations, sacrifices, prayers, solemnities, and mysticall Ceremonies" (p. 165). Such a comment is consistent with the theological orientation of his essay *Irene*, in which Drummond argues that the natural diversity of the world, out of which arises a "beauty, so wonderfull and amazing to our Eyes,"²⁵ signals a religious diversity constituting a "perfect Harmony" in which "Concord maketh all the Parcels of it delightful".²⁶ While possibly a reaction to Reformation dogmatism, Drummond's willingness to allow for a variety of religious expression, and for personal belief outside of religious orthodoxy, again expresses that "transition from Renaissance to Baroque," which is "marked by a change from the perception of an object by theme and surfaces to a perception with less tangible design."²⁷ In the Baroque context, things no longer have definite lines, and this includes the spiritual. While God is still there, He is much more dynamic even while being increasingly vague—Drummond's "great All"—and there is no absolutely certain path by

²⁵William Drummond, "Irene: A Remonstrance for Concord, Amity and Love, amongst His Majesty's Subjects," in *The Works of William Drummond* (Edinburgh, 1711), p. 172.

²⁶*Works* (1711), pp. 171, 172.

²⁷Daniells, *Milton, Mannerism and Baroque*, p. 53.

which the individual finds God, as there seem to be no certainties anywhere, except those found in the heart and the imagination of the believer. To this end, Drummond condemns any attempt to define the nature of the God-person relationship as "outward shows and Ceremonies . . . Bablings and Tautologies."²⁸

Drummond's love poetry is crucial to understanding these same Baroque sentiments, although this does not mean one should overlook the success of Drummond's Petrarchan idealism. Drummond dwells at length and with great effect on his mistress' charms, the "Deare Corral Lip which *Beautie* beautifies," (Sonnet XIII, l. 7), and movingly expresses the loss of his loved one. Night is his friend because sleep allows him to forget his lost love, while, without the gaze of his loved one, he, like the marigold, dies without the sun. At the same time, however, the Petrarchanism of many of Drummond's love poems pales beside some of his shorter and much simpler and spontaneous verse, which, in its directness, suggests that Drummond, both as poet and man, is much more taken with the sentiments they express; take, for example, the following:

Harke happie Lovers, harke,
 This first and last of Joyes,
 This Sweetner of the Annoyes,
 This Nectare of the Gods,
 Yee call a Kisse, is with it selfe at ods:
 And halfe so sweet is not
 In equall Measure got,
 At Light of Sunne, as it is in the Darke,
 Harke, happie Lovers, harke.
 ("A Kisse"; p. 76)

More than this, though, is Drummond's recognition that love cannot be denied. While expressing the traditional Petrarchan notion of one's enslavement to love, Drummond nonetheless makes his point when he writes:

In vaine I haunt the colde and silver Springs,
 To quench the Fever burning in my Vaines,
 In vaine (*Loves Pilgrime*) Mountaines, Dales, and Plaines,
 I over-runne, vaine Helpe long Absence brings.
 In vaine (my Friends) your Counsell me constraines
 To flie, and place my Thoughts on other Things,
Ah! like the Bird that fired hath her Wings,
 The more I move, the greater are my Paines.
 Desire (alas) *Desire a Zeuxis new,*

²⁸*Works* (1711), p. 205.

From *Indies* borrowing Gold, from *Westerne Skies*
Most bright Cynoper, sets before mine Eyes
In every Place, her Haire, sweete Looke and Hew:
That flie, runne, rest I, all doth prove but vaine,
My Life lies in those Lookes which have me slaine.
(Sonnet XIX; p. 27)

Drummond's love poems are not, however, so much about love as they are about the inadequacy of life in general. There is a sense of ennui in Drummond, a rootlessness and a sense of missed opportunity suggesting that, while the world offers fulfillment, it also brings loss and pain. Among human experiences, love, for Drummond, perhaps most incorporates the incongruities, inconsistencies, and the intangible nature of the human condition lying at the base of the Baroque impulse. Love is something we cannot do without, yet it is that which causes the greatest pain; as Drummond writes "Though sure I know my Labours End is Griefe, / The more I strive that I the more shall pine," (Sonnet XXIV, ll. 9-10; p. 30). And even though he condemns the "cruell Beautie" of his lady (Sonnet XXXIV, l. 1; p. 34), and knows the pain of love, he also bemoans the lost occasions of love: "Then is Shee gone? O Foole and Coward I! / O good Occasion lost, ne're to bee found!" (Sonnet XXIII, ll. 1-2; p. 29). While Drummond might elsewhere focus on the rigors of human mutability, he is by no means willing to give up the joys of earthly life; as he says, "Who lives in Love can never bee too bolde" (l. 14). There is expressed in Drummond's poetry the need to seize on each experience of life, even while one realizes it has only momentary significance; as Drummond writes:

