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## A Jungian Analysis of Sacraments in John Donne's *Holy Sonnets*<sup>1</sup> John Donne'ın *Kutsal Sonelerinde* Dini Sembollerin Jungiye Analizi

Melih KURTULUŞ\*

### Abstract

This article aims to analyse three poems in John Donne's religious sonnet collection titled *Holy Sonnets* within the context of the Jungian concept of the individuation process. In this respect, the article presents two related arguments. First, it is contended that the poetic personae of the selected poems, namely "Thou hast made me," "Oh my blacke Soule!," and "Batter my heart," suffer from neurosis because of their reluctance and inability to perform the two tasks of the individuation process. The process put forward by Carl Gustav Jung requires an individual to both separate herself/himself from societal demands and integrate the unconscious part of her/his psyche with the conscious one. In the case of the selected poems' speakers, their unconscious sides are constituted by their carnal desires which they wish to suppress to the point of extinction. Feeling inadequate to suppress their bodily passions, they ask their Creator to intervene in the process. However, neither God responds to their prayers, nor their undesirable selves disappear from their conscious minds. Thus, the poetic speakers oscillate painfully between their carnal and spiritual selves, indicating that they suffer from neurosis. God's silence in this process stems from the speaker's rejection to utilize sacraments as mediatory objects. In this respect, it is argued that the speakers are influenced by Protestant iconophobia. Therefore, the second argument suggests that the selected poems showcase that rejecting sacraments' mediatory function halts one's attempt to bridge the gap between the conscious and the unconscious parts of the psyche which is the main aim of the individuation process.

**Keywords:** John Donne, *Holy Sonnets*, Carl Gustav Jung, individuation, sacraments, neurosis.

### Abstract

Bu makale, John Donne'ın *Kutsal Soneler* başlıklı dini sone koleksiyonundan seçilen üç şiiri Jung'un bireyleşme süreci konsepti bağlamında analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, makale birbiriyle bağlantılı iki argüman sunmaktadır. İlk olarak, seçilen şiirlerin şiir kişilerinin, bireyleşme sürecinin iki görevini yerine getirme yetersizliği ve isteksizliğinden dolayı nevrozdan muzdarip oldukları öne sürülmektedir. Carl Gustav Jung tarafından öne sürülen bireyleşme süreci bireyin hem sosyal beklentilerden kendini ayırmasını hem de psişesinin bilinçdışı kısmını bilinç kısmı ile bütünleştirmesini gerektirir. Seçili şiir kişilerinin durumunda, bilinçdışı tarafları, yok olma noktasına kadar bastırmak istedikleri bedensel arzularından oluşmaktadır. Bedensel arzularını bastırma konusunda yetersiz hisseden şiir kişileri yaratıcılarından sürece müdahale etmesini isterler. Fakat ne Tanrı dualarına cevap verir ne de istenmeyen kişilikleri bilinçlerinden kaybolur. Böylece, şiir kişileri sancılı bir biçimde bedensel zevkleri ve spiritüel kişilikleri

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arasında gidip gelir ve bu da onların nevrozdan müzdarip olduğunu gösterir. Bu süreçte Tanrı'nın sessizliği şiir kişilerinin dini semboller ve konseptlerden Tanrı ve kendileri arasında aracı nesneler olarak faydalanmayı reddetmelerinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, şiir kişilerinin Protestanların dini sembolere karşı tutumlarından etkilendiği ileri sürülmektedir. Bu nedenle, ikinci argüman, seçilen şiirlerin dini sembollerin Tanrı ve birey arasında aracı işlevini reddetmenin, kişinin bireyleşme sürecinin ana amacı olan psişenin bilinç ve bilinçdışı bölümleri arasında bağlantı kurma girişimine engel olduğunu göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** John Donne, *Kutsal Soneler*, Carl Gustav Jung, bireyleşme, dini semboller, nevroz.

## Introduction

John Donne (1572-1631) wrote many of his poems in *Holy Sonnets* (1633) between the years 1609 and 1617, after his conversion from Catholicism to Protestantism. This period was marked by a sense of religious crisis in his life which made the poet view his former experiences of sexual liberation, clearly revealed in his secular love poetry collections *Elegies* (1633) and *Songs and Sonnets* (1633), in a penitential manner. As Carey observes, in *Holy Sonnets*, “[t]he idolatrous effort to transfer his instinct for worship from God to women, which he had recorded in the love poems, confounds him, but he cannot rid his mind of it” (1981, p. 46). The collection, then, reflects the conflict between secular love and religious love. The sonnets in the collection do not form a narrative sequence, but they singularly present religious individuals who are afraid of being eternally punished in the afterlife because of their former enjoyment of bodily desires in love.

