THE SONNET SEQUENCE IN ELIZABETHAN POETRY

DISSERTATION

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PREFACE

This dissertation should properly be dedicated to four people: to my parents, who encouraged, to Saralyn, who persevered, and to Bruce, who endured.

I owe more than I can express to the unfailing courtesy, wide scholarship, and sound critical judgment of my adviser, Harold R. Walley, and wish as well to pay inadequate tribute to the inspiration and guidance, over several years, of Richard Altick, Ruth Hughey, James Logan, Francis Utley, and Harold Wilson. They have a part, always, in whatever scholarly excellence I may achieve.

Finally, I wish to thank Mrs. John Kempton, whose aid in preparing the manuscript was invaluable.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Even the most casual student of the Renaissance sonnet sequences is struck at once by two things—their extreme popularity, and their short-lived vogue. Within the vital decade of the 1590's almost every Elizabethan poet who is remembered at all by the general student, and many who have been forgotten even by the specialist, wrote sonnets. They were more catching than the plague. Nor was this fever confined to England; it had been raging sporadically in Italy, France, and Spain since the fourteenth century. England's participation, though full-bodied, was tardy.

It has been the prevalent custom for critics to consider the Elizabethan sonnet sequences rather neatly, and artificially, isolated from the rest of English poetry—a small though vigorous tributary rushing presumably toward some Dead Sea of sterile conventions. They are damned as "imitations, if not mere translations,"¹ "the last decadent flickers" of the "European convention of courtly love,"² and a

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"treasure-trove of conventions, distorted... into sheer grotesquerie."\(^3\)

From this vantage the greater poets are uprooted; Sidney and Spenser find their champions. Drayton is allowed for the sake of "one perfect sonnet," and Daniel receives a condescending pat on the back. Shakespeare is almost entirely disassociated. As for the other sonneteers, as Hallet Smith remarks, "though it is a matter of curiosity that so many sonnets should have been written,... it can hardly be a matter of surprise that so many of them are so bad."\(^4\)

Reading such remarks one is overtaken by a feeling similar to that felt watching a surrealist play—all is disconnected, isolated, the movements mechanical, sometimes predictable, but seemingly without underlying motivation. L. C. John is driven to lament, "One who would ascertain the impulse which prompted these poets to translate and imitate Petrarch's sonnets can only say with Wyatt, 'In a net I seek to hold the wynde,'..."\(^5\) Yet surely the critic need not feel reduced, when considering the multiplicity of sonnet cycles, to a series of baggats.

Given the fact of their overwhelming popularity, it seems reasonable to suppose that some aspect or aspects of the sonnet sequence must

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have held particular appeal for Renaissance poets. In some way the somnet sequence supplied an opportunity lacking, or not as easily accessible, in other poetic genres of the time. Usually this appeal is ascribed to the least important attribute of the sequence—its convention. Yet much that we now identify as "Petrarchan" convention belongs more properly to other schools of poetry, the Provencal, the Analectic, and the Ovidian. Indeed, one often indulges in a fruitless search through Petrarch for a cliché he is supposed to have originated.

Both the dominant postures of feeling and the metaphorical dialectic developed to accommodate these postures belong to the system of courtly love. While Petrarch no doubt assisted in the diffusion of aspects of the courtly love convention, no poet would have needed to imitate Petrarch to come at these materials. The most widely read pre-Petrarchan manual of "Petrarchan clichés," The Romance of the Rose, contains many of the favorite commonplace of sommeaters. Lines fifty through eighty of Part Two, for instance, multiply example after example of the oxymoron so over-worked by a host of Renaissance lyric poets:

Love is a troubled peace, an amorous war—
A treasonous loyalty, disloyal faith—
A madman's logic, reasoned foolishness—
A pleasant peril in which one may drown—6

And so on for twenty-six more lines. Here also occur the "Petrarchan" devices of the God of Love shooting the lover through the eye into the

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heart, a long and quite typical account of the sufferings and behavior of the lover, and the much admired metaphor describing the lover as a mariner steering by a single star. The point is not worth laboring in more detail: Petrarch did not win his wide following because of the novelty of his subject matter.

What is there, then, that influenced so many poets to experiment with the genre of the sonnet sequence? At the outset one must distinguish between those poets such as Wyatt and Surrey who experimented with the form of the sonnet or "quatorzain" in the general process of adapting romance rhyme schemes and meters to the English language and those poets who, able to profit from the early experiments, imitated the sonnet sequence itself. One may recall that the sonnet did not find noteworthy favor with English poets at the time of its first introduction into English. Following the initial statement and practice in Tottel's Songs and Sonnets, it was scarcely used until almost twenty-five years later when Sidney began the vogue of the sonnet sequence.

Neither form nor convention, therefore, seems adequate answer to the problem of such widespread imitation. At best they are contributing elements. But if these considerations are removed, what then remains to be imitated? The answer, I believe, is found in a new poetic, a new attitude toward the function of poetry contained in Petrarch's Canzoniere. This attitude, when grasped, caused a re-evaluation of the relationship of the poet to his poetry and to his audience.

The sonnet sequence obviously falls into the broad category of the lyric as distinguished from drama or epic. In the lyric the poet
is closer to the audience than in the other genres. This is not to say that he expresses himself more intimately, more personally, in the lyric than in the novel or the drama, but that his stance is one of appearing to do so. The one apparent character to whom the sentiments of the poem may be referred is the poet himself. The audience is not given characters in action but an utterance that forms its own unity. All lyrics, of whatever century, have this in common. Yet it would be naive to assume that all lyrics establish the same relationship between poet and audience. The lyric may stand for what Coleridge called the "I-representative" or the "I-particular." To quote Northrup Frye, "Lyric is ... the poet presenting the image in relation to himself; it is to epos rhetorically, as prayer is to sermon. Lyric is the hypothetical form of what in religion is called the I-Thou relationship." It is interesting to juxtapose this quotation with the statements of Rosamond Tuve, who writes specifically of Elizabethan and Jacobean poetry, "On the responsibility of the poet to himself, earlier poetic is silent. To judge by the poetry that was written, I do not think that the period found this question especially interesting. We are not to read poems as if language were a tool for announcing facts about a particular thou or I but a medium for intimating and ordering


significances which particulars shadow forth." In effect, Miss Tuve says that we must drastically modify our current definition of the lyric genre, one essentially molded by the attitudes and biases of the nineteenth century, when approaching lyrics written during the Renaissance.

Any extended attempt to deal with lyric poetic theory in the Renaissance has, naturally enough, emphasized this distinction between modern and Renaissance attitudes toward the lyric. Hence we find Miss Tuve declaring, "Earlier theory reads as if poetry were conceived of as a relation established between a subject and a reader, though only establishable by a poet. The emphasis on poetry as interesting evidence of the relation between a subject and a particular poet is an emphasis we have learned long since" (page 189).

Certainly Miss Tuve's statements are accurate for a vast number of Renaissance lyrics. Everything seemed designed to separate the poet from his work: the lack of "professional" poets other than those dependent on the favor of a patron, the affectation of anonymity among persons of independent means with inclination and leisure enough to write poetry, the haphazard manner in which poems were collected or published, and the long apprenticeship of English poetry during which imitation and translation were the desiderata. A glance into the poetic criticism of the time reveals that generic distinctions were based on subject—"the thing written about" or form.10

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9 *Elizabathan and Metaphysical Imagery* (Chicago, 1947), p. 179.

10 Discussions of genre or "kinds" of poetry are seldom detailed,
Is one to conclude, then, that in the modern sense of the term, the sense represented by Northrup Frye, the Renaissance wrote no lyric poetry, that the urge for personal self-expression was either unfelt or ignored in an age rediscovering the importance of the self? This question, which is germane to a discussion of the nature of the sonnet perhaps since so much English Renaissance criticism was devoted to defending "poesy" against Puritan strictures or to discussing it from the rhetoricians' viewpoint. However, those attempts at classification that do exist group poetry under two general headings—form and subject. For example, Richard Willis, one of the earliest Elizabethan apologists, attached his short Latin treatise on poetry, De re poetica disputatio, to a collection of a hundred poems, Poematum Liber (1573), each representing a distinct verse-form such as epitaph, epigram, eclogue or, more abstrusely, palindromes, epigramma, or pasquines. (See J.W.H. Atkins, English Literary Criticism: The Renaissance (London, 1947), p. 103.) Gascoigne, in his Notes of Instruction Concerning the making of verse or rhyme in English (1575), discusses in general the stanza-forms available and the content appropriate to each; of the sonnet he remarks, ". . . some thinke that all Poemes (being short) may be called Sonets, . . . but yet I can beseele allowe to call those Sonnets whiche are of fouer and turnoveres lynes, every line containing tenn syllables. The firste twelve do ryme in staves of foure lines by crosse meetre, and the last two ryming togethre do conclude the whole . . . Sonets serue as well in matters of loue as of discourse; . . ." (In G. Gregory Smith, Elizabethan Critical Essays, I (London, 1930), 55, 57.) Sidney's approach in An Apology for Poetry (pub. 1595) follows this pattern. He divides his third class of "right" poets (those treating of human life as opposed to religious or philosophical poets) according to "kinds", "Heroick, Lirick, Tragick, Comick, Saterick, Lambock, Elegick, Pastorell, and certaine others, some of these being termed according to the manner they deal with, some by the sorts of verse they liked best to write in, . . ." (In Smith, II, 159.) William Webbe, in Discourse of English Poetrie (1586) and George Puttenham, in Arts of English Poetry (1589) also treat English poetry in terms of its subject matter and forms, though Puttenham goes on to attempt to explain the qualities of each "kind" according to its social and emotional origin. Thus the sonnet, along with the ode, song, elegy, ballad, and other "ditties" is described as a "forme of Poesie variable, inconstant, affected, curious, and most witty of any others, whereof the iyues were to be uttered in one sorte, the sorrowes in an other, and, by the many forme of Poesie, the many moods and pangs of losers throughly to be discovered; . . ." (In Smith, II, 47.)
sequence, cannot be solved by treating all Renaissance poets as if they were interchangeable. A critic cannot take for granted that Puttenham can be quoted correctly to explain the poetic impetus of every Renaissance poet, nor can he know that what Sidney says is presumably what Raleigh or Marlowe would have said if they had been writing a defense of poetry. Writers who could agree on very little else can hardly be expected to have agreed on how, and why, poetry should be written. It is quite true, to paraphrase Shelley, that no poet can escape the influence of his age; yet one must be careful to distinguish between stimuli and reaction. Perhaps the most difficult task of the critic is to become as unsophisticated as his subject. If one feels he knows in advance the solution of a mystery, the bumblings of those still engaged in solving the riddle can seem incredibly stupid. Thus, in dealing with the sonnet sequence, the critic, who has read a hundred sonnets if he's read ten, feels rather out of patience with a Renaissance poet for bothering to write them at all. Yet if it were possible to put oneself in the position of the poet of the 1580's one might gain, at the least, a new perspective.

In this attempt, as has been noted, the criticism of the age is but partially helpful. The reason is not hard to find: most Renaissance criticism is derivative and most is prescriptive, not descriptive. Thus poetry which was new for its age was either ignored or judged by ancient standards. This was the fate of the Elizabethan play and, by and large, the fate of the sonnet sequence. It helps to explain much of the criticism leveled at both by the savants of the time.
The majority of Renaissance criticism falls into two categories: the mimetic theory of poetry, based on Aristotle, and the pragmatic or rhetorical theory, of which Horace was the leading exponent. The theories have different points of emphasis, but view the poem in much the same way: looking at the poem as something "made" or "imitated," they regard the poet as subordinate to the artifact.

In Aristotle's critical system the relationship of the work to the subject matter it imitates is primary. The poetic artifact draws its nature from the objects imitated, the necessary effects on the audience, and the internal demands of the product itself. The poet, though necessary, is not determinative. His personal facilities, desires, emotions, are not called on in an explanation of the subject matter or form of a poem. Even if the ideas to be imitated were conceived of as trans-empirical, available only to the eye of the mind, as under the Platonic concept of reality, the emphasis is on the shaping influence of the Ideas or principles themselves, not on the poet as part creator of the idea. The poet's vision, if he had one, was impersonal, and it was necessary for the poet to transcend his immediate sensuous reality to attain it. Thus the Neo-Platonic lover must climb beyond the vision of one woman's beauty to a perception of Beauty. The function of the woman is to point the way to this broader, more impersonal view.

The central tendency of pragmatic criticism, on the other hand, conceives of the poem as something made in order to draw certain appropriate responses from its readers. The poet is considered from the
point of view of the powers and training he should have to achieve effectively the end of moving his audience. In Puttenham's words, the poet is judged according to his power to "inaugele and appassionate the mind." The pragmatic critic is above all concerned with formulating the methods by which he can achieve this end; the "craft" of poetry is analyzed. Poetry is thus classified according to the effects it is most competent to achieve, and the norms of the poetic and the canons of critical appraisal are taken from the needs and desires of the audience to whom the poetry is addressed. Under both of these theories the poet is diminished; in the one he is subordinated to his subject, in the other he is subordinated to his audience.

This attitude is, of course, in direct contrast to the attitude toward the poet developed in the early nineteenth century. To quote M. H. Abrams, who has very cogently summed up this shift in attitude,

In general terms, the central tendency of the expressive theory may be summarized in this way: A work of art is essentially the internal made external, resulting from a creative process operating under the impulse of feeling, and embodying the combined product of the poet's perceptions, thoughts and feelings. The primary source and subject matter of a poem, therefore, are the attributes and actions of the poet's own mind or, if aspects of the external world, then these only as they are converted from fact to poetry by the feelings and operations of the poet's mind.

The poet, under the expressive theory, has become supreme.

Let us summarize the differences between what we will call the Renaissance and Romantic conceptions of the poet's relation to lyric. First, to the Romantics, the poet was more important than the subject.

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12Abrams, p. 22.
of his poem. Thus, a lyric properly was concerned with the poet's re-
action to the object rather than the object itself. As John Stuart Mill
says, "poetry is not in the object itself," but "in the state of mind"
in which it is contemplated.13 Under the Renaissance conception,
according to Abrams' well-drawn images, the mind of the poet served as
a mirror reflecting external objects; under the Romantic conception the
mind was a lamp, which made a contribution to, or cast a light on, the
objects perceived.14

Second, the poet was more important than his audience. Says
Mill, "All poetry is of the nature of a soliloquy." Further, "When the
poet's act of utterance is not itself the end, but a means to an end--
vis by the feelings he himself expresses, to work upon the feelings or
upon the belief, or the will, of another,—when the expression of his
emotions . . . is tinged also by that purpose, by that desire of making
an impression upon another mind, then it ceases to be poetry, and be-
comes eloquence."15 In the Renaissance, as we have noted, the stress
is more on moving affections than revealing them. The poet must not
lose sight of the effect he intends to have on his audience.

A third major difference lies in the way in which the two periods
viewed the emotional sincerity of the poet. The Romantic view is most
succinctly stated by Wordsworth, "Poetry is the spontaneous over-flow

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13Early Essays by John Stuart Mill, ed. J. W. M. Gibbs (London,

14Abrams, p. vi.

of powerful feelings." The Reverend John Keble elaborates the theory this way, "Poetry is the indirect expression in words, . . . of some overpowering emotion, or ruling taste, or feeling, the direct indulgence whereof is somehow repressed." He calls those poets "primary" who, "spontaneously moved by impulse, resort to composition for relief and solace of a burdened or overwrought mind." Secondary poets are those who "imitate the ideas, the expressions and the measures of the former." The true lyric poet was personally involved with his subject.

The Romantics would not deny, however, that a concomitant of poetic inspiration is the effect it will have on its audience. Carlyle, for example, praising Burns for his "Sincerity", says, "This is the grand secret for finding readers and retaining them; let him who would move and convince others, be first moved and convinced himself." But at the time of composition, the poet can not, must not, if he is a true poet, consider his audience. As J. G. Sulzer reiterates, only eloquence "constantly has the listener, upon whom it wants to produce an effect, before its eyes. The poet is . . . put into a passion, or at least into a certain mood, by his object; he can not resist the violent desire to utter his feelings, he is transported . . . He speaks, even if no one listens to him, because his feelings do not let him


be silent."19

The Renaissance stressed the value of "sincerity", or at least the appearance thereof, but this "sincerity" was important not in relation to the poet, but to the audience. Long before, Cicero, the Roman deity of Renaissance rhetoricians, had stated the aims of the orator to be "conciliating, informing, and moving the audience," and had gone on to say that the speaker must himself achieve a state of excitement in order to arouse one in his audience, for "no mind is so susceptible to the powers of eloquence, as to catch its blaze, unless the speaker, when he approaches it, is himself in flames."20 The art of poetry, in the Renaissance, was closely aligned with the art of oratory. Rhetoric belonged to both equally, and Cicero's comment became a commonplace reference.

In short, the needs of the audience and the nature of the object "imitated" determine the creation of the Renaissance poem; in the nineteenth century the poem was determined by the needs and nature of the poet. One cannot doubt that these broad distinctions apply to such lyrics as "Gascoigne's Good Night," John Lyly's "Cupid and my Campaspe," and Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd." But one may seriously question the appropriateness of these strictures when applied to the sonnet sequences of Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare or to the lyrics of Donne and Herbert. Elements seem present here which are not adequately


accounted for by the prevailing rhetorical and mimetic explanations of
the functions of poetry. At some point poets begin writing poetry in a
different way and, apparently, for different reasons. This shift,
referred to by Patrick Crutwell as "that deep change in sensibility
which marks off the later from the earlier Elizabethans,"21 is usually
placed in the 1590's.

Various explanations and counter-explanations for this shift
have been offered, but no one denies its occurrence. The decade in
which it occurs is also the decade of the sonnet sequence, but the son-
net sequence, rather than being considered a factor contributing to the
shift, is generally looked upon as a conservative, unprogressive form.
It is "fashionable and conventional," "a chosen form of the old."22
Yet the sonnet sequence was new, not "old," to Elizabethan poets. Ap-
ppearing in England in complete form in 1591, it conquered the imagi-
nation of almost all practicing poets; it flourished; it vanished. In
this process its approaches, its attitudes—whatever it contained that
a poet might assimilate—became part of the texture of Renaissance
poetry. This study is concerned with defining the nature of this con-
tribution and its relationship to the shift in poetic sensibility which
took place in the 1590's. For this endeavor, I will examine the vari-
atations of the genre in the works of Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare, and
representative minor Elizabethan sonneteers. But to understand what
English Renaissance writers were dealing with in their fascination with
the sonnet sequence, we must examine carefully what Petrarch—perhaps

21The Shakespearean Moment, p. 1.  22Ibid., p. 2.
unconsciously—achieved. The genre did not develop gradually; but sprang, full grown, from Petrarch's Cansoniere. It is with the Cansoniere that the study of the genre of the sonnet sequence must begin.
CHAPTER II

PETRARCH

Perhaps no man, until we reach the Romantics, has ever been so conscious of his identification as a poet. Petrarch regarded himself as destined to rekindle, singlehanded if need be, the flame of poetry which had previously burned in Rome. This endeavor was attended by every worldly success, for his fame, even while he lived, was known in all European courts pretending to the slightest culture. It was he who felt it necessary to write a letter "To Posterity" in order to tell "what sort of man I was and what was the fate of my works," and who began this letter, "I was but a mortal man like yourself, with an origin neither very high nor very low."¹

Petrarch was no nobleman who dabbled in poetry as one would cultivate a social grace, nor was he the talented dependent of some wealthy lord; he was a Poet, one who was presented at an early age with the choice of whether to be crowned poet laureate by the Chancellor of the University of Paris or by the Roman Senate, and his devoted study of antiquity had made him self-conscious and critical. Coming from such a man, the Canzoniere is a supremely sophisticated work.²


² For accounts of Petrarch's life see Armi and Morris Bishop, Petrarch and his World (Bloomington, 1963).
On one level, then, Petrarch writes in full awareness of his audience and thus for his audience. It is impossible a poet should do otherwise. As T. S. Eliot states,

If the author never spoke to himself the result would not be poetry though it might be magnificent rhetoric; and part of our enjoyment of great poetry is the enjoyment of overhearing words which are not addressed to us. But if the poem were exclusively for the author it would be a poem in a private and unknown language . . . no poem at all.3

An audience must be presupposed for any poem, but this audience plays a greater or lesser role, depending on the type of poem to be written. If the aim of the poet is to persuade, whether of the beauty of a lady or the eternality of some philosophic truth, the role of the audience becomes highly important. The poet becomes a suitor—the indifference of the audience means the failure of his communication. If, on the other hand, the intent of the poet is to express what he feels, the importance of his audience is considerably diminished. The poet becomes soliloquizer; he speaks because of the strength of his emotions. What is important is to make his statement. The impulse to write is thus motivated primarily by the inner state of the poet. If the intent of the poet is to persuade, his initial motivation—whatever it may be—is affected by the external nature of his intent.

Naturally, not all of Petrarch's songs and sonnets are written from the same radical of presentation. Though by far the bulk of his numerous collection pertains to his love for Laura, he included poems written on patriotic themes and some addressed to friends. And his

attitude toward his audience varies with his intent. His famous poem beginning "Italia mia," for example, contains an earnest plea to men to consider the brevity of their lives and put aside the hatreds so destructive to the land. And in his sonnet on the death of his friend Cino he follows elegiac tradition in exhorting all women and lovers to weep. Such poems, though they are not, as some critics have felt, violations of the unity of his subject, may still be considered separately from the poems motivated by Petrarch's love affair. As these love poems give the Canoniere its essential character, it is with their variations in intent that we must deal.

References to his audience are incidental in the first part of Petrarch's Canoniere, that part written to Laura during her life. Petrarch gives the effect that his audience is an afterthought—never do his poems seem written with his readers in mind. This attitude is made clear in his opening sonnet in which, detached like Chaucer's ascended Troilus, he gazes back over the countless poems inspired by the love of a woman, and speaks to those who read them. Yet in this poem he does not invite his audience into his verse; rather he places himself with them—outside what was experienced. He is no longer the same man as the young poet who created the work; his poems belong to him only in the way an old man may be said to own the face he wore as a young boy:

Voi ch'ascoltate in rime sparse il suono
Di quei sospiri ond'io nudriva 'l core
In sul mio primo giovenile errore,
Quand'era in parte altr'uom da quel ch'io sono,
Del vario stile in ch' io piango e ragiono
Fra le vane speranze e 'l van dolore,
Ove sia chi per prova intenda amore,
Spero trovar pietà, non che perdono.

Ma ben veglio or sì come al popol tutto
Favola fui gran tempo, onde sovente
Di me medesmo meco mi vergogno;

E del mio vaneggiar vergogna è 'l frutto,
E 'l pentersi, e 'l conoscer chiaramente,
Che quanto piace al mondo è breve sogno. 4 (I)

In the first part of the Cansoniere the rhetorical or persuasive
function of his poetry focuses on one person: his lady. One of
Petrarch's characteristics is his ceaseless concern with style, but
this concern is narrowly channeled; he does not desire an audience to
admire him, but that Laura should love him. Thus he writes,

Se 'l pensier che mi struggo,
Come pungente e saldo,
Così vestisse d'un color conforme,

4 Citations from the Cansoniere in my text are from Armi, Petrarch.
Unless otherwise indicated English translations are by Miss Armi.

O you who hear in scattered rhymes the sound
Of that wailing with which I fed my heart
In my first youthful error, when in part
I was not the same man who treads this ground,

May I find mercy, also forgiveness,
Where, after trial, science of love is deep,
For all the ways in which I talk and weep
Between vain hopes, between throes of distress.

But I have seen enough that in this land
To the whole people like a tale I seem,
So that I feel ashamed of my own name;

Of all my raging the harvest is shame,
And to repent, and clearly understand,
That what pleases on earth is a swift dream.
Forse tal m'aride e fugge,
Ch'avria parte dal caldo,
E desteriasi Amor là dov'or dorme;
Men solitarie l'orme
Fòran de' miei pie' lassi
Per campagne e per colli,
Men gli occhi ad ogn'or molli,
Ardendo lei che come un ghiaccio stassi, ... ⁵ (CXXV)

Petrarch's frustrations as a poet are metamorphosed into his frustra-
tions as a lover, and vice versa. His rhymes are the only arms he
can use in this "primiero assalto D'Amor," but they are inadequate.
Perhaps, if his power with words were as great as his emotion, he would
win sympathy, but the very force of his feelings defeats his skill:

Pero ch'Amor mi sforza
E di saver mi spoglia,
Parli in rime aspre e di dolcenza ignude.
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Come fanciul ch'a pena
Volge la lingua e smoda,
Che dir non sa, ma 'l più tacere gli è noia,
Cosi 'l desir mi mena
A dire; e vo' che m'oda
La dolce mia nemica ani ch'io moia. ⁶ (CXXV)

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⁵If the thought melting me,
As it is firm and neat,
Could also be clothed in a fitting shade,
She who burns me to flee
Away, might feel some heat,
And Love would wake up from where he is laid;
Less lonely would be made
My tired footsteps that go
Among meadows and hills,
Less tears would run in rills,
If she would burn, who is as cold as snow, . . .

⁶Also see XXXIII and CXXXI for statements of the same theme.

Because Love crushes me
And nullifies my mind,
I only speak in rhymes unsweet and rough.
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
The lady functions both as the mover of Petrarch's poems and as their sole audience. Instead of the rhetoric from poet to unknown audience we have the rhetoric of lover to beloved. A consistently intimate note is struck by poems of direct address which recur throughout the series. Numerous examples might be quoted. The third sonnet of the series demonstrates a typical opening. The poet begins with what might seem an impersonal statement then follows this with a dependent clause which brings himself into the poem and, in the last line of the quatrains, addresses the whole to the woman:

Era il giorno ch'al sol si scolorarono  
Per la pietà del suo fattore i rai,  
Quando i' fui preso, e non me ne guardai,  
Che' i be' vostri occhi, donna, mi legaro.? (III)

This pattern was favored by Petrarch, probably because it lent itself so well to the sonnet form; it easily permitted the natural break of a shift in subject to coincide with a quatrains or octave break.8

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As a child who begins  
To move and turn its tongue  
Who cannot speak and yet hates to be dumb,  
So desire spurs and wins  
Me, and I speak and long  
For her to hear me before death will come.

7It was the day when the sun's rays turned white  
Out of the pity it felt for its sire,  
When I was caught and taken by desire,  
For your fair eyes, my lady, held me quite.

8In Sonnet XLIV, for example, the shift in subject, stanza form, and address occur after the octave. The first two quatrains contain examples of pity shown when the need for pity was debatable:

Que che 'n Tesaglia ebbe la man si pronte  
A farla dal civil sangue vermiglia,  
Pianse morto il marito di sua figlia,  
Raffigurato a le fattezze conte;
Frequently Petrarch will use the second person throughout a poem, as in V, "When I summon my sighs to call you near/ With the name
that Love wrote within my heart, . . ." Or, he will open a poem with

E 'l pastor oh' a Golía ruppe la fronte
Pianse la ribellante sua famiglia,
E sopra 'l buon Saul cangiò le ciglia,
Ond'assi la puo dolersi il fiero monte.

That man whose hands to Thessaly brought slaughter
And made her red with civil blood and bold,
Mourned the death of the husband of his daughter,
Recognized by the features known of old;

And the shepherd who broke Goliath's brow
For his rebellious family did spill
Tears from his eyes, and to good Saul did bow,
Whence great must be the grief of the wild hill.

These generalized examples are turned suddenly and presented
directly to the lady:

Ma voi, che mai pietà non discolora
E ch'avete gli schermi sempre accorti
Contra l'arco d'Amor, che 'ndarno tira.

Mi vedete straziare a mille morti,
Ne l'agrima per diocese ancora
Da'be' vostr' occhi, ma disdegno et ira.

But you, whom pity does not make more pale,
Who always have your screens cunningly set
Against the aims of Love that always fail,

Can see me by a thousand tortures torn,
And not a tear is fallen down as yet
From your fair eyes, but only wrath and scorn.

9Armi, p. 7. "Quando io mover i sospiro a chiamar voi,/ E 'l nome che nel cor mi scrisse Amore, . . ." For reading convenience,
brief citations from the Cansoniere, unless used to illustrate qualities lost or obscured in translation, are given in English. Unless
otherwise indicated Miss Armi's translations are used.
a direct statement to Laura, "My sweet Lady, I see/ In your eyes' motion an enchanting light/ Showing the way that toward heaven tends; . . ."10 (LXXXII.) The tone of these poems is intimate and immediate, as if the two sat together in a garden:

I have never been weary of this love,
My Lady, nor shall be while last my years,
But of hating myself I have enough,
And I am tired of my continuous tears;11 (LXXXIII)

By directing his rhetoric to the lady, Petrarch places himself at one remove from his audience. To speak to one only excludes the intention of speaking to others at the same time. The effect on the audience is that of "overhearing" poetry not intended for public performance.

Many succeeding poets attempted to imitate this tone of intimacy and directness, some with a high degree of success. But it was not commonplace when Petrarch began. As critics have pointed out, Petrarch learned much from the Provengal poets, particularly from poets of the trobar clus such as Arnaut Daniel.12 But Provengal poetry was public poetry, intended to win applause from some courtly circle and, in some cases, to win gifts or favors from a noble patron. Hence Giraut de Bornelh gives four conditions necessary for good singing—love, a

10"Gentil mia donna, i' veggo/ Nel mover de' vostr'occhi un dolce lume/ Che mi mostra la via ch'al ciel conduce; . . ."