Deare Life while as I touch
These Corral Ports of blisse,
Which still themselves do kisse,
And sweetly me invite to do as much,
All panting in my Lips,
My Life my Heart doth leave,
No sense my Senses have,
And inward Powers doe find a strange Eclipse,
This Death so heavenly well
Doth so me please, that I
Would never longer seeke in sense to dwell,
If that even thus I only could but die
(*"Desired Death"*; p. 81)

Drummond's intent is not so much to penetrate the world as to embrace it; love, as the most powerful of human emotions, serves as an important signal of Drummond's feelings towards the world generally. It is worth noting that Drummond at one point places side by side his need to love and his need to

write, suggesting that even the poet's efforts fade in time. Although he recognizes that "I know that all beneath the *Moone* decays, / And what by Mortalles in this World is brought" (Sonnet II, ll. 1-2; p. 8), he admits, "Know what I list, this all can not mee move, / But that . . . I both must write, and love" (ll. 13-14).

This desire to embrace a world that cannot be fully and completely grasped is further demonstrated in the sensuous imagery found in many of Drummond's poems. As Cohen observes, the Baroque poet, "plagued by agonized intimations that the world was illusion and life no more than a brightly coloured dream . . . was driven to seek refuge . . . in imaginary Edens."²⁹ In a number of both his longer and shorter poems, Drummond celebrates that "sweet solitarie Place" (Sonnet XLIII, l. 1; p. 43), where he can experience "what it is to bee of Bondage free, / Farre from the madding Worldlings hoarse Discords" (ll. 10-11). Drummond's intent is obvious: the desire to make the mutable into the eternal. It is not a matter of transcending the world for some better place or reality; rather it is to freeze what is beautiful in this world. It is the inability to accomplish this task that is largely the source of the melancholy so often associated with Drummond. But it is also Drummond's oftentimes sensual imagery and rich language that sustain a view of him as a poet who, despite his tendency towards melancholic reflection, remained sensitive to the world's beauty:

*Like the Idalian Queene
Her Haire about her Eyne,
With Necke and Brests ripe Apples to be seene,
At first Glande of the Morne
In Cyprus Gardens gathering those faire Flowrs
Which of her Bloud were borne,
I saw, but fainting saw, my Paramours.
The Graces naked danc'd about the Place,
The Winds and Trees amaz'd,
With Silence on her gaz'd
The Flowrs did smile, like those upon her Face,
And as their Aspine Stalkes those Fingers bands,
(That Shee might read my Case)
A Hyacinth I wisht mee in her Hand.*

(Madrigal III; p. 29)

Striking in Drummond's poetry is his direct appeal to the senses, as, for example, when he writes of the "*Sonne the Sunne sweet Spring, / Such hote*

²⁹Cohen, p. 89.

and burning Dayes why doest thou bring?" (Madrigal VI, ll. 3-4; p. 42) or of

*The Ivorie, Corrall, Gold,
Of Brest, of Lips, of Haire,
So lively Sleepe doth show to inward Sight,
That wake I thinke I holde
No Shadow, but my faire:*
(Madrigal IX, ll. 1-5; p. 50)

Although there has been considerable conjecture on the relationship between Drummond's love poetry and his own life, it is quite clear that Drummond was working within convention, and that the mistress of his poems, as well as his own expressions of love and grief, are appropriately exaggerated as convention demanded.³⁰ But this is not to deny that Drummond goes beyond the commonplace in portraying a distinctly Baroque sensibility that, in fact, conflicts with the very conventions he uses. Perhaps, then, we have not sufficiently focused on Drummond's poetry to note that he is a poet especially sensitive to the shifting world in which he lived. Drummond is a poet who leaves mixed signals, which is perhaps as it should be, for the time in which he lived was at once consumed by the new directions of religion, ethics, and science. But this is also what comprises the Baroque. If, then, there is anything to be remembered about Drummond, it is not that he was a "mere" imitator, but that he took much from his many sources in expressing a world view that placed him in the intellectual and literary center of the seventeenth century.

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³⁰MacDonald, p. xx.