The poetic personae's fears concerning the uncertainty of their salvation establish the early modern theological subjects reflected in the poems. As many critics suggest, the sonnets' speakers represent the institutionally reformed religion in the sense that they echo “the Calvinist sense of man's utter helplessness in [their] corruption, and total dependence upon God in every phase of [their] spiritual life” (Lewalski, 1979, p. 25). Likewise, Guibbory claims that the poems in *Holy Sonnets* “explor[e] what it might feel like for someone to live in a reformed, Calvinist world, where God might seem particularly distant if one did not feel God's presence within and could no longer access the divine through the church's institution and sacraments” (2015, p. 209). By extension, the speakers' uncertainty about their salvation is occasioned by both their earlier attentiveness to carnality in love and God's silence in relation to their prayers. Moreover, God's silence is suggestive of the religious sacraments' appeasing impact on individual psychology as they make pious people believe in the possibility of forgiveness. Thus, the theological and psychological aspects of Donne's *Holy Sonnets* are well-recorded by critics, and this article aims to contribute to the understanding of its psychological aspects by reading three poems from the collection within the framework of the Jungian concept of “the individuation process.” Understanding the concept as a process of maintaining psychic balance, it is suggested that the lack of sacraments in the speakers' lives disables them to come to terms with their undesirable selves constituted by carnal desires. The wish to turn wholly to God by eradicating those desires is not actualised, and their persistence in the speakers' minds leads them to suffer from neurosis in Jungian terms. In other words, the sonnets represent the deterioration of the equilibrium between the conscious and the unconscious parts of the psyche. To this end, in the theoretical part, the terms “the individuation process” and “neurosis” are defined with reference to their explanation in archetypal terms. Additionally, the sacraments' role in maintaining psychic balance provided by the performance of the individuation process is explained by referring to historians' and Jung's views on the subject. Later, the article analyses three poems from Donne's *Holy Sonnets*, namely “Thou hast made me,” “Oh my blacke Soul!,” and “Batter my heart,” to reveal the psychological aspects of sacraments observed in them.

## The Individuation Process and Neurosis

This part of the article presents the theoretical background that is employed to analyse the importance of sacraments in John Donne's religious sonnets. To do this, the term “individuation process” and the outcome of one's failure at completing the process are defined. “The individuation process” is a term put forward by the analytical psychologist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) to refer to the path that would provide

a person with psychological wholeness. Jung explains that “[i]ndividuation means becoming an ‘individual,’ and, in so far as ‘individuality’ embraces our innermost, last, and incomparable uniqueness, it also implies becoming one’s own self. We could therefore translate individuation as ‘coming to selfhood’ or ‘self-realization’” (1953, p. 182). It can be deduced from Jung’s own definition that the individuation process requires an individual to perform two tasks. One of them can be denominated as the separation process, or in Stein’s words “the analytical movement” (2005, p. 2). The separation phase means that a person needs to diverge herself/himself from what Jung terms “the collective consciousness” or the societal demands to come to selfhood (1960, p. 268). According to Jung, “[h]uman beings have one faculty which, though it is of the greatest utility for collective purposes, is most pernicious for individuation, and that is the faculty of imitation” (1953, p. 162). Therefore, an individual should differentiate herself/himself from the suggestive demands of the collective consciousness to reach the state of selfhood. The self-exploration part leads the individual to the second task of the individuation process which can be called the integration part, or again in Stein’s words, “the synthetic movement” (2005, p. 8). According to individuation’s second task, then, psychic equilibrium can be achieved by integrating the unconscious part of the psyche with the conscious one. As Jung’s definition of the individuation process asserts, a person should acknowledge her/his unconscious side. Similarly, the Jungian psychologist Jolande Jacobi states that “[t]he aim of the individuation process is a synthesis of all partial aspects of the conscious and unconscious psyche” (1967, p. 49).

Analytical psychology also explains the individuation process through archetypes. Constituting what Jung calls the collective unconscious, or “the ancestral heritage of possibilities of representation,” archetypes are “inherited thought-patterns” (Jung, 1960, p. 204; Jung, 1953, p. 144). The archetype that is directly related to conscious experiences is called “the persona archetype” (1953, p. 165). Jung defines the term as “a mask that feigns individuality, making others and oneself believe that one is individual, whereas one is simply acting a role through which the collective psyche speaks” (1953, p. 165). Therefore, the persona archetype refers to social interactions. On the other hand, what is called the shadow archetype suggests a person’s undesired personality. It includes “those parts of ourselves that we would rather deny and disown” (Ulanov, 2008, p. 323). In light of the given definitions of the two archetypes, it can be claimed that the individuation process is the integration of the shadow archetype with the persona archetype.