11"Io non fu' d'amor voi lassato unquancio,
Madonna, ne sarò mentre ch'io viva;
Ma d'odiar me medesmo giunto a riva,
E del continuo lagrimar so' stanco;

12Erich Auerbach, for example, refers to Daniel's "antithetical formulations of intense passion which, by way of Dante and Petrarch, were to influence all European poetry." Dante: Poet of the Secular World, trans. Ralph Manheim (Chicago, 1961), p. 52.
favorable time, a favorable place, and applause—the last three conditions having to do with the public performance of the poem, not its creation. The lady might move the poet to song, but the songs were never designed only for the ears of the lady and they make no attempt to create an atmosphere of privacy. The poet's real suit was to his audience, not his lady.

The poetry was written to be sung by the troubadour himself or by a jongleur, a man who made a profession of performing, but not necessarily composing, music or poetry. The professional singer Papiol is often mentioned in the poems of Bertran de Born, "Go, Papiol, at once, quickly and swiftly; be at Trainace before the feast. Say to Sir Roger from me, and to all his relatives, that I must finish the poem for want of fresh rimes." Gueraul de Bornail traveled with two musicians who sang his work and even Bernart de Ventadorn, whose songs seem among the most personal of the troubadour lyrics, ends a poem, "Good Ugonet, pray bear in mind/ The song that to you I've consigned,/ And sing it to the Norman Queen." The resulting lyrics contain very little personal detail, particularly when the lyrics concern love. Most often the poems discuss an idealised lady in the third person, or switch back and forth from third person to direct address, as in this song of Bernart de Ventadorn:

Would that I the form could take

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15Smythe, p. 41.
Of a bird, then flying
Through the night, my way I'd make
There where she is lying!
Lady, see, for pity's sake,
Your true love is dying.\textsuperscript{16}

Frequently these songs begin with an address to an audience.
Example after example, similar to this one, could be cited: "Since you
ask me to sing, my lords, I will sing, but when I think to sing I weep
whenever I try. You will scarcely find a singer who sings well when
he is sorrowful; but I fare much better with love-sickness than ever I
did, so wherfore am I dismayed?"\textsuperscript{17} The poems belonged as much to the
audience as to the poet; thus Jaufre Rudel cautions his audience, "Let
him who learns it see no word/ Is spoilt or altered in the song;"\textsuperscript{18}

The poets of the dolce still nuovo, reacting against the virtuoso
work of the later Provencal tradition, arrived at a type of poetry less
obviously designed for public performance. The move is from the public
theater to the private. The poet's audience is narrowed to those highly
select readers (usually other poets of the school) able to understand
and share the mysticism underlying the experience of love.\textsuperscript{19} This

\textsuperscript{16}Smythe, p. 43. \textsuperscript{17}Smythe, p. 33. \textsuperscript{18}Smythe, p. 21.

\textsuperscript{19}Auerbach describes the transition from late Provencal to dolce
still nuovo in the following fashion: "From the overstylized experience
of love and from the sirventes . . . sprang the dialectical play of the
trobar clus, the confessions in ciphered language, the passionate
paradoxes . . . . The penchant to dialectical games, characteristic of
all medieval spiritualism, was inborn in the Provençals . . . . But
only when the courtly ethos was beginning to decline, in Peire
d'Alvernhe, Giraut de Bornelh, and above all in Arnaut Daniel, does the
paradoxical riddle become the actual vehicle of meaning, and thereby
the root of a great tradition. Here again we have allegory; but the
riddles are not interpreted, and perhaps they do not even contain any
intelligible general idea that can be interpreted at all. In a defen-
sive, esoteric form, as though behind high walls, they hold the
audience still forms an equal side of the triangle existing between poet, lady and public.

The finest product of the dolce stil nuovo, Dante's Vita Nuova, is often compared with the Canzoniere, and there can be no doubt that Petrarch was influenced by that strange, pure work. A false impression of that influence, however, is often given: a reader unacquainted with the Vita Nuova might feel that Dante really began the sonnet cycle and that all Petrarch did was remove the prose links. Actually the two are generically so different that an evaluative comparison is bound to distort one in favor of the other. The similarity of materials is outweighed by the difference in form—as sculpture differs from painting even though both may attempt to image the same subject.

The Vita Nuova, written as a single unified expression, is part confession, part vision. Dante incorporates into the account of his love for Beatrice several of the poems he wrote while a young man. These thirty-one poems, twenty-five of which are sonnets, are fixed into their chronological position by his prose. The tone of the entire Vita Nuova resembles the tone of Petrarch's previously quoted opening sonnet, that of an older man reviewing what has gone before, though

endangered secret form of the soul; what was first a game and then a defense, became the refuge of a dwindling elite, and in the end an expression of the inner cleavage of a soul striving, in an allegorical dialectic, to master the torment of passion. But at that point the trobar clus broke through the narrow frame of the Provençal cultural sphere; there is the bridge to the dolce stil nuovo and to Dante."
Dante, pp. 22-3.
their attitudes toward the passions that dominated their lives are different.

The unity of Petrarch's Canzoniere is not, as we shall demonstrate, a formally patterned unity but the unity of tone and personality. The composite picture is what matters; fifty sonnets more or less would have made no difference. Dante unfolds his account in the manner of a narrative, even though the events narrated belong more to the world of symbol than reality. He leads the reader from one occurrence to the next, pointing out the significance of everything he discusses. These significances are known by Dante precisely because he views them from the vantage point of hindsight. In Petrarch, time and events flow imperceptibly through the succession of poems; the occasions giving rise to the poems are, for the most part, glimpsed obscurely, like rocks through a moving stream.

Dante, before quoting a poem, explains in prose the event or thought which motivated it. After a lengthy prose account of the vision culminating in his first sonnet, he writes,

Then, musing on what I had seen, I proposed to relate the same to many poets who were famous in that day; and for that I had myself in some sort the art of discoursing with rhymes. I resolved on making a sonnet, in which, having saluted all such as are subject unto Love, and entreated them to expound my vision, I should write unto them those things which I had seen in my sleep. And the sonnet I made was this:

The effect created is that of being invited to witness some part of what Dante assures the reader is a great and moving experience; the

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effect is not that of "overhearing" an exchange which, not, apparently, designed for a reader, has the feel of naturalness and lack of pose. The reader is always aware that Dante, through his explications, controls the communication. This control is less noticeable in the Canzoniere precisely because Petrarch does not invite his audience to share the experience. The reader easily forgets that the poet knows of its presence.

Dante further distances himself from the poems by following or preceding each with a sort of structural analysis, as in the case of his first sonnet:

This sonnet has three parts. In the first part, I tell how I met Love and of his aspect. In the second, I tell what he said to me, although not in full, through the fear of discovering my secret. In the third, I say how he disappeared. The second part begins here: "Then as I went," the third here: "Wherewith so much."21

Petrarch's comments about style are always within the scope of his poem. They stem from his perhaps disingenuous frustration with what he feels to be his inability to express adequately the beauty of his lady or the torment of his love. Dante is not above interrupting the intensity and flow of his account to insert a three page discourse explaining his reasons and literary precedents for treating Love as an animate figure.

The note of intimate address so marked in Petrarch is absent in Dante. He rarely permits himself, even in the inserted poems, to seem to speak to Beatrice directly. Explaining the genesis of one of his

21Ibid., p. 10.
songs, he writes that Love appeared to him one night in a dream and
told him,

... it is my will that thou compose certain things in rhyme,
in which thou shalt set forth how strong a mastership I have
obtained over thee, through her; ... and so write these things
that they shall seem rather to be spoken by a third person; and
not directly by thee to her, which is scarce fitting. After the
which, send them, not without me, where she may chance to hear
them; but have them fitted with a pleasant music, into the which
I will pass whenever it needeth.\(^2\)

The lady is the ultimate mover of Dante's poems, but she is at
the same time merged with the external world which composes his audi-
ence. Only through this larger audience can he reach her; by reaching
them he approaches her. He is in the position of a playwright at-
ttempting to reach one woman in his audience through the mouthpiece of
an actor. Thus, recalling an occasion when he was struck into a
speechless and noticeable confusion by the appearance of Beatrice in
the company of other ladies, he writes,

And in my weeping, I bethought me to write certain words, in the
which, speaking to her I should signify the occasion of my dis-
figurement, telling her also how I knew that she had no knowl-
edge thereof; which, if it were known, I was certain must move
others to pity. And then, because I hoped that peradventure it
might come into her hearing, I wrote this sonnet.\(^3\)

His poems, having always to pass through this public screen, frequently
address the public directly, as in the eleventh poem, "Ladies that have
intelligence in Love,/ Of mine own lady I would speak with you; ... ",
or in the twenty-second, "Stay now with me, and listen to my sighs,/ Ye
piteous hearts, as pity bids ye do."\(^4\) Only two of the poems address
the lady directly.

\(^{22}\text{Ibid., p. 13.}\) \(^{23}\text{Ibid., p. 18.}\) \(^{24}\text{Ibid., pp. 23, 50.}\)
Dante did not intend in the *Vita Nuova* to describe a love affair. He was writing rather of a mystical and deeply meaningful religious experience. Beatrice is the center of a vision; her reality is that of the Holy Grail. She is transfigured in the poem even as Christ is transfigured. Dante is communicating a love experience, but it is the love a mystic feels for Christ. He gives his reader only what he judges necessary to communicate the importance and awe of his passion, and there is much that he himself claims not to understand. Beatrice had become the embodiment of all that Dante most deeply prized. As an ideal, she must lose any individualizing traits. Dante's own efforts, as a persona in the *Vita Nuova*, are directed toward cleansing himself of his own individuality, for it is these considerations of self which render him unworthy. In the process of creating and loving a symbol, Dante's unavoidable movement is toward impersonality and allegory.

Petrarch, as we have noted, avoids the appearance of considering his audience in the first part of the *Canzoniere*. The audience becomes more important during the second part, the poems written after Laura's death. Although Petrarch still addresses his lady, the note of intimacy, even familiarity, is absent. He speaks to her as one speaks to a saint:

Beautiful soul, delivered from that knot
Which was the loveliest Nature could prepare,
Consider from the sky my darkened lot,
Leave your glad thoughts, my suffering to share.\(^{(25)}\)

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\(^{(25)}\) *Anima bella, da quel nodo sciolta*
Che pig bel mai non seppe ordir Natura,
Pon dal cial mente a la mia vita oscura,
Da si listi pensieri a pianger volta.*
Such direct appeals are rare. Petrarch’s ostensible motive can no longer be that of moving Laura to love or pity him, and he lacked the Platonic temperament, the quality of mind which would have enabled him to overcome the sense of loss for a specific woman by making that woman a symbol for all the beauty or love lost in the world. Laura becomes a saint, but never, in the way of Dante’s Beatrice, Saintliness. Petrarch’s external purpose becomes that of moving the world to admire the dead Laura. In Sonnet CCCXXVII he declares,

You slept here, lovely Lady, a brief sleep;
And if my rhymes are good for any aim,
They shall inscribe among the holy merits
The eternal remembrance of your name.26

More than the immortality of one woman is at stake. Petrarch is engaged in the struggle that forms the burden of all art—the effort to turn the mutable into the eternal, a transmutation possible only if perfection is possible. The effort toward this perfection, and his failure to achieve it, balances the poet’s concern with the reputation of one woman. The narrow consideration for Laura’s immortality broadens into the conflict between art and time. “My rhymes have not yet reached their high object,” Petrarch writes. “I know it well myself; and every poet/ Who spoke or wrote of love till now, can show it.”27 (CCIX.)

26 Cf. also CCCIX and CCLXVII.

Dormist’hai, bella donna, un breve sonno;
E se mie rime alcuna cosa ponno,
Consacrate fra i nobili intelletti,
Fia del tuo nome, qui, memoria eterna.

27 Non son al sommo ancor giunte le rime:
Throughout the last part of the Cansoniere two ideas haunt
Petrarch's verse: however much he write, Laura is dead; however skill-
fully he write, his art cannot truthfully reveal the wonder of what she
was when living:

... più volte he riprovato indarno
Al secoł che verra l'alte bellezza
Pinger cantando, a ciò che l'ame e prezze;
Ne col mio stile il suo bel viso incarno.

Le lode mai non d'altra, e proprie sue,
Che'n lei fur come stelle in cielo sparte,
Pur ardisco ombreggiare, or una, or due;

Ma poi ch'ai' giungo a la divina parte,
Ch'un chiaro e breve sole al mondo fue,
Ivi manca l'ardir, l'ingegno e l'arte.\(^{28}\) (CCCVIII)

The function of the lady as mover/object of his verse led
Petrarch to two radicals of presentation, both coming under the broad
classification of rhetorical. Two poses are thus exemplified for the
 emulation of future poets. The first is the pose of the lover, writing
only to move his lady to pity him, the second is the role of the per-
former or artificer, writing to move his audience to admire and

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In me il conosco; e provval ben chiamque
E 'n fin a qui, che d'amor parli o scriva.

28. ... many times I did desire
And vainly try to sing her lofty grace
For the next age to love her and admire,
But my style cannot make alive her face.

Nor any other's praises, but her own
That were scattered on her like stars from birth
I dared to paint, one or two I have shown.

But when I come to touch the divine part
That was a clear and fleeting sun on earth,
There fails my courage, my talent, my art.
attempting to win, through their continuing admiration, a victory for art against time and death.

The rhetorical function of poetry in the Canzoniere, although present in the ways discussed, is secondary to what one must call the personal or expressive function. Petrarch's true subject is always himself. He declares flatly, "But I will tell the tale I find designed/Within my heart, which I always pursue,..."29 (CXXVII.) Even poems written to imitate or describe some object, such as the beauty of Laura, and in reflections on the difficulties of his craft or on the effects such a beauty has on the suffering poet. Petrarch exemplifies Mill's dicta that the subject of poetry should be the emotion felt by the poet, not the object itself.

Poetry acts for Petrarch as a purge for his over-flowing feelings.

Early in the series he relates,

In the sweet springtime of my history
Which saw the rising and becoming green
Of a desire that for my ill grew wild,
Because in singing the heart cures its spleen,
I will sing how I lived in Liberty
While Love inside my dwelling was called child;30 (XXXI)

He claims to write almost against his will, being forced to it by the emotions he feels. He desires to find relief by externalizing what is

—29"Ma pur quanto l'istoria trovo scritta/In mezzo 'l cor, che si spesso rincorro, . . ."

30" Nel dolce tempo de la prima etade,
Che nascor vide et ancor quasi in erba
La fera voglia che per mio mal crebbe,
Perché cantando il duol si disacere,
Canterò com'io vissi in libertade,
Mentre Amor nel mio albergo a sdegno s'ebbe;"
internal, to control it by putting it into words. So he explains,

When I began, I thought  
To find in words for my ardent affair  
A little comfort and a brief delay.  
This hope led me to dare  
Express by language my emotions’ knot;  
Now it abandons me and fades away.  
But still I must pursue my task and play  
And sing my amorous music again,  
So mighty is the will that drives me on;\(^{31}\) (LXXIII)

This hope for relief, through poetry, from his emotions continues even after Laura’s death, providing a more personal reason for writing than the desire to immortalize her memory:

In anguish, in a horror black as coal,  
I try in speaking to allay my qualm.  
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .  
No other remedy to me was sent  
Against the trials that our fate bestows.\(^{32}\) (CCLXXVI)

Throughout the series Petrarch reiterates this function of poetry, a function which, under Kehle’s criteria, would qualify him as the "primary" poet who, "spontaneously moved by impulse, resorts to composition for relief and solace of an over-wrought mind."\(^{33}\) The

\(^{31}\) Nel cominciarcredia  
Trovar parlando al mio ardente desire  
Qualche breve riposo e qualche trégua.  
Questa speranza ardire  
Mi porse a ragionar quel ch’i’ sentis;  
Or m’abbandone al tempo, e si dilegua.  
Ma pur conven che ’l alta impres’ seguia  
Continuando ’l amorose note,  
Si’ possente e’l voler che mi trasporta;

\(^{32}\) Lasciato ha l’alma e ’n tembroso errore,  
Cercò parlando d’allentar mia pena.  
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .  
Ch’altro rimedio non avess ’l mio core  
Contra i fastidi, onde la vita è piana.

\(^{33}\) Quoted in Abrams, p. 145.
audience, even the lady, is excluded. The poet speaks to comfort himself; he has become audience as well as creator.

Petrarch insists that his love poems were intended for relief, but never to increase his fame as a poet. However studied this pose may be, it is constant. In a sonnet written near the end of his life, Petrarch declares,

S’io avesse pensato che si care
Fossin le voci de’ sospir mi si rima,
Fatte l’avrei, dal sospirar mio prima,
In numero più spesse, in stil più rare.

E certo ogni mio studio in qual tempo era
Pur di sfogare il doloroso core
In qualche modo, non d’acquistar fame.

Pianger cecati, non già del pianto onore;
Or vorrei ben piacer; ma quella altera,
Tacito, stanco, dopo se’ mi chiazza.34 (CCXIII)

Petrarch’s choice of words is of interest here. He attempted to verbalize his sighs, to put his tears into words. The emphasis is not on explanation or analysis, but on expression. One is reminded of Adam Smith’s much later attempt to distinguish poetry from rhetoric or eloquence.

34 If I had ever thought that my sighs’ voice,
Expressed in verses, would be found so dear,
I should have made them since my earliest tear
More numerous in bulk, more rare in choice.

Certainly at that time my only care
Was to pour forth my heart’s dejection
In this or in that way, not to gain fame.

I tried to weep, not to honour my name;
Now I would gladly please, but that proud one,
Calls me, silent and weary, after her.
While the sole object of poetry is to transmit the feelings of the speaker or writer, that of eloquence is to convey the persuasion of some truth. . . . By the language of emotion, however, I mean the language in which that emotion vents itself—not the description of the emotion, or the affirmation that it is felt. . . . Between such and the expression of emotion, there is much the same difference as that which exists between the information a person might give us of his feeling bodily pain, and the exclamations or groans which his suffering might extort from him.35

Petrarch was the first poet to express so insistently this facet of a poet's impetus to write, an impetus which was largely ignored by Renaissance critics.36 In this way Petrarch answers more to the Romantic theory of poetry than to that of his own age.

The expressive radical of presentation is demonstrated not only by Petrarch's overt statements. It is demonstrated even more unmistakably in the poems he wrote: their content, direction, and metaphor. Instead of dealing with the Canzoniere as the expression of a poet or the poet in love, the reader is drawn, by a force as subtle and irresistible as gravity, to a consideration of the unique "historical" emotions of one specific poet, Francisco Petrarch. Petrarch will not let us forget that his subject is himself; the Canzoniere contains poem after poem of probing self-examination. The troubadour poets had

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35 Quoted in Abrams, pp. 150-52.

36 In this connection it is interesting to read Puttenham's account of one kind of lyric poetry, which he calls "the form of poetical lamentations." Puttenham explains it as "a homeopathic remedy by which the poet plays physician to his auditors," "making the very grief it selfe (in part) cure of the disease." His focus is on the response engendered in the audience; the pain or grief of the poet is utterly beside the point. Not so in Petrarch. See The Arte of English Poesie (1589) in G. Gregory Smith, Elizabethan Critical Essays (London, 1950), II, 49.
written much on the paradox of love, now sweet, now bitter, now pleas-
ure, now pain; but Petrarch, though elaborating at times on that theme,
prefers to meditate on the paradox of the self. "What do you think,
my soul? Shall we have peace?" 37 (CL.) As well as the effect of
distance with its accompanying correlative of objectivity, the reader
is given the passion of the present misery:

What say I? Where am I? and who cheats me
But my own self and my desire's despair?
Though I run through the sky from sphere to sphere,
No planet dooms me to this misery. 38 (LXXI)

Petrarch here goes beyond the achievement of the Provencal poets.
He is by no means a passive figure in the love affair, someone who has
been victimized by the irresistible force of love. This was the para-
dox of the courtly lovers; though they were the instigators of the love
affair, languishing, at least for a time, in an unrequited passion,
their sphere of action was almost nil. They lost, irrevocably, their
free will. Hence Pierre Vidal cries, "No man can save himself from
love when he has put himself under Love's command; whether it pleases
him or not he must obey his wishes. And you must know that a man in
love cannot follow any other wish, but he hastens wherever Love wills,
and heeds neither sense nor folly in it." 39 The movement of such a

37 "Che fai, alma? Che pensi? avrem mai pace?"

38 Che parlo? o dove sono? e chi m'inganna,
Altri ch'io stesso e 'l desiar soverchio?
Oia, s'i' trascorro il ciel di cerchio in cerchio,
Nessun pianeta a pianger mi condanna.

philosophy of love is inevitably outward. Love is externalized, personified. It is compared with other forces in a man's life over which he has no direct control: plague, warfare, or insanity. In this respect courtly love provided little impetus toward sustained self-examination.

Petrarch, however often he acknowledges the devastating power of love or of his lady, realizes that this power exists only because he himself suffers its existence. He lacks the comfort of the fatalism of courtly love, and is utterly devoid of a temperament which would let him find comfort in stoicism. Denied him as well is the comfort of Neo-Platonism, which would have enabled him to transform an appreciation of present and actual beauty into a worship of ideal beauty, and the passion of secular love into the worshipful love of God. The most characteristic poetry of the dolce stil nuovo was the poetry of men who had mastered their passion and hence could see its meaning. Petrarch was never able to glide from the specific into realms of the abstract. This conflict forms the theme of some of his most beautiful poems,

Tutte le cose, di che 'l mondo è adorno,
Uscir buone da man del mesto eterno;
Ma me, che cosi a dentro non discerno,
Abbaglia il bal che mi si mostra intorno;
E s'al vero splendor gia mai ritorno,
L'occhio non pò star fermo;
Così l'ha fatto inferno
Par la sua propria colpa, e non quel giorno
Ch'i' volsi in ver' l'angelica beltade
"Nel dolce tempo de la prima etade."40 (LXX)

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40 Everything that gives the world delight
Was made good by the master of the sheep,
But I who cannot see so far and deep,
Am dazzled by the beauty in my sight.
Petrarch lacks the intellectual depth of Dante, or of later less skilled poets such as Michelangelo or Lorenzo di Medici. But for this depth he substitutes a self-analysis which is the direct result of the tensions he is unable to resolve, and, unlike the troubadour poets, he correctly judges these tensions to be the result of internal rather than external forces. He thus supplies future poets a model for the most fruitful source of all lyric poetry.

These poems of self-analysis become more dominant after Laura's death. It could not be otherwise. Throughout the first part of the Canzoniere he ignored his audience, writing for two reasons only: either to move Laura to pity or to relieve his own emotions. Though her death turns him somewhat to his audience as a means of eternizing his lady, it turns him more singlemindedly into himself. His need for relief is greater than before, but he can no longer hope to find it in Laura's love. Yet he cannot sublimate this love into a love for God. His tensions, far from being relieved by the death of Laura, become more intense. The first poem of part two is an explicit statement of this struggle which is rarely absent from the remainder of his poems. The poem is entirely introspective, that of a man who attempts to solve, through art, the puzzle of himself:

Whenever I return to the true light
My eyes cannot be still;
And they suffer this ill
By their own fault and not by that day's plight
When I turned them that angel's face to see
"In the sweet springtime of my history."
I' vo pensando, e nel penser m'assale
Una pietà si forte di me stesso,
Che mi conduce spesso
Ad altro lagrimar ch'i' non soleva;
Ché, vendendo ogni giorno il fin più presso,
Mille fiate ho chieste a Dio quell'ale
Co le quai del mortale
Carcer nostro intelletto al ciel si leva;
Ma in fin a qui mente mi releva
Prego, o sospiro, o lagrimar ch'il faccia;
I'un pensar parla co la mente, e dice;
—Che pur agogni' onde soccorso attendi?
Misera, non intendi
Con quanto tuo dismore il tempo passa?
Mentre che 'l corpo è viyo,
Hai tu 'l fremo in balia de' penser tuoi.
Deh, stringilo or che poi,
Che dubbiuso è 'l tardar, come tu sai,
E 'l cominciar non fia per tempo ormai.41 (CCLXIV)

Petrarch passes to a meditation on the two things which have,
throughout his life, drawn him from a contemplation of God: his love

41 I go thinking, and thinking I am caught
By such a pity of my destiny,
That often it leads me
To other grief than when I used to cry;
For since each day the end I nearer see,
A thousand times I begged from God and sought
Those wings with which our thought
Flies from its mortal prison to the sky;
But until now there has come no reply,
Though I pray, sigh, or shed many a tear;
One thought speaks to the mind in these astute
Words:—What do you long for? What help, what hope?
Don't you see while you grope
With what dishonour time passes away?
While life is in your blood
You are given the rein of your thoughts' race:
O hold them in their place
Now that you can, to be late is evasion,
And to start now is not your first occasion.
for Laura and his ambitions toward temporal fame. Thus he gives poetic form to the ideas of the Secretum, where he confesses to St. Augustine his too passionate love for a woman and his too burning desire for renown. In the poem, seeking to turn his thoughts to heaven, he asks himself,

Che dove, del mal suo qua giù si lieta,  
Vostra vaghezza acqueta  
Un mover d'occhi, un ragionar, un canto,  
Quanto fia quel piacer, se questo è tanto?—

D l'altra parte un pensier dolce et agro,  
Con faticosa, e dilettevol, salma  
Sedendosi entro l'alma,  
Preme 'l cor di desio, di spera il pascce;  
Che sol per fama gloriosa et alma  
Non sente quand'il agghiaccio, o quand'io flagro,  
S'io son pallido o magro;  
E s'io l'accido, più forte rinasce.  
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Ma se 'l latino e 'l greco  
Parlan di me dopo la morte, è un vento;  
Ond'io, perché pavento  
Adunar sempre quel ch'un'ora sgombre,  
Vorre' 'l ver abbracciar, lascando l'ombre.  

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42 Because if here you are pleased with your ill  
And two quick eyes can still  
Your passion, or a spoken word, a song,  
What will be that, if this joy is so strong?—

Another thought, sweet, sour, then takes its turn  
With weary and agreeable countenance;  
Sits in my soul at once,  
Fills my heart with desire and with hope feeds;  
Only caring for fame and glory's glance,  
It feels not how I freeze and how I burn,  
If I decline or yearn;  
And if I kill it it sows stronger seeds.  
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
But if scholars display  
My merits after death, 'tis but a wind;  
Thus, fearing in my mind  
To hoard what in one moment dies,  
I would embrace the truth, leaving the lies.
Petrarch laments the passing of his life spent in writing and in loving Laura as time wasted for his soul. Yet he feels unable to abandon these loves. His tension bursts into an impassioned plea for God's aid:

Tu che da gli altri, che 'n diversi modi
Legano 'l mondo, in tutto mi disciogli.  
Signor mio, che no togli
Omai dal volto mio questa vergogna?
Ché 'n guisa d' uom che sogna,
Aver la morte inanzi gli occhi parmi;
E vorrei far difesa, e non ho l'arme.\(^{43}\) (CCLXIV)

These poems are marked by a lack of generalized statement. The conflicts Petrarch feels are conflicts felt by others, but the poems do not broaden out to align Petrarch with the rest of mankind. It is his plight which concerns him and the fate of his soul. There is no hint of the Mirror of Magistrates autobiographical approach used by so many Elizabethans. Petrarch does not serve up parts of his own life as homilies to demonstrate a certain moral point.

Petrarch was honest enough in his analysis to suspect the poet part of himself of artifices. In the last poem of the Canzoniere, a beautiful plea to the Virgin, he confesses, "Mortal grace, gestures, words, have been the chief/ Interest of my soul."\(^{44}\) (CCCLXVI.) And he

\(^{43}\)You who, from those that with different thoughts
Enslave the world, free me breaking their locks,
O Lord, relieve the shocks
Of shame upon my face, see how it streams!
For like a man who dreams
I seem to see before me Death's alarms;
And I would fight for life, and have no arms.

\(^{44}\)"Mortal blessea, atti, e parole m'hanno/ Tutta ingombrata l' alma."
confesses of his love for Laura. "To love a mortal thing beyond the
mean,/ With a faith that to God only pertains,/ Is less becoming when
praise we desire."45 (CCLXIV.) His conflict, a peculiarly Renaissance
battle between flesh and spirit which was also to find expression in
the poems of John Donne, is not resolved, not in this poem, nor in the
series. The struggle which Petrarch calls "that war I liked against
myself to wage" ends in this dilemma,

E da l'un lato punge
Vergogna e duol, che 'n dietro mi rinvolve;
Dall'altro non m'assolve
Un piacer per usanza in me si forte
Ch'a patteggiair n'ardisco co la morte.

... delibero ho volto al subbio
Gran parte omai de la mia tala breve;
Ne mai peso fu greve
Quanto quel ch'i' sostengo in tale stato;
Che co la morte a lato
Cerco dal viver mio novo consiglio,
E veggo 'l meglio et al peggior m'appiglio.46 (CCLXIV)

The tensions embodied in these poems grow directly from
Petrarch's internal stresses. There is no artificial wall between

45"Che' mortal cosa amar con tanta fece,/ Quanta a Dio sol per
debito convensvi,/ Più si disdice a chi più peglio brama."

46On one side my sad needs
Are pierced by shame and grief; bid to retire;
The other is on fire
By a pleasure with time grown so intense,
That it bargains with Death and Providence.

... in musing I have rolled on the beam
Most of my woven cloth that soon must go;
No burden do I know
Hard as the one I bear in such a state,
For, with Death as my mate,
I seek a way of life, another thing,
And see the best and to the worst I cling.
feeling and expression. Petrarch, when he chose, had a highly ingenuous poetic mind. There are poems in which he, like the poets of the trobar clus, embroiders his main line of thought with rhyme and word play to the point where feeling is lost sight of in the pursuit of cleverness. This was the aspect of Petrarch that appealed so strongly to mannerist poets such as Gongora and Marino, and Petrarch's sonnets containing conceits, elaborate figures of speech, and the piling-up of tensions, antitheses, paradox and hyperbole are, unfortunately, those best known to the student. But Petrarch possessed to a high degree the ability to speak directly, to use his metaphors only to carry and interpret his meaning. It was this ability which enabled him to make his personality dominate the Canzoniere.

