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A Correlation of the Arts

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There is certain equality of painting and poetry expressed by Horace in his descriptive phrase *ut pictura poesis*.¹ The implication is that the arts are practically interchangeable, one may describe the other, and the genius of each arises from the same source. Some of the best evidences of similar inspiration and perception within these two arts can be illustrated through a comparison of Italian Mannerist painting and Metaphysical poetry as embodied in various works of John Donne. Although these works are separated by chronological time and geographical location, they are, nevertheless, the product of mutual attitudes and stress common themes and techniques. The three main categories between the two art forms involve the artist's individual sense of rebellion to a previous literary tradition, his delight in the intellect leading to an emphasis of the mind over sense perception, and his use of paradox.

In order to understand the values and aspirations of both the Mannerist painter and John Donne, it is necessary to comprehend their sense of rebellion toward particular previous traditions. Many of the elements incorporated within their works are reactionary and require knowledge of the past tradition before a complete analysis of them can be made.
The Mannerist painter is reacting to the symmetrically constructed, harmonious compositions of the Renaissance. Consequently, he strives to create shockingly disproportionate and bizarre paintings. Likewise, Donne, in several of his works, clearly reveals a contempt for the traditional Petrarchan attitudes and themes concerning the concept of love. In both cases, the artists do not discard the past traditions, but rather distort them within their works to produce a noticeably jarring experience. Perhaps, as a result of their rebellion, these artists flaunt an air of independence which, in the case of many Mannerist painters, led to extreme isolation. Horace's comments concerning painters and poets underscores the independent, spirited attitude of these artists.

Painters like poets
Have the power, always to dare one and all...²

The Mannerist painter, as Wurtenberger describes him is a "completely new, individually gifted type of artistic personality"³ who delighted in "playing with incongruous ideas."⁴ He did not attempt to simply imitate Nature in perfect symmetry as the Renaissance masters had strived for in their compositions. Rather, he ignored such unwritten regulations as Albertian perspective in order to convey a more startling image indicative of his own individual mind. Rosso Fiorentino exemplifies the distortion of traditional perspective and treatment of theme in his Descent from the Cross. In this composition, three ladders are propped against the cross, but they are neither in a symmetrical pattern, nor in a logical
perspective for the angles at which they are placed. The figures seek the frame rather than the middle of the panel and the exact center reveals only the lower beam of the cross rather than the main character traditionally featured in this spot. The figures appear as chunky blocks of stone with knife-edged creases indicating the folds in their clothing. These figures are quite a contrast to the soft, delicate ones which, for instance, Botticelli created. The body of Christ himself is shocking to the eye attuned to the beautiful and graceful Christ figures of the Renaissance. The flesh of Rosso's Christ has a sickly green tint to it, and the surprising and unconventional red hair and beard add to the eerie effect. He reveals a detached, empty smile which is neither directed at or received by the other figures or the viewer. Almost directly above Christ's face is the figure of Joseph of Arimathea. He is repulsive to the eye, dressed in rags which reveal his bony arms and a violently distorted face seemingly composed of rags of flesh as twisted as the ones he wears.

Just as Rosso takes the traditional scene of Christ's deposition and distorts it, Donne creates new variations on Petrarchan themes with the same shocking results. Although Donne's rejection of the Petrarchan tradition may be explored in depth, the particular differences depicted here involve the contrasting attitudes the artists assign their lovers in relation to their beloveds. In "The Blossome," the lover has been conventionally rejected by a cold mistress, "the
forbidden of forbidding tree." The lover predicts that his heart will desire to stay with the mistress even though the rest of his body is leaving on a journey. It is a Petrarchan tradition that a heart goes to the beloved even if the lover himself is rejected. However, Donne perverts Petrarch's theme in favor of his own reflections on the subject. He criticizes the superficiality of women in general as he warns his heart.