Following the tasks of the individuation process and abiding by the collective demands have different outcomes. A life lived only through the demands of the conscious materials and the persona archetype or a life that is lived according to the societal requirements is defined by Jacobi as the “biological” life, whereas the “spiritual” life necessitates the integration between the collective consciousness and the unconscious (1967, p. 16). If one follows the biological life without giving the unconscious contents their due recognition, it becomes a life that “comes to an end,” while the spiritual life, or the integrated psyche, makes life complete and satisfactory (Jacobi, 1967, p. 16). The latter kind of life also provides one with “inner peace” (Jacobi, 1967, p. 17). Contrarily, submission to collective demands carries the possibility of leading an individual to psychological afflictions such as neurosis or psychosis. As Jung maintains, “[n]eurosis is self-division. In most people the cause of the division is that the conscious mind wants to hang on to its moral ideal, while the unconscious strives after its—in the contemporary sense – unmoral ideal which the conscious mind tries to deny. Men of this type want to be more respectable than they really are” (1953, p. 33). Likewise, Palmer explains that “neurosis arises from a failure to achieve a proper equilibrium between the disparate sides of the psyche—between the conscious and the unconscious” (1997, p. 120). The reason for the failure of obtaining the psychic balance is the suppression of the unconscious part of the psyche instead of the integration of both parts which is the main aim of the individuation process. As a result of this repressive process, neurosis arises, and as Schaer asserts, “[t]he more one-sidedly, absolutely, and rigidly the one position is held, the more aggressive, hostile, and incompatible will the other become” (1951, p. 132). Consequently, the unconscious material, if neglected excessively, finds its way into consciousness disastrously and might cause neurosis.

## The Role of Sacraments in Individuation

Thus, according to Jung and Jungian psychologists, an individual must separate herself/himself from the collective consciousness by acknowledging her/his unconscious side. One way to acknowledge the unconscious materials or the shadow archetype and thus attain psychological wholeness is, according to Jung, through sacraments and religious practices (1938, pp. 22-23). Many historians and psychologists acknowledge that sacraments and religious rituals have a soothing effect on the individual psyche. For instance, in an analysis of the changing social aspects of the Reformation period in England, Cressy and Ferrell state that “local religious activities [of Catholicism] satisfied most people’s need for a faith that connected them to their locality, to their ancestors, and to God” (1996, p. 2). For the Catholics of the period, “[r]eligion was a matter of routine, of faith, of duty, fellowship and familiarity, and its principal purpose was to lead the sinner to salvation.” (Cressy and Ferrell, 1996, p. 2). Here, the notions of locality and familiarity are of importance because the religious images and symbolic religious ceremonies are understood to build a bridge between man and God, which makes the latter reachable for the former. Along the same lines, MacCulloch observes that the rituals and the ceremonies performed in the Catholic Church ease religious people psychologically: “The mass in late medieval Catholic Christianity had become the kingpin in a system which provided a majestic and satisfying answer to one of the central anxieties of mainstream Christian faith: how to be saved to enter the joys of heaven” (1990, pp. 1-2). Subsequently, God and salvation became accessible to people through religious images and rituals. An individual could attain redemption through such religious practices as contrition, absolution, or confession. For example, while confession on the deathbed was considered by the believers to be the last chance of absolution, monuments and religious images of saints remind them of virtuous deeds that they should perform to attain divine grace (Heal, 2003, pp. 103-104). Although the religious consensus would be based on the deprivation of mankind, such religious objects and ceremonies can assure religious believers of the fact that salvation is possible for them.

While sacraments and religious practices can aid an individual in her/his way to salvation, the rejection of their mediatory function might lead one to religious despair. In the context of the early modern period, when Europe was undergoing a religious change from Catholicism to Protestantism, one of the most debated issues of the period was the attitude towards sacraments and religious practices. A contemporary account of the Protestant treatment of the subject during the Henrician Reformation and the counter-reformation led by Queen Mary I of England (1516-1558) indicates that the reformed religion was hostile towards them. The Catholic priest named Robert Parkyn (1569 - ?) lists the removal of the symbolic rituals and ceremonies lauded by the old religion: “[In 1547], all images, pictures, tables, crucifixes, tabernacles, was utterly abolished and taken away forth of churches within this realm of England” (Dickens and Parkyn, 1947, p. 66). In a way that proves Parkyn’s observations, “The Ten Articles of 1536,” composed by the learned churchmen during the Henrician Reformation, argues that religious practices and sacraments cannot be the “very expedient and necessary mean” to salvation (Cressy and Ferrell, 1996, p. 19).

The concept of iconophobia promoted by the Protestant sect during the Reformation period is understood by Jung and other psychologists to be the cause of religious despair. In his book chapter titled “Approaching the Unconscious” (1964), Jung summarizes his theories of analytical psychology for the non-experts. While discussing the relationship between religion and psychology, Jung stresses the importance of symbolic religious images and ceremonies and how they give meaning to the lives of believers. Jung also claims that, unlike Protestantism, “the Catholic Church still feels responsible for the *cura animarum* (the care of the soul’s welfare),” and it carries out this mission through religious rites and ceremonies (1964, p. 87). In another book titled *Psychology & Religion* (1938), consisting of his lectures on the psychological aspects of religious experiences, Jung explains how Protestant iconophobia affects its followers psychologically by suggesting that as a result of the abandonment of religious concepts and ceremonies, the Protestants are “confronted with an inner experience ... without the protection and guidance of a dogma and a ritual which are the unparalleled quintessence of Christian as well as of pagan religious experience” (1938, pp. 22-23). Similarly, in a lecture in 1951 translated by Leon King, Burgelin focuses on the divisions between Catholicism and Protestantism over several religious themes and how their different perceptions of