Petrarch achieves this dominion partly by means of "confessional" poems such as the one just quoted. But he varies this approach with another which even more insistently focuses the attention of the reader on the poet: the poet is presented simultaneously as object and speaker. The persona aspect of the poet/lover of the sonnet sequence is emphasized, a technique Sidney utilised extensively in Astrophel and Stella. The poet continues to speak in the first person, but his concern, rather than that of expressing or formulating his thought, is to meditate on the picture he presents, even though this picture is not necessarily presented for anyone but himself. The universal instinct to dramatize one's experiences, certainly highly developed in a poet, produces such poems as sonnet XXXV, in which Petrarch, brooding and watching himself brood, writes,
Alone and pensive, the most desert strand
I tread and measure with steps slow and dark,
My eyes ever intent to flee the mark
Of human feet imprinted in the sand. 47

Petrarch gives picture after picture of the restlessness of the poet. "I go pining away from shore to shore,/ Pensive in the daytime,
weeping at night," he says in Rime CXXXVII, and proceeds to describe
himself fleeing from the towns into the woods where he can walk at
night, pouring out his thoughts "with the murmur of the waves."48

Sometimes he pictures himself as he must appear to anyone who sees him
wandering in the woods. Seeing his face they would say, "He burns and
does not know his state."49 (CXXXIX.) Or he presents a picture of the
post thinking of his beloved: "Where a tall pine or a hill throws a

47 Solo e pensoso i più deserti campi
Vo mesurando a passi tardi e lenti,
E gli occhi porto per fuggire intenti
Ove vestigio uman l'arena stampi.

It was this Young Werther aspect of Petrarch which appealed to
the pre-romantic sensibility, accounting for a minor revival of imi-
tation. Susannah Dobson's Life of Petrarch (1775) ushered in a wave
of blue-stockinged translations by John Nott, Lady Dray, and the Earl
of Charlemont as well as a group of minor sonneteers, among them Mrs.
Charlotte Smith and William Lisle Bowles, who lauded the Italian sonnet
as the perfect form in which to express the melancholy sensibility. A
selection from Bowles' Fourteen Sonnets, Written Chiefly in Picturesque
Spots During A Tour (1789) contains these "Petrarchian" lines:

Languid, and sad, and slow, from day to day
I journey on, yet pensive turn to view...
The streams, and vales, and hills, and start away.

This aspect of Petrarchian imitation is discussed in more detail in

48 "Consumando mi vo di piaggia in piaggia,/ El di pensoso, pio
piango la notte: . . . ."

49 "--Questo arde, e di suo state è incerto.--"
shade/ Sometimes I halt, and on the first-set stone/ I draw within my
mind her lovely face." 50 (XXXIX.)

The world pictured in the Canzoniere is egocentric, circling the
poet as his own world circles the beloved. Nature, other people, never
exist for themselves, but only as they provide paradigms for the exer-
cise of Petrarch's thoughts. "Before I rest," he cries, "the sea shall
have no waves,/ The sun shall receive splendour from the moon./ The
April flowers shall die on every shore." 51 (CXXXVII.) However wide
a scope Petrarch seems at first to embrace in a poem, the focal point
is always subjective, always himself:

Già fiammeggiava l'amorosa stella
Per l'oriente, e l'altra che Giunone
Suol far gelosa nel settentrione
Rotava i raggi suoi luscente e bella;

 Levata era a filar la vecchiarella,
 Discinta e scalza, e desto avea 'l carbone,
 E gli amanti pungia quella stagione
 Che per usanza a lagrimar gli appella;

 Quando mia speme già condotta al verde
 Giunse nel cor, non per l'usata via,
 Che 'l sonno tenea chiusa, e 'l dolor molle; . . . 52
 (XXXIII)

50 "Ove perge ombra un pino alto od un colle/ Talor m'arresto, e
pur nel primo sasso/ Disegno co la mente il suo bel viso."

51 "Ben fia, prima ch'io posi, il mar sens'onde,/ E la sua luce
avrà 'l Sol de la Luna,/ E i fior d'april morranno in ogni piaggia."

52 The star of love had just begun to glare
Throughout the east, and the other that makes
Juno jealous, and in the north awakes,
Whirled round its beams all luminous and fair;

The poor old woman, with bare feet, undressed,
Had just got up to spin and stirred the coal,
Here the universe is pictured—the stars of early morning, a peasant woman rising to make a fire, other grieving lovers—all of these pictures, beautiful in themselves, serve only to set the time, to make more poignant the picture of the poet, wakeful, thinking of his lady.

The device of contrasting or comparing the plight of the poet with what happens to other people was a favorite with Petrarch. Cansoniere I consists of a series of vignettes which describe the ease of various persons, an old woman, a shepherd, sailors, even oxen, at the end of day. The second stanza will demonstrate the technique of the rest:

_Come 'l sol volge le 'nfiammate rote_
_Per dar lungo a la notte, onde discende_
_Da gli altissimi monti maggior l'ombra,_
_L'avaro sappador l'arme riprende,_
_E con parole e con alpestri note_
_Ogni gravessa del suo petto sgombra;_
_E poi la mansa ingombra_
_Di povere vivande,_
_Simili quelle ghiande_
_Le qua' fuggendo tutto 'l mondo onora,_
_Na chi vuol si rallegrì ad ora ad ora;_
_Ch'i' pur non ebbe ancor, non dirò lista,_
_Na riposata un'ora,_
_Né per volger di ciel né di pianeta._

And lovers by that season were distressed
Which always seems to cause their tears to fall;

When the hope that by now was turning green
Came in my heart, not by the usual way
That sleeping closed and suffering made wet; . . .

_53 When the sun turns its incandescent wheels_
_To give room to the night, and greater then_
_Falls down the shadow from the mountain crest,_
The greedy sapper takes his tool again
And with some country songs and words he heals
And clears away the burden of his breast._
The song is too long to quote in its entirety, but the technique of each stanza is the same: the poet's isolation, his singleness, is intensified by its contrast with the habits of other people. This sense of isolation is emphasized by the song's envoy, an envoy appropriate to a poet who represents himself continually as fleeing from and regarding as alien the settlements of his fellow man:

Canson, se l'esser meco
Dal matino a la sera
T'ha fatto di mia schiera,
Tu non vorrai mostrarti in ciascun loco;
E d'altrui loda curerai si poco,
Ch'assai ti fia pensar di poggio in poggio
Come m'ha ondio 'l foco
Di questa viva petra, ov'io m'appoggio. 54

The Renaissance poet who picked up Petrarch's Cansoniere, whatever his expectations might have been on beginning the work, was thus made gradually but insistently aware of the personality of the poet, and that the sonnet sequence was a vehicle for expressing this personality. Almost unconsciously the reader becomes familiar with the

And then he fills with zest
His table with poor food
Like those acorns of wood
That the world, shunning, still worships as power.
Let anyone find joy from hour to hour:
I have not had, I will not say a gay,
But a comforting hour,
Either from wheeling sky or planet's ray.

54 Song, if being with me
From morning unto night
Made you my company,
You will not show yourself in any light;
You will not care for other people's praise,
You will think it enough that you have seen
How I faint from the blaze
Of that animate stone on which I lean.
various guises of the poet. Most striking are the numerous pictures of Petrarch contemplating nature, a pose which helped endear him to the Romantics. But the reader also sees him at night in his room, filled with such a dread of being alone that he confesses, "And the vulgar, to me such alien lot; (Who would believe it?) I seek for release; Such dread have I to find myself alone." He portrays himself sailing on the sea, going on a journey, or gives pictures of minor, specific incidents of importance to no one but himself. He sees a maid washing a veil that Laura uses to tie her hair and trembles all over, "like a loving gale." Or he is walking "On the left shore of the Tyrrhenian sea" when, suddenly remembering Laura's golden hair, he falls into a stream in his preoccupation. Although unobserved he confesses, "I was ashamed; for to a gentle heart/ This will suffice, no other spur I met." Then, with a note of humor not often present, he adds, "It pleases me that I have changed my part/ From eyes to feet; would that when these are wet,/ The first were dried up by a sweet April!"

55 "Il volgo, a me nemico, et odioso/ (Chi 'l penso mai?), per mio refugio chero:/ Tal paura ho di ritrovarmi solo."

56 "d'un amoroso gielo."

57 "Dal mar Tirreno a la sinistra riva, Vergogna ebbi di me; ch'al cor gentile Basta ben tanto, et altro spron non volli. Piacemi almen d'aver cangiato stile, Da gli oeci a 'pia'; se del lor esser salti Gl'i altri asciugasse un piu cortese aprile!"
A reader, as long as he is the reader of a particular poet, must consider the subject that the poet presents to him, and consider it, at least temporarily, from the poet's point of view, whether he is aware of doing so or not. Petrarch, as we have seen, forces his readers to consider the mind and experience of the poet by expressing this mind directly and to consider the poet himself by picturing him in his daily experiences and set off against the experiences of the rest of mankind. The reader is given as well a slightly more subtle portrayal of the poet/persona; the poet contemplating the past in order to cast it into present poetry. Such a technique forcibly merges the poet and his creation into one being. It is difficult, almost impossible, to consider the work as "fiction" or as "imitation" of events when one is presented with the actual creative process. At times Petrarch will picture the poet sorting through his memory to find the subject for his songs. In XXXIII he writes,

But because time is fled,
My pen cannot go after my good will;
Hence many things written within my mind
I pass in silence and talk of a few, 53

In other poems the feeling is one of immediacy, not of an emotion recollected in tranquility. The sense of time established is almost Proustian in effect,

Quando mi v'e n'anzi il tempo e 'l loco
Ov'il perdei me stesso, e 'l caro nodo

53 Ma, perché 'l tempo è corto,
La penna al buon voler non po gir presso;
Onde più cose ne la mente scritte
Vo trapassando, e sol d'alcune parlo.
Petrarch is not saying only that he loves Laura, his sun, as much now as he did when love was new, but that the love felt then is the same love, untouched by time, burning him at the immediate moment.

Petrarch's incessant comments about style, some of which have already been singled out, have the effect of pointing the reader's mind toward the "truth" of what Petrarch is saying. His stylistic concern within his poems is with their ability to express the truth, either of his lady's beauty and virtue or of the depth of his emotion. Hence he states, "I cannot remain silent, and I fear/ That my language may not second my heart."60 (CCCXXIV.) Or, attempting to write of his lady's beauty, he confesses,
But the burden I find crushes my frame,
The work cannot be polished by my file,
And my talent which knows its strength and style
In this attempt becomes frozen and lame.61 (XX)

By these techniques the traditional distance between writer and subject is bridged. Attention is drawn to the figure of the poet and to the "truth", the emotional truth, of what he says.

The reader's impression of the unity or singleness of personality of the poet creating, and created in, the Canzoniere is intensified by metaphorical repetitions and by the similarity of the metaphors with which Petrarch describes himself. Continually he aligns himself with things weak and helpless. He flees from Laura's eyes, "as a child from flogging flies,"62 (XXXIX), and his difficulty in speaking to her is "As a child who begins/ To move and turn its tongue,/ Who cannot speak and yet hates to be dumb."63 (CXXV.) In one of his most successful extended metaphors, Petrarch compares his actions with those of an old man who leaves his home to go on a pilgrimage to Rome. He arrives, "Broken by time and weary of the road," hoping here to find the image of him "Whom in the sky he hopes to find." Likewise, Petrarch says, "Sometimes, alas, my mind/ Will try with all its power

61 Ma trovo peso non da me braccia,
   Ne' v'ora da polir colla mia lina;
   Però l'ingegno, che sua forza estima,
   Ne l'operazion tutto a' agghiaccia.

62 "come fanciul la verga"

63 "Come fanciul ch'a pena/ Volge la lingua e smoda,/ Che dir non sa, ma 'l piú tacer gli è noia."
and will not tire. To seek in others you desired true form." 64 (XVI.)

This typically Petrarchan humanizing of the system of Neo-Platonic love emphasizes the feebleness and lack of hope of the mind which tries to seek Laura's beauty in others. In other sonnets he compares himself to a "weeping small bird" 65 that sees the coming of night and winter (CCCLIII) and a sparrow, lonely on a roof. (CCXVI.) In sonnet CCXII he hunts a deer "wandering in flight" with "an ox crippled and ailing and slow." 66, and in CXXXIX he must hunt, with this "crippled ox" the "aura."

The same technique of metaphoric repetitions unifies Petrarch's portrayal of Laura. No realistic portrait is given of Laura. Like the heroines of medieval romance she is beautiful, slender and pale, with golden hair and white, delicate hands. Like the Neo-Platonic mistresses she is virtuous and inspires virtue, superior to all other mortals. Like the women in Botticelli's paintings, her feet never weigh upon the earth. All of Laura's attributes can be found in other literary materials of the time. The real unity of Laura's portrayal, and its freshness, rests in the consistency of Petrarch's responses. These

64 "Rotto da gli anni e dal cammin stanco;
   Ch'ancor lassù nel ciel vedere spera.

Così, lasso! talor vo cercand'io,
Donna, quanto è possibile, in altrui
La disiata vostra forma vera."

65 "Vago augelletto"

66 "errante e fugitiva, " un bue zoppo e 'nfermo e lento."
responses are not only expressed directly but are reinforced by motifs attached to Laura which symbolize his own feelings. For example, in sonnet XI Petrarch complains that Laura, after discovering Petrarch's love for her, has hidden her face from him with a veil. The veil, which begins as a physical object, immediately becomes symbolic of Laura's elusiveness. 67

Laura's death alters, but does not discontinue, the use of the veil motif. As the actual Laura is gradually transformed in Petrarch's mind into something superphysical, the veil becomes the symbol of that physical self which no longer exists. Petrarch tells himself that now her best form is alive to make him worship her beauty even more than when he "looked at her enchanting veil." 68 (CCXIX.) Laura's ascension makes Petrarch more conscious of his own "veil" of mortality forcibly holding him from following his lady. 69 This shift in the focus of the symbol endows it with additional nuances. Petrarch comes to see that his physical "veil," not Laura's, separated them in life as in death. His impure love for Laura prevented the merging of soul with soul, and this impure love was caused by Petrarch's own fleshbound perceptions, not by the beauty designed to lead him from physical to spiritual appreciation. As he confesses in CXXXIX, "But before me

67 Cf. XLIV and CXXVII. At other times, as in CXIX, this elusiveness is that of Fame or Poetic Immortality, a concept which Petrarch often deliberately fuses with the figure of Laura. Both things are earnestly desired and difficult to obtain; both are hidden from the eager gaze of the poet.

68 "Qual a vedere il suo leggiadro velo."

69 Cf. CCLIII.
was interposed a veil/ That caused me not to see what I did see,/ To make my life at once more sad and frail."

Petrarch's use of symbol is never static—the symbols gain depth as, with each use, new meanings accrue to them. But the symbols are consistently used. Laura's unity is convincing because of the consistency of the symbols which surround her—as these symbols are consistent and convincing because they spring from Petrarch's uniform response to the most dominant symbol of the sequence—Laura herself.

The impression one carries from the *Canzoniere* is not that of a planned or formal work of art nor of a single, static position reflected from sonnet to sonnet as a series of revolving mirrors might reflect the ceramic forms of pedestaled lady and kneeling lover. This rigidity of pose often occurred in Petrarch's imitators, but not in the *Canzoniere* itself. The constant elements of the sequence, Petrarch's love and Laura's value, are like water in a river, sometimes placid, sometimes turbulent—now flowing past desert, now lost in forest. Time passes, deaths occur, symbols deepen, the poet and lady both change (yet without losing their identities) in the process of the writing.

The most obvious underlining of the varying nature of the love affair occurs in the sonnets which contain specific references to time. However deliberately unspecific Petrarch may have been about Laura, and

70 "Ma 'nansi a gli occhi m'era post'un velo,/ Chi mi fia non veder qual ch'i' vedea,/ Per far mia vita subito più trista." See also CXXII.
however unconsciously revealing about himself, the length of the love affair is one aspect which he treats with comparative concreteness. It is true that the Canzoniere does not recount, in the manner of a five-year diary, the chronological development of his love, but the love affair is firmly held to temporal reality by the interspersed dating sonnets. In Sonnet CXXI, for example, Petrarch declares, "In thirteen hundred twenty-seven, I,/ At the first hour, in April's sixth day,/ Entered the labyrinth, and lost my way." In XXX he states, "For if I do not err, now seven years/ I have been sighing between shore and shore." and in LXXIX, "If the beginning, middle, and the end/ Are alike in my fourteenth year of sighs, . . ." In the midst of the poems written to Laura during her life, Petrarch includes an almost rhythmic reference to the passing of time. In Sonnet CVII he relates that "the fifteenth year's blaze/ Shines more than the first day and makes me blind." Ten sonnets later he remarks, "Now I have left behind the sixteenth year/ Of my heart's yearning." And three poems later we find that "Seventeen years

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71"Mille trecento ventisette, a punto/ Su l'ora prima, il di sesto d'aprile/ Nel laberinto intrai; né veggo ond'èsc."  
72"Che, s'al conte non erro, oggi ha sett'anni/ Che sospirando vo di riva in riva . . ."  
73"S'al principio risponde il fine e 'l mezzo/ Del quartodecimo anno ch'io sospiro, . . ."  
74"Ch'al quintodecimo anno/ M'abbagliam piú ch 'l primo giorno assai; . . ."  
75"Rimansi a dietro il sestodicesimo anno/ De miei sospiri . . ."
heaven has turned and tossed/ Since I burned."76 (CXXII.) Petrarch continues this method after Laura's death. For example, in Sonnet CCLXIV, he tells us he loved the living Laura twenty-one years, and has loved ten years since her loss. In Sonnet CCCXXXVI he seems to see his lady alive, and must remind himself of the specific date of her death "in thirteen hundred forty-eight/ On the sixth day of April, the first hour."77

The progression of chronological time, a mechanical device if unsupported by other evidence of change, is combined with the physical and mental aging of the poet. In the first part of the sequence Petrarch writes from the viewpoint of a young man. In Canzoniere XXXI, a sestina containing several plays on the idea of age, symbolized by the rhyme word "chions" (hair), Petrarch declares that he will find peace when Laura is turned to flaming snow, but comments dryly, "I have not such a quantity of hair/ As I would wait that day plenty of years." He continues by meditating that death comes suddenly but that until the day of his death, "Whether with brown or with white hair," he will continue to pursue Laura. Already he has loved Laura seven years, and he states, "I fear to change in my face and my hair" before she will show mercy. Nevertheless, looking again to the future, he foresees he will

76"Dicesette anni ha già rivolti il cielo/ Poi che 'imprima arsi, . . ."  
77"n mille trecento quarantotto/ Il di sesto d'aprile, in l'ora prima."
continue his love "Only with these thoughts and with other hair"—a prediction fulfilled by the rest of the sequence. In Sonnets LXXXII and CXXII he looks forward to old age, for he feels that, "Until the temples of my brow are white/ That slowly time is mixing with grey hair," he will not be free of the desire which torments him.

(LXXXIII.)

By Sonnet CXCIV the mood has changed. Petrarch no longer looks forward to age, for he feels himself to be no longer young—yet still his desire fills him: "Day after day I change my face, my hair,/ But do not drop the bit of hook and bait." The first poem of Part II, CCLXIV, shows Petrarch undergoing the change he looked for. He is now 44 years old. Laura's death, inevitably facing him with thoughts of his own mortality, has shaken him. Although he cannot see his own death, he says, "I see my hair still/ Change and inside me all my longings age." In Sonnets CCCXV to CCCXVII Petrarch laments that with the lessening of his "ardent fire" he was approaching a time of life when he and Laura would have been able to meet as friends. Her

78 "Non ho tanti capelli in queste chiome/ Quanti vorrei quel giorno attendere anni." "O colle brune e colle bianche chiome..." "Temo di cangiare prisa volto e chiome..." "Sol con questi pensieri, con altre chiome..."

79 "Se bianche non son prima ambe le tempie/ Ch'è poco a poco par ch'il tempo mischi..."

80 "Di di in di vo cangiando il viso e 'l pelo;/ Ne pèro smorso i dolor inesinati ami..."

81 "... variarsi il pelo;/ Veggio, e dentro cangiarsi ogni desire."
death, occurring when his love was still mixed with desire, has cheated him of that pleasure.

The later references to age are made from the viewpoint of a man who feels himself to be at the end of life. The majority of these sonnets look backwards, containing memories of what has taken place or reflections on how the world is now changed:

My days, more nimble-footed than a hart,
Fled like a shadow, with no greater good
Than blinking eyes and some hours of calm mood
Whose sweet and bitter I keep in my heart. 82 (CCCXIX)

"And in thinking of this," he continues, "my hair turns white." 83 At the end of the sequence Petrarch's physical change is permanent and accepted:

Often they tell me, the mirror I hold,
My weary spirit and my altered sight,
And my diminished nimbleness and might:
—Do not hide any more; for you are old. 84 (CCCXI)

The next sonnet fulfills the prediction Petrarch made in XXI, though the fulfillment occurs 333 poems and twenty-four years after it was made. Petrarch had feared to change in his face and in his hair before Laura showed pity, and now, since this has taken place, Laura

82 I di miei, piú legger che nesum cervo,
Fuggir come ombra; e non vider piú bene
Ch' un batter d' occhio, e poche ore serene,
Ch' amare e dolci ne la mente servo.

83 "E vo, sol in pensar cangiando il pelo, . . . ."

84 Dicevi spesso il mio fidato speglio,
L' animo stanco, e la cambiata scorsa,
E la scemata mio destrezza e forza:
—Non ti nasconder piú; tu sei pur veglio.
comes to him in a vision and says, "Friend, now I love and prize you most,/ Because I see quite changed your hair and ways." 85 (CCLXII.) Petrarch is fifty-four as he writes. He was to live until the age of seventy.

At the end of the sequence Petrarch is no longer what he was at the beginning. The change occurs slowly, organically, and grows naturally from the passing of time, the aging of the poet, the death of Laura, and the forces at conflict throughout the Cansoniere. It is noteworthy that Part II, the poems written after Laura's death, begins not with the statement of this death, but with a long, subjective account of the poet's state of profound moral unrest. Laura's death is not announced until Sonnet CCLXVII, two sonnets after the introductory CCLXIV. Critics have advanced several theories to account for what seems to be a mistakenly placed division. 86 But the progression of the poems of the second part, most of which deal with the changing attitudes of the poet, make it artistically appropriate that the first poem of this part should point to the mental conflicts the poet is experiencing. In this poem, already discussed as one of the most introspective of the Cansoniere, Petrarch begs God to aid him to cast away the things which bind him to a consideration of the world—his love of Laura and his desire for fame. The poem ends on a note of despair: "I

85"—Amico, or t'am'io, et or t'onoro,/ Perch'ha i costumi variati, e 'l paco.—" 86

seek a way of life, another thing,/ And see the best and to the worst
I cling."37

The change Petrarch desires but is too weak to achieve begins
with Laura’s death. In one way her death might be said to serve as an
answer to his prayer, though this idea never occurs to Petrarch. Her
death, followed by the death of his good friend Cardinal Giovanni
Colonna, left him desolate.38 The pain he feels at his loss is his
dominant concern in these initial sonnets of Part II. By means of
Laura’s death he is able to perceive more clearly what he had felt
throughout the sequence, that Laura’s cruelty was for the good of his
soul. In Sonnet CCLXXXIX he confesses that she "for our own good fought
my desire," and thanks her that she "Bid me in burning think of my sal-
vation."39 At the end of the sonnet he feels a balance has been struck
between them; his "tongue" worked for her "glory," her eyes, for his
"virtus".

But this mood, reinforced in the next sonnet, is not long sus-
tained. In Sonnet CCLXI he has a vision at dawn of Laura’s physical
beauty, and envies Tithonus, the lover of the Dawn, for knowing the
time of day when he can hold again his treasure, while the poet,

37"Cerco del viver mio novo consiglio,/ E veggio 'l meglio et al
peggior m'appiglio."
38Cf. CCLXIX.
39"Per lo migliore al mio desir conteso, . . .", "Facci, ar- 
dendo, pensar mia salute."
to find his love, must first find death. The destruction of this physical beauty, coupled with his desire to make her memory live, forms the theme of numerous sonnets. Another recurrent motif is the loss of his skill. Without Laura to inspire him he can accomplish little; if she had lived his style by now "would have broken a stone/ With words; and made it weep from tenderness."90 (CCCIV.)

As Petrarch loses the impression of Laura's physical being, his lament turns in a new direction, the grief that Death has prevented him from ever talking of his love and pain with its object. In Sonnet CCCXVII, connecting the passage of time with physical aging, he writes, "There was little to wait, for years and hair/ Changed me; and it would not have been a sin/ To reason of my agony with her."91 He envisions them sitting together in the manner of Yeats' old lovers, he speaking of the "ancient load" of his "passionate thought," she answering with "her sighing and her holy word."92 (CCCXVII.) At night in his dreams Laura seems to come to him, and he is able to tell her what he felt. These visions sustain him partially, but his eagerness to join Laura increases.

At the end of the sequence he overcomes, at last completely, the

90"avrei fatto parlando/ Romper le pietre, e pianger di dolcezza."

91"Poco avev' a 'ndugiar, oh'é gli anni e 'l pelo/ Cangiavano i costumi; onde sospetto/ Non fóra il ragionar del mio mal seco."

92"De miei dolci pensier l'antiqua soma." "Qualche santa parola sospirando, . . . ."
 unholy elements of his love. The effect is that of waking from a
"long, heavy sleep." He is able to view Laura with distance and objec-
tivity,

E veggio ben che 'l nostro viver vola,
E ch'esser non si pò piú d'una volta;
E 'n mezzo 'l cor mi sova una parola

Di lei ch'è or dal suo bel nodo spolita,
Ma ne' suoi giorni al mondo fu si sola,
Ch'a tutte, s'i' non erro, fama ha tolta.93 (CCCLXXI)

In the last sonnets Petrarch has attained the viewpoint of the
first introductory poem of Part I. These poems also serve to resolve
the conflict stated in the first poem of Part II. Textual criticism
has shown that Petrarch rearranged the last part of his Canzoniere so
that the final four poems would be poems of repentance, thus ending on
a note of religious climax.94 He has left behind the love that con-
sumed him, and is "Sad and repentant for my wasted age/ That should have
been applied to better use."95 (CCCLXIV.) The love of Laura was his
inspiration during the large part of his life, but it is noteworthy
that at the end he turns from it completely. Only by overcoming his
obsession can he turn to God. Laura does not, as did Beatrice for

93And I see well that our life runs away,
    And that we cannot come twice to this spot;
    And in my heart a word returns to stay

    Of her, who now is loosed from her fair knot,
    But in her day had so unique a name
    That she robbed other women of their fame.

94For arrangement of the Canzoniere see Wilkins, p. 189 ff.

95"Pentito e tristo de' miei si spesi anni,/ Che spender si
deveano in miglior uso."
Dante, lead Petrarch into heaven, but only to the threshold. Too much of his time was wasted in her pursuit.

I go lamenting my past history
That I spent in the love of mortal things,
Without soaring up high, though I had wings,
So as to leave more worthy proofs of me.96 (CCCLXV)

It was perhaps in this mood of rejection that Petrarch, in a letter written two years before his death, expressed the wish that his poems in the vernacular "might be unknown to the whole world and even to myself if that could be."97

The last poem, one of the most beautiful he ever wrote, shows his turn to the worship of God. It is a song of praise and pleading to the Virgin. At the last Petrarch was dissatisfied with the system of courtly love, which sought to substitute the worship of a mortal woman for the worship of the Blessed Mary. Yet he needed a love more personal than that ultimately sought under the Neo-Platonic school of thought. The answer for him was to sublimate his love for Laura into a worship of the Virgin. In this poem he confesses,

Virgin, someone is earth and has condemned
To pain my heart, who living made it weep;
And of my thousand ills not one she knew;

96 "Io piangendo i miei passati tempi
   I qua pos in amar cosa mortale,
   Senza levarmi a volo, abbians'io l'ala,
   Per dar forze di me non bassi esempi.

97 Quoted in Armi, p. xxvii.
Had she known them, the harvest I did reap
Would not have changed; if other wish had stemmed
From her, I should be dead and she untrue.98

He dedicates himself to Mary, reasoning that his love for her
will be proportionally greater than his love for Laura since Mary is
divine and Laura only mortal: "For if a little piece of earthly glue/
I can love with a faith that is so wide,/ What shall I do with you,
thing of the sky?" He also rededicates his skill, previously spent in
praising things of the world, to things of heaven. He confesses that
"Mortal grace, gestures, words, have been the chief/ Interest of my
soul," but assures the Virgin, he will now devote to her "my mind and
style and sigh,/ my tongue, my heart, my tears and all my skill."99
(CCLXVI.) In this last poem then the conflicts of the first poem of
Part II, conflicts implied throughout the series, find their resolution.

The Cansoniere ends with full focus on the poet; Laura is im-
portant only because she was so integral a part of the poet's life.
It is noteworthy that it is the poet who develops in the Cansoniere,
not the lady. Laura's state changes from life to death, but we feel
this change only because we see how it affects a change in the nature

98 Vergine, tale è terra e posto ha in doglia
Lo mio cor, che vivendo in pianto il teme;
E di mille mali un non sapea;
E per saperlo, pur quel che n'avevano
Póra avenuto; ch'ogni altra sua voglia
Era a me morto, et a lei fama rea.