Well then, stay here, but know
When thou hast stayed and done thy most;
A naked thinking heart, that makes no show
Is to a woman, but a kinde of Ghost.8

Donne, perhaps, is implying that women are incapable of appreciating love as a mental concept and instead, only understand the physical and affected verbal manifestations of love. Donne even insults his own beloved in a way that would be an unthinkable sacrilege to Petrarch:

How shall shee know my heart; or having none,
Know thee for one?
Practise may make her know some other part,
But take my word, shee doth not know a Heart.9

The lover then warns the heart to try and meet him in London in twenty days. There he shall be "fresher and more fat"10 after visiting with other company and he would give the heart to another more eager for his body than the previous mistress. This is hardly the expected tone for concluding a poem which begins describing a loving heart as a poor flower blossomed yet destined to die. Furthermore, such a candid discourse by the lover to his heart transmits a humorous tone which overpowers the traditional opening mood of despair in unrequited love. It is almost as violent a shock to witness such a
nonchalant lover as it is to see Rosso's ghastly Christ figure. Donne has distorted the traditional perspective of the rejected lover just as forcefully as Rosso has distorted symmetrical perspective in his painting.

The rejected lover is characterized in a violently unPetrarchan manner in "The Dampe." Donne creates an extremely vengeful lover who directs a sort of verbal onslaught to his mistress. He claims that when he is dead of unrequited love, and doctors gather to perform an autopsy, they too will die when they reach the picture of her in his heart.

When they shall finde your Picture in my heart,  
You think a sodaine dampe of love  
Will through all their senses move,  
And work on them as mee, and so preferre  
Your murder, to the name of Massacre.11

The lover then hostiley taunts her to be daring if she desires conquest and fight fairly by relinquishing the aid of her disdain, "the enormous Gyant,"12 and her honor, "th' enchan­tress."13 Nothing could be farther from the attitude of Petrarch's lover. The beloved, though cold and discouraging, never falls below the concept of perfection.

No base desire lives in that heavenly light,  
Honor alone and virtue!14

Even during the most bitter hours of rejection, the mistress remains ideal and is not blamed for the lover's torment. Instead, the lover succumbs to the inevitability of his pain, knowing he would choose the hardships of love over the pleasures of freedom:

No other theme will now my soul content  
Than she who plants my death  
...........................  
My hand can trace nought other but her fame,  
No other spot attracts my willing feet.15
In regard to his death from rejection, the lover asks only that the beloved's name be carved on his sepulture.\textsuperscript{16} Donne concludes his poem by presenting his lover in an even more distorted view. The lover claims he too could call up his "Gyants and Witches,"\textsuperscript{17} but would prefer for them to battle as man and woman.

\begin{quote}
\hspace{1cm}....doe you but try
\hspace{1cm}Your passive valor, and you shall finde than,
\hspace{1cm}Naked you have odds enough of any man.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

The lover's sensual suggestion seems obnoxious and lewd in comparison to the demure Petrarchan lover, and its inclusion firmly establishes Donne's poem as a mock on the past tradition.

In "The Apparition," the vengeful lover becomes almost psychotic as he describes the horrid fate which he will suffer the mistress to endure for causing his death by her scorn. The poem, colored by the narrator's vengeance, is as bizarre and nightmarish as the face of Rosso's Joseph. The lover foretells the mistress' grief when his ghost returns to harass her.

\begin{quote}
And then poor Aspen wretch, neglected thou
Bath'd in a cold quicksilver sweat will lye
A veryer ghost than I.\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}

The most shocking element of the poem, however, is the lover's admitting that he no longer loves her and yet desires her to "painfully repent."\textsuperscript{20} Such a lover would seem demented to Petrarch. Instead, his lover would continue to praise the day he first saw the beloved. The Petrarchan lover can even sincerely offer thanks for the pain he endures from a scornful mistress.
blest the bow, the shafts which pierced my breast
And even the wounds which bosomed thence I bear.21

He is a lover of infinite endurance despite his pain.

Pain would I fly, but both by day and night
The rays of steadfast love are shining clear,
And rise within my mind this fifteenth year,
More dazzling than when first they met my sight.22

Donne's lover in "The Apparition," on a baser level, insists
that the cold mistress acknowledge her blame in his death
rather than "rest still innocent."23 Donne has gone to the
opposite extreme of Petrarch by substituting unnaturally cold,
bitter contempt for the traditionally passionate and feverish
lament. Besides the rejection of the Petrarchan lover as a
tradition, Donne seems to find the excessively amorous lover,
as a man, inferior to a less emotional one. Rather than be
ruled by the demands of the body, Donne prefers the mind.