those themes affect their followers psychologically. Burgelin stresses the salience of religious objects that make salvation possible and that accompany the individual in her/his way to salvation: "The Catholic is the man who is never alone; through the intermediary of these signs and the help of the saints the whole faithful community accompanies him in his prayer and his life" (1951, p. 61). On the other hand, Burgelin argues that the constant promotion of such doctrines as man's fallen nature and predestination by the Protestant religion becomes "demanding for the person" and "leaves the individual in the grip of his demons" (1951, pp. 68-69). In short, religious objects with their symbolic meanings lauded by Catholicism and abandoned by Protestantism during the early modern period are viewed as means to provide pious believers with psychological ease by enabling them to express or canalize their repressed elements consciously.

### **Analyses of the Selected Poems from John Donne's *Holy Sonnets***

The relationship between religion and psychology can be observed in John Donne's life and poetical works. Donne was born into a Catholic family, and from his mother's side, he was descended from the line of Sir Thomas More (1478-1535), who was attributed martyrdom by the Catholics. Moreover, Ellis Heywood and Jasper Heywood, who were his uncles from his mother's side, were Jesuits who aimed at a counter-reformation in England during the early modern period (Bald, 1970, p. 25). Since it was almost impossible for a Catholic to succeed in social life, Donne had to abandon the religion of his family (Carey, 1981, p. 15). The publication of his polemical work *Pseudo-Martyr* (1610), which argued that Catholics should pledge allegiance to the king over the Pope, revealed his conversion from Catholicism to Protestantism, and it helped Donne become a divinity reader at Lincoln's Inn and later the dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in 1620 (Bald, 1970, p. 381). This change in the poet's religious views is also reflected in how he perceived the matter of sacraments. Thus, before moving on to analysing the selected poems in *Holy Sonnets* in relation to the role of sacraments in the individuation process, it seems important to note that the poet presents an ambiguous attitude towards sacraments in his works. For instance, the famous satire on religion titled "Satire III: Of Religion" addresses one of the most popular theological topics of the time, which is the search for the true religion that might help one attain salvation. After explaining the deficiencies of all religious sects that claim themselves to be the true religion, Donne concludes that "Cragged and steep, Truth stands, and he that will / Reach her, about must and about must go, / And what the hill's suddenness resists, win so." (1633/2001, p. 102). In other words, Donne proclaims that one should distrust the established theological norms so that this skepticism may lead one to true knowledge. That is, he offers believers to "doubt wisely" (1633/2001, p. 102). To emphasize the importance of not having blind confidence in established religions, he lists the defects of all the religious sects throughout "Satire III: Of Religion":

Seek true religion. O where? Mirreus,  
Thinking her unhous'd here, and fled from us,  
Seeks her at Rome; there, because he doth know  
That she was there a thousand years ago,  
He loves her rags so, as we here obey  
The statecloth where the prince sate yesterday.  
Crantz to such brave loves will not be enthrall'd,  
But loves her only, who at Geneva is call'd  
Religion, plain, simple, sullen, young,  
Contemptuous, yet unhandsome; as among  
Lecherous humours, there is one that judges  
No wenches wholesome, but coarse country drudges. (1633/2001, p. 101)

In these lines, Donne seems to detract himself from both Catholicism and Protestantism. The religious symbols and ceremonies cherished by the Roman Catholic Church are referred to as rags with the word's negative connotations. He also claims that the Protestants have only changed the object of worship. On the

other hand, the fictional character named Crantz is depicted as a Calvinist believer who is not impressed by the religious symbols and who believes that the true religion resides in Geneva, the center of Calvinism.

While the speaker of the satire seems to be not impressed by the three religious sects, on other occasions, Donne also emphasizes, in line with the aforementioned historians' and psychologists' arguments, the sacraments and religious practices' effects on the individual psyche. In a letter to a friend dated 1615, Donne maintains that the Catholic rites and ceremonies carry a symbolic meaning by "bring[ing] us nearer heaven" while it also moves heavens far away from individuals "by making us pass so many Courts, and Offices of Saints in this life." (2001, p. 396). Adding a negative aspect while writing on Catholicism and its embracement of sacraments might be viewed as Donne's attempt to mediate himself between the two dominant religious sects of the time. However, as the given quotation reveals, Donne puts his faith in the alleviating effects of religious symbols and ceremonies on human psychology. Therefore, as both Jung and Donne argue in different contexts, religion and its symbolic rituals and concepts operate to accentuate socially improper attitudes and actions. In this way, a person who transgresses the demands of the collective consciousness finds a shortcut to forgiveness through the aid of these symbolic objects and ceremonies. In the context of the individuation process, then, sacraments and religious practices might be said, first, to enable individuals to avoid religious despair, and second, to provide individuals with psychological ease because through them individuals possess the opportunity to integrate their unconscious side, or the shadow archetype, with the conscious one.