99 "Che se poca mortal terra cadua/ Amar con sí mirabil fede
soglio,/ Che devrò far di te cosa gentile?" "Mortal ballessa, atti,
e parole m'hanno/ Tutta ingembrata l'alma." "I pensieri e 'nsegno
e stile,/ La lingua e'l cor, le lagrime e i sospiri."
of the poet and in his relationship with his materials. The persona
of the poet, as had been shown, does change, not only the small changes
from happiness to despair in love, with their corresponding shifts of
emphasis in the portrayal of the beloved, but an overall development
of certain aspects of his personality. It is perhaps the greatest
achievement of the sequence (at least it was the achievement hardest
for imitators to duplicate) that throughout the long series no jarring
note is ever struck by even a momentary lapse into another pose or
viewpoint. Consistency of personality is triumphantly maintained.
Even these sonnets and sestinas for which one must accuse Petrarch of
cleverness and artificiality do nothing in their use of theme and meta-
phor to destroy the direction and unity of the whole work. Rather,
they are carried by the totality of the sequence, surrounded and placed
in perspective by the songs and sonnets coming before and after.

The tonal unity of the sequence, a unity based on consistent
revelations of the personality of the poet, an integrated radical of
presentation, and the repetition of dominant motifs, allows Petrarch
an untypical metaphorical freedom. Clarity was not always a desider-
atum of thirteenth and fourteenth century poets. Arnaut Daniel was
known for the allusiveness and obscurity of some of his poems, as was
his successor Cavalcanti, and we find Dante, in the Vita Nuova, dis-
cussing the poet's right to obscurity in this manner.

True it is that, amid the words whereby is shown the occasion
of this sonnet, dubious words are to be found; namely when I
say that Love kills all my spirits, but that the visual remain
in life, only outside of their own instruments. And this
difficulty it is impossible for any to solve who is not in
equal guise leige unto Love; and, to those who are so, that is
manifest which would clear up the dubious words. And therefore it were not well for me to expound this difficulty, inasmuch as my speaking would be either fruitless or superfluous.\textsuperscript{100}

Petrarch takes advantage of the poet's right to be obscure, but most of his obscurities become clear when considered against the background of the sequence as a whole. It was Wordsworth who declared that all of his poems, of whatever length and on whatever subject, were to be viewed as components of a Gothic cathedral in which the poet himself constitutes the principle of unity, and it is common technique now to use other works of a poet as an aid to clarify one particular poem, but the habit of the early Renaissance was to consider each poem in isolation. With the songs and sonnets that make up the \textit{Canzoniere} this was impossible. Except for a few cases (for instance the long patriotic poem \textquote{Italia mia}) each lyric both grows out of the preceding poems and predicts those to come. A sonnet can, indeed, be considered in isolation—fourteen self-contained lines—as an aria in an opera can be removed from its context and performed at a concert. But the difference in emotional richness between the isolated melody and the melody in its musical environment is immediately apparent to anyone experiencing the complete work. The melody itself may be unchanged, but our responses to it have been altered. Further, the poet himself benefits from the ability to build his single lyric phrase upon a strengthening emotional foundation. The advantage Petrarch gained from this can be seen by examining his use of two comparatively

\textsuperscript{100}Dante, \textit{Vita Nuova}, p. 19.
transparent metaphors, both word play on the name of Laura—lauro for the laurel and l'aura for breeze or aura.

The Laura/laurel merging was a favorite device with Petrarch. It has more depth than the ordinary pun on a lady's name because the laurel also symbolized the wreath with which Apollo crowned victorious poets. Thus in the one word the two consuming passions of Petrarch's life could be represented: his desire for Laura and his desire for fame as a poet. Sonnet XXXIV, in which Petrarch draws heavily on mythology for his metaphors, is a good example of the ambiguity with which he uses the pun.

Apollo, s'ancor vive il bel desío  
Che t'inflammava a le tesaliche onde,  
E se non hai l'amate chîme blonde,  
Volgendo gli anni, già poste in oblio,

Dal pigro gialo e dal tempo aspro e rio,  
Che dura quanto 'l tuo viso s'asconde,  
Difendi or l'onorata e sacra fronde,  
Ove tu prima, e poi fu' invescato io;

E per vertú de l'amorosa speme  
Che ti sostenne ne la vita acerba,  
Di queste impression l'aere disgombra:

Si vedrem poi per meraviglia insieme  
Seder la donna nostra sopra l'erba  
E far de le sue braccia a se stessa ombra.  

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101 It seems a little paradoxical that today, when ambiguity is generally prized in poetry, Petrarch's skillfully ambiguous use of the word draws so much connotation-limiting criticism from scholars seeking to disprove the real existence of Laura and, thus, the insincerity of Petrarch.

102 Apollo, if still lives the sweet desire  
That made you yearn on the Thessalian wave,  
If you have not forgotten to suspire,  
With time, for the fair hair you used to crave,
The underlying mythological reference is that of Apollo's fruitless love for Daphne, the mortal who had vowed her chastity to Diana. When Apollo, having exhausted more gentle methods of persuasion, attempted to overpower Daphne, she was turned into a laurel. In remembrance of his love Apollo made the laurel sacred to himself, and, since Apollo was the patron of artists, it became sacred to them, being bestowed as a sign of Apollo's favor. On one level Petrarch could be asking Apollo, in his guise of patron of poets, to defend the "honored and sacred leaf" from negative forces which prevail as long as Apollo refuses aid. Petrarch could be asking Apollo, in the name of his unrequited and therefore unforgettable love, to send him the inspiration he will need to escape the present unspecified menace and win, once more, the laurel for himself. This interpretation utilizes Daphne as a two-fold symbol: she is woman as unattainable love (with the implications of the sovereignty of chastity), and the laurel, the symbol of poetic achievement.

Another possible interpretation, again building on the Apollo/Daphne myth, could have Petrarch begging Apollo to protect the present

From the slow frost and from the weather's grief
Which lasts as long as your face is not bare,
Defend the honored and the sacred leaf
That once held you and holds me in a snare;

And by virtue of those amorous ties
That sustained you in your life's cruel harms,
Make the menace of these impressions pass:

Then we shall see together with surprise
Our lady sitting down amid the grass,
Casting a shade around her with her arms.
day laurel (or Laura) in memory of his love for the first. In this reading Apollo is called upon more by virtue of his identity as the sun. Thus, in the second stanza, "slow frost" and "the weather's grief" prevail as long as the sun does not shine. The "menace of these impressions past" could refer to an illness brought on by bad weather which has threatened Laura's health. The metaphor of the last stanza grows directly from the Apollo/Sun identification. If Apollo bares his face he will see Laura, sunning in the grass and, again pictured as the laurel, "casting a shade around her with her arms."

An astute reader with a knowledge of mythology might arrive at the first interpretation of the sonnet without having read the other sonnets of the sequence. But the second interpretation depends on the reader's familiarity with the rest of Petrarch's poems. Petrarch takes completely for granted a knowledge of his love affair and of the woman's name. The idea that Laura has undergone some illness is supported by the immediately preceding sonnets, which, without themselves being specific, dwell upon the possibilities of the death of his beloved, and this, according to the time scheme of the sequence, years before death actually takes place.103

103Thus in Sonnet XXXI Petrarch meditates on, "Questa anima gentil che si diparte,/ Anzi tempo chiamata a l'altra vita, ...", (This gentle soul that from us will depart,/ Called to the other life prematurely, ...), and XXXII contains these stanzas;

I'dico a'miei pensier;—Non molto andreme
D'amor parlando omai, ché 'l duro e greve
Terreno incaros come fresca neve
Si va struggendo; onde noi pace avremo;

Perch'è co llui cadrà quella speranza
Che ne fe vanegliar si 'lungamente, ...
The initial identification between Laura and the laurel is made in Rime XXX, an elaborately artificial sestina in which the end words of each line of the first stanza are repeated, in various orders, by the succeeding stanzas. Here the repeated words are lauro (laurel), neve (snow), anni (years), chiome (hair), occhi (eyes), and riva (shore). In essence the poem vows the poet's devotion to a fair-haired young woman once seen under a green laurel. Petrarch vows he will follow "the shade of that sweet laurel/ In the most ardent sun and in the snow/ Until the final day will close my eyes." In the fourth stanza the laurel and the lady become one, when Petrarch speaks of Love leading "to the feet of the hard laurel/ With diamond branches and with golden hair." 104

Following this statement Petrarch has no compunction about merging the attributes which belong to a tree with those which belong to a lady. In Sonnet XI, for example, Petrarch begins by saying,

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I tell my thoughts:--Before long we shall cease
To talk of love, because the hard and slow
Terrestrial load is melting like fresh snow;
Therefore at last we shall be given peace:

For with that weight also the hope will die
Which made us rave and tremble for so long, . . .

In the next sonnet, the one immediately preceding the sonnet under question, Petrarch has a dream in which Laura appears to him, "Quanto cangiata, oimè, da qual di pria!" ("How changed, alas! from what she had once been!") Laura comforts him by asking, "Perché tuo valor perde?/ Veder quest'occhi ancor non ti si tolle.--" ("Why do you lose your strength? To see my eyes is not denied you yet.--") (XXXIII.)

104"L'ombra di quel dolce lauro,/ Per lo più ardente sole e per la neve,/ Fin che l'ultimo di chiusa quest'occhi."
"a pie del duro lauro/ C'ha i rami di diamante e d'or le chiome."
"When from its proper place is seen to move/ The tree that Phoebus
loved in human form," and ends by speaking of the universal gloom felt
"when she forsakes/ Us with that face that even angels charms." 105
Without the previous Laura/laurel/Apollo conjunctions this metaphor,
artificial at best, would seem very awkward, even if the reader had no
trouble adjusting, thanks to the Daphne myth, to a tree with a charming
face.

In other poems Petrarch implies that the merging of Laura with
the laurel is more than merely an excuse for intricate conceits and
subtle puns. In the best courtly tradition, a tradition intensified
by the greater depth of feeling brought to it by Dante and the writers
of the dolce still nuovo, Laura is the cause, since she is the inspi-
ration, of all of Petrarch's achievements. As the symbol of Beatrice
was to move Dante to write of her "what hath not before been written
of any woman," Laura serves as the inspiration of Petrarch's finest
efforts. In LXXI, in which Petrarch comes "to tell of things/ That I
have long concealed in my heart's strings," he says to Laura, "The
loving argument/ Which dwells inside, in you stands out revealed/ Such
that it drives from me all other joy." Later in the same poem he
assures her,

Therefore if some sweet fruit
Is born of me, from you the seed and clay:

105 "Quando dal proprio sito si rimove/ L'arbor ch'amo gia'
Febo in corpo umano, . . ." "come si parte/ Il bel viso da gli
angeli aspettato."
I in myself am like a barren root
Nurtured by you, yours the gift of the shoot.  

Thus the ambiguity present in many of Petrarch's laurel metaphors is highly meaningful.

The metaphors growing from Petrarch's pun on the l'aura/Laura similarity are much more artificial. (One remembers that Arnaut Daniel had used this pun previously.) Nevertheless, they testify as well to the necessity of reading the sonnet sequence as a unit for complete understanding. Sometimes the understanding arrived at seems trivial, as, for instance, in the short LIII, where Petrarch witnesses a woman washing the veil that "l'aura il vago e biondo capel chiude."  

Here the knowledge of the pun is all that tells the reader that the veil belongs to Petrarch's love. In other sonnets Petrarch will write of "L'aura gentil, che rasseren all sole" (CXCIV) or of "L'aura soave al sole" (CXCVII) and will proceed to write of the love he feels for

106 "ne dirò cosa/ Che portate nel cor gran tempo ascose."
"L'amorose penserò/ Ch'alberga dentro, in voi mi si discopre
Tal che mi tra' del cor ogni altra gioia."
"Onde s'alcun bel frutto
Nace di me, da voi vien prima il senso;
Io per me son quasi un terreno assiutto,
Colto da voi, è 'l pregio è vostro in tutto.

107 "the aura's fair hair is wont to tie." The word aura poses a problem for translators. Most choose the exact English equivalent, aura, though this makes the whole line seem rather effete. However, to substitute the words breeze or wind loses not only the pun but an important facet of Petrarch's meaning; the aura refers to a subtle emanation preceding from and surrounding Laura. It is her atmosphere, associated almost mythologically with the spring beauty of Nature.

108 "The gentle aura that clears up the hills."

109 "The mellow aura in the sun"
his lady. These sonnets are extremely allusive; what clarity they have is dependent on an initial understanding of the pun.

In some sonnets Petrarch permits himself a double pun, as in CXCVII, where he begins "L'aura celeste oh 'n qual verde lauro/ Spira, ov'Amor feri nel fianco Apollo . . ." The dual nature of the pun is more subtle in Sonnet CXCVI, beginning "L'aura serena che fra verdi fronde." This type of sonnet endeared Petrarch to such poets as Serafino, Cariteo, and Febaldeo, who imitated him for the wit and ingenuity of some of his conceits. Their imitations, reinforced by the later flamboyant school of Rota, Costanza, and Tansillo, though occasionally clever and entertaining, were lacking in the quality of Petrarch which sustains even the most trivial of his metaphors; the carrying force of the unity of the sequence. Petrarch's metaphors are not dependent on one utilization for their effect, instead they culminate, each appearance revealing new facets, until the final impression is one of depth instead of shallowness. Petrarch uses metaphorical repetitions with much the same intent we find in, say, the novels of Hawthorne. An image, at first appearance, may seem insignificant and may fail to catch the attention of the reader. It is only upon noticing it in new guises, in new settings, that the underlying meanings are finally perceived. Thus the often artificial uses of L'aura can reinforce, in a new reincarnation, a meaning which is neither

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110 "The divine aura that in breathing broke/ Through the bay where Love pierced Apollo's side, . . ."

111 "The serene aura that among green boughs"
artificial nor trivial. For example, let us consider Sonnet LXXIX,

S'al principio risponde il fine e 'l mezzo
Dal quartodecimo anno ch'io sospiro,
Più non mi pò scampar l'aura né'l resso;
Si cresco sento 'l mio ardente desiro.

Amor, con cui pensier mai non ammesso,
Sotto 'l cui giogo già mai non respiro,
Tal mi governa, ch'è non son già mezzo,
Per gli occhi, ch'è al mio mal si spesso giro.

Così mancando vo di giorno in giorno,
Si chiusamente, ch'è sol me n'accorgo,
E quella che guardando il cor mi strugg.

A pena in fin a qui l'anima scorgo,
Ne so quanto fia meco il suo soggiorno;
Ché la morte s'appressa, e 'l vivere fugge. 112

The third line of the first stanza is crucial to the meaning of
the rest of the sonnet, depending, as it does, on Petrarch's already
established identification of Laura with l'aura and his previous uses
of the concept of shadow or shade, the comforting coolness found under

112 If the beginning, middle, and the end
Are alike in my fourteenth year of sighs,
Neither a breeze nor a shade can defend
Me, for I feel that my wish multiplies.

Love, with whose thoughts I never quite agree,
Under whose yoke I cannot breathe the air,
So rules me that I am unfit to see
With the eyes that I turn to my despair.

Therefore I grow more faint from day to day,
So quietly that no one knows it but I
And she who looking has worn out my heart.

I led my soul with pain since the first start,
Nor do I know how long it likes to stay;
For death is coming and life hurries by.
the branches of the laurel. Thus in the first line of the poem, then, Petrarch is saying that these tokens from his lady are no longer enough; his desires have grown too strong to take pleasure in what had previously served to appease him. In the second stanza, speaking of his lack of agreement with Love, he proclaims that under Love's yoke he cannot breathe. Again an implied pun is present; air (l'aura) is denied him as Laura denies him any tangible reward for his love. The poem ends with a statement of the poet's despair: he has loved long and life passes quickly, but his pain continues without any end in sight but that of death.

The symbols just discussed have the advantage of being fairly obvious. They call attention to themselves by their punning quality, and their appeal, as their source, is more rational than emotional. Petrarch also uses symbols, much less tightly controlled, which seem to spring from some dominant feeling rather than from some dominant thought. The use of the veil motif in connection with Laura is of this type. These metaphors have no easily discernible consistency, serving

113Thus at the end of Sonnet XXXIV, Petrarch visualizes Laura, in her guise as a laurel, "E far de le sue braccia a se stessa ombra." ("Casting a shade around her with her arms.") And in Sonnet IX Petrarch declares, 

L'arbor gentil, che forte amai molt'anni,
Mentre i bei rami non m'ebber a sdegno
Fiorir faceva il mio debile ingegno
A la sua ombra, a crescer ne gli affanni.

The gentle tree that I loved many years
When the fair branches did not spurn my eyes,
Caused my weak mind to blossom and to rise
Under her shade, and to grow among cares.
more to point to rather than delineate a train of thought, and they
give the effect of recurring without any deliberate effort. Their re-
appearances are more in the nature of reincarnation than repetition.
They are used because they carry for the poet a weight of associated
meanings not immediately apparent to another person; in other words,
they symbolize for him certain aspects of experience. Thus his uses
of *riva* (shore) which recurs in the sequence\(^{114}\) are enigmatic in their
single contexts and create, in their reappearances, an effect which
owes its unity to an emotional mood felt by the poet and created in
the reader rather than to a rational apprehension of meaning.

Several of the symbols used by Petrarch, for example the symbol
of a ship steering by a single star, were used by other poets, and with
approximately the same meanings. Much of the force of poetry depends
on the skill with which a poet, of any period, is able to use the
symbols he inherits. For him they are the most important part of
language, for they appeal most directly and unanswerably to the emotions
of his readers. Petrarch was the master of this art. The medieval
vision of life, wherein the mind lived in a world of symbol, was
Petrarch's natural manner of thought, so that he was able to use mean-
ingfully the literary symbols he found and to create powerful symbols
from his own experiences. All of the physical manifestations of the
world were assimilated, by assuming the power of symbols, into Petrarch's

\(^{114}\) As, for example, in Sonnet CCXC, "Benedetta colei ch'a
miglior riva/ Volea il mio corso." ("Blessed be she who to the
better shores/ Turned my direction.")
visions. Thus he writes, "When the sun mounts and spreads warmth everywhere,/ It seems as if it were/ A flame of love in a heart pure and steady."115 (CXXVII), or condenses his comparisons as, upon wishing for one night spent with Laura in his arms, "But I shall be the earth of a dry wood/ And the day will be full of tiny stars/ Before such a sweet dawn will see the sun."116 (XXII.)

It was this ability to fuse the symbol, whether taken from preceding poets or drawn from his own observations, with inner experiences that caused him to create the poetic language which became known as Petrarchism or Petrarchismo. As we shall see, few of his imitators were able to follow his practice of assimilation, so that their use of his symbols was superficial. The numerous symbols that Petrarch "borrowed", from Roman as well as medieval poets, were quickly metamorphosed into originality by the weight of Petrarch's individual feelings and associations. This rarely took place with his followers since, for the most part, they made mental rather than emotional use of what they found. But the example was there to be used.

The overwhelming effect of the Cansoniere is one of unity based on the gradual revelation of a single personality, the kind of unity a man might achieve in his diary or in letters to an intimate friend. The degree of conscious arrangement which Petrarch imposed on his work is still a matter of critical debate. The Cansoniere contains poems

115 "Poi che sormonta riscaldando il sole,/ Farmi qual esser sole,/ Fiamma d'amor ch'in cor alto s'endonna."

116 "Ma io sarò sotterra in secca selva,/ E 'l giorno andrà pien di minute stelle,/ Prima ch'a sí dolce alba arrivì il sole."
written at various times during the long years of Petrarch's life. It is not a collection made as the result of a single editorial effort, nor is it merely a gradual accumulation of poems. Instead it is a selective and ordered collection, the arrangement of which was begun in his youth (probably in 1342) and continued in his spare time until the end of his life. Apparently the final arrangement was fore-stalled by his death. Thus Petrarch never chose a definite title for his collection, referring to his works as Rerum vulgarium fragmenta, "Fragments," or "Pieces of matters written in the vernacular." In the poem to the collection he calls them simply "scattered rhymes."

Each of the two parts of the final form of the Cansoniere consists of two layers, or series, of poems. In each case the first series is carefully arranged, while the second series consists of addenda made from time to time during the years between the first arrangement and Petrarch's death. Even in these final addenda Petrarch showed much concern at certain points with the arrangement of groups of poems. Apparently his frequently attested concern with the re-working of individual poems superseded his attention to the collection as a whole; nevertheless, examinations of the existing manuscript forms of the work reveal that within each part the poems as a whole are

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117 The nature of his collection is shown in a postscript to a letter to Pandolfo, where he writes concerning his work, "Sunt apud me huius generis vulgarium adhue multa, et vetustissimis schedulis, et sic senio excisis ut vix legi quæant. E quibus, si quando unus aut alter dies otiosus affulserit, nunc aliud sibi idem videatur, per quodas diverticula laborum." Quoted in Wilkins, p. 188, who discusses the arrangement of the Cansoniere in detail.
carefully arranged upon three principles. The most important principle, discussed earlier, is the maintenance of a generally but not strictly observed chronological order. The second principle seems to be an effort to secure variety in form. Of the three hundred and sixty-six poems in the final gathering, three hundred and seventeen are sonnets, twenty-nine are canzoneti, nine are sestine, seven are ballate and four are madrigals. The less numerous forms are interspersed, seemingly where content and chronology permit, through the sonnets. The third principle of selection is that of securing variety of content. The theme of the large majority of the sonnets is that of his love for Laura, but he also includes, as we have seen, poems which might be classified as political, religious or moral, and some addressed to people other than Laura. These are spaced throughout the sequence, with the poems of religious meditation occurring solely in Part II.118

A fourth principle of unity, if not a criterion of selection, is that unity of personality, tone, and use of metaphor already demonstrated. It is quite possible that this fourth "unity" was as conscious an effort as the previously listed principles; surely a writer of Petrarch's skill could have created a convincing "fictional" character. However, one statement by Petrarch, appearing in a 1336 letter to his friend Giacomo Colonna, Bishop of Lombez, is interesting in this connection.

You actually say that I have invented the name of 'Laura' in

118 See Wilkins.
order to have some one to talk about, and in order to set people talking about me, but that, in reality, I have no 'Laura' in mind, except that poetical laurel to which I have aspired, as my long and unwearyed toil bears witness; and as to this breathing 'laurel,' with whose beauty I seem to be charmed, all that is 'made up'—the songs feigned, the sighs pretended. On this point would that your jests were true! Would that it were a pretense, and not a madness! But, credit me, it takes much trouble to keep up a pretense for long; while to spend useless toil in order to appear mad would be the height of madness. Besides, though by acting we can feign sickness when we are well, we cannot feign actual pallor. You know well both my pallor and my weariness; and so I fear you are making sport of my disease by that Socratic diversion called 'irony,' in which even Socrates must yield the palm to you.119

This declaration of an actual love is supported by other testimony too lengthy and involved to include here.120

Of course, the actuality of Laura or the "sincerity" of the love affair make little difference when one is considering a finished product and its effect on later poets. The important thing is that Renaissance poets took the love affair quite seriously. The first printed edition of the sonnets appeared in Venice in 1470. By the early sixteenth century biographical interest in the poet and in the facts of his story played a prominent part in criticism of the Canzoniere. These cinquecento writers discussed elaborate biographical problems. In 1525 Alessandro Vallutello, deciding to prepare a new commentary on the poems of Petrarch and an essay on the dwelling-place and identity of Laura, visited Avignon and explored the surrounding region. The result, first published in August, 1525, included a two

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119 Quoted in Armi, xxxiii.

120 The reader interested in this problem is referred to Armi, "Introduction", and Morris Bishop.
page pictorial map of Vaucluse and the surrounding region. The map, a charming work full of little figures, was used as reference in Vellutello's long and utterly serious attempt to place geographically the exact scenes of Petrarch's love affair. His endeavor was considered a success, the map being reprinted in twenty of the one hundred or so editions of the Cansoniere published in the next hundred years. Thus Petrarch's sequence was regarded as a unified and factually verifiable work of art.

It does not necessarily follow that Petrarch's imitators were always concerned to emulate this unity and "sincerity". In the study of the sonnet, careful distinction must be made between poets who had some grasp of the artistic unity of the Cansoniere and hence of the genre of the sonnet sequence and those who were never more than piece-meal imitators, interested more in the invention of clever conceits, the practice of concettismo, than in the thought or feeling actually expressed by the sonnet. Petrarch's earliest imitators, the quattrocento poets such as Serafino and Tebaldeo, cared little for the life of Petrarch or the unity of the sequence. They imitated single sonnets, and embellished them with motifs drawn from the Greek Anthology. A reaction against these flamboyant poets was instigated by Cardinal Bembo, who proposed a return to the unadorned Petrarch. By the 1530's the poets of Italy were converted to Bembo's, and the Cansoniere as a whole was imitated, instead of being regarded as a sort of poetic mine for metaphorical fragments. Ronsard and Du Bellay, the most influential French writers for English sonneteers, were followers.
of Bembo, hence of Petrarch himself. But this movement, in its turn, swung back to a new flourishing of the flamboyant school. Representatives included the Neapolitan poets Angelo di Costanzo, Bernardino Rota, and Luigi Tansillo. The vogue begun by these three in the sixties and picked up in France by Philippe Desportes, was to culminate at the end of the century in the advent of G. B. Marino, whose popularity continued for the next century.\footnote{Cf. Mario Praz, \textit{The Flaming Heart}, pp. 264-286, for a brief history of Petrarch's influence.}

In the complicated history of the influence of the sonnet sequence, an influence too often reduced to a study of the transmission of conceits, the critic should not forget that Petrarch, the original Petrarch, was the ultimate reference for serious lyric poets. He was the model not only for the sonnet sequence but for all lyric poetry. He established, by crystallizing certain aspects of that complicated mingling of love theory and ritual of courtship developed by Provençal and Italian poets, a convention which could move from language to language and genre to genre. More importantly, he created a genre which was a means of shifting the focus of lyric poetry from the object to the creator of a poem. One cannot be sure to what extent Petrarch was conscious of his achievement. Writing and arranging his poems, as he did, over a considerable period of time, he might not have been aware of the effect of the sequence as a whole. His poems, taken singly, do not go beyond the subjectivity achieved by Dante or Cavalcanti. Yet Petrarch, through the scope permitted by the sonnet sequence...
sequence, created what they did not— the figure of the Poet as the subject of his poetry.

The Cansoniere is clearly written under an impetus which is more accounted for by the Romantic or expressive explanations of lyric than by the mimetic and pragmatic poetic theories of the Renaissance. Petrarch reached the point where the poet uses poetry to try to discover and formulate his own experiences. His personal desires and emotions are of primary importance in explaining his poems. His verses point inward, not outward, for the vast majority of the poems deal with his reaction to a subject, not to the subject itself. There is no distance between the poet and his persona; the two are one; poet and persona are merged. Petrarch thus provided other poets with more than a way to view love; he provided them with a way to view the function of poetry.

Naturally not every poet found the same things in the Cansoniere. In the first place they were not all looking for the same thing. In the second place, any major work of art is major just because of its capacity to open in several directions. As has already been noted, a wide gulf must be drawn between those poets who imitated single poems and those who considered the sonnet sequence as a genre. And even in the later division there are several variations on the original theme. It could hardly be otherwise. Imitation of the Cansoniere as an artistic unity could lead a poet in one of two directions, the ramifications of which form the subject of the remainder of this study. The Renaissance poet could look upon the figure of the poet there presented as a
persona and the sonnet sequence as a skillfully constructed artifice having much the same radical of presentation as drama (the persona having no apparent connection with the poet), or he might look deeper, to discover that the persona has become transparent and, instead of reflecting experience, conducts the reader into the mind and heart of the poet himself. Then the model to be imitated is that of the poet speaking without masks, sometimes without audience, from the totality and exclusiveness of his own being. It was this new concept of poetry that the Cannoziere carried within it, like a burning coal.
CHAPTER III

PRECURSORS: WYATT, SURREY, WATSON

A study of the fate of the sonnet sequence in England is made considerably more complex by England's laggard espousal of the genre, a tardiness Elizabethan poets were to redeem lavishly. By the 1590's when the sonnet sequence was safely launched in England, English sonneteers had God's plenty of continental examples clamoring for attention. The influence of Petrarch had broken and receded in three succeeding waves in Italy: the artificiality and flamboyance of the quatrains imitations of Serafino, Tebaldeo, and Cariteo provoking Cardinal Bembo's return to Petrarch in the 1530's, his Bambismo being replaced in its turn by the popularity of the concettismo of Angelo di Costanzo, Beradino Rota, and Luigi Tansillo in the sixties. These Italian movements were reflected in turn by the French: Maurice Scève followed by Ronsard, Du Bellay and members of the Pléiade, these yielding to the flamboyance of Phillipppe Desportes. This pattern of influence and reaction found no repetition in England.1

Contradictory and confusing examples of sonneteering art broke like a single tidal wave on England's green shores. Sincerity and

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1For a more elaborate account of the history of the sonnet see Mario Praz, p. 264ff.
satire, Neo-Platonism, and cynicism arrived almost simultaneously. And within one decade the vogue had run its course, the Elizabethans condensing the practices of over a century into ten years.

Two aspects of this history seem contradictory. Given the incredible enthusiasm with which English poets embraced the practice of sonneteering in the 1590's, one wonders why their initial reactions to its introduction had been, at best, lukewarm. Clearly the surreptitious publication in 1591 of Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* was the shout that produced the avalanche, but why did his use of the sonnet generate response where the earlier examples of Wyatt and Surrey as well as the 1582 sequence of Thomas Watson, the *Hecatombadia*, had failed?