Perhaps, inevitably, as a result of their rebellion,
both the Mannerist painter and Donne emphasize the intellect,
rather than sense perception, as the important faculty neces-
sary in creating and comprehending their works. Wurtenberger
states that the Mannerist painter supports "the dominion of
the over cultivated intellect instead of natural intuition."24
The comment of Frederigo Zuccari concerning the idea or in-
spiration for the Mannerist painter indicates the value given
to the intellect.

Although he (the painter) does not deny the
necessity of sensuous perception, he affirms that the
origin of the idea is more metaphysical and apriori.25

The real essence of the painting is only reached when the
artist successfully translates his idea through his work to
the mind of the viewer. More than visual perception, compre-
hension involves mental rapport. The poetry of Donne is
termed metaphysical, in one sense, because it is "intellectual, analytical, and psychological." The use of the conceit enables the poet to express his thoughts in a complicated, extended manner which requires skillful concentration for complete understanding. The conceit, then, provides the poet with a chance to display his virtuoso wit, while relating a metaphysical image.

Pontormo, in his masterpiece entitled Entombment, clearly depicts the importance of the intellect in conception and interpretation of Mannerist painting. He emphasizes the intellect not only as the basis of his own inspiration, but as the primary element in the content of the composition itself. From purely sense perception, it is only evident that the body of Christ is being transported after crucifixion by followers, among whom the mother Mary is solely recognizable. Pontormo reveals no familiar natural setting except a single cloud. There is no horizon, no sense of separation between ground or sky. It is not clear whether the painting is an Entombment or a Deposition since there is neither cave nor cross. It seems apparent that Pontormo, in omitting natural objects, is attempting to transmit a deeper and more intricate theme by appealing to some higher perception than that of physical sight. The physical elements, inexplicable on a sensory level, are, perhaps, only representative of a more complex iconology perceived through the intellect. Hartt calls this a "meditative picture." He remarks that "its real space is the inmost soul of the observer—and the artist—and its real subject is the Sacrament." The composition,
not identifiable in natural setting, is remote from historical reality, seemingly suspended somewhere between an earthly and an intangible world. Indeed, the eerie colors, the dream-like figures and their ascending motion imply a passing from the physical to the spiritual, in much the same manner that the wine and bread of the Sacrament transpose to the body and blood of Christ, the source of eternal salvation. The colors, particularly initiate this non-sensual affect.

The colors pass all belief—pink, sharp greens, pale but intense blues—and appear in the most improbable places... The figures, themselves, display slow, dream-like motions, seemingly controlled by some force other than their own physical impulses, and their facial expressions also appear unnatural. Not only do they not weep, but they do not even seem aware of one another on a conscious level. They are not positioned on solid ground, but rather "ascend in mysterious space." Perhaps this upward spray of figures is indicative of the more ethereal realm of the mind where the intellect deciphers ideas beyond the grasp of mere sense perception.

The same thought process needed to comprehend Pontormo's painting must be used in those poems by Donne based on conceits. For instance, in "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," the comparison of parting lovers with the feet of twin compasses is, on a sensuous level, illogical and displeasing. The physical qualities of the metal, stick-like feet of the compass are antipodal to those sensuous objects usually connected with love, such as the rose. However, the metaphysical conceit strikes on a different plane, a mental level, somewhere be-
yond that of the sensuous, and resulting in a perception which seems even more real. The compass conceit implies a greater, more powerful love by the very fact that it cannot be visualized or in any way perceived except through the mind.

Donne is also praising, through his theme, feelings of love based more on the intellect, embodied in the soul, than love grounded merely on physical attraction. The parting lover is able to console his beloved by assuring her that a love so "refin'd" as theirs would "endure not yet/ A breach but an expansion" in absence. They are two souls who, in loving, have become one, and therefore can be stretched, but not broken. The lover offers only disdain for the love between "dull sublunary lovers" or those "(whose soul is sense)" or physical attraction. Like Pontormo's concept of the Sacrement, Donne's concept of love does not rely on sensuous elements, in this case, the bodies of the lovers. Their love is "Inter-assured of the mind,/ Careless, eyes, lips, and hands to misse." The intellect is important in lesser analogies of the love too. Donne incorporates cosmology as he correlates their love with the most important, but least harmful movement of the ninth sphere. In contrast, the noisy "tearfloods" and "sigh-tempest," passages which clearly equate emotional feeling with physical phenomena, are regarded as "prophanation" of the love. Just as the light, airy movement of Pontormo's figures contrasts with the grave reverence of the theme, the minute, almost imperceptible movement of the compass feet provides a contrast to the power
of union between the souls.