The religious despair caused by the lack of sacramental means to attain salvation or to reach God is also reflected in the literary works produced by English writers during the Reformation period. For instance, Kuchar suggests that poems such as "The Temper" by George Herbert (1593-1633) and "The Sponge" by William Alabaster (1567-1640) equate poetic expressions of religious faith to sacraments that assure salvation (2018, p. 50-56). Another example, and the focal point of this article, is John Donne's *Holy Sonnets*. Unlike Herbert and Alabaster, Donne's speakers in this collection fail at seeing religious verse as a medium through which they express their faith in God. Instead, these speakers are considerate about being an unworthy subject to God. This feeling of insufficiency stems from the persistence of their carnal desires in their present selves. In his doctoral dissertation on the theme of self-sacrifice in Donne's works, Migan claims that most of the poet's works reveal that Donne suffers from "neurotic anxiety" in Freudian terms, defining it as "a restless and anticipatory disposition which elicits from the sufferer a depressive response to some unknown and unfounded danger" (2004, pp. 25-28). However, in this article, neurosis with which the poetic personae of *Holy Sonnets* are understood to be afflicted is analysed in Jungian terms, and thus it is argued that neurosis stems not from the poetic personae's anxiety about an indefinite object but from their relationship to their former selves. Along with the argument that the speakers of the selected poems suffer from neurosis, the article suggests that the lack of religious subsidiary objects adds to the mentioned affliction. Since neither God nor religious objects can eradicate the speakers' sinful nature, they fluctuate between their repentant and sinful states. In this respect, the speakers' carnal sides constitute the shadow archetype. While sacraments and religious practices enable an individual to acknowledge their shadow or unconscious sides, the lack of them invalidates their mediatory function. Thus, the desire to eradicate the unconscious self is not materialized, which leaves the speakers in an in-between state.

The first poem chosen to be analysed to reveal the sacraments' importance in the individuation process is "Thou hast made me." The sonnet's speaker oscillates between his worldliness and his spiritual side. In addition, the despondent tone of the speaker in this sonnet is perceptible as he questions God on the matter of his salvation. What he requires from God is to cleanse his soul of the sins that were committed by the speaker in the past and that still exist in the present time. However, God stays silent throughout the whole poem leaving the speaker in a state of uncertainty concerning the verdict on his salvation. When read within the Jungian theories of neurosis, "Thou hast made me" manifests that the speaker's neurotic situation arises from his desperate wish to eliminate his carnal side. Further, it reveals that this state of contraries in which the poetic persona finds himself leaves him in terror since he cannot receive an answer from God on the question if he will be saved after the elimination of his carnal desires. Therefore, the analysis of "Thou hast made me" suggests that its poetic persona suffers from neurosis due to his adherence to the reformed religion's distrust in the human body and its passions, which stems from the same theological skeptical

attitude towards sacraments. It further claims that the lack of religious symbols distances God, the singular source of grace, from the reach of human beings as the poem manifests this inadequacy of attaining salvation through the representation of God's silence.

The first two lines of "Thou hast made me" reveal the speaker's despondency stemming from his feelings of uncertainty about his salvation: "Thou hast made me, and shall thy worke decay? / Repaire me now, for now mine end doth haste" (Donne, 1633/2001, p. 258). Here is a man who senses the impending death and is in a state of immediacy concerning his salvation. The lines indicate that the speaker is afraid of dying not because of leaving the material world but because of the consequences of the way he lived in that world. That consequence is eternal punishment in Hell. Still, there seems to be a remedy for this fear related to that consequence. However, this remedy cannot be provided by the speaker but by his addressee in this poem. The addressee of the poem is God, and He is the creator of the speaker. Therefore, it is only Him who can save or "repaire" him.

Although what the speaker asks God to repair in him is not specified here, the given lines cast the poem as a Protestant work since they evince the reformed ideas on the futility of sacraments and human efforts in acquiring salvation. In the same way, Martin states that the sonnet "aptly establishes the main theme of experimental predestination" (2013, p. 371). That is, according to these lines, salvation can only be achieved through God's mercy; human beings are incapable of attaining divine grace neither through their own attempts nor through the mediatory aid of religious symbols or ceremonies. Both the lack of human autonomy in working out salvation and the conviction that God has already decreed who is elected for salvation leave the speaker in religious despair. Along with the reformed ideas of predestination and iconophobia, the feeling of despair also arises from the speaker's relationship to his own past shaped by his enjoyment of bodily desires, and this relationship between his present and past selves indicates that the speaker suffers from neurosis. As Blanch points out, the feelings of fear and despair are equally due to both the speaker's consideration of himself as a sinful creature and his inability to obtain salvation through his own efforts (1974, p. 478). In addition to the relation of the speaker's fear and despondency to his past experiences, the remaining six lines of the octave of the sonnet establish how the poetic persona views his past self in the present time:

I runne to death, and death meets me as fast,  
And all my pleasures are like yesterday;  
I dare not move my dimme eyes any way,  
Despaire behind, and death before doth cast  
Such terrour, and my feeble flesh doth waste  
By sinne in it, which it t'wards hell doth weigh; (Donne, 1633/2001, p. 259)

As Malpezzi rightly puts forward, the scene here resembles the tradition of psychostasis, or the enactment of the Last Day (the Judgement Day) when one's good deeds and sins are weighed to decide whether that person is going to be saved or punished eternally (1987, p. 72). However, the feeling of despair arises not only from the result of psychostasis, that is he is a sinful man, but also from the possibility that God may have not mended his sinful nature. The given lines demonstrate that the poetic persona considers his former self to be a person who is not worthy of salvation. The reason why the present self has the same feeling of unworthiness is the persistency of his former self shaped by his days of appeasing his bodily desires. He "always possesses some remnant of the old body, 'dead to sin,' and the new nature that is able to rise in proportion as the sinful nature is repressed" (Cefalu, 2003, p. 79). The fourth line of the poem thus corroborates that what the poetic persona desires to eradicate, that is his carnal side, does not leave his consciousness; that side of him formed by "pleasures" is as perceivable as it was in the past. Due to the existence of his opposing sides, which are his worldliness and his spirituality, he can confront neither his spiritual side nor his carnal side. His bodily part raises the feeling of despair for the present self, and the present religious self is afraid of the possibility of eternal punishment. He is torn between his carnal desires and his fear of damnation.



The image of being stuck between despair and fear that is presented in the octave of “Thou hast made me” is strikingly similar to a dream of one of Jung’s patients described by the psychologist in his discussion of the function of the unconscious materials:

He is walking along an unfamiliar street. It is dark, and he hears steps coming behind him. With a feeling of fear he quickens his pace. The footsteps come nearer, and his fear increases. He begins to run. But the footsteps seem to be overtaking him. Finally he turns round, and there he sees the devil. In deathly terror he leaps into the air and hangs there suspended. (1953, p. 191)

Here, the dreamer finds himself torn between fear and despair just like the poetic persona of Donne’s “Thou hast made me.” Jung suggests that the dreamer suffers from neurosis and the cause of the dreamer’s neurosis is his wish to “keep himself in a ‘provisional’ or ‘uncontaminated’ state of purity” by means of renouncing the world outside (1953, p. 191). Similarly, in Donne’s poem, the speaker suffers from neurosis due to the resistance of his “feeble flesh” or his bodily desires which he aims to repress to the point of extinction so that God may forgive his sins and save him (Donne, 1633/2001, p. 259). However, as the given lines of the octave of the poem indicate, the persona cannot dispose himself of his carnal side, which leaves him in a state of contraries between his worldliness and his repentant spiritual side. Therefore, the poetic persona’s relation to his former carnal self produces feelings of despair and fear in him and leads him to neurosis.

The representation of a neurotic poetic persona in the poem can be related to the Jungian concept of the individuation process. The individuation process suggests that an individual should liberate his personality from the demands of collective consciousness that is constituted by social expectations, which in the case of the poetic personae of Donne’s *Holy Sonnets* are the repression of carnal desires. To do this, the individual needs to recognize the part of herself/himself that s/he does not want to disclose to the world outside. If the processes of separating from societal demands and of integration of the unrecognized self into consciousness are successful, the individual, according to the principles of the individuation process, can acquire psychic wholeness that is manifested in feelings of contentment and security. However, if the individual complies with the demands of collective consciousness at the expense of avoiding the part of her/his that s/he views as inappropriate to disclose to the public, s/he might suffer from psychological disorders such as neurosis or psychosis. As Jung claims, the demands of collective consciousness are the hindrances on one’s way to the experience of psychic wholeness (1953, p. 162). In the same way, the poem makes apparent the outcome of repressing undesirable experiences. Congruent with the principles of the individuation process, the unpreferable carnal desires experienced by the former self of the poetic persona do not disappear from his psyche. They still exist in his consciousness, and thus they afflict him with feelings of despair and fear concerning his salvation.

In addition to his inability to attain salvation, God’s silence adds to the feelings of despair in the poem, which reveals the anticipated psychological effects of the Protestant doctrines. As noted above, the first two lines examine the Protestant idea of individual efforts’ futility in working out salvation. For this reason, the speaker requests God to intervene in the process to discard his carnal side. However, no answer from the addressee is granted to the speaker. As a Protestant man, he lacks the Catholic auxiliaries such as penance and symbolic religious objects that might accompany him on his way to salvation. What is left for him is God’s mercy that can only be attained through divine will.