The explanation most usually provided is that the universal admiration surrounding Sidney's name blessed the sonnet sequence for later writers. One sometimes has the impression that if *Astrophel and Stella* had not been written there would have been no sonnet vogue in England, and, to carry this reasoning further, that whatever Sidney wrote would have produced much the same wave of enthusiasm and imitation. Yet mere admiration for a man, no matter who deeply and widely felt, seems an inadequate motive for a vogue of such magnitude. And Sidney's own reputation as a poet was based largely on the *Astrophel and Stella*. Until its publication he was renowned primarily as a man of letters and a patron of the arts, not as a poet.²

²Of the thirty-eight dedications soliciting his patronage only one mentioned that Sidney was a writer, and in the hundreds of poems written lamenting his death, though he is frequently called a poet.
External reasons are not sufficient. The answer must be sought in an examination of the nature of *Astrophel and Stella*, what it contained or manifested that was not present in earlier English examples of the sonnet form and sonnet sequence.

Wyatt and Surrey are generally credited with introducing the sonnet into England. Their sonnets, along with the attempts of such imitators as Nicholas Grimald, Sir Thomas Vaux, and Thomas Churchyard, were made widely available through the pages of Tottel's *Songs and Sonnets*, the first two editions of which appeared in 1557. Their faltering translations of Petrarch are often juxtaposed by critics with later often no less faltering translations of the same sonnets. While these juxtapositions are enlightening in examinations of meter or the development of Elisabethan versification, such studies are usually designed to point out similarities and continuities, and thus run the danger of showing, say, how Sidney is related to Surrey, but of obscuring how differently the sonnets of Surrey and Sidney were presented to the public.

In the *Songs and Sonnets* the poet is carefully separated from his poetry. The poems are advertised as "written by the ryght honorable Lorde Henry Howard late Earle of Surrey, and other.", and the names of the poets usually follow the corpus of their work, but

the poems themselves are, with a few exceptions, examples of the typical "anonymous" lyric. It seems likely that many readers failed to ascertain which poems belonged with which authors. Drayton, for example, though evidently well-acquainted with the Songs and Sonnets, did not realize that number 121, the famous "Tagus farewell," written to celebrate Wyatt's return to England from Spain in 1539, though clearly appearing in the group of poems attributed to Wyatt, was written by him, and thinks it written by Sir Francis Bryan.

Let us examine as typical and most influential the body of poems by Surrey which appears in the first edition of the Songs and Sonnets. Each is preceded by a title which sets the scene for the following poem. For example, the first poem is titled, "Description of the restlesse state of lover, with sute to his ladie, to rue on his diying hart." The following first person account of the lover's "restlesse state" is in no way intended to lead to a confusion between the "I" of the poem and the ego of the poet. The lover is merely a persona, the "actor" appearing indefatigably in their titles: "Complaint of a lover

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3Hyder Rollins, ed., Tottel's Miscallany (Cambridge, 1929), II, 65, has commented on Tottel's evident hesitancy in naming his authors. Only three are named in the first edition, Surrey, Wyatt, and Grimald—and Grimald's name is replaced with the initials N. G. in subsequent editions. In some cases, of course, Tottel may not have known his author's name. But Rollins suggests that Wyatt's name may have been omitted from the fear that it might be confused with that of his son, who in 1554 was executed for rebellion against Queen Mary. He further speculates that a desire for anonymity on the part of the living authors may have played some part in the hesitancy Tottel shows in naming his sources.

4Rollins, II, 67.

5Citations from Songs and Sonnets in my text are to Rollins, I.
rebuked" (#6), "Complaint of the lover disdained" (#7), or "A complaint by night of the lover not beloved" (#10). Sometimes the "Lover" appears in the third person, as in numbers 12 and 14, "Vow to loue faithfully howsoever he be rewarded" and "Request to his loue to ioyne bountie with beautie."

The "Lover" is not the only persona used by Surrey. He writes two laments from the viewpoint of a woman, both entitled "Complaint of the absence of her lover being upon the sea" (#17 and #19), as well as a poem, "Complaint of a dying lover refused upon his ladies injust mistaking of his writynge" (#18), where the "I" of the poem is a rustic shepherd who stumbles on to a disappointed lover "forsooing" himself "Against the ground with bloody strokes." It would be even more absurd to attempt to merge the person of the dashing young Howard, who died before thirty, with the voice of number 33, "How no age is content with his own estate, & and how the age of children is the happiest, if they had skill to understand it," who refers to his "wytherd skyn", "Toothless chaps", and "white and hoarish heares."

Of these poems only two seem to demand, by their greater specificty, a closer identity between poet and persona—the "Description and praise of his loue Geraldine" (#8) and "Prisoned in windsor, he recounteth his pleasure there passed" (#15). The former consists of a formal praise of the lady in question, a praise concentrating primarily on Geraldine's noble lineage. The relationship between the poet and the lady is mentioned in highly general terms. The elegy on the death of his friend Henry Fitzaroy, Duke of Richmond, on the other
hand, is full of personal detail, and no doubt contemporary readers in any way acquainted with the life of Surrey had little trouble making an accurate appraisal of the event that gave rise to the poem, even though Fitzroy is not identified other than by the reference to "a kinges somne." Yet this merging of the poet and his "pose" is not emphasized.

None of the fourteen sonnets in the collection show the personal detail found in Surrey's lament for Fitzroy. Nine of the sonnets, numbers 6 through 14, occur in sequence, but they do not differ, in either approach or content, from the other poems. Most consist of conventional love-laments in the courtly love tradition of the unappreciated wooer. Only the already mentioned Geraldine sonnet and sonnet 11, "How esche thing saue the louer in spring renueth to pleasure," with its reference to "Windsor walles," contain specific detail.

The point to be made speaks for itself: whatever other stimulus Surrey gave to succeeding poets (and they overwhelmingly preferred his customary abab cdcd efef gg sonnet form to Sidney's more difficult usage), the stimulus to personal expression or to an identification between poet and persona was incidental.  

6This is not to say that Surrey wrote without personal feeling, without intending to express himself; his elegy on Fitzroy is sufficient example of the contrary, and his elegies on Wyatt strike the same note of personal involvement. It is even possible to read all of Surrey's poems as motivated by deep personal feeling; one has only to recall Padelford's Geraldine-ridden edition of Surrey's poems. The works of any poet can be read as autobiography, but not all poets, and none in the period under discussion, intended or would welcome such a reading.
It is noteworthy that the Elisabethan public, after its reading habits had been changed by the sonnet sequence, did reconstruct what Surrey had written. On the slim basis of one sonnet Surrey and Geraldine were elevated to the same status as the almost mythical Petrarch and Laura. Nashe’s fantasy, The Unfortunate Traveller, or the Life of Jack Wilton, the hero of which meets the Earl of Surrey and becomes his page, was the first elaboration of romance; it was not published until 1594 when the sonnet sequence vogue was in full bloom. The only previous tangible support for the “romance” other than the sonnet itself occurred in Richard Stanyhurst’s description of Ireland published in the 1577 Holinshed’s Chronicles. Nashe’s tales of Surrey’s seeing, with the aid of a magic mirror and Cornelius Agrippa, Geraldine weeping for his absence, and arranging a tournament in defense of her beauty were not designed to convince English readers of the truth of the love. But England, by that time inured to such devotions by the sonnet sequence, needed no convincing.

To turn to Wyatt, who had ninety-seven poems in the first edition of Songs and Sonnets to Surrey’s forty, we find an equally distinct

7Stanyhurst, in his account of “Gerald Fitzgerald earl of Kildare” merely remarks of this sonnet, “The familie is very properlie toucht in a sonnet of SURREIES, made vpon the earle of Kildares sister, now countesse of Lincolne.” Quoted in Ruth Hughey, ed., The Arundel Harington Manuscript of Tudor Poetry (Columbus, 1960), II, 76. The reader interested in the complex Geraldine/Surrey question is referred to Miss Hughey’s cogent discussion of the available data, II, 78-84.


9This number was reduced to ninety-six in later editions by the attribution of number 82 to an uncertain author. Rollins, II, 75.
difference between poet and persona. Fifteen sonnets, eleven of which
are based on or translated from Petrarch, open his section of poems.\footnote{The fact that Surrey's poems come to a close with number thirty-
six and Wyatt's begin with number thirty-seven is signaled only by the
name, SURREY, centered a few spaces down from thirty-six. Number
thirty-seven, which begins Wyatt's corpus, is not distinguished by
either typographical device or spacing from the preceding poems, and
the reader must cover ninety poems before coming across the unob-
trusive "T. WYATE the elder" which follows number 127. Six more poems
written by Wyatt occur at the end of the book under the heading "Other
Songs and sonettes written by sir Thomas wat the elder" (numbers 266-
271). These follow four poems written by Surrey, which, like those by
Wyatt, were probably gathered too late for inclusion with the main
body of their works. Surrey's four are introduced by "Other Songs
and Sonettes written by the earle of Surrey." The typography is not
designed in any way to draw attention to the persons writing the poems.}
The first of these poems could hardly have been more pointedly chosen
to discourage the impression of personal involvement, for it is Wyatt's
translation of Petrarch's sonnet CXL, "Amor, che nel pensar mio vive
et regna," the same sonnet Surrey translated as number 6. No astute
reader could avoid noticing the second-hand nature of their sentiments.
The other sonnets of this group occur without the slightest attempt at
any ordering—sonnets 38 and 39 proclaim the emancipation of the poet
from his cruel love, but sonnet 40 describes the poet being "stricken
with sight of his love" and sonnet 41 continues with the idea of the
poet hopelessly in love. This haphazard arrangement continues through-
out, poems expressing abject servitude bumping into poems of rough
rejection of all the wiles of love. Each poem is considered a separate
entity, not an organic part of a larger work.

Although Wyatt does not, as did Surrey, establish a dramatic
persona clearly divergent from his own person, even a casual reading
of his poems reveals a wide divergence of tone. In addition to creating original poems Wyatt translated, with varying degrees of faithfulness to his text, lyrics written by several poets. The result is an inconsistency in the tone of the impersonal "I" who is the referent for most of Wyatt's poems, an inconsistency which would have bothered neither Wyatt nor his readers. Petrarch's gentle melancholy jostles strangely with the rough manliness more characteristic of Wyatt, more characteristic because most often found in poems written without apparent models. The modern critic, through research, is able to sort the "originals" from the "translations". The Renaissance critic, even if he had wished to do so, would have had little opportunity. Unless chance threw an original poem in his way, Petrarch, Pandulpho, Serafino, Sannazaro, would have been all Wyatt to him.

The content of Wyatt's poems is, for the most part, extremely general. Even number 116, "wiat being in prison, to Brian" which probably was written during Wyatt's imprisonment in 1541 contains no personal detail. Several of the poems are so abstract that the titles chosen by the editor have only distant appropriateness to the content they head. For instance, number 60, titled "The louver rejoyseth against fortune that by hindering his sute had happily made him forsake

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11 The one exception to this is the strange little number 123, "Of the mother that eat her childe at the siege of Jerusalem," and one should perhaps add number 109, a dialogue between lover and lady. On the other hand, the editor of the miscellany twice mentions Wyatt in the titles to the poems: number 64, "wistes complaint upon Love, to Reason: with Loues answer," and number 116, "wiat being in prison, to Brian."

his folly," does not contain any allusion to love or to any "for-saking" of folly by the poet. Instead the poet seems to rejoice that fortune has failed in its wiles through his own steadfast "honestie."

The editor seems anxious to relate all the poems to love. Wyatt's poem number 102, though titled "The louer lamentes the death of his loue," simply complains of the death of some person, not necessarily his love. Commentators have seen the poem, based on Petrarch's "Rotta e l'alta colonna, e 'l verde laura," as a reference to the execution of Cromwell, Earl of Essex, on July 28, 1540. And number 108, "The louer suspected blameth yll tongues," deals with only a general resentment against "mystrustfull mindes" who have accused the poet of a "crime."

Only two or three poems seem more specific. "The louer unhappy biddeth happy louers rejoice in Maye, while he wailleth that moneth to him most unlucky" (#43), again misleadingly inserting a love theme into a poem not clearly pointed in that direction, records the poet's feeling that the month of May, however fortunate it may be for the rest of the world, is a month in which he would be better off "in bed." Furthermore, one "Stephen," apparently his astrologer, has told him the month is "mischanced" for him. A critical footnote may tell the modern reader that Wyatt was imprisoned in England in May of 1534 and 1536 and probably in Italy in May 1527, but Wyatt in no way specifies what misfortunes he has in mind.13 One of Wyatt's most successful poems, number 121, "Of his returns from Spaine," comments specifically

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13 Rollins, II, 163.
that the poet is leaving the Tagus in Spain for the "temmes," and "the
towne that Brutus sought by dreames."

Among all his poems, number 52 stands out by its vivid evocation
of event and emotion. Only in this poem, the famous "They flee from
me, that sometime did me seke," does Wyatt go beyond the lamenting or
applauding generalities of the love lament. And only in this poem does
Wyatt evoke a picture of a woman to serve as object of his complaints.
The majority of his other references to women are copied directly from
his various sources and consist of stereotyped allusion to "the bright
beames of those fayre eyes," (§51), the "hart of crueltie" (§61), or to
"tresses" of "crisped gold" (§93). Numbers 67 and 68, variations of
the same idea, show a woman sewing on a sampler who, when she hears
the poet singing, pricks her own finger as she imagines the sampler
to be her lover's heart. This type of epigram, written for a neat turn
of wit, has no place for any attempt to make "real" the figure of the
lady. In sonnet 44, based distantly on a sonnet by Petrarch, Wyatt
declares, "Thumfayned chere of Phillus hath the place,/ That Brunet
had: . . .", but these names occur nowhere else in his poetry, and
though critics have made various attempts to discover the women, the
context is too general to provide positive identification, supposing
that Wyatt had had specific women in mind.¹４ The only other feminine

¹⁴Anne Boleyn has been suggested for "Brunet," and Wyatt's
mistress Elizabeth Darrell for Phillis. Wyatt may, indeed, have had
these women in mind. However, identifications of his ladies must
always depend on rather tenuous circumstantial evidence since Wyatt
did not care to provide specific autobiographical detail. See Hughey,
II, 156, for a discussion of this poem.
proper name to occur in his poems is mentioned in the group added to
the end of the volume,

What word is that, that changeth not,
Though it be turned and made in twaine;
It is mine Anna god it wot,
The only causer of my pains: (4266)

Naturally critics have identified Anna as Anne Boleyn, but the point
of the riddle seems only to point out that the word Anna is a palin-
drome.15

If Wyatt, who traveled in Italy in 1527 and perhaps in 1522, dis-
covered there, as Lu Emily Pearson declares in her book The Elizabethan
Love Sonnet, "a new convention of voicing personal emotion,"16 he
failed to transmit that convention in the Songs and Sonnets. Whatever
the achievement of a few superior individual poems, his poems as a
whole are highly generalized in tone and content, containing little
specific detail that would link them not just to Wyatt's life but to
any particular life. Nor do they present one consistent attitude
toward the subjects they discuss. The poet's attitude toward love is
sometimes that of the most abashed of courtly lovers:

Though for good will I finde but hate;
And cruelty my life to wast:

15 The editor of the miscellany evidently considered the word
Souch, or Souchs, used several times in number 65, to be a pun on a
proper name, for he places it in parentheses, a sixteenth century
equivalent for quotation marks. Thus he titles the poem "The louers
sorrowfull state maketh him write sorrowfull songes, but Souchs his louse
may change the same." Though this was apparently the editor's idea,
not Wyatt's, the poem may have encouraged the propensity for such puns.

16 (Berkeley, 1933), p. 60.
And though that still a wretched state
Should pine my dayes vnto the last:
Yet I professe it willingly.
To serve, and suffer paciently. (#107)

But at other times it is refreshingly down to earth:

If it be yea: I shall be faine.
If it be nay: frendes, as before.
You shall another man obtayn:
And I mine owne, and yours no more. (#53)

Even that most mechanical of unifying devices for a sonnet sequence,
a single mistress as referent focal point, is lacking.

Wyatt's failure to respond to the genre of the sonnet sequence
may be explained in at least two ways. First, the genre was thoroughly
entwined with the Neo-Platonic courtly love convention, which Wyatt was
by temperament unsuited for. It can be no accident that, whereas
sources are almost always available for Wyatt's conventional
"Petrarchan" sonnets or poems, his non-Petrarchan poems exhibiting an
impatience with convention or a bitterness toward love seem to have
been written either without sources or with only dubious precedents.17

Secondly, Wyatt's reading of Petrarch was clearly influenced by
the poetic habits of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century
practitioners of the concettismo, in particular of Serafino Aquilano
(1466-1500), the most flamboyant of the group. Although Wyatt was most
indebted to Petrarch as his poetic master (Rollins lists twenty-four
of the poems in Songs and Sonnets as either direct or loose imitations
of Petrarch), he favored Serafino as well. His trip to Italy occurred
shortly before the widespread conversion to Bembismo that took place

17cf. #99 and #53.
in the 1530's. Wyatt imitates Serafino nine times in the Songs and Sonnets, the only poet besides Petrarch to have been followed so consistently. Wyatt particularly favored the strambotti popularized by Serafino, little eight-line epigrams, the last two lines of which formed a couplet. Like the other poets of this "flamboyant" period, 18 Benedetto Garseth (1450-1514) called Chariteo, and Antonio Tebaldeo (1467-1537), Serafino used Petrarch as a quarry for conceits and clever rhetorical flourishes. Their French equivalent, Maurice Sceve, who wrote dissains (ten line stanzas) in place of strambotti, was also imitated by Wyatt. Wit, particularly as expressed in antithetical pairs or a cleverly worked out conceit, not self-expression or the pretense thereof, was the aim of these writers.

Accordingly Wyatt sifted Petrarch's Cansoniere for songs and sonnets abounding in oxymora, lists of antithetical pairs, contrived conceits and startling images. He usually chose the most rhetorical of Petrarch's poems for imitation, as in number 49 ("I find no peace, and all my war is done"), a poem consisting almost wholly of antithetical pairs which might have been taken straight from the Romance of the Rose, or number 50 ("My gallery charged with forgetfulness"), an elaborate working out of the time-worn ship conceit. 19

The relative ease of translating such poetry no doubt encouraged Wyatt in his choices, for a clever conceit or paradox, which depends

18 Cf. Praz, p. 268ff for use of this term.

19 Other obvious examples of this type are numbers 47, 51, 94, and 103.
for its effect on a purely rational apprehension of similarities, may be moved from one language to another with little damage done to its import. Emotion, on the other hand, in which Petrarch showed his real genius, is extremely difficult to transfer, depending as it does on subtle meshings of the sounds and connotations of words. As fragile in its texture as a spider web, it disappears with clumsy handling. But comparative ease of translation was only one factor; even in poems for which no source has been found Wyatt frequently favored these rhetorical and artificial devices.

Wyatt's fondness for artifice would have obscured effectively whatever "personal" notes are found in his poetry. Conceit and rhetorical cleverness call attention to themselves. They are the end, the raison d'être of the poem; hence the poet using these devices seems little concerned with communicating his feelings to a reader, with making the reader feel what the poet feels.

Even when Wyatt chooses a less obviously rhetorical Petrarchan model, he seems drawn to those containing the germ of a conceit he can elaborate upon. Such is the case in number 40, based on Petrarch's sonnet CCLVIII,

Vive faville uscian de' duo bei lumi
Vèr' me si dolcemente folgorando,
E parte d'un cor saggio sospirando,
D'alba eloquenza si soavi fiumi,

20Good examples of poems written for the sake of a conceit are number 63, "Comparison of love to a stream running from the Alps" and number 73, "The lover comparest his heart to the overcharged gonne." Both are adaptations of Serafino strambotti.
Che pur il rimembrar par mi consumi
Qualor a qual di torno, ripensando
Come veniendo i miei spiriti mancando
Al variar de' suoi duri costumi.

L'alma nudrita sempre in dolce e 'n pene,
(Quanto è 'l poder d'una prescritta usanza!)
Contra 'l doppio piacer sì 'nferma fuse,

Ch'al gusto sol del disusato bene,
Tremando or di paura or di speranza,
D'abbandonarme fu spesso en tra due. 21

The point of Petrarch's sonnet is to recall the unexpected kindness of his lady, a kindness so unlike her usual aloofness that his soul fell ill from the tension of too sudden a shift from fear to hope. The brilliance of his lady's eyes is mentioned almost in passing. Wyatt took this mention and, as was the habit of the "flamboyant" school, literalized and expanded it. Thus he takes the "liusely sparkes" of the first line and adds,

21 Citations from the Canzoniere in my text are from Anna Maria Armi, trans., Petrarch: Sonnets and Songs (New York, 1946), p. 362. Unless otherwise indicated English translations are by Miss Armi.

"A living radiance shone out of the beam
Of two eyes scintillating toward me,
And a wise heart lamented destiny
With the high eloquence of such sweet stream,

That memory itself makes me break down
When I come back to that day and recall
How all my spirits then began to fall
Under the change of her habitual frown.

That soul nourished in continuous pain and grief,
(How great the power of a strict routine!) Struck by the double pleasure felt so ill,

That in tasting the unusual relief,
Now from hope, now from terror trembling still,
Was about to desert me in between."
Was never man could any thing devise,
Sumne beames to turne with so great vehemence
To cawe mans sight, as by their bright presence
Dased am I, much like vnto the gise
Of one striken with dint of lightenyng,
Blind with the stroke, and erryng here and there. (#40)

Having gone to brightness, to the son, to lightning, Wyatt takes the
next obvious step—to the thunder associated with the lightning. "For
straight after the blade (as is no wonder)/ Of deadly may heare I the
fearfull thunder."22 Petrarch's attempt to recall and express a certain
vividly felt state of mind became for Wyatt the starting point for an
ingenious but trivial conceit.

Wyatt's fondness for antithesis emerges in his adaptation of yet
another of Petrarch's sonnets, CCXXXIV. Petrarch laments that the room
which used to be his harbor has now become the place of his nocturnal
tears:

O cameretta, che gia fosti un porto
A le gravi tempeste mie diurne,
Fonte se or di lagrime notturne,
Che 'l di celeste per vergogna porto!23

Again Wyatt, not interested in communicating the experience of a par-
ticular state of mind, changed the poem into a series of mechanical
antitheses, abandoning the sonnet form to do so:

The restful place, renewer of my smart:

22 The last line in the Songes and Sonnetes reads of "deadly noyse"
instead of the "hay" of the manuscript version. No doubt Elizabethan
readers were baffled. See Rollins, II, 161.

23"No little room that used to be a harbour
In the severest tempests of my day,
You are now the source of my nocturnal terror
Which from the light for shame I hide away."
103

The labours salue, encressyng my sorrow;
The bodyes ease, and trouabler of my hart;
Quieter of minde, myne vnquiet fo;
Forgetter of payne, remembrer of my wo;
The place of slepe, wherein I do but wake;
Besprent with teares, my bed, I thee for sake. (462)

Wyatt's fundamental impatience with the humility of the so-called
Petrarchan attitude to love flashes out again and again in his poems.
Frequently it affects drastically the way he adapts a poem. In number
38, an imitation of Petrarch's sonnet LXXXII, he changes Petrarch's
mood of hopeless and self-pitying despair to one of truculent exasperation, a note Wyatt is not infrequently driven to in his poetic
dealings with the fairer sex.24 In his sonnet Petrarch has become
weary of his addiction to unrequited love and meditates,

Io non fu' d'amar voi lassato unquanco,
Madonna, ne saro mentre ch'io viva;
Ma d'odiar me medesmo giunto a riva,
E del continuo lagrimar so stanco;

E voglio anzi un sepoloro bello e bianco,
Che 'l vostro nome a mio danno si scriva
In alcun marmo, ove di spirto priva
Sia la mia carne, che po star seco anco.25 (LXXXII)

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24See also number 69 and number 91 for similarly directed changes.

25"I have never been weary of this love,
My Lady, nor shall be while last my years,
But of hating myself I have enough,
And I am tired of my continuous tears;

And I demand a grave handsome and white,
That your name for my punishment be writ
Into the marble where without delight
My flesh will be, to remain still with it."
Wyatt, on the other hand, far from consigning himself to the grave, in
the second stanza informs his lady,

I will not yet in my grave be buried,
Nor on my tombe your name have fixed fast,
As cruel cause, that did my sprite some hast.

He ends by, so to speak, putting the proposition to her, with a
decidedly take-it-or-leave-it attitude completely foreign to Petrarch,

Then if an hart of amorous fayth and will
Content your minde withouten doyng grief;
Please it you so to this to do relief.
If otherwise you seke for to fulfill
Your wrath: ye erre, and shal not as you wene,
And you your self the cause thereof have bene. (#38)

Petrarch and Wyatt, if they had ever met, would have had little in
common.

Neither Wyatt nor Surrey, apparently, grasped the altered rela-
tionship between a poet and his works that Petrarch had developed in
his Canzoniere. Or if they grasped it, they failed to transmit this
radical of presentation in their works. Wyatt’s view of Petrarch’s
sonnet sequence was that of the “flamboyant” school of imitators: his
imitations or translations are of separate poems, each considered in
isolation. In the poems of both Wyatt and Surrey, with a few
exceptions, the figure of the lady receives little development, the
figure of the poet scarcely exists. Whatever their contribution to
metrical form, and it was great, their attitude toward poetry is still
essentially impersonal.

Though the Songs and Sonnets gave rise to a number of imitative
miscellanies, the sonnet form, despite its favored use by such worthy
practitioners, was little imitated. "Sonnets" are often promised in
the titles of collections of poems, as in the works of Googe and
Tuberville, but no genuine sonnets occur. The term was apparently used
as a synonym for song or lyric, suitable for any short poem. No son-
nets appear in the 1584 edition of *A Handful of Pleasant Delights* (the
1566 first edition is lost), despite its title-page promise of "sun-
drie new Sonets and delectable Histories, in diuers kindes of Meeter."
The *Paradise of Dainty Devices* contains only one sonnet in the 1576
edition, and this is gone in all later editions, while *A Gorgeous
Gallery of Gallant Inventions* (1578) contains only four. The love
element, likewise, is little stressed in these miscellanies.26 The
sonnet form, until its appearance in the sequence, had little appeal
for English poets.

The first poet to attempt the creation of a sonnet sequence in
English was Thomas Watson, "a Londoner born, who did spend some time
in the university, not in logic and philosophy, as he ought to have
done; but in the smooth and pleasant studies of poetry and romance,
whereby he obtained an honourable name among the students in these
faculties."27 His *Hecatompathia, or Passionate Centurie of Love*, was
published in 1582. The would-be sonnets of the Hecatompathia are of

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26 For further discussion of these miscellanies see Rollins, II, 107ff.

eighteen lines, consisting of three four-line stanzas, each followed by a couplet.\textsuperscript{28}

Despite this non-sonnet form the sequence is almost an epitome of the themes and motifs so beloved by later sommeaters;\textsuperscript{29} yet the Hecatompathia, like the isolated imitations of Wyatt and Surrey, elicited no response. Its failure was not due to inferior quality. Though dwarfed by the sonnet sequences of its more illustrious successors, the Hecatompathia is superior to the large number of sequences produced in the 1590's. If they lack excitement, Watson's "sonnets" are at least graceful, and most have that sense of easy execution which is so pleasing in later Elizabethan poets and so often lacking in the poems of the Songs and Sonnets. The aspect most discouraging to modern readers, their derivative nature, could not have offended Watson's compars, for they were to use and reuse his favored themes and motifs in their own works. Yet his poems were not imitated.

Again, the secret of their lack of success lies not in what was present, but in what was lacking. Watson clearly considered himself a follower of Petrarch. By his own testimony he translated the entire Ciononiere into Latin verse, a feat which staggers the imagination.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{28}Mario Praz, p. 268, labels this a provincial development of the French sonnet marotive, whereas C. S. Lewis calls the "sonnets" poems of "three Venus and Adonis stanzas each." English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama, The Oxford History of English Literature, ed. F. P. Wilson and Bonamy Dobree (Oxford, 1934), III, 483.


And one G. Bucke, in a prefatory "Quatorsain, in the commendation of Master Thomas Watson, and of his Mistress, for whom he wrote this booke of Passionat Sonnetes," proclaims that "The starr’s, which did at Petrarch’s byrthday raigne, Were first againe at thy nativity. . . ." Watson possessed the aim and enthusiasm of a true devotee, and all the raw materials of the genre, but he lacked the least notion of how to put them together. What he produced was a one-man miscallany of love poetry, not a sonnet sequence.

The Hecatompathia, however, is of interest in a study of the sonnet sequence because it is so representative of the piecemeal imitation of Petrarch habitual to poets who used the convention separately from the genre. Watson is a particularly helpful example because he makes no attempt to impose a sonnet sequence structure on a formless collection of separate imitations as do later English sonneteers. He preserved from the sonnet sequence the bare kernel—the idea that the collection should be appropriate to the expressions of an Unhappy Lover.

The sequence makes little effort at any sort of consistency. There is no structural unity, no dominant speaking voice or revelation of the personality of the speaker, no consistency in tone or use of metaphor, and no coherent presentation of the mistress. Later sonneteers discovered that a skeletal narrative base served to give a semblance of unity to an otherwise incoherent sequence, but Watson makes little effort even in this direction. His first poem opens the

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Watson, p. 33.
collection by declaring that "Cupid hath clapt a yoke" upon his neck. The next seventy-nine poems, to number LXXX, are predictable variations on the theme of being in love. With LXXX, which is not a poem at all but an elaborate explanation for the following pattern poem, Watson begins a section entitled "My Love is Past." The last twenty-nine poems finish the advertised "century" with various celebrations of the poet’s escape from love. Within these divisions Watson makes only one effort to arrange his poems. Numbers XI through XVII are all compliments on the theme of hearing his mistress sing.

A presentation of the personality of the dominant speaking voice, the most important characteristic of a true sonnet sequence, is entirely missing in the poems themselves. A personality is created in the Hecatompethia, but it is that of the poet/pedant not of the poet/lover. Each of the hundred poems is introduced by prefatory remarks ranging from the introduction to LXXXI, which occupies a full page and is itself numbered, to the comment, brief for Watson, preceding the second poem,

In this passion the Author describeth in how pitious a case the hart of a lover is, being (as he sayeth heere) separated from his owne body, and removed into a darksome and solitarie wilderness of woes. The conneyance of his inuention is plaine and pleasant enough of it selfe, and therefore needeth the lesse annotation before it.33

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32 Citations to Watson’s Hecatompethia in my text are to Arber, X.