If the physical setting of "The Exstasie" were painted, it would clearly enforce the inferiority of sensuous elements as compared with the intellectual idea. There would be only a river bank with a man and woman holding hands and looking at each other, but appearing "like sepulchral statues." Just as a purely sensory interpretation of Pontormo's work misses the painter's real idea, the natural setting of "The Exstasie" becomes irrelevant compared to the idea of soul communication. The physical is acclaimed as the passageway through which their higher intelligences may unite. It is the necessary medium just as the physical painting is the medium for Pontormo's inspiration. Only by returning to their bodies can the lovers teach "weake men" about their rare and perfect love. Their union is now beyond destruction by physical elements or affections because it is a love based on reason and aware of its composition. Even the one important element, the violet, Donne seems to have injected as an analogy to the love, rather than a sensuous element, since it exists in a single and double form like the lovers' souls.

There is this same essence of belief in the superiority of the intellect over sense perception mingled within other Donne poems, one example being "The Dreame." Although the poem indicates a certain delight in the sensual, the importance of the intellect remains a vital theme. It is true that the lover in the poem would just as soon "die" in the
Elizabethan sense of the word, but his description of his mistress, which occupies the majority of the poem, praises her more in regard to characteristics of the intellect than of the physical. She knows the lover's thoughts and his heart "beyond an Angels art."\(^{41}\) Grierson maintains that in this passage the lover equates the mistress with God according to Aquinas' precept that no one knows the thoughts of the heart but God.\(^{42}\) The mistress has awakened the lover at exactly the moment when the lover has dreamed of her, implying her perception beyond the senses. He may have been dreaming of sensual delights, but, nevertheless, the dream "was a theame/ For reason, much too strong for phantasie."\(^{43}\) The dream itself, like the dream-like figures in Pontormo, seems to aid in the projection of a level higher than pure sensory perception.

Perhaps responding to their delight in the intellect, both the Mannerist painter and Donne insert paradoxical elements within their works. Both artists seem to be especially fascinated with juxtaposing seemingly incompatible elements of emotion and time. The injection of "chill eroticism"\(^{44}\) or sensual subjects depicted with cold, impersonal overtones, causes emotional conflicts within their works. The paradoxical time elements are evident in the artists' arbitrary delay in time, creating unnatural effects of time through space. It seems likely that both the painter and poet used these elements to produce friction, sparks that would jolt their audience. In a sense, these elements are used for shock
value to underscore the difference in their compositions as opposed to any others, and to stress a belief in the complexity and discord inherent in real life.

A comparison of Bronzino's painting *Venus, Cupid, Folly and Time* with three of Donnes' sonnets and elegies reveals the common depiction of chill eroticism. Bronzino creates a physically beautiful Venus whom he positions seductively nude on a rich, blue drapery. Her son Cupid, also nude and physically beautiful, hovers near his mother and kisses her on the lips while caressing her breast. Although elegant in appearance and superbly shaped, the nudes seem cold and hard. As Hauser describes them they are "beautiful, rigid, and bloodless, like marble." The incestuous relationship implied between mother and son further negates the beauty of their external features. Perhaps the most repulsive element in the painting is the presence of Fraud, a monster with the head of a lovely girl but the tail of a serpent and claws of a lion. Her presence fortifies the effect of coldness, impersonality, and even disgust embedded within physical perfection. In the extreme background of the painting, Time holds the drapery up, as if uncovering for display the complete scene to Truth who sees only the moral atrocity. Although the viewer is instinctively drawn to the beautiful nudes and brilliant color, he is simultaneously repulsed by the hard quality of the nudes, the unacceptable relationship between mother and son, the grotesque creature of Fraud, and the overall sense of the artificial from the staged setting.
Like Bronzino's painting, Donne's poetry projects this same psychological shock in experiencing the sensual pierced with an unnatural and unexpected element of cold impersonality. In "To his Mistris going to bed," Donne describes a scene where a beautiful, richly-adorned woman is undressing in her bedroom, at the encouragement of her lover, who fully intends to enjoy a Mohommet's Paradise with her. The poem abounds with sensual passages.