The absence of God’s answer to the speaker’s requirements from Him affirms that the poetic persona is a Protestant man. Also, the lack of God’s assurance concerning the question of the speaker’s salvation leaves him in a feeling of religious despair. That is, he cannot be sure whether he is saved or not. The feeling of religious despair, associated with the former sinful self of the speaker and related to God’s silence, is voiced in the sixth line as it is also elaborated in the sestet of the sonnet:

Onely thou art above, and when towards thee  
By thy leave I can looke, I rise againe;  
But our old subtle foe so tempteth me,  
That not one houre my selfe I can sustaine;  
Thy Grace may wing me to prevent his art,  
And thou like Adamant draw mine iron heart. (Donne, 1633/2001, p. 259)

The sestet of the sonnet led critics to different interpretations of the poem in terms of the speaker's assuredness of his salvation. For example, Carey rejects the idea put forward by Martz that the speaker eludes feelings of despair by expressing his faith in God's grace. Rather, the tone of the sestet "is one of despairing inadequacy" (1981, p. 53). Thus, according to Carey, the poem presents a man who is in a state of urgent need of help from God but who is not sure if God will supply aid at all. Also, Rissanen points out that the speaker "is still craving for a message, a communication and communion that would carry him across the emptiness that is about to engulf him, but he has found none" (1975, p. 293). Even if the sestet contains a hopeful tone, it is only "a contingent optimism," that is, the speaker can only be saved from damnation only if God is willing to save him (Stachniewski, 1981, p. 700). As the sestet makes clear, the upward movement towards salvation can be effectuated only "[b]y [God's] leave" (Donne, 1633/2001, p. 259). Put in another way, human efforts cannot assure the poetic persona of acquiring salvation. Additionally, the analogy drawn between the relationship between God and the human subject and a magnet and an iron heart exemplifies the argument that the speaker is still uncertain about his salvation as the poetic persona's tainted iron heart is yet to be moved by God the magnet. For this reason, the speaker of the sonnet tries to be assured of his salvation only by understanding the will of God.

God's silence observed in the sonnet can be regarded as the outcome of the reformed religion's disenchantment with sacraments and religious practices. The mediatory functions of symbolic religious concepts and objects mean nothing to the speaker of "Thou hast made me" in terms of obtaining salvation. That is, his despair at the presence of God's silence suggests that a religious object such as the Eucharist or a religious practice like penance is not believed to be fruitful in acquiring his salvation. As explained above, although Catholic believers put faith in such religious objects and ceremonies in attaining salvation, the belief in their utility was considered by Protestantism to be heretical, and the Protestant rejection carried the possibility of religious despair without the aid of religious images.

The Protestant view that religious symbols cannot enable an individual to attain salvation is also manifested in "Oh my blacke Soule!" and "Batter my heart." The speaker of "Oh my blacke Soule!" feels helpless concerning his salvation. As "Thou hast made me," "Oh my blacke Soule!" is also about its speaker's repentance for tarnishing his pure soul with bodily desires. In the octave, the speaker compares his soul to "a pilgrim, which abroad hath done / Treason, and durst not turne to whence he is fled" and to

a thiefe, which till deaths doome be read,  
Wisheth himselfe delivered from prison;  
But damn'd and hal'd to execution,  
Wisheth that still he might be imprisoned. (Donne, 1633/2001, p. 260)

Like a pilgrim, the speaker's soul dwells not in the place to which it belongs. The earth is not the soul's hometown; it is Paradise. However, on earth, the soul betrays its creator by letting bodily desires taint it. The stain of bodily desires on his soul leaves the speaker in fear of eternal damnation. The only agency that might save him from punishment is God. As the sestet of the sonnet suggests, God's grace might save the speaker from eternal punishment if he repents his sins. However, the main question is "who shall give thee that grace to beginne?" (Donne, 1633/2001, p. 260). At first, it seems as if the speaker believes in the power of individual effort for salvation:

O, make thyself with holy mourning black,  
 And red with blushing, as thou art with sin;  
 Or wash thee in Christ's blood, which hath this might,  
 That being red, it dyes red souls to white. (Donne, 1633/2001, p. 260)

Here, the poetic persona believes that acknowledging his sins and repenting them will eventually make him a worthy creature in the eyes of God. Moreover, one of the methods of repenting sins is being drowned "in Christ's blood," and this act resembles the rite of Eucharist, which is a sacramental practice during which a believer is given a piece of bread and a cup of wine symbolising Christ's body and blood respectively. This line of the sonnet implicitly suggests that sacraments are required for God's mercy that would turn "red [or sinful] souls to white [or salvation]" (Donne, 1633/2001, p. 260). In other words, the poetic persona claims that the act of repenting of his sins that are related to his body might save him in religious terms. However, as the tenth line suggests, the speaker cannot initiate the repentance process if God does not let him do so. Therefore, for the poetic personae of both "Oh my blacke Soule!" and "Thou hast made me", the deliverance of salvation depends wholly on God's will, which casts them as Protestant individuals.