33 Haller Smith, p. 134, has referred to the annotator of the book as "someone like Spenser’s E. K." These glosses, explaining the sources, intent, and, often, the motivation of the poems were written by someone thoroughly familiar with Watson’s work. I see no reason to suppose that Watson himself did not edit his own poems since mention is nowhere made of another annotator. His translation of Antigone into
The majority of Watson's introductory remarks furnish sources for his sonnets. As a rule he gives not only the author or authors from whom he borrows, but the specific lines which he is translating or imitating. For instance, in the preface to XXI he tells the reader,

In the first staffe of this passion the Authour imitateth Petrarch. Sonetto 211.

Chi vuol veder quantunque puo Natura
El ciel tra noi, venga a mirar costei, etc.
And the very like sense hath Seraphine in one of his
Strambotti, where he beginmeth thus,

Chi vuol veder gran cose altiere e nueve.
Venga a mirar costei, lacuale adoro;
Dunque gratia dal ciel continuo pioce. etc.

Not his mistress but his learning is Watson's true object of adoration. His pleasure in his ability to translate occasionally bursts forth in his prefaces,

The whole inuention of all this Passion is deducted out of Seraphine, Sonnet 63, whose verses if you reade, you will judge this Authors imitation the more praise worthy; these they are. . . . (Introduction to LV)

Eight lines of the Italian sonnet follow. His love of translation for the sake of translation occasionally leads him to include both English and Latin versions of the same original, as in V and VI. Of the Latin version of Petrarch's original he comments that it "commeth somewhat neerer vnto the Italian phrase then the English doth"34 (Introduction to VI).

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34See also XLI and LXIV, where Watson remarks, "The Authour vseth in this Passion the like sense to that which he had in the last before it, calling his Mistres a Second Sunne vpon earth, wherewith Haauen it selfe is become in Loue: But when he compiled this Sonnet, he thought not to have placed it amongst these his English toyes."
His explanations are always earnest, even though the editorial logic behind them seems at times haphazard. For instance, in XCVIII he again gives the English for one of his own Latin poems. This time, however, he does not number the Latin poem, explaining that although "they [the verses] may well importe a passion of the writer, and aptly befitte the present title of his ouerpassed Loue, he setteth them down in the next page following, but not as accordable for one of the hundred passions of this book" (Intro. to XCVIII). On another occasion he includes only a Latin translation "borrowed from Petrarch Sonetto 133." Here he declares that the

. . . Author presumeth, vpon the paines he hath taken, in faithfully translating it, to place it amongst these his own passions, for a signe of his greate sufferance in loue. (Intro. to LXVI)

Watson reveals more than he perhaps intended: the pains he suffers in the Hecatompthia are indeed those of the faithful translator, not of the frustrated lover. In Watson's hierarchy a Latin translation deserves numbering where a Latin "original" does not.

As well as demonstrating his ability to translate Italian, French, and Latin, Watson is careful to work his knowledge of Greek into the Hecatompthia, perhaps to show that his title was not without justification. In LXXIX he declares that in the sense of the poem he is "very like vnto him selfe, where in a Themse diducted out of the bowelles of Antigone in Sophocles (which he lately translated into Latine, and published in print) he writeth in very like manner." Other introductory references to Sophocles or Antigone, usually accompanied by appropriate Greek verses, occur in XXX, XXXVIII, and XCIIL.
Watson's pride in his knowledge of languages is almost overshadowed by his earnest pride in his classicism. He possessed the maggoty brain and love for footnotes of the true pedant and took advantage of his "passions" to indulge himself in both characteristics. Finding his introductory notes in some cases insufficient, he footnotes twenty-eight of his sonnets. Usually these footnotes list the source of a certain bit of information tucked into his poems, as do two of the three footnotes for Sonnet VII. For the line, "Her necke more white, then aged 2 Swans yet mone," he must explain, "2Quale suo recint funere carmen Olor. Strozza et vide Plin. de cantu Olorino lib. 10. nat. hist. cap. 23." And he footnotes "Her slipper such as 3Momus dare not mocks; ..." with "3Vide Chiliad 1. cent. 5 adag. 74 vbi Erasm. ex Philostrati ad vxorem epistola mutuatur." At other times he seeks to justify the standard hyperboles of love poetry with sober Latin. The "lover" writes, upon receiving a kiss, "1Forthwith my heart gaue signe of joy by skippes,/ As though our soules had icynd lippes." But the pedant adds, "1Siquidem opinati sunt aliqui, in osculo fieri animarum combinationem." (Intro. to XX.) Other footnotes identify allusions the university man felt too abstruse for the average gentle reader; "Phesus Sonne" is identified as "Asculapius," she "who Tithon did beguile" is Aurora, and the "Clubfoote Smith" is Vulcan. (Cf. LIII, LIII, and LXVII.)

Watson's desire to educate his reader is much more apparent than his desire to win his mistress. In XXXI, for example, with that characteristic note of innocent pomposity, Watson begins,
There needeth no annotation at all before this Passion, it is of it self so plaine, and easily conveyed. Yet the unlearned may have this help to gaine them by the way to know what Galaxia is, or Pactolus, which perhapse they have not read off often enough in our vulgar Rimes.

He then gives a brief explanation, omitting, however, "both the Etimologie and what the Philosophers doe write thereof." Watson's eye was always on the "understanding" of the "vulgar" sort.

His classicism is omnipresent. Many of his poems are mere excuses to string classical names and attributes together. Hence in XXX he compares his sufferings to those of Leander for Hero, "Pyram" for "Thisbes," Hamon for Antégone, and Orpheus for Eurydice. In LXII he compares his torments to those of Tantalus, Ixion, Tityus, Sisyphus, or the Belides, and in LXXV his mistress is compared to "she, whose Joue transported into Crete," "Semele," "she, whose flanokes he fild with fayned heate," she "Whose with Aegles winges he oft embrast," "Danae," "she, for whom he tooke Diana's shape," "Antiope," "she, whose Sonne/ To wanton Hebe was conioyn'd aboue," and "sweets Mnemosyne."

None of the other conceit-quarrying sonneteers of England carried pedanticism or classicism to Watson's extreme, and if their main interest was, with Watson, in translation, they were wise enough after Astrophel and Stella to mask this concern. But they were drawn to the same type of sonnet that Watson preferred. Like Watson, their poems focused on the external. They looked at, not into. A glance at Watson's preferences, therefore, forecasts the categories to be imitated by later dabblers in the genre.
In addition to the poems based on classical comparisons, Watson is drawn to poems structured around elaborate conceits, hence his predilection for Serafino. The following poem, based on a sonnet by Serafino, is typical,

The haughty Angel Bird, of Birds the best
Before the feathers of her younglings growe.
She lifts them one by one from out their nest,
To see the Sunne, thereby her owne to knowe;
Those that behold it not with open eye,
She lets them fall, not able yet to flye.

Such was my case, when Love possesse my mind;
Each thought of mine, which could not hide the light
Of her my Sunne, whose beames had made me blinde,
I made my Wit suppress it with Despight:
But such a thought, as could abide her best,
I harbred still within my careful brest. ("My Love Is Past," XXIX)

This structure, an example followed by an extended comparison, is common.

But Watson, not always content with translating "wit," occasionally risks such a poem without an apparent model. One such attempt is laboriously wrought around a comparison of the poet's heart to Mount Etna. He points out that a limping god (Vulcan) lives in Etna, a blind god in his own heart; that "rebell Gystes" were imprisoned by Jove in Etna while "rebell thoughtes" are bound by "will" in him; Etna "breathes out a burning flame," his heart "doth smoke with scalding smart," and, for the unexpected twist at the end, he gives this difference,

Empedocles consum'd with Aetnae fire
When godhead there he sought, but all in vaine:
But this my heart, all flaming with desire,
Embraceth in it selfe an Angels face,
Which beareth rule as Goddesse of the place. (LVIII)

The majority of these comparisons are emblematic in quality and
often in source, easily translatable into a picture accompanied by a motto. In loving he is like a bird at night which flies into the light when beaters shake its nest, or like a fly playing about a candle. (XLVIII.) He is the salamander living in "fire and flame" (XLIII), and the marigold that "shuts or sprouts" according to the sun. (IX)

In addition to comparison, conceit, and emblematic poems, Watson generally favors two other types, "story" and what might be called "florilegia" poems. The first type consists of little anecdotal fragments told because they relate in some way to the plight of the lover or can be turned into a compliment to the lady. In XLIII the poet dreams that Love had a feast to which all "Neighnor, Saintes and Gods were calde: ..." Jove, in his cups, offers to find Ganymede a "fayrer Wife, then Paris brought to Troy: ..." They decide to send Phoebus, who knows all the world, to look for the fairest face. That woman will become Ganymede's bride. The poet then awakes in fright for his own mistress.

A more elaborate story is told in LIII. Cupid, while asleep, is stung in the end of his finger by a bee. Weeping, he wonders to Phoebus how such a small thing as a bee can cause so much pain. Venus makes the obvious Anacreontic rejoinder that he himself is small but is able to make "the hardest harts to cry." Then Venus begs Phoebus, in his guise of healer, to cure Love's hurt. Phoebus cures the wound with some herbs, which he then throws away. Here the poet squeezes

35 These types, of course, often overlap in the same poem, though they also occur in isolation.
himself into the tale. The herbs just happen to fall into the heart of the poet and, since they had recently touched Love, they pass the malady of love to this hapless passer-by.

In his florilegia poems Watson strings together a series of pithy sayings or traditional remarks on one subject or another. His most elaborate example of this is LXXXIX, where he numbers the twelve "sententiall" verses he has collected on the evils of love. In his introduction he itemizes his sources and quotes the sayings in their original languages. "Hieronimus," "Ausonius," "Seneca," "Propertius," "Horatius," "Xenophon," "Calenti," "Ouidius," "Fontanus," "Marullus," "Tibullus," and "Virgilius" are culled for such gems as "Love hath delight in sweete delicious fare," and "Love shoteth shaftes of burning hote desire." ("My Love Is Past," LXXXIX.) A florilegium on time, LXXVII, is more typical of Watson’s technique,

\[
\text{Time wasteth yeeres, and month’s, and howr’s;}
\text{Time doth consume fame, honour, wit and strength;}
\text{Time kills the greenest Herbes and sweetest flowr’s;}
\text{Time wears out youth and beauties lookes at length:}
\text{Time doth conuuy to ground both foe and friend,}
\text{And each thing els but Love, which hath no end.}
\]

The remaining twelve lines preserve the same structure, with very slight variations in the content.

Many of these poems are characterized by a carefully elaborate use of rhetoric. Although Watson usually includes these rhetorical flourishes without comment (apparently not feeling it necessary to follow "E. K.’s" Shepherd’s Calendar example), he sometimes uses his introductory notes to discuss technique. An example of a poem
organized for the sake of rhetoric is XLI, whose structure affects the mind like a bad case of hiccups,

O Happy men that finde no lacke in Lous;
I Lous, and lacke what most I do desire;
My deepe desire no reason can remoue;
All reason shummes my brest, that's set one fire;
And so the fire maintaines both force and flame,
That force suayleth not against the same; ... 

In his introductory note Watson comments,

This Passion is framed vpon a somewhat tedious or too much affected continuation of that figure in Rhorique, which of the Greekes is called Παραλογία or Ἀνασίνως, of the Latines Reduplicatio; ...

Despite his recognition of its character he repeats the same technique in LXIII, happily commenting, "This Passion is of like frame and fashion with that, which was before vnder the number of XLI. whereto I referre the Reader."

Another tour de force is XXV, a dialogue between Author and Echo. Echo is, of course, both the physical phenomenon and the unhappy mythological figure. A brief taste will suffice.

Author. In all this world I thinke none lou's but I.
Echo. None lou's but I. Auth. Thou foolish tattling ghest,
       In this thou talst a lie. Echo. thou talst a lie.

Fifteen lines in the same manner follow.

His rhetorical summit, however, is attained in LXXXI, entitled "A Pasquine Pillar erected in the despit of Lous." Watson introduced this elaborate pattern poem with an entire page of comment, itself numbered LXXX. Here he lays down "many pretty observations" for the sake of any man who might have "such idle leasure to looke it over, as the Authour had, when he framed it." Among these pretty observations
he points out that the phrase "Amare est insanire" (a happy choice) "runneth twyse through out ye Columne, if ye gather but the first letter of everie whole verse orderly (excepting the last two) and then in like manner take but the last letter of every one of the said verses, as they stand." In addition, every verse, with the exception of the last two, ends with the same letter with which it begins. To aid the puzzled reader to discover these finer points he prints the poem straight on the next page as LXXXI.

All of these diverse methods and types have one thing in common. The scope of the poem is always confined to some external, easily discernible subject. They are completely impersonal exercises concentrating on virtuosity of either "wit" or rhetoric or a combination of both. As Watson is careful to point out, the "wit" and rhetoric usually belong to someone else; he desires his accolades primarily as a scholar and translator. The governing principle of selection in the Hecatompathia, accordingly, seems to be to choose poems which are easy to turn into English verses not too far removed from the original. The same anonymous quality characterizes the poems for which Watson supplies no precedent. Revelation of personality, even a fictitious personality, never seems to have occurred to him.

It is a mistake, therefore, to look in the Hecatompathia for consistency of metaphor or theme. The poems cannot even be called inconsistent, since no base is ever established as the norm. It is possible, when examining Wyatt's poems in the Songs and Sonnets, to group some of the poems together as being more characteristic of Wyatt than others,
and thus to note marked discrepancies between the speaking voices of his poems. In the Hecatompethia modes of previous writers may strain restlessly through the verbosity and mechanical alliteration of Watson's translations; the modern critic may note the shifts among Serafino's artificiality, Petrarch's gravity, Ronsard's delicate sensuality, and a sudden dip into the stateliness of the dolce stil nuovo, but none of these seem more or less appropriate to Watson or to any principle of organization in his poems.

With Watson the only discrepancies one may note are those in his use of borrowed motifs. Though he continually personifies Love, he is inconsistent in his portrayal, and the various conceptions of Love as the playful Amorecentic Cupid or as the cruel "feudal" lord jostle each other throughout the poems. In XXIII Cupid, hidden in the eyes of the lady, shoots a shaft into the poet's heart, while in XIII Love transforms himself into air and enters the poet's ears through the music of the lady's voice. Such discrepancies, and it would be mere quibbling to multiply them, attest once more to the fragmented nature of the Hecatompethia.

Watson's treatment of the lady and of the relationship of the lover to the lady is similarly lacking in consistency. He has very few poems which actually take up these themes except as a rather taken-for-granted starting point for whatever conceit, story, or emblem he wishes to develop. The lady is typically beautiful and cruel in most of the poems, but in XX she kisses the poet, saying a little ungraciously, "Take this for once, and make thereof no bost," and LIII, based
on Ronsard, strikes a sensual, satisfied note repeated nowhere else in the collection.

Watson lacks even the necessary interest in the lady to give her a name. In the preface to XC, a translation of one of Petrarch's sonnets into Latin, Watson remarks, concerning Petrarch's use of the name Laura, "which name also the Author, in this Sonnet, specifieth her, whom he lately loued." Yet in XCVII, which has no apparent connection with Petrarch, Watson again borrows the name of Petrarch's lady, "my Laura here I may an Harpye name:" Another time Watson seems to pun on the word "spring," remarking coyly to his reader, "The Author in this passion, upon a reason secret unto him selfe, extollith his Mistres vnder the name of a Spring." (Intro. to LXXIII.) Yet, in keeping with his customary failure to develop themes, this hint is confined to one sonnet: no springs bubble into any of his other poems.

It is not surprising, then, to find Watson, in his introduction, disclaiming the reality of his love and making what amounts to a commercial appeal to his readers. In his address to "the friendly Reader" he declares,

This toyse being liked, the next may prove better; being discouraged, wil out of the likelihood of my travaile to come . . .

Yet for this once I hope that thou wilt in respect of my travaile in penning these Louepassions, or for pitie of my paines in suffering them (although but supposed) to survey the faultes herein escaped, as eyther to winke at them, as oversights of a blinde Louer; or to excuse them, as idle toyes proceedinge from a youngling frensie; . . .

John Lyly, in his introductory letter of praise, not unnaturally expresses scepticism about the reality of Watson's lady. He comments, "Touching your mistress I must needs thinke well, seeing you have written so well, but as false glasses shewe the fairest faces,
Later in the introductory material (which includes letters or verses of commendation from among the most notable supporters of poetry of the time, John Lyly, George Peele, Matthew Roydon, George Duc, and Thomas Achelow) Watson himself addresses "A Quatorzain of the Author unto his booke of Louespassions." No pretense is made here that his book is for his lady. Instead, he wistfully comments,

My little booke goe hye thee hence away,
Whose price (God know's) will countervail no perte
Of paines I tooke, to make thee what thou arte: ... .

Watson's complete lack of emotional involvement with his subject is clearly expressed in the preface to L, "In this Passion is effectually set downe, in how strange a case he liueth that is in loue, and in how contrary an estate to all other men, which are at defaisance with the like follye. And this the Author expresseth here in his owne person." Watson's speaking voice is that of the I-representative, never that of the I-particular.

Watson's lack of involvement in the Hecatompathia is attested so fine glosses amend the baddestancies. Apelles painted the phenix by hearesay not by sight, and Lysippus engraved Vulcan with a straight legge, whome nature framed with a poult foote, which proueth man to be of greater affection their [sic] judgement."

37Hallet Smith, p. 135, commenting on the sponsors of Watson's book, quotes Nashe's 1589 preface to Greene's Menaphon to the effect that, in addition to Spenser, "there are extant about London many most able men to reuive Poetry, though it were executed tenne thousand times, as in Platoes, so in Puritans Commonwealth; as, namely, for example, Mathew Roydon, Thomas Achlow, and George Peele."

38It is of interest that Watson here, under the name of "quatorzain," follows a standard Italian sonnet form. The term sonnet was applied to a great many lyric structures in sixteenth century England; quatorzain was the name usually applied to a fourteen line iambic poem.
by one other trait, a characteristic linking him with similarly impersonal practitioners of the Concettismo. This is his extreme literalization of hyperbole. Hyperbole must exist in a sonnet sequence as a means of testifying to the overwhelming nature of the emotional experience under discussion. But it must, if the sequence is to be taken seriously, never, or rarely, exceed the bounds of probability. Every successful sonneteer had to find some balance for or some method of controlling hyperbole. This difficulty did not trouble Watson or those like him who considered the single sonnet, not the embodying sequence, the important focal point. Their aim was to be striking, not probable. Hence their hyperboles are treated as real; their conceits, though retaining logical coherence within themselves, lose any connection with nature. Thus Watson can write, apparently with serious intent,

My harte is seth him downe twixt hope and feares
Upon the stonie banke of high desire,
To view his own made fluid of blubberyng teares
Whose waues are bitter salt, and hote as fire: . . . (II)

Of this he comments, "The conuayance of his [the author's] inuention is plaine and plessant enough of it selfe, and therefore needeth the lesse annotation before it."

In yet another poem he plays with the traditional theme of the lover burning with desire to declare "That flesh and boane consume with secret flame,/ Each vaine dries vp, . . ." He goes on to declare that he longs for death but his soul dreads to die, fearing that the heat of his love will set on fire Charon's "with'red boat." "So dang'rous are the flames of Mighty Lorn/ In Stix it selfe, in earth, or heau'n
above." (XLIX.) The original purpose of the metaphor, to communicate as exactly as possible the emotional experience of a man burning with love, has been completely forgotten. The metaphor was atrophied, worn-out. But the remedy attempted by Watson and his models was to give new life to the metaphor instead of to the experience that produced it. What was properly a means of expression became for them the end, the subject, of expression. The result, as Sidney was to point out in Astrophel and Stella, was that the artist was cut off from the source of his power. In his pursuit of manner, he lost matter, and with it the ability to look for or convey the truth.

Watson's Hecatompthia, then, rather than being the first sonnet sequence in English, deserves only the name pseudo-sequence, or perhaps "sonnet" miscellany. It started no vogue because it brought nothing new to the attention of Renaissance poets. As an example of what should be avoided in the production of a true sonnet sequence, it is extremely useful. Later sonneteers, who had more idea of what they were about, sometimes made the same mistakes without having Watson's excuse of being a pioneer. Although Watson did not show Sidney the way to Astrophel and Stella, he may very well have shown him a few paths not to take. The Hecatompthia makes one strongly suspect that Sidney had Watson in mind when he wrote,

But truely many of such writings as come vnder the banner of vnresistible loun, if I were a Mistres, would never perswade mee they were in loun; so coldely they apply fisely speeches, as men that had rather red Louers writings, and so caught vp certaine
swelling phrases, which hang together like a man which once tolde mee the winde was at North West, and by South, because he would be sure to name winde sene, then that in truth they feele those passions, . . . 38

CHAPTER IV

SIDNEY

With the appearance of *Astrophel and Stella* in 1591, the genre of the sonnet sequence was introduced to the general English Renaissance public. Sidney was the first English poet to grasp Petrarch's achievement, the creation of a body of lyric poetry which approached the unity and coherence of a single work of art by centering on the focal figure of the poet. The causes of this unity are easily misunderstood, for a sonnet sequence can, and sometimes does, possess a unity of subject, and shares with classic drama and epic the attribute of being the imitation of a single action—in the case of the Petrarchan sonnet sequence the action is a love affair. But these secondary coalescing elements are inadequate unless they are grounded upon a distinct and individualized speaking voice, whether that of the poet himself or that of some clearly visualized persona through which the poet communicates the specific emotions of an individual—not generic—poet/lover. In either case, the emphasis must be primarily on the reactions of the "I" of the sequence to what he experiences.

Not all modern critics have agreed that Sidney's sequence can boast this unity. C. S. Lewis, for example, regards *Astrophel and*
Stella not as a sequence but as near anarchy.\textsuperscript{1} Robert Montgomery, in a recent study of Sidney's style, while rejecting Lewis's judgment, agrees that the first impression may be a sense of bewildering variety in style and motif. He feels that most of the first thirty sonnets appear derivative.\textsuperscript{2} These first sonnets also concern Richard B. Young, who justifies the changing style of the sequence as caused by the changing roles of the protagonist. In the early sonnets, Young feels, Astrophel assumes the guise of the traditional poet-lover. His style changes, becomes less conventional, toward the middle of the sequence as his involvement with Stella deepens.\textsuperscript{3}

It is true that two poses alternate in Sidney's sequence, both inherited from Petrarch's Canzoniere, but it is a mistake to see them as incompatible poses which destroy the unity of a single speaking voice. It is of the very essence of the sonnet sequence that it embrace the two radicals of presentation which underlie the two poses of the poet. On the one hand the sonnet sequence is poetry as rhetoric, poetry which intends, through eloquence, to persuade or move its audience (whether one or many) to some emotion or action. On one rhetorical level the poet's primary pose is that of directing himself only to the object of his love. As Sidney has Astrophel declare,

\begin{quotation}
\textsuperscript{1}C. S. Lewis, \textit{English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama}, p. 326.


\end{quotation}
STELLA! THINK not that I by verse seek fame;
Who seek, who hope, who live but thee.
Thine eyes my pride; thy lips mine history:
If thou praise not, all other praise is shame.⁴ (XC)

Under this radical of presentation the poet is contemptuous of his audience. If she care, the opinions of all the world are as naught. The audience, which must approach the poet from the position of the lady, tacitly acquiesces in its own dismissal. It must be convinced, as the lady is supposedly convinced, of the sincerity and value of the love expressed. Sidney reinforces this mode of presentation by addressing several sonnets directly to Stella.⁵

On rare occasions Sidney makes use of a less important rhetorical pose, the direct address to a general audience. Customarily this form is used when a sonneteer wishes to "eternize" his lady, or when he wishes to lament her cruelty to an objective or sympathetic world.

Sidney addresses an external audience five times: once to advise other poets (XV), once to protest the truth of his love (XXVIII), once,

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⁴This is the most obvious imitation of Petrarch in the sequence. William A. Ringler, p. 487, cites Horne 293 and 151 as possible models and notes that the protestation was commonplace. Sidney was never as preoccupied with his poetic fame as was Petrarch, but the pose of writing only for Stella is reiterated in other sonnets. Since the primary point of this study is to consider Astrophel and Stella as it appeared to its contemporary public, I follow the ordering and text of Thomas Newman's 1591 edition as reprinted in Sir Sidney Lee, Elizabethan Sonnets (New York, 1964), I. Citations to Astrophel and Stella in my text will be to this edition. Lee numbers the sonnets as they appear in the 1598 folio edition, including in his numbering Sonnet XXXVII which is omitted by Newman. Since the 1591 edition was rather carelessly printed, the reader is referred to William Ringler's recent excellent edition of Sidney's poetry for a more accurate reflection of his work.

⁵Cf. XXXVI, XL, XLVIII, I, LIX, LXIV, LXVII, LXXI, LXXXVI, XC, XCI, and CVII.
humorously, to introduce a conceit (XX), once to bid his circle to listen to a riddle on Stella's identity (XXXVII), and once to chas-
tize "envious wits" who have guessed his passion (CIV). 6

Sidney's second radical of presentation, the expressive, is that of the poet speaking to himself. This is inward directed poetry of self-analysis and self-expression from which the true audience, the reader, is supposedly excluded except as it may chance to "overhear" the poet's words. The figure of the lady no longer imposes herself between the poet and his invisible audience, nor between the poet and himself.

The "rhetorical" function of the sonnet sequence, which acts as an explanatory frame for the "expressive" sonnets of analysis and introspection, is usually established early. In Astrophel and Stella, Sidney's first sonnet bluntly states the motive for this persuasive function of the sequence,

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,  
That She, dear She! might take some pleasure of my pain;  
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,  
Knowledge might make pity win, and pity grace obtain: (I)

The more conventional sonnets, as Young points out, do show Sidney in the traditional pose of the wooing lover, but these sonnets occur throughout the sequence whenever Sidney turns his attention from sonnets of self-analysis to exterior matters, usually to Stella. For example,

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6This sonnet is the only sonnet missing from the 1591 edition. It may have been omitted because it contains the most obvious identi-
fication of Stella as Lady Rich, and Sidney, to make sure the point of his pun is noticed, introduces it by saying, "Listen then Lordings with good ease to me,/ For of my life I must a riddle tell."
sonnet VII consists of a praise of Stella's eyes, unconventional only in that Stella's eyes were black instead of the customary blue or grey; sonnet VIII contains Sidney's variation on the theme of run-away Love, and sonnet IX is an ornate comparison of Stella's face to "Queen Vertue's court."\footnote{Montgomery, p. 172, lists 11-13, 16, 17, 20, 22, 23, 25-27, and 29 as conventional sonnets of praise and devotion occurring in the first part of the sequence.} Sonnet 36, which addresses Stella directly, is built around the very conventional comparison of the heart of the poet to a town under assault and ends with a very paroxysm of play on the word sweet. The three sonnets on Stella's kiss (LXXIX, LXXX, and LXXXI), though occurring shortly after Astrophel has discovered that Stella in some fashion returns his love, are highly conventional. And of the very last sonnets, C, on Stella's tears, and CIII, celebrating an occasion when the poet saw Stella sailing on the Thames, use conventional motifs.

It was natural that these sonnets be more conventional than the sonnets written from the expressive radical of presentation. Even a brief look through the poetry and prose of the period reveals that these "Petrarchan" conventions, drawn from a variety of sources, were considered the natural language of love. Sidney drew on these accepted modes for the wooing of Stella. He flattered the lady in the language and manner that she and the Renaissance understood as appropriate.

It is in the sonnets written from the second radical of presentation, the sonnets to be "overheard," that Sidney establishes most
clearly the personality of his persona. This pose, as well as the more often expressed rhetorical purpose, is also given a graphic representation in the first sonnet. The poet is pictured struggling to express his own emotions, not those belonging to another poet. The inner nature of what Sidney desires to write is made explicit by his metaphor: he is "great with child to speak," but helpless to give birth until he casts off the external models which are "but strangers in my way." (I.)