License my roving hands, and let them goe
Behind, before, above, between, below

Later, the lover extols the virtue of nakedness.

Full nakedness, all joys are due to thee
As souls unbodied, bodies unclothed must bee
To taste whole joys.

It would be comforting to be able to accept the elegy as an illustration of man's natural, pleasant, and sincere desire for physical intercourse with a woman. However, throughout the work, there is a cold, debasing tone toward the woman and her body which are supposedly being glorified. The geographical correlations of the body with an "America," a "new found land," and a "myn of precious stones" are too dramatic and expansive to be absorbed without a tinge of satire. The lover seems too experienced to sound quite so naively jubilant and he undermines his lines of grand exclamations with more vulgar conclusions.

...........my Empiree
How blest am I in this discovering thee.
To enter in these bonds is to be free,
Then where my hand is set my seal shall be.
There is an implication that the poem is a staged proclamation of passion and flattery to conceal what in essence is a common, illicit affair. The lover demeans the moral character of the woman conspicuously in the latter lines when he implores her to "cast all, yea this white linen hence./ Here is no penance, much less innocence." Apparently, he feels that his "new found land" has been discovered by others previously and seems to be urging a waiving woman by reminding her that she has no loss of innocence to repent now. Just as Bronzino associates the beautiful Venus with fraud and incest, Donne hints that his allusions to a "far fairer world" are a euphemistic play on a common seduction of a common woman.

Although Donne at times creates this aura of chill eroticism through a narrator's cold, impersonal tone, as in "To his Mistris going to bed," he also in several poems characterizes his women as physically sensual but cold emotionally to create the same effect. His women, for the most part, are externally appealing but marble on the inside with little capacity for intellectual endeavors or virtuous morality. In "Loves Alchymie," Donne concludes that women "at their best/ Sweetness and wit, they 'are but Mummy possest." In effect, women are merely physical shells satisfying man's sexual desires but unable to relate with their minds. They are "sweetness and wit" in a superficial sense only. Indeed, the woman who has reached perfection, such as the one in "Tutelage," has perfected only superficial characteristics. She is
"Nature's lay ideot" until the lover molds her "into a blissful paradise." The lover values his beloved only as she satisfies his lust and delights as a superficially charming woman. He says, "thy graces and good words my creatures bee" as if she is nothing more than what he has created. His final lines project an utterly impersonal attitude toward his beloved. As he thinks of strangers tasting his creation, he displays no passionate jealousy or deep sorrow at the thought of separation. He is simply provoked at the realization that he will not receive due reward for his work.

Must I also
Frame and enamell|Plate, and drink in|Glass?
Chafe waxe for other seales? break a colts force
And leave him then, being made a ready horse?

The impersonal attitude of the lover can be seen as precipitated from the beloved who, although now is perfect, is still incapable of producing emotional response from her lover. "Loves Progress" is, perhaps, Donne's most polished example of this effect of cold sensuality. In this work, Donne quite analytically and logically explains the best procedure for seduction. He advises the lover to start with the foot, "the emblem that hath figured firmness" and work up to "that part which he dost seeke." Donne takes the physical characteristics of women which are typically hailed as beautiful adornments to her person and makes them topographical or geographical hazards which encumber the lover in obtaining the "Centrique part."

The hair a forrest is of ambushes,
Of springs, snares, fetters and manacles,
The brow becalms us, when 'tis smooth and plaine
And when 'tis wrinkled, shipwracks us again;
Smooth 'tis a Paradise where we would have
Immortal stay, and wrinkled 'tis our grave.61

The allusions to the physical parts of the woman's body which
are hazardous are stated in much the same indifferent, plod-
ding tone of voice authors use in a "How to" manual.