Similarly, imperatives are employed to call God for action to strip the speaker of his body in "Batter my heart." The speaker's need for God's involvement in the process of eradicating his carnal side is voiced perceptibly in the sonnet. To emphasize the point that his personality has been tarnished, he draws an analogy between himself and a town (Donne, 1633/2001, p. 264). His reason, he claims, is the "viceroy in mee, mee should defend" (Donne, 1633/2001, p. 264). However, his reason, through which he believes he can attain salvation, is not functional because it is enslaved by God's enemy, that is Satan (Donne, 1633/2001, p. 264). In Donne's works, the Satan figure often refers to the sins generated by bodily desires. For example, in another religious sonnet titled "Since she whom I lov'd," the speaker aims to focus his love wholly on God after the beloved's death. However, he is still apprehensive about the possibility that "the world, flesh, yea devil put thee [God] out" (Donne, 1633/2001, p. 265). Here, the affirmative "yea" between bodily desires and Satan corroborates the affinity between the two. It can be deduced from this analogy that the speaker of "Batter my heart" desires the extinction of his carnal desires. For this reason, both prior to and after explaining the sinful situation in which he observes himself, the speaker pleads with God to intervene in the process of quenching his bodily passions. He depicts God as a blacksmith at the very beginning of the sonnet. The reason for the use of such an analogy is the mentioned occupation's renewing function. As a blacksmith restores an object easily, God can also free the speaker from the enslaving nature of his carnal side. Accordingly, he asks God, as if he asks a blacksmith, to "[b]atter my heart" or to "knocke, breathe, shine, and seeke to mend" his personality (Donne, 1633/2001, p. 264). God needs to "bend / Your force, to breake, blowe, burn, and make me new" (Donne, 1633/2001, p. 264). Also, later in the sonnet, the speaker envisions God as his master and his marital partner. Although Satan is his husband-to-be, he needs God to "[d]ivorce mee, 'untie, or breake that knot againe" (Donne, 1633/2001, p. 264). God's regenerative power is required so much that the speaker's corruption caused by his bodily passions can only be redeemed only if "you [God] ravish mee" (Donne, 1633/2001, p. 264). These striking images employed by the speaker express how desperately he needs his personality to be reconstructed. He wants to be devoted to God so much that only destructive actions can make his transformation possible. However, he never performs these actions but asks God to carry them out. This means that the poetic persona, as a Protestant believer, indirectly expresses his disbelief in the utility of any other means than God's mercy. Still, God's silence and the persistence of his undesirable carnal desires contradict his expression of this disbelief.

Both the speakers' avoidance of active participation in the process of renewing themselves and their complete trust in God render them Protestant believers who share the idea that neither individual efforts nor sacraments can aid one in obtaining salvation. As stated before, both historians and psychologists agree upon the view that the post-Reformation attitude towards sacraments might leave a person in a state of religious despair without the guidance of those religious symbols and ceremonies (Cressy and Ferrell, 1996, p. 2; MacCulloch, 1990, pp. 1-2; Burgelin, 1951, pp. 68-69; Jung, 1938, pp. 22-23). In the same way, since the poetic personae of "Thou hast made me," "Oh my blacke Soule!", and "Batter my heart" are not answered as to whether they will be saved or punished, they are still in a state of despondency and fear.

Thus, the analyses of Donne's selected poems within the context of the individuation process suggest that the speakers pray for the elimination of their bodily desires that constitute the shadow archetype. However, the lack of sacramental means to come to terms with those desires, which the speakers view as sins, entails God's silence. Thus, the undesired shadow self, composed of carnal desires, persists in the minds of the speakers, leading them to oscillate painfully between those desires and repentance.

## Conclusion

Read within the context of the Jungian concept of the individuation process, the selected poems in John Donne's *Holy Sonnets* present neurotic speakers who disturbingly oscillate between their pious and sinful selves. The reason for the emergence of this psychological disturbance is the ever-presence of their undesired parts or their shadow sides. In these poems, the speakers' desire to eradicate the unpreferable parts of their personality is observed. As stated in the analyses of "Thou hast made me," the way that the poetic persona expresses his aversion to his carnal desires is reflected in their association with the devil, which is also maintained in other sonnets. As Protestant individuals, the speakers abide by the religious rules and want to suppress their carnal sides to the point of extinction. Therefore, as opposed to the requirements of the individuation process, they neither separate themselves from the demands of the collective consciousness nor acknowledge their shadow sides. In addition, feeling inadequate to achieve this task, they ask God to intervene in the process. However, since they lack the mediatory function of religious sacraments, they are left without an answer from God. As historians and psychologists argue, sacraments operate as a bridge between human beings and God. Thus, their absence also entails God's absence for the speakers of the analysed sonnets. In the analyses of "Oh my blacke Soule!" and "Batter my heart," it is suggested that the frequent use of imperatives while addressing God and God's silence confirm the effect of sacraments' absence in the lives of the poetic personae. The consequence is observed in their expressions of anxious feelings about salvation. Since God does not take the initiative in the process of eradicating the speakers' carnal or undesired sides, they suffer from fluctuating painfully between their religious and sinful personalities. In this respect, the poems evince the importance of religious sacraments in the continuation of the individuation process in Jungian terms.

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