In sonnet XXXIV Sidney undergoes an inner debate in which he questions his purpose in writing,

```
Come, let me write. "And to what end?" To ease
A burthened heart. "How can words ease, which are
The glasses of thy daily vexing care?"
Oft cruel thoughts well pictured forth do please.
"Art not ashamed to publish thy disease?"
Mey that may breed my fame. It is so rare.
"But will not wise men think thy words fond ware?"
Then be they close, and so none shall displease.
"What idler thing, then speak and not be heard?"
What harder thing than speak, and not to speak?
"Peace! foolish wit!" With wit, my wit is marred.
Thus write I, while I doubt to write; and wreak
My harms on ink's poor loss. Perhaps some find
STELLA's great powers, that so confute my mind.
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He is unable to give, in this instance, the traditional purpose for writing, to win Stella to pity him, and rejects as well the idea of writing for fame. The sonnet's form reflects this chaos, the short questions and rejections destroying the rhythm and sense of ordered structure. Sidney's recognition of this disordered structure is admitted in the last two lines. Perhaps "some" will find "STELLA's great powers" in his confusion.
His use of this second radical of presentation is more often practiced than discussed. Sidney has a number of sonnets of self-analysis in which he deals with the conflict between his reason and his passion. Sonnet XVIII may serve as an example of this introspective verse,

With what strange checks I in myself am shent,  
When into REASON's audit I do go;  
And by just counts, myself a bankrupt know  
Of all those goods which heaven hath lent.  
Unable quite, to pay even Nature's rent,  
Which unto it by birthright I do owe;  
And which is worse, no good excuse can show,  
But that my wealth I have most idly spent.  
My youth doth waste, my knowledge brings forth toys;  
My wit doth strive those passions to defend,  
Which for reward, spoil it with vain annoys.  
I see my course to lose myself doth tend;  
I see, and yet no greater sorrow take,  
Than that I lose no more for STELLA's sake.8

Sidney is not writing here to entertain his lady, to impress her with the sincerity of his love, or to win her to love in return. He considers this love a "waste," a misuse of what he is for no better purpose than the production of "toys" or the reward of "vain annoys." He sees that the only ultimate effect of his love will be to "lose myself." And yet, the paradox that gives rise to Sidney's most striking sonnets, in full knowledge of this self-harm, he persists in his delusion.

Sidney's most characteristic stance is one of inner debate, of the pull of opposites. Sometimes this tension is expressed in the antitheses which infuse most sonnet sequences, but which, nevertheless, are justified here.

8 Cf. also IV, V, X, XIV, XVIII, XIX, XXI, XXV, and XLVII.
On CUPID's bow, how are my heart-strings bent!
That see my wrack, and yet embrace the same,
When most I glory, then I feel most shame.
I willing run, yet while I run repent.
My best wits still their own disgrace invent.
My very ink turns straight to STELLA's name;
And yet my words,—as them, my pen doth frame—
Advise themselves that they are vainly spent. (XXI)

But the tension of which Sidney wrote expressed itself more characteristic in his use of personification. Robert Montgomery sees Sidney's use of personification as the most dramatic aspect of the sonnet. The personifications become actors. They are spoken to, not merely evoked in narration or exposition. Sidney uses personification to focus the attention of the reader on the internal debate of the lover. Through this device he causes the reader to witness the dialogue of a man at war with the diverse elements of his soul:

"Virtue! Alas, now let me take some rest./ Thou settest a bate between

Cf. Montgomery, p. 93. Personifications are characteristic in sonnet sequences to objectify an internal experience. Yet by their highly stylized nature they inevitably gravitate toward conceit; often the conceit extends itself toward allegory and the motivating experience of the poet disappears from the picture altogether. This occurs, for example, in the second poem of Watson's Hecatompathia,

My harte is set him downe twixt hope and feares
Upon the stonie banke of high desire,
To view his owne made flud of blubbering teares
Whose wares are bitter salt, and hote as fire:

But blacke despaire some times with open throate,
Or sightfull Jalousie doth cause him quake,
With howlinge shrikes on him they call and crie
That he as yet shall nether live nor die: (II, p. 38)

The personifications intended to express the "inner" Hall of the poet, through their literal application, draw all attention to their own development. Metaphor exists for its own sake, not for its ability to clarify an underlying experience.
my will and wit," (IV), or "Reason! In faith, thou art well served! that still/ Wouldst brabbling be with Sense and Love in me!" (X). Only in sonnet LXXVIII, a portrayal of Lord Rich as Jealousy with "piercing paws" and "many eyes," do we find Sidney using personification for any other purpose than to dramatize the conflicting emotions of his experience. Controlled in this way, personifications become a highly effective means of self-analysis.

The conjunction of the rhetorical and the expressive radicals of presentation in no way destroys the unity of the sonnet sequence. On the contrary, Sidney's so-called "conventional" sonnets serve graphically to demonstrate the truth of Astrophel's protestations of an attraction powerful enough to overcome both his reason and moral sense. Many of the rhetorical sonnets on Stella, by their constant note of sensuality, reinforce the struggle between desire and reason pictured in the introspective sonnets. Even a brief examination of the sequence will demonstrate the complementary interaction of the two modes.

The first sonnet, as we have noted, establishes both the external and internal motives for writing. The second sonnet, while it breaks with the tradition of love at first sight, serves to inform the reader of Astrophel's descent into unreasoning passion,

At length to LOVE's decree, I forced, agreed; Yet with repining at so partial lot. Now even that footprint of lost liberty Is gone; and now, like slave-born Muscovite,

10 The sixth song, discussed elsewhere in this chapter, is another exception if the songs are to be included as an integral part of the sequence.
I call it praise to suffer tyranny;
And now employ the remnant of my wit
To make my self believe that all is well;
While with a feeling skill, I paint my hall. (II)

The first result of this passion, as Montgomery points out, is misplaced idealistic devotion.\textsuperscript{11} Astophel's love is not, as was Petrarch's, merely tinged with sensuality; it is firmly based on physical desire. He never sees his love for Stella as leading him closer to God, but pictures Stella as a rival deity whom he worships against his right reason. Virtue opposes Stella; very well, he advises Virtue, "Leave what thou lik'st not! deal not thou with it."
He then declares, "I swear my heart, such one shall show to thee;/ That shrines so true a deity;/ That VIRTUE thou thyself shalt be in love!" (IV.)

Sonnet V continues this overt statement of a rival deity.

\begin{quote}
It is most true—that eyes are formed to serve
The inward light; and that the heavenly part
Ought to be King; . . . . . . . . . . .
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
It is most true—that we call CUPID's dart,
An image is, which for ourselves we carve,
And, fools, adore, in temple of our heart;
Till that good GOD make church and churchman starve: . . .
\end{quote}

But the last line, playing against the symmetry of the preceding verses, sums up Astophel's position, "True—and yet true, that I must STELLA love." In only five sonnets Sidney has established the opposing poles at work in his persona.

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{11}Montgomery, p. 110.
\end{quote}
The next fifty-one sonnets show the ascendency of appetite over
wit. 12 Astrophel is obsessed with Stella's physical beauty. He
pictures Cupid as taking liberties that he himself desires, telling
him that "In her cheek's pit, thou didst thy pitfall set;/ And in her
breast, bo-peep or couching lies." (XI.) Even Cupid is in love with
Stella's shining eyes and swelling lips. "Her sweet breath" often
makes his "flames to rise," and in her breast Cupid's "pap well
sugared lies." (XII.) In another sonnet he elaborates the conceit
that Stella has yielded Cupid her body in order to preserve her heart.

... thus her eyes
Serve him with shot; her lips, his heralds are;
Her breasts, his tents; legs, his triumphal car;
Her flesh, his food; her skin, his armour brave.13 (XXIX)

As the sequence progresses Sidney's reaction to these charms
becomes more fervent. In sonnet XXXVI he confesses,

And there, [in his heart] long since, LOVE thy Lieutenant
lies;
My forces rased, thy banners raised within.
Of conquest, do not these effects suffice?

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12 I refer here to the division suggested by Ringler, p. xlvi, who
believes the sequence to fall into three parts. The first part, giving
the reactions of a young man in love for the first time, ends with
Sonnet III. With the fifty-second sonnet desire has become dominant,
and Stella is more affectionate. The final section, which Ringler
begins with the eighth song, deals with Astrophel's despair at
Stella's rejection of the physical.

13 The sensual imagery associated with Stella sometimes surrounds
even casual mention of her name, as in sonnet XV. Here Sidney, advising
would-be poets against imitation of other writings, tells them,
But if (both for your love and skill) your name
You seek to nurse at fullest breasts of Fame;
Stella behold; and then begin to endite.
In view of the very sensual nature of Astrophel's love, it is hard not
to see this as yet another witty allusion to Stella's physical
attributes.
But wilt now war upon thine own begin
   With so sweet voice, and by sweet Nature so
In sweetest strength; so sweetly skilled withal
In all sweet stratagems sweet Art can show:
   That not my soul, which at thy foot did fall,
Long since forced by thy beams; but stone nor tree
By SENSE's privilege. can 'scape from thee.14

As his physical excitement increases, his attempts to use reason to
overcome love or to reconcile it with virtue falter. In sonnet XXV he
had argued that the "Strange flames of LOVE" in his soul were caused
by Virtue, which had manifested itself in Stella’s body. But in sonnet
LII he projects his inner debate onto Stella’s form, declaring that
Virtue possesses Stella’s soul, her true self, but that Love holds her
body. He is willing to gratify his desire even at the cost of losing
this true Stella, "Let VIRTUE have that STELLA's self; yet thus/ That
VIRTUE but that body grant to us." (LII.)

The tension between Astrophel the humble worshipper of Stella’s
heavenly beauty and Astrophel the would-be ravisher provides interest
for the sonnets of praise that goes beyond the scope of each sonnet
considered as a single entity. Thus sonnet XLIII, of itself a con-
tinuation of the theme that Cupid is too much in love with Stella to
aid Astrophel, gains from the sequence the scope to express, in one
pun, the ambiguity the lover feels toward his own motives, "Fair eyes!
sweet lips! dear heart! that foolish I/ Could hope, by CUPID’s help,

14The irrational, almost panting, effect of the s alliteration in
these lines is suitable preparation for the opening of sonnet XXXVII
(omitted in the 1591 edition, cf. footnote 6) with its description of
a man in a state of sexual excitement, "My mouth doth water, and my
breast doth swell,/ My tongue doth itch, my thoughts in labour be."
on you to pray: . . ." (XLII.) The play on pray/prey (spelled pray in the 1598 edition) sums up in brief the two attitudes of this guilty love: its substitution of physical desire, with the concomitant submission of self to a false ideal, for divine love, and its fixed ego-centered intent to possess its object, thus to destroy the object's enslaving power. 15

By sonnet LIII Astrophel has seemingly admitted to himself both the power of his love for Stella and its true aim—the possession of her body. A new conflict, this time external, between himself and Stella is substituted for the inner tension which had been expressed in the sonnets of self-analysis. Stella battles his capitulation to desire, seeing it correctly as "selfness," not love. Thus she tells him that "infeint affection" "captives" both "soul and sense" to the wishes of the beloved. If Astrophel truly loved, he would lose his desire to "pray" on Stella. Astrophel's recalcitrance is shown in his humorous remark, "O DOCTOR CUPID! thou for me reply:/ Driven else to grant by angel's sophistry,/ That I love not, without I leave to love." (LXI.) Having overcome virtue in himself he is impatient to discover it in Stella, finding expression for the irony of the situation in paradox, "Dear! love me not, that ye may love me more!" (LXIX.)

He has resolved the battle between reason and desire by making Stella the repository of both. He begs her "O give my passions leave

15Cf. XI, XLII, XLIII, XLVIII for the posture of worship and humility, and VIII, IX, XI, XII, XXIX, XXVI, XXXII, XXXVII for the sensual praise of physical attractiveness.
to run their race!" and rejects her "counsels" by saying, "Thou art
my Wit, and thou my Virtue art." (LXIV.) His utter abandonment of
right reason is demonstrated in sonnet LXVIII. In the custom of
Petrarchan worship and in rhythms reminiscent of the Litany, he applies
epithets to Stella which belong more properly to God,

STELLA! The only planet of my light!
Light of my life! and life of my desire!
Chief good! whereto my hope doth only aspire;
World of my wealth! and heaven of my delight!

But his heresy turns against the devotional basis of the traditional
Petrarchan attitude as well as against religion. While he listens to
Stella's counsels of virtue, "O think I then, what paradise of joy! It
is, so fair a virtue to enjoy?" (LXVIII.)

Sonnet LXXI continues the conflict between Stella's possibly coy
idealism and Astrophel's own sensuality. The first thirteen lines
consist of stately symmetrically balanced praises of Stella's virtue
and goodness, the loftiness of the sentiments reinforced by the
length and balance of the three sentences forming the octave and first
five lines of the sestet. The last line destroys both symmetry and
Petrarchan convention as the abrupt cry of the speaking voice tears
across the balanced rhetoric, "But ah! DESIRE still cries, "Give me
some food!" In LXXII Astrophel attempts to side with Virtue against
his lust. Again the last line, with its cryptic denial, contradicts
the movement of the entire sonnet. "But thou, DESIRE! because thou
wouldst have all;/ Now banish art: but yet, alas, how shall?" (LXXII.)

Sonnets LXXIII through LXXXV mark an absence of debate, either
external or internal, in the sequence. Sonnets LXXIII, LXXIV, LXXIX - LXXXII are on the pleasures of Stella's kiss. Sonnet LXXVI, a witty comparison of Stella to the sun, pictures once more the poet's sensual excitement. The nearness of Stella affects him like the journey of the sun through the day. At first the warmth is gentle and pleasant, then,

But lo! while I do speak, it growth noon with me;
Her flamy glistening lights increase with time and place;
My heart cries "Ah! It burnes!" Mine eyes now dazzled be.
No wind, no shade can coole, what help then in my case,
But with short breath, long looks, stayed feet and walking head;
Pray that my sun go down with meeker beams to bed.

Sonnet LXXVII continues this note of expectancy. As in the preceding sonnet, with its stately repetition of "She comes," rhetorical balance is used to establish a mood to be shattered by a flippant ending. Here Sidney begins the first ten lines of his sonnet with variations of "Those ____ whose" or "That ____ which." After praising "Those looks," "That face," "That presence," "That grace," "That hand," "Those lips," "That skin," "Those words," "That voice," "That conversation," he ends "in no more but these, I might be fully blest; Yet, ah! my maiden Muse doth blush to tell the rest." Sonnet LXXXII finds Astrophel dwelling on those beauties which exceed "hers whom naked the Trojan boy did see." Sonnet LXXXVIII, a condemnation of Jealousie, ends with an emblematic description of that many-eyed monster, and Astrophel wittily alludes to his hopes of cuckoldolding Stella's jealous husband by asking, "Is it not evil that such a devil [Jealousy] wants horses?"
On the surface Astrophel no longer feels doubt, but one sonnet casts an ironic look at his infatuation even at this moment of intensity. In sonnet LXXV Astrophel praises Edward IV, but not for his valor in arms, wisdom, kingly accomplishments or any such "small cause." He sees Edward's merit in that "this worthy knight durst prove/ To lose his crown, rather then fail his Love." As Ringler points out, Sidney was well aware that Edward was a moralist's example of wantoness and self-indulgence.\textsuperscript{16} His connection with Jane Shore had been the subject of Thomas Churchyard's very popular lament of Shore's wife in the \textit{Mirror for Magistrates}. His flattery of Edward, therefore, considered in light of his earlier fears and Stella's warnings that love was destroying his ambition and noble future, demonstrates ominously the abjectness of his surrender.

The notes of expectancy in Sonnet LXXXIV, on the highway to a place where Astrophel will meet Stella, and Sonnet LXXXV, beginning "I see the house! My heart! thyself contain!" are shattered by the abrupt cry of LXXXVI, "Alas, Whence came this change of looks?"\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{16}Ringler, p. 481.

\textsuperscript{17}In the edition of 1598, apparently authorized by Sidney's sister, the Countess of Pembroke, eleven songs are interspersed in the text. The 1591 edition prints the first ten following Astrophel and Stella under the running title "Other Songs of Variable Verse." Ringler, p. 453, points out that five of these songs were circulating publicly apart from the sonnets, which were apparently kept close, in 1597. The songs have proven something of a problem for critics analyzing the unity of the sequence. Montgomery, p. 87, feels they are set pieces, abstracting emotions from the main flow of the sequence and giving them a more emphatic and extended voice. Ringler, p. xiv,
The remainder of the sonnet sequence is somewhat anticlimactic. The tension which added the greatest interest to the first two sonnet groupings is missing. Astrophel no longer argues with himself, and his argument with Stella, either because they are separated or because he has finally accepted her denials, is no longer to the point. The mood, for the most part, is quiet and melancholy, with only occasional flashes of the vigor so characteristic of the previous sonnets. In CVII he has gained enough release from his passion to ask Stella to dismiss him so that he can take part in "this great cause, which needs

believes they narrate the more important events of the courtship and are sometimes little more than fillers, the inclusion of the iambic songs showing traces of clumsy joynery.

It is just as well that the influential 1591 edition, by grouping the songs at the end, eliminated this difficulty for Renaissance readers. It is at least questionable whether Sidney looked upon them as an integral part of the sequence; their earlier circulation suggests that he viewed them as separate. Internal evidence indicates that at least one song, V, was composed earlier than Astrophel and Stella. (Cf. Ringler, p. 494.) Moreover, in some cases they alter the radicals of presentation common to the sequence. The first, sixth, and seventh songs are quite general in their praise; the sixth song uses personification in a *Romance of the Rose* way that runs counter to Sidney's normal practice in the sequence. Lacking both direct address to the lady and references to the persona common to the sonnet sequence these songs seem to belong to the lyric I-anonymous tradition.

The fourth, eighth, ninth, and eleventh songs, with their use of dialogue, directly contradict the practices of the genre. R. B. Young, p. xiv, believes that Song viii, in which the lovers appear in the third person, permits Sidney to see the lovers from "a completely objective point of view, as if at a distance, and from this objective point of view they appear in a new intimacy." But third person distance or objectivity, by turning the lovers into fiction, would destroy the effect of immediate sincerity essential to the sonnet sequence. The "truth" of the sequence, which Sidney attempts so painstakingly to establish, would be undermined. The ninth song, where Astrophel appears in the guise of a pastoral lover, even though written in the first person, is even more foreign to the point of view of the sequence. Again the reality of the persona is shattered by an obviously artificial pose, and one which was mocked in sonnet VI. It is noteworthy that, in
both use and art." The antagonism to all claims other than that of his love, expressed in sonnet LXX, has been replaced by a sense of other commitments, and he begs her, "O let not fools in me thy works reprove;/ And scorning, say, 'See! what it is to love!'" The next sonnet ends the sequence on the note of paradox implicit throughout.18 He has neither resolved his love nor overcome it; rather, it has

contrast, Petrarch's songs generally reach a depth of subjectivity and introspection precluded by the brevity and fixed structure of the sonnet.

Further, the songs, even when smoothly inserted, never seem necessary to the flow of the sequence. The content of the second song, on stealing a kiss from the sleeping Stella, is repeated in the following LXXII. In the fifth song, a lengthy indictment of Stella unique in the sequence, the poet promises to heap further calumny on her cruel and ungrateful head, but the sixth and seventh songs, immediately following, contain unalloyed praise of her voice and face.

The fourth song is by content best integrated into the sequence. Following sonnet LXXXV, the last of a series of sonnets in which Astrophel optimistically anticipates Stella's surrender, it provides reason for the estrangement described in sonnet LXXVI. The lover apparently tries to use strength to aid his suit, for the lady resists him with "force of hands" and at last swears to hate him. Yet in sonnet LXXVI Astrophel seems not to understand Stella's "change of looks," and protests that his "faith" is "like spotless Emirin." In sonnet LXXVII, which in the 1598 edition follows songs five through nine, Astrophel describes a parting from Stella which seems to have grieved them both. The fourth and eighth songs (the eighth, in the third person, relating another dialogue in which Astrophel attempts to overcome Stella's scruples) aid the sequence from the standpoint of "plot," but in no way are necessary to its emotional development and flaw the more important unity of presentation.

18 The attempts to end the sequence with "Leave me o Love, which reachest but to dust" from Certain Sonnets seems to have no real basis, and, as far as the influence of the sequence on Renaissance poets is concerned, is utterly beside the point. The transition was not made until the nineteenth century. Ringler, p. 422, in his notes on Certain Sonnets, very neatly sums up the case against imposing this ending.
defeated him. He seems to dismiss it as one would dismiss the true but unexplainable,

    So strangely, alas, thy works in me prevail;
    That in my woes for thee, thou art my joy,
    And in my joys for thee, my only annoy. (CVIII)

The unity and organic growth of theme in *Astrophel* and *Stella* are paramount in making it a sequence, an integrated work of art, rather than a mere collection of love poems. Sonnets of praise and of introspection coalesce to develop the picture of Astrophel's tension-filled love. It is true that the sonnets occur in no necessary order within the broad divisions of the three moods, or acts, of the sequence.\(^{19}\) Such an ordering would be necessary only if each sonnet carried forward a little segment of a plot. This is not the case. They build a mood, they analyze an emotion, an experience. This unity is never disrupted.

But Sidney did not depend on thematic unity alone to knit together his sequence. Like Petrarch, though perhaps with more conscious knowledge of creating a persona, he gave his lyric I, Astrophel, a personality definite enough to make him the greatest centralizing feature. Dominant in some sonnets, dimly glimpsed through a fabric of conceit or rhetoric in others, the accents of his voice are heard in every word. As in Petrarch's *Canzone*, the figure of the speaker is established so vitally that it imposes unity upon the more conventional sonnets.

\(^{19}\) For the three divisions, see note 12.
The reader knows Astrophel primarily through the emotions expressed, the tensions elaborated. But Sidney follows Petrarch in presenting his main figure from more than this internal point of view. Astrophel himself becomes the object, as well as the expresser, of his verse. He steps out of an examination of his love for Stella long enough to ponder the impression he makes in society. In sonnets XXIII and XXVII he views himself as he may appear to others,

Because I oft in darke abstracted guise,  
Seem most alone in greatest company;  
With dearth of words, or answers quite away,  
To them that would make speech of speech arise.  
They deem, and of their dooms the rumour flies,  
That poison foul of bubbling pride doth lie  
So in my swelling breast; that only I  
Fawn on me self, and others do despise: . . . (XXVII)

In sonnet XXIII "curious wits" ascribe his "dull pensiveness" to a pursuit of knowledge, service to the Prince, or ambition. These guesses are wrong; his antisocial behavior stems from his preoccupation with thoughts of Stella. Sonnet XXX continues this theme as Astrophel repeats the topics of conversation broached to him by "busie wits." He answers, "cumbered with good manners," even though he finds their efforts tedious. This indifference changes to antagonism in sonnet CTV. His secret is public, and he challenges "Envious wits" with,

Your moral notes straight my hid meaning tear  
From out my ribs, and puffing prove that I  
Do STELLA love. Fools! who doth it deny?

Other sonnets providing this "external" view of the lover recur throughout the sequence. Astrophel is twice pictured as taking part in a tournament. Once, in an engagement with the French, he excels because conscious of Stella's presence. (XLI.) The second time, after
entering a tourney filled with pride in his former victories, he sees Stella unexpectedly at a window, and is so astonished that he misses his cue and covers himself with shame. (LIII.) He gives several pictures of his insomnia. Sonnets XXXVIII and XXXIX show him wooing sleep with "smooth pillows, sweetest bed,/ A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light, . . ." (XXXIX.) But the next sonnet admits failure with its abrupt and unintegral beginning, "As good to write as for to lie and groan." (Sonnets XC VIII and XCIX, written during Astrophel's separation from Stella, again pick up the insomnia theme.)

The reader is given glimpses of Astrophel's relations with women other than Stella. The secrecy of his love causes him to be mis-understood,

The courtly nymphs, acquainted with the moan
Of them, who in their lips, LOVE's standard beare:
"What he!" say they of me, "now I dare swear,
He cannot love. No, no, let him alone!" (LIV)

Later in the sequence, after he and Stella have parted, he hastens to assure her that any rumors she may hear of his attraction to others are false. The sight of "amber coloured head,/ Milk hands, rose cheeks, or lips more sweet, more red:/ Or seeing gets [sic] black, but in blacknesse bright: . . .", pleases him, he confesses, but only because such beauties are models of Stella, even though such models as "wood-globes of glistening skies." (XCI.) He seemed less sure of his resistance in sonnet LXXXVIII, and chastized himself for his response to one who "in brave array" attempted to "win" him.
Is faith so weak; or is such force in thee? Absence
When sun is hid, can stars such beams display?
Cannot heaven's food, once felt, keep stomachs free
From base desire, on earthly oates to pray?

However, in sonnet XCVII, he declares that the "choice delights and
rarest company," of a "lady, DIAN's peer," have failed to show his
"blind brain ways of joy; . . ."

Further views of Astrophel as he appears to others are given in
four sonnets addressed to single persons. The reader is given the
illusion that Sidney is speaking directly to another; dialogue, not
soliloquy, is practiced even though the other half of the conversation
is implied. Hence Sidney, in sonnets XIV and XXI, argues with a friend
who attempts to dissuade him from loving Stella. He asks his friend
if Love has not given him enough pain that "with your Rhubarb words ye
must contend/ To grieve me worse." (XIV.) In sonnet LI Sidney's
comments are silent, a running ironic rejoinder to the worldly and to
Sidney tedious remarks addressed to him. In XCVII his impatience with
a friend who is non-committal with news of Stella ("You say, forsooth!
You left her wall of late.") provokes him to sarcasm.

Through these sonnets the reader is able to construct a back-
ground for Astrophel, and a personality which seems "real" enough to
give him scope to move in several directions without destroying the
unity of his characterisation. He is a young man rather proud of
family and position although he is striving to ignore them in order
to pursue Stella. He rides in tournaments where he finds himself
glorying in the "people's shouts" of favor and his own "youth, lucke,
and praise." (LIII.) His success in one tournament leads "town-folkes" to praise his "strength," "horsemen" his "skill in horsemanship," "a dainty wit" his "sleight," while,

Others, because of both sides, I do take
My blood from them who did excel in this;
Think Nature me a man-at-arms did make. (XLI)

In another sonnet he alludes to his education and high position by musing,

"That Plato I read for nought, but if he tams
Such coltish years, that to my birth I owe
Nobler desires, lest else that friendly foe
Great Expectations, wear a train of shame,"
"For since mad March great promise made of me,
If now the May of my years much decline,
What can be hoped my harvest time will be?" (XXI)

He is clearly a person of authority and position. In sonnet XXX he is consulted about foreign affairs and it is suspected, when he is preoccupied, that his absent-mindedness is "because the Prince my service tries." This prefigures the end of the sequence when he begs Stella to release him for "this great cause, which needs both use and art." (CVII.) His high position causes him to be accused of the "poison foul of bubbling pride" (IXVII), or of "ambition's rage—/ Scourge of itself, still climbing slippery place." (XXIII.)

In these sonnets, in his sonnets of direct address to Stella, in the sonnets addressed to various personifications, and in his sonnets of inner debate, Sidney substituted the freedom of colloquial speech patterns for the mechanical regularity characteristic of his earlier works. He looks forward to the speaking poetry of Donne.
immediacy, the effect of listening to the presently speaking voice, is
at times very strong.

VIRTUE, awake! BEAUTY, but beauty is.
I may, I must, I can, I will, I do
Leave following that which it is gain to miss.
Let her do! Soft! but here she comes. Go to!
"Unkind! I love you not." O me! that eye
Doth make my heart give to my tongue the lie. (XLVII)

His tone is tender, "No more! my Dear! no more these counsels try!"
(LXXXI), melancholy, "with how sad steps, O Moon! thou climb'st the
skies!" (XXXI), sardonic, "Be your words made, good Sir! of Indian
ware?/ That you allow me them by so small rate?" (XCII), quarrelsome,
"Reason! in faith, thou art well served! that still/ Wouldst brabbling
be with SENSE and LOVE in me." (X), mock-serious, "Fly! Fly! my
friends, I have my death wound, fly!/ See there that boy! that mur-
dering boy, I say!" (XX), and humorous, "Dear! Why make you more of a
dog, than me?/ If he do love; I burn, I burn in love!" (LIX). The list
could continue.

The love of Astrophel for Stella does not take place in a vacuum.
The reader is not condemned to a series of abstract sonnets where the
only background is furnished from the stage properties of some cloudy
Olympus or the featureless forest of a pastoral landscape. Instead,
this love is enacted in a specifically indicated society, where real
affairs, of the French, the Dutch, the Poles, are discussed, where
tourneys are won and lost, where a lady may sail down the Thames or
ride barefaced in the sun, and where a young man in love is subject to
the good advice of his friends, the misunderstanding of chattering
young ladies, and the malice and gossip of an envious court. Nor is
Astrophel's pose fixed in the classic posture of adoration. The typical Petrarchan lover, though not Petrarch himself, was like Keats's young man of marble, who endlessly pursues the lady ever chaste and ever fair. Astrophel's attitude is fluid instead of static, passing through several facets of the experience of love.

How closely this picture of Astrophel "imitates" the life of its creator Sidney is an unanswerable question. Perhaps Sidney, in creating Astrophel, was practicing a device he explained in An Apology for Poetry when he attempted to absolve poets of the charge of lying.

But hereeto is replied, that the Poets give names to men they write of, which argueth a conceit of an actual truth, and so, not being true, provest a falsehood. And doth the Lawyer lye then, whenvnder the names of John a stile and John a noakes hee puts his case? But that is easily answered. Theyr naming of men is but to make theyr picture the more liuely, and not to buildie any historie; paynting men, they cannot leave men namelesse. We see we cannot play at Chesse but that wee must give names to our chesse-men: and yet, mee thinks, hee were a very partiaall Champion of truth that would say we lyed for giving a peeces of wood the reverend title of a Bishop. The Poet nameth Cyrus or Aeneas no other way than to shewe what men of their fames, fortunes, and estates should doe.20

Is the generally agreed upon unity of Astrophel and Stella an autobiographical unity, one derived from its faithfulness to "reality," or is it imposed through artifice, with Sidney manipulating a dramatic persona whose words are more faithful to his characterization than to the feeling of his creator?

As Montgomery and Ringler have demonstrated, Sidney was ceaselessly occupied with structure. Ringler has pointed out that this

20Sir Philip Sidney, An Apology for Poetry, in G. Gregory Smith, I, 185-86.
preoccupation with structure extended beyond the creation of single

... he sought to relate the single poems to one another
to produce larger and more complex unities. He closely related