There in a crieke where chosen pearles doe swell
The Remora, her cleaving tongue doth dwell.
These, and the glorious promontorye, her chinne,
O'rpast; and the straight Hellespont between
The Sestos and Abydos of her breasts,62

Donne also includes the elements that perhaps correspond to
the figure of Fraud in Bronzino's painting. For instance,
Donne maintains that "love's a beare-whelped born"63 which
must not be "overlicked" or forced to encompass feelings which
it is not capable of sustaining. Love apparently is only
physical pleasure in women and would become as monstrous as
the calf with a man's face if felt to be more than it is. That
is a disagreeable enough image, but the concluding image is
nothing short of repulsive.

Rich Nature hath in woman wisely made
Two purses, and their mouthes aversely laid;
They then which to the lower exchequer lookes must goe.
Hee which doth not, his error is as great;
As who by Clyster gave the stomach meate.64

The poem concludes by combining the topic of sensual love with
not only cold, but disgusting feelings. The conflict becomes
one between the natural human response to sexual love and the
bizarre, unnatural overcast for this love carefully implanted
through the poem.

The Mannerist painter and John Donne also deliberately
cause irrational effects of delayed time within several of
their works. This concept refers to those elements of time
and space within a work which create an effect totally irreconcilable to the natural world. The Mannerist painter manifests these elements in his works primarily through precariously posed, elongated figures and irrational spatial relationships. Parmigianino, in his *Madonna with the Long Neck*, has created a good illustration of this restrained time. The Madonna herself appears, at first sight, unbelievably graceful and serene, although she is actually massive in size with body, neck, and particularly fingers "impossibly attenuated." In further analysis, the superficially calm, composed scene becomes chaotic spatially. It is impossible to determine whether the Virgin is seated, standing, or leaning, and, in any case, the position remains a physical feat for the human body. That she is seated seems doubtful, since the raised marble slab on which Parmigianino places her appears too small even to provide room for her frame, much less a piece of furniture. The large, blue robe draped around her is on the verge of completely falling from her body, taking the child with it. The totally unstable position of the son on his mother's lap is one of the most jarring aspects of Parmigianino's irregular spacing. The Madonna, contrary to what seems instinctively natural, nonchalantly holds her son with only one hand and wrist, apparently undisturbed that he is falling. Parmigianino, in his irregular spacing has captured illogical moments in time. The child, the drapery, even the Madonna's curling toes are in the process of motion, yet Parmigianino has arrested that moment of time within his
A second type of delayed time is the physical and intellectual jolt which occurs in the viewer himself as he realizes the irrationality of elements within the composition. Parmigianino includes two such elements which particularly create this jolt. To the right of the Virgin, four sexually ambiguous figures stand admiring the mother and child. In this foreground, Parmigianino reveals a disrobed, elongated leg positioned so that it is impossible to determine to which of the figures it belongs, if any. The presence of the useless pillar in the right background is the other completely shocking element causing an affect of delayed time. In both cases, the leg and the column dictate eye movement from the base to the peak of the structure, and then cause the jolt as the eye perception connects with the intellectual thought and the viewer becomes aware of the unnatural, irrational aspect. The leg has no discernible owner, the column serves no purpose, and in this realization, the viewer experiences a breaking point—a delayed time effect.

Again Donne employs similar tactics as the Mannerist painter within his poetry to create delayed time effects. In "Love's Growth," Donne begins with a metaphor which likens the growth of his love to the grass which "doth endure/Vicissitude and season." It is not a pure quintessence such as the elixar, "but as all else, being elemented too/...sometimes would contemplate, sometimes do." He compares the development of love to the birth of the blossoms.

Gentle love deeds, as blossoms on a bough, From loves awaken'd root do bud out now.
However, the love is growing without abatement and here lies the disconcerting time factor which distorts the concept of love. Donne does not maintain his natural metaphor because it involves times of both regeneration and decay, and Donne wishes only to depict the season of propagation. Consequently, he switches to a new metaphor in which love is unabated in growth like the war taxes which are not remitted in peace. He, thereby, cancels the idea that love can correlate with the regular, ordered time periods of nature. It is true that he clarifies the idea that the love is not growing in size—only eminence, but it is none-the-less growing which must be manifested as an increase in some capacity in some sort of space. Just as Parmigianino cannot logically suspend the child in the midst of falling from his mother's lap, Donne cannot suspend eternal Spring in love, defying the natural order of the seasons, without creating an effect of the unnatural through this delayed time. Thus, the reader may become slightly wary of this perfect love. Donne re-enforces this idea by having the lover questioning the purity of the love in the first stanza. The love, like the Madonna, comes under suspicion during the jolts caused by these arrested moments in time.

