Looking for Lovelace:  
Identity, Style and Inheritance in  
the Poetry of the Interregnum

Thesis Submitted by

Dosia Reichardt, BA (Hons) James Cook, BA York

in September 2003

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Humanities  
Faculty of Arts, Education and Social Sciences

James Cook University
Abstract

This thesis discusses the work of the Cavalier poet Richard Lovelace in two contexts in particular: first, within the political and cultural constraints operating during the period of the English Civil War and the Interregnum; second, against the background provided by the work of contemporary, often obscure, poets whose aesthetic and political attitudes help illuminate Lovelace’s own.

The study examines a number of apparent paradoxes in the work and status of poets in Lovelace’s milieu. The desire to fashion an individual and lasting literary persona in the mould of Ben Jonson, for example, conflicts with the practice of circulating essentially un-authored lyrics within an educated and exclusive male coterie. Lovelace’s amatory verse is viewed through the prism of contemporary attitudes towards female constancy, but also through seventeenth-century poets’ habitual borrowings from Latin and Greek sources. Lovelace’s attempt at a lengthy pastoral partakes of the cultural poetics of nostalgia for a vanished Court and the genres associated with it. His interest in music and the fine arts inspires many poems which comment on contemporary politics while participating in an immemorial debate about art and artificiality versus nature. His prison and drinking songs have earned him a place in anthologies of poetry as a minor classic, but they also crystallize a conjunction of genres peculiar to the years between 1640 and 1660.

The thesis draws on much unpublished material and on rare early books and pamphlets, and hopes to provide an unprecedented sense of Lovelace’s creative conditions. Recovering Lovelace’s verse as much as possible in the context of his contemporary admirers, imitators, influences, and readers brings to the fore the intense intertextuality of seventeenth-century poetry generally speaking, but also illustrates the ways in which poets transcended those “trans-shifting times” of political and religious unrest.
## Contents

Acknowledgments 1
Introduction 2

1. **Picnics on Parnassus and the Liberty of an Imprisoned Royalist** 15
   1.1 Lovelace’s other prison poems 20
   1.2 “No such liberty”: Lovelace in prison 26
   1.3 “To Althea”: inheritance, imitation and echoes 28
   1.4 “I will ever follow/The juice of Apollo”: drinking up the ocean 32
   1.5 Lovelace’s drinking songs 40

2. **Love and War: Valediction, Parting and Grief** 50
   2.1 Poems of parting 58
   2.2 Expressing grief: “I must from whence these forward tears should flow” 63
   2.3 Platonic illusions and the chivalrous hero 68
   2.4 The woman abandoned 80

3. **“My Mistress is a shuttlecock”: Cupid’s Games and the Constant Inconstancy of Women** 89
   3.1 A choice of mistresses 92
   3.2 The valuing of women 98
   3.3 Cupid’s deathly power 104
   3.4 “Thankes, Cupid, but the Coach of Venus moves/For me too slow” 112
   3.5 The “wilde boy” becomes a man 116
   3.6 Love’s like a game at tables 119

4. **“The Devil’s Looking-Glasse”: Woman as Muse** 124
   4.1 “Truth and the Graces best when naked are”: reading women 131
   4.2 “Their mistris glove, her ring, her fanne, her looking glass, her pantofle” 146
   4.3 “I have made my song a coat” 157

5. **Lovelace’s Poetry and the Sister Arts: *ars et coelare artem*** 160
   5.1 “The picture of the mind in purer verse”: Lely and the visual arts 161
   5.2 Veils, disguises and reversals 170
   5.3 Poets, musicians and the making of harmony 176
   5.4 Lovelace’s untuneable times 182
   5.5 Moving trees, moving hearts: Orphic powers and poetry 188
   5.6 Feminine arts and feminised triumphs 195

6. **“Aramantha” and the Poetry of Pastoral** 201
   6.1 “Aramantha” in context 209
   6.2 Woman and metamorphosis 215
   6.3 The grove, the wood and a magical restoration 221
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Court, country and city: love in a changing landscape</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>The architecture of retreat: country house as grove</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>The Golden Age rejected</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bibliography**

240
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With many thanks to the staff of the School of Humanities at James Cook University, especially Professors Peter Pierce and Anthony Hassall for their helpful editorial suggestions. I am also very grateful to Dr Robert Woodhouse, University of Queensland, who translated the Greek commendatory poems to Lovelace, and to Dr Stephen Torre at JCU, who helped with Marino and Petrarch. Many thanks are due to the library staff at JCU Cairns campus for their patience and efficiency over the years. I was greatly assisted by the staff of the British Library and the English Faculty Library, Oxford, and owe a large debt of gratitude to those at the Bodleian Library. Dr Helen Porter of Worcester College Library, Oxford, kindly allowed me to consult material in situ. I am very grateful to the School of Humanities and to the Faculty of Arts at JCU for financial support towards research conducted interstate and in the United Kingdom. My fellow graduate students — especially Susan-Alice Clarke at the Australian National University and Christopher McMahon at the University of Queensland — have provided stimulating discussions of seventeenth-century poetic practice. I owe my introduction to the Cavalier poets to Dr Michael Sharkey at the University of New England, and I owe my completion of this work to the dedicated support of my family.

My principal supervisor, Dr Richard Lansdown, deserves, however, the eulogy only a seventeenth-century poet could write, for his continuing guidance, inspiration and encouragement in every sphere of this endeavour.