Donne inserts more of these suggestions of delayed time in "A Lecture upon the Shadow." The subject is again love, and again Donne seems to defeat his own concept of perfect love by comparing it to an unnatural and impossible phenomenon in time. He suggests that perfect love is at exact noon, when lovers are neither concealing their love...
from each other (morning shadows), nor lying to each other after love's peak has passed and new interests have developed (evening shadows.) In an exact definition:

Love is a growing, or full constant light,
And his first minute, after noone, is night.

This perhaps implies that since noon obviously cannot remain more than a moment in the natural world, neither can true love. Donne further complicates this delayed time element which makes the poem considerately more unsettling. The spatial situation of the two people, for instance, is such that they have been walking within the confines of a garden with their shadows consistently in one direction. As Gardner points out, "this would mean the lovers had spent three hours walking steadily in one direction, which is absurd." This realization causes a break in rapport with the work in the same manner as Parmigianino's unaccountable leg or useless column. If the lovers keep walking, that is, if their love progresses, and the shadows fall "the other way," will their love be declining or, according to the final definition, will they simply be in total darkness? Donne has imparted his theory of love's waning in the afternoon sun only to stop abruptly the image with his final statement that the first minute after noon is night. An interesting concept of delayed time is the realization that the high noon love enjoyed by the lovers has, technically, already passed by the conclusion of the poem. In the first line, the lover says "Stand still" to his beloved and proceeds with his lecture. In other words, they are at high noon in the natural world and presumably at noon in their
love. By the time the lines are completed, a minute has passed. The lovers are in the afternoon of the natural day and that realization arouses the suppositions that their love has passed too. For, even if the point of the poem lies in the idea that love is above and superior to the natural world, it nevertheless is in conflict with it and, consequently, like Parmigianino's Madonna, loses the aura of divine perfection.

Although works of the Mannerist painter and John Donne may be cited as inconsistent with a theory which purports the similar attitudes between the artists, these inconsistencies actually strengthen the argument for correlation. Indeed, those works only further emphasize the rebellious and adventurous nature of the two artists, constantly re-evaluating the relationship of their own thoughts with the ideas of their ages.
Footnotes


2 Ibid., p. 56.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.


6 Ibid.


8 Ibid., ll. 25-28.

9 Ibid., p. 88, ll. 29-32.

10 Ibid., l. 35.

11 Donne, "The Dampe," p. 49, ll. 4-8.

12 Ibid., l. 11.

13 Ibid., l. 12.


15 Petrarch, "Ahi, bella liberta, come tu m'ai," p. 86, ll. 9,10,13, 14.

16 Petrarch, "Io non fu' d'amar voi lassato unquanco," p. 68, l. 6.


18 Ibid., ll. 22-24.


20 Ibid, l. 16.
22 Petrarch, "Non veggio ove scampar mi possa omai," p. 94, ll. 5-8.
24 Wurtenberger, Mannerism, p. 9.
25 Ibid.
27 Hartt, Renaissance Art, p. 507.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
31 Ibid., ll. 22-23.
32 Ibid., l. 13.
33 Ibid., l. 14.
34 Ibid., ll. 19-20.
35 Ibid., l. 6.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., l. 7.
39 Ibid., p. 61, l. 70.
40 Ibid., p. 185 n.
41 Donne, "The Dreame," p. 80, l. 16.
42 Ibid. p. 209n.
43 Ibid., p. 79, ll. 3-4.
44 Hartt, Renaissance Art, p. 592.
46 Ibid.
47 Donne, "To his Mistris going to bed," p. 15, ll. 25-26.
The interpretations of the paintings were drawn from an assimilation of a variety of sources listed in the bibliography.
Bibliography


Venus, Cupid, Folly, and Time - Bronzino
Madonna with the Long Neck - Parmigianino