the verses in the narrative portion of his Arcadia to the contexts in which they occur by making them appropriate to the
texts in which they occur by making them appropriate to the
situation and the speaker, and he even grouped his miscellaneous
 Certain Sonnets that they have a clearly defined beginning and
end. But his greatest triumphs in creating larger architectonic
patterns are in the between-the-act eclogues of the Old Arcadia
and in Astrophil and Stella. He unified each group of eclogues
by making the individual poems illustrate a single theme in
different ways, and he related the four groups to one another
so that they form an artistic whole that is fully capable of
standing by itself. In Astrophil and Stella, instead of
collecting a mere aggregate of sonnets and songs, he arranged
them to provide a narrative and psychological progression, and
so produced a sequence that is more dramatic and highly ordered
than any other in the Renaissance.21

Perhaps it was the conjunction of this awareness of encompassing
forms with Sidney's similar experience with an unequal love affair
that enabled him to perceive, where lesser poets did not, the new kind
of unity and the new relationship with an audience present in
Petrarch's Canzoniere. Having grasped the organizational principles
of the new genre, with their concomitant opportunities for increased
freedom and ability to present a poet's perceptions in multifaceted
deepth, Sidney may well have created Astrophil and Stella with a dual
purpose: to establish this "imitative pattern"22 for his fellow poets,

21Ringler, p. lxx.

22Sidney's concern for the haphazard quality of English poetry
comes out in the Apology. He states here, "Yet confesse I alwayes that
as the firtilest ground must bee manured, so must the highest-flying
wit have a Dedalus to guide him. That Dedalus, they say, both in this
and in other, hath three wings to bære it self vp into the aire of due
commendation: that is, Arte, Imitation, and Exercise. But these,
neither artificial rules nor imitative patterns, we much cumber our
selues withal!" (In Gregory Smith, 1, p. 195.)
and to "imitate" the pattern himself to formalize and thus gain a degree of control over a bewildering emotional experience.

That Sidney considered his material in other manners than that of the sonnet sequence is demonstrated by the eighth and ninth songs, the first a little third-person vignette containing dialogue between the characters Astolphel and Stella, and the latter written in the pastoral tradition. Some of Astolphel's poses, if looked upon as reflecting the historical Sidney, are patently artificial. Thus his claim to speak in "pure simplicity" (XXVIII) and his attempt to ally himself with "Dumb swans . . . who quake to say they love" (LV) have been scorned as spurious. His affected loutishness and timidity, as in sonnets VI and LXXIV, would seem to indicate a wide chasm between the artful Sidney and the "artless" Astolphel.23 Could the polished and learned Sidney speak in this voice?

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23 This distinction is argued by Hallet Smith, pp. 143-154. He sees Astolphel as a "poet who uses no art and keeps swearing that he uses no art," but Sidney, on the other hand, "uses very considerable art." Smith views Astolphel as Sidney's solution to the "problem of the relationship between post, subject matter, and reader. The professions of "sincerity," of plainness, of lack of art, are directed to the lady; she is not only subject matter but also a reader, within the framework of the convention of the sonnet cycle. The role of Astolphel is of course directed at Stella. The reader, an outsider in this situation, must go around through the lady's position to approach the poet. . . For Stella, then, unvarnished plainness and simplicity. For the reader, who goes beyond Stella in his sharing of the speaker's feelings, all the similitudes and decoration that the emotion will maintain." This analysis serves for the rhetorical radical of presentation discussed in this chapter, but fails to account for those sonnets written under the expressive radical. Cf. pp. 125-130.
I never dranke of Aganippe's well;
Nor never did in shade of Tempe sit;
And Muses scorn with vulgar brains to dwell.
Poor layman, I'll for sacred rites unfit.
Some do, I hear, of poet's fury tell;
But (God wot) not what they mean by it;
I am no pick-purse of another's wit.

Critics see this pose as testimony that the I of Astrophel should not be confused with the I of Sidney. Further, they state, Sidney claims originality either dishonestly, if he claims it for himself, or with tongue-in-cheek, if he claims it for Astrophel. But it is noteworthy that all the sonnets in which Sidney claims complete originality and poses as artless and untutored are sonnets which have the clear purpose of flattering the lady. To end the above sonnet Sidney declares that his "smooth" "ease" in writing verses which "best wits doth please" is caused by "STELLA's kiss." He never pretends that his verses are cruds; quite the contrary, only that Stella deserves the larger part of the credit for their skill.

On the other hand, the sonnets in which Sidney addresses himself never adopt this pose. In these sonnets he meditates on his position, learning, "great expectations" and "well-formed soul." The clownish Astrophel who envies the privileges of Stella's dog or threatens to wring the neck of her sparrow never appears. The postures which will

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Sidney has been largely cleared of the charges of conventionality and imitiveness leveled against him by Sir Sidney Lee, in Elizabethan Sonnets (Westminster, 1904). I, xliii-xliv. The problem of sources and their use is not germane to this investigation, but the reader is referred to Janet Scott, pp. 15-53, and to Kinkler for work on this problem. The Renaissance was much more concerned with the use a poet made of his sources than with his degree of imitiveness or originality.
aid the outward-turned Astrophel to "persuade" are not needed when the inward-turned Astrophel attempts to analyze. Sidney, or Astrophel, himself glances wittily at the connection between truth and art in sonnet XLV. Musing that Stella, who does not pity him, can shed tears over the "fable" of "Lovers never known," he bids her "Then think, my Dear! that you in me do read/ Of lovers' ruin, some sad tragedy./ I am not I, pity the tale of me!"

A problem more solvable than that of the degree of autobiographical verity in Sidney's use of Astrophel is the question of how he intended his audience to react to this use. Nothing would have been easier for Sidney than to have constructed an anonymous or patently artificial persona. But Sidney, instead, includes sonnets which clearly identify Sidney himself as Astrophel and Penelope Devereux as Stella. Sonnet XXX refers to his father's governorship of Ireland, and sonnet LXV, at first glance merely a rather elaborate conceit, alludes to his own coat of arms. Penelope Devereux is even more specifically identified; three sonnets (XXIV, XXX, and XXXVII—which does not appear in the 1591 edition) indicate that her name is Rich. The "roses gules ... borne in silver field" of her cheeks in sonnet XIII resemble the Devereux arms (argent, a fesse, gules, in chief three torteaux—three red disks, suggesting roses, in a silver field),25 and her home is placed "toward Aurora's court" (XXXVII). Lord Rich's family home was in one of the eastern counties. Further,

the plentiful descriptions of Stella, which concentrate on golden
hair and black eyes, fit contemporary accounts of her beauty.26

It should be emphasized that the sonnets themselves contain no
justification for naming Sidney's persona Astrophel. Sidney provided
no title for his work. Newman, in 1591, was the first to call the
sequence Astrophel and Stella. As critics have pointed out, the
name "Astrophel" is a misspelling for "Astrophil"—lover of the star--
a mistake Sidney had too much knowledge of Greek to make. The name
itself occurs in only two poems, songs eight and nine, which probably
belong to an earlier attempt to deal with the material. The sonnet
sequence as it appeared in 1591, other than the title and the intro-
duction by Thomas Nashe, gave no referent for the speaker of the
poems other than their creator, Sidney.27

Certainly few readers of the 1591 edition had trouble making the
proper associations. Sir John Harington left the earliest record of
the identification, in 1591 or earlier naming Lady Rich as the object
of Sidney's sonnets. And, as Ringler points out, five of the seven
books dedicated to Lady Rich between 1594 and 1606 connect her with
Astrophel.28 Sidney himself, of course, was often called Astrophel in
references by other poets. This should not be overlooked; it was not

26Ringler, p. 436. For further identifications see H. H. Hudson,
"Pamela Devereux as Sidney's Stella," Huntington Library Bulletin,
VII (1955), 89-129.

27See Ringler, p. 439, for a cogent discussion of the name and
its use.

28Ringler, p. 436.
the Renaissance custom so to merge the identity of the poet with that of his creation.

One is inclined, viewing Astrophel and Stella from the Shakespeare side of the century, to minimize, however unconsciously, Sidney's accomplishment. But in 1591 the lyric expectations of the average Renaissance reader were conditioned by the endeavors of George Gascoigne, Thomas Howell, George Tuberville, Barnaby Googe, and contributors to the numerous miscellanies. The works of Wyatt and Surrey, though still admired, belonged to the preceding generation.

Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, printed in 1579, was of their own times, but it had a conscious archaism that even Sidney questioned, and it, like Thomas Watson's *Hecatompathia*, was accompanied by a superfluity of editorial comment, an air of painstaking premeditation, that gave it the distance from reality belonging to a labeled shelf of precious stones encased in glass in some museum. Such was the perspective from which the Renaissance reader viewed Sidney's work.

Seen against this lyric background one aspect of Astrophel and Stella blazes forth: Sidney's earnest, impassioned attempt to convey the truth, the sincerity, the awful reality of the love described. He makes careful and reiterated attempts to disassociate himself from the artificialities of other poets who have written of love. This is the motivating force behind his famous first sonnet,

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,
That She, dear She! might take some pleasure of my pain;
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain:
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe,
Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain;
Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburnt brain;
But words came halting forth, wanting Invention's stay.
Invention Nature's child, fled step-maide's Study's blows;
And others' feet still seemed but strangers' in my way.
Thus great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes;
Biting my trewand pen, beating myself for spite:
"Fool!" said my Muse, "look in thy heart and write!"

Sidney's imitation is to be of Nature directly perceived, not of
Nature as perceived by previous poets; thus his "invention" (the dis-
covery of ideas and subject matter) must come from his own "heart" or
mind. It is within his own "heart" (as he makes clear in sonnets IV,
V, XXXII, XXXIX, XL, LIII, L, LXXXIII, and CV), not in the
verses of others, that he finds the image of Stella, the mover and
ostensible subject of his verse. "... In STELLA's face I read/
What love and beauty be," he declares; "Then all my deed/ But copying
is, what in her Nature writes." (III.)

The scorn that Sidney expresses for those poets whose writings,
"if I were a Mistres, would never persuade me ... that in truth they
feels those passions, ... " is echoed in the sonnets.29 He has nothing
but disdain for "PINDAR's Apes,"30 (III), and cautions poets who "poor
PETRARCH's long deceased woes,/ With newborn sighs and denizeden wits
do sing" that "sure at length, stolen goods do come to light." (XV.)

29 An Apology for Poetry, p. 201.

30 Mona Wilson, ed., Astrophel and Stella (Nonesuch Press, 1931), p. 160, n. 3, cites Ronsard as the first French poet to boast of
imitating Pindar.
It may be that Sidney intends these sonnets on style to demonstrate to Renaissance poets the proper method of writing love poetry, but their dominant purpose is dramatic: to contrast the heartfelt sincerity of Astrophel with the glib insincerity of others. They are "chattering pies" who only "in their lips, LOVE's standard bear" (LIV).

He sees their dependence on secondary sources as one mark of their weak feelings, but spends more of his time criticizing their abuses of rhetorical patterns. Sidney scorns poets who are more "careful to speake curiously than to speake truly." "Let dainty wits cry on the Sisters nine," he cries, "That bravely maskt, their fancies may be told." (III.) He rightly understood that too much "using Art to show Art, and not to hide Art" destroyed the effectiveness of the poet/lover's appeal. Thus he comments,

For my part, I doe not doubt, when Antonius and Crassus, the great forefathers of Cicero in eloquence, the one (as other not to set by it, because with a playne sensibleness they might win credit of popular ears) which credit is the nearest step to persuasion; ... 31

The voice of the poet was obscured by "new-found tropes," "strange similes," or "Phrases and problems." (III.) He condemns as well use of oxymora which have become commonplace, "living deaths, dear wounds, fair stormes, and freezing fires," mythological reference, and pastoral disguise.

Some one his song, in Jove and Jove's strange tales attires; Bordered with bulls and swans, powdered with golden rain:

31 Apology, p. 203.
Another humbler wit to shepherd's pipe retires,
Yet hiding royal blood full oft in rural vein. 32

These strictures have caused some critics to accuse Sidney of hypocrisy. Why should the author of the Arcadia speak slightingly of the "shepherd's pipe"? And why should so constant a practitioner of rhetorical patterns claim to scorn their use? However, Sidney's attack is not on rhetoric, classicism, or the pastoral, but on the substitution of these things for "truth," or, as he phrases it in the Apology, the substitution of "certaine swelling phrases" for Energia, the "forcibleness" which tells a mistress or an audience that "in truth they [love poets] feel those passions, ..." 33 Thus Astrophel contrasts himself with the above practices by saying,

I can speak what I feel, and feel as much as they;
But think that all the map of my state I display,
When trembling voice brings forth, that I do STELLA love. (VI)

When compared with other sonnet sequences, Astrophel and Stella is remarkably free of rhetorical excess. Few examples can be found where Sidney uses the various figures of rhetoric for the primary purpose of revealing his technical skill. Instead, he takes to heart the words of warning he gave the "diligent imitators of Tullie and Demosthanes" in the Apology:

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32 Sidney here, by accident or design, hits at the three most influential or immediate predecessors in the realm of love poetry. Tottel's Songs and Sonnets abounds in frigid oxymoron. Thomas Watson's Hecatopathia owes classicism, and Spenser, in the Shepherd's Calendar, if one can trust E. K., disguised a real passion in his celebrations of Colin Clout's unhappy love for Rosaline.

33 Apology, p. 201.
For nowe they cast Sugar and Spice upon every dish that is 
annexed to the table; like those Indians, not content to wear
earrings at the fit and natural place of the ears, but
they will thrust Jewels through their nose and lippes, because
they will be sure to be fine. Tullie, when he was to drive out
Catiline, as it were with a Thunder-bolt of eloquence, often
used that figure of repetition, Vivit, Vivit? Immo in Senatum
venit, etc. Indeed, inflamed with a well-grounded rage, hee
would have his words (as it were) double out of his mouth, and
so doe that artificially which we see men doe in choller
naturally. And wee, having noted the grace of those words,
hale them in sometime to a familiar Epistle, when it were too
much choller to be chollerick. 34

The figure of speech must be appropriate to its context, imitating
"artificially" what men do "naturally."

Sidney's figures of speech consistently meet this test. Perhaps
the most obviously excessive use of rhetoric occurs in sonnets LXXIX,
LXXX, and LXXXI, where Astrophel waxes exuberant about the pleasures
of Stella's kiss, "Sweet kiss! thy sweets I fear would sweetly
endite:/ Which even of sweetness, sweetest sweet'ner art!" (LXXIX.)
Here Sidney is guilty of a fault he had criticized earlier in the
sequence, "To some a sweetest plaint a sweetest style affords," (VI.)
But the excesses of these three sonnets are dramatically effective.
Occurring at a time during the sequence when Astrophel looks forward
to Stella's ultimate surrender, they express his almost hysterical
anticipation and pleasure. Further, they reveal one additional bit
of skill on Sidney's part: Stella, like the reader, feels that this
praise of kissing is exaggerated and forbids Astrophel to continue.
He replies,

But my heart burns, I cannot silent be. 
Then since, dear life! you fain would have me peace; 
And I, mad with delight, want wit to cease: 
Stop you my mouth with still still kissing me! (LXXXI)

Even the two-rhyme tour-de-force of LXXXIX can justify its use of the rhyme words night and day as contributing to the effectiveness of the sonnet. Here Astrophel, separated from Stella, complains of the "irksome" quality of his life, where day and night follow each other in unending monotony. "Each day seems long, and longs for long-stayed night; / The night as tedious, woos th' approach of day." (LXXXIX.) The monotony of the rhyme scheme and a constant internal repetition of the two words reinforces the feeling of tedium described. As artificial as this may seem to modern tastes, few Elizabethan poets are as careful as Sidney to incorporate rhetoric and meaning.

Such sonnets as the above are rare in Sidney's sequence. He customarily uses rhetoric to accompany his treatment of the worshipful pose of the conventional lover, a pose he develops usually to destroy by a sudden reversal to wit or impatience.35 These sonnets bear out Astrophel's claim to have rebelled against convention. The reader who is momentarily lulled into accepting conventional praise at face value is swiftly disenchanted.

As a remedy for the artificialities in style of other poets Sidney suggests a more serious involvement with their subjects. Verses inspired by "far-fet helps," he declares, "bewray a want of

35Cf. LXVIII, LXXI, LXXVI.
inward touch; . . ." He advises poets to take his path to success,

But if (both for your love and skill) your name
You seek to nurse at fullest breasts of Fame;
STELLA behold! and then begin to endite. (XV)

His most fervent declaration of his own truthfulness occurs in sonnet

XXVIII.

You that with allegory's curious frame,
Of others' children, changelings use to make;
With me, those pains for GOD's sake do not take.
I list not dig so deep for brasen fame.
When I say STELLA! I do mean the same
Princess of Beauty: for whose only sake
The reigns of love I love, though never slack;
And joy therein, though nations count it shame.
I beg no subject to use eloquence,
Nor in hid ways do guide philosophy;
Look at my hands for no such quintessence!
But know that I, in pure simplicity,
Breathe out the flames which burn within my heart,
Love only reading unto me this art.

One is reminded that Sidney's "plea for restraint in the name of
sincerity and directness must not be read to favor, or even anticipate,
the subjectivity of the Romantics . . . The point in these sonnets and
the point in the Defence is not that the poet should parade himself or
glory in his own uniqueness; he must simply tell the truth, and the
abuse of ornament is bound to inhibit his aim."36 To quote Rosamond
Tuve in this context, "We are not to read poems as if language were
a tool for announcing facts about a particular thou or I but a medium
for intimating and ordering significances which particulars shadow
forth."37 But the nature of the genre of a sonnet sequence made it

36 Montgomery, p. 72.

37 Tuve, p. 179.
exactly a "tool for announcing facts about a particular thou or I," whether the thou refer to Stella or Penelope Devereux, the I to Astrophel or Sidney. The "truth" of the sonnet sequence, if conceived in dramatic terms, is the persona's single and individual love for his mistress. It is essential that this persona "glory" in the "uniqueness" of his love if for no other reason than that he is attempting, as Sidney emphasizes, to win a lady.

Sidney's intent to create a recognizably individualized poet/lover for his sonnet sequence and to set this figure apart from the general run of poet/lovers cannot, I think, be seriously questioned. Nor can the fact that Sidney focuses the main force of his sequence on expressing and analyzing the psychological reactions of this figure to his experiences. The existence of Astrophel is not in doubt, but Astrophel's relation to the historical Sir Philip Sidney is forever debatable. Certainly Sidney's use of a poet/lover so similar to himself justifies one in suspecting that at times his persona became a transparent mask through which Sidney expressed his own emotions. But the degree of autobiographical "truth" underlying Astrophel's love for Stella is as impossible to determine as would be, to reverse the direction, the amount of literary "artifice" involved in Yeats's love for Maud Gonne.

Astrophel and Stella is neither as complex nor as subjective as the Canzoniere, but Sidney did succeed in perceiving the essential
features of Petrarch's creation. He thus accomplished two things of paramount importance for later poets: he introduced to England the true sonnet sequence, a genre in which unity is achieved by relating all the separate poems to the underlying figure of the poet, and he suggested that this genre could be used to reveal autobiographical experience.
CHAPTER V

THE DELUGE

Clearly not all Renaissance poets who read *Astrophel* and *Stella* reacted to it the same way. English sonnet sequences show the same diversity as their continental prototypes. Again distinctions must be made between poets who viewed the sonnet sequence as an artistic unit and those who viewed it as a collection of single poems. No English sequence published after 1591 shows the formlessness of Watson's *Hecatompathia*, but not many sonneteers followed Petrarch and Sidney in using the sequence to express the personality of the speaker. As Rosamond Tuve has aptly demonstrated, the practice of using poetry as a vehicle for revealing the thoughts and emotions of a particular I, the poet, was foreign to them.¹ For the most part later English sonneteers contented themselves with following the patterns laid down by their predecessors. Their attitudes toward poetry continued in the old mimetic and pragmatic molds: they "imitated" the actions of lovers and they rhetorically fashioned their sonnets to praise or prevail upon their featureless ladies, who could stand for all loves or for any.

Yet, even though few sonneteers picked up the guise of the poet

¹p. 179.
speaking of and to himself, almost all were aware, whether they chose to utilize or discard the pose, of the autobiographical association between the poet and the persona of his sequence. Critics have made much of the repetition of motif and metaphor, but have largely ignored this repetition of an attitude toward poetry and its function that was carried along with the conventional language. After *Astrophel* and *Stella* the possibility that the poet might speak his own innermost private thoughts existed. This possibility he could sincerely undertake, utterly ignore, or treat as a literary pose.

Many of the minor sonneteers merely ignored the possibility. Their sequences are frankly imitative collections of witty "inventions." The "sequences" of Thomas Lodge, William Smith, Samuel Constable, Bartholomew Griffin, and R. Linche belong to this category. Thus Thomas Lodge, whose *Phillim Honoured with Pastorall Sonnets, Elagies, and amorous delights* was published in 1593, prefaces his collection of anacreontic and pastoral songs and sonnets by declaring in his "Induction" that he must "Now mount the theater of this our age,/ To plead my faith and Cupid's cursed rage."² He humbly acknowledges his inferiority to Watson, Daniel, and Spenser, telling his poems they are, in regard to "learned Colin," "but mists before so bright a sun," yet he hopes his "little loves" may also please.³ He reiterates this


³"Induction." Lodge's actual disinterest in the sonnet sequence is evident in his praise of these models. Watson is praised not for the *Amantempathia* but for the "swan-like songs Amintas wept," while
this appeal to his audience in the last sonnet of the sequence by alluding to earlier abortive ventures at publication that "bred no fame but flame of base misdeem," and by hoping that now "perhaps these silly small things/ May win this worldly palm." (XL.)

The sequence makes little pretense at unity. For the most part it utilizes the pastoral mode, supposedly celebrating the love of a shepherd, Damon, for a shepherdess, Phillis. Generally the poems follow the Petrarchan convention of the lamenting lover, but Lodge permits himself an occasional change of mood. In sonnet XXVIII he declares his love both "fair and true," and ends, "And should I leave thee then, thou pretty elf?/ May, first let Damon quite forget himself." His desire for variety leads him to intersperse other poetic forms ("An Elegy," "An Ode," ) among his sonnets. The longest of these, "Egloga Prima Demades Damon," is a dialogue on love between Damon and an old shepherd, Demades, in the manner of The Shepherd's Calendar.

Autobiographical details, far from adding to the characterization of Lodge's persons, conflict with the unity of the pastoral framework he has chosen. Some of the sonnets of Phillis were written during a privateering expedition Lodge made to the West Indies in 1591-93. This probably accounts for sonnet II, which begins, "You sacred sea-nymphs pleasantly disporting/ Amidst this wat'ry world, where now I sail.

Spenser is cited for his pastoral, The Shepherd's Calendar. Watson's Latin pastoral, the Amintas Gaudia, was, if we may trust the frequency of later allusions, by far the most popular thing that writer produced. Only Daniel is praised for the creation of a sonnet sequence.
Two sonnets later "Damon" is reading his "moaning lines" to his "ruthful sheep" although there is no record that the voyage was made in a cattle boat. (IV.) In "An Elegy" also included in the sequence Lodge writes a long poem on a bitter parting caused by a sea voyage. After railing against the "cruel winds," the "traitorous floods" and the "rage of tides and winds," he ends, "And now, ah now, my plaints are quite prevented! The winds are fair the sails are hoised high, . . ." But the following "Thirsie Egloga Secunda" finds him once again with his "pining" "ewes and lambs," and all "unto our deaths declining." There is no use belaboring the point. Lodge's specific details, far from adding to the picture of his persona or serving to link the "I" of the sequence to Lodge himself, only demonstrate once more Lodge's lack of interest in the genre of the sonnet sequence.4

William Smith, who in Chloris (1596) followed Lodge in combining the pastoral and Petrarchan conventions, follows him also in caring more for his public than his lady. He dedicates his verses "To the most excellent and learned Shepherd COLIN CLOUT," andcourts the favor

The only poem which Lodge clearly meant to be taken autobiographically appears to be the last sonnet, which serves as a kind of postscript to the volume as a whole. Here the poet refers, riddlingly, to an apparent injustice done to his poetic reputation:

Resembling none, and none so poor as I,
Poor to the world, and poor in each esteem,
Whose first-born loves at first obscured did die,
And bred no fame but flame of base misdeem,
Under the ensign of whose tired pen,
Love's legions forth have masked, by others masked;
Think how I live wronged by ill-tongued men,
Not master of myself, to all wrongs tasked!
The sonnet ends with an appeal for favor for this "languishing conceits." (XL.)
of the general reader in a humble poem addressed "To all Shepherds in
general." Imitating Lodge, he begs "You paragons of learned Poesy"
to "Favour these mists! which fall before you sun." At times a
sonneteer reveals a rather schizophrenic attitude toward his work,
appealing for public favor in dedications and introductory verse while
declaring in the sonnets themselves that he cares for his lady's
approval alone. But Smith has at least the virtue of consistency.
His closing sonnet, which, like the opening sonnet of the sequence,
was traditionally used to dedicate the sequence to the mistress, dedi-
cates the sequence instead to his mentor, Colin Clout. The approval
of his lady is evidently beside the point, for Smith declares,

But that it pleased thy grave Shepherdhood,
The Patron of my maiden verse to be;
When I in doubt of raging envy stood;
And now I weigh not who shall Cloris see! (XLIX)

Smith attempts to unify his sequence, but his sonnets are too
derivative to support more than superficial organization. He depends
heavily on the device of linking sonnets together through repetition
of lines, using it to connect twenty-one of his forty-nine sonnets.
On occasion he uses two sonnets to tell a small narrative. He gains
a feeling of homogeneity by his adherence to pastoral imagery, but his
persona, given the standard shepherd's name of Corin, is a complete
cipher.

5 Chloris, or the Complaint of the passionate despised Shepherd
(1596), in Elizabethan Sonnets, Introd. by Sir Sidney Lee (New York,
1964), II, 324. Citations to Smith in my text are from this edition.
Smith was also influenced by Watson, comparing his plight with that
of Amyntas in sonnets XIV and XXIV.
Henry Constable's Diana, though poetically much superior to Smith's humble production, is another collection of single sonnets which shows the attempt to substitute external for internal unity. Diana appeared in two varying editions, neither, apparently, authorized by Constable. The first edition, Diana. The praises of his Mistres, in certaine sweete Sonnets. (1592), consists of twenty-two sonnets which are repeated, in a slightly different order, in Diana, or, The excellent conceitful Sonnets of H. C. Augmented with divers Quatessains of honorable and lerned personages. (1594). Of this second edition only twenty-seven are known to be by Constable. Eight are by Sidney; the others remain unattributed but the most recent editor of Constable's poems, Joan Grundy, feels sure they are not by Constable. 6 Constable, therefore, cannot be held responsible for the artificial arrangement of the 1594 edition, in which the sonnets are divided into eight "decades." The last decade contains five instead of the customary ten poems. Each poem has a separate title in the manner of Tottel's Songs and Sonnets, and the groupings seem completely arbitrary. 7

However, that Constable himself took the attitude that organization

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6 The Poems of Henry Constable (Liverpool, 1960), p. 51. Readers interested in the complicated history of Constable's poems are referred to this work, and to Ruth Hughey's valuable The Arundel Harington Manuscript of Tudor Poetry, II.

7 The general Renaissance reader, apparently, accepted the complete 1594 Diana as Constable's work. The poet is mentioned several times in connection with sonnets in the sequence now excluded from his canon. Cf. Grundy, p. 59.
was a matter of an external rather than an internal nature is shown in the preface to the important Todd MS version of his sonnets, thought to derive from his own revised manuscript. The preface states,

The sonets following are divided into 3 parts, each parte contayning 3 severall arguments and every argument 7 sonets.

The first parte is of variable affections of loute wherein the first 7 be of the beginning and byrth of his loute, the second 7 of the prayse of his Mistresse, the thyrde 7 of severall accidents hap:ning in the tyme of his loute.

The second is the prayse of particularus wherein the first 7 be of the generall honoure of this Ile, through the prayses of the heads thereof, the q1 of England and k: of Scots; the second 7 celebrate the memory of particular ladies whose the author most honoureth. the thyrde 7 be to the honoure of particularus presented vpon severall occasions.

The thyrde parte is tragicall, contayning only lamentations wherein the first 7 be complaints onlye of misfortunes in loute, the second 7 funerall sonets of the death of particularus, the last 7 of the end and death of his loute.8

This listing of "arguments" affectively shows that Constable's interest lay in the single sonnet rather than the sequence. His sonnets were designed primarily as compliments for great personages.

Miss Grundy believes that many, perhaps all, were written before his conversion to Catholicism in 1590.9 Several sonnets show Sidney's influence, but we have no way of knowing whether or not Constable was acquainted with the complete sequence at the time he was writing his own. Diana's lack of unity indicates he was either unaware of or indifferent to the possibilities of the genre. The persona of the poet

8Quoted in Grundy, p. 114, who discusses the manuscript in some detail.

9Grundy, p. 33.
receives no attention; the love poems consist of impersonal blasons, conceits, or laments. As Miss Grundy comments, for Constable, "passion and beauty exist only as themes upon which to perform elegant literary arabesques, . . ." She finds the sonnets completely lacking in artistic "personality."

Bartholomew Griffin, whose 1596 Fidessa, more chaste than kind belongs to the murky depths of the vogue, lacks poetic skill as well as artistic personality. His only apparent effort to individualize his imitations results in a sensibility-jarring pun on his own name. After comparing his lady to a number of mythological goddesses and beautiful objects he ends, "But ah, the worst and last is yet behind;/

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10 The sonnets were apparently first written for Sidney's Lady Rich, but the lady's identity could scarcely be gleaned from the published versions. The twenty-one sonnets contained in the Arundel Harington MS (in content almost identical to the 1592 Diana and the first twenty-one sonnets of the 1594 edition) are prefixed by the title, "Mr. Henry Constables sonnet to the Lady Ritche, 1589." Various sonnets play upon the word rich and contain other small identifying details. In the 1592 edition a prose address "To the Gentle-man Readers" describes the sonnets as "sonnes of no partiall Judge, whose eles were acquainted with Beaties Riches," but this address is dropped in 1594. Both editions change the title of the sonnet headed in the Harington MS "The Calculation of the nativity of the daughter of my Lady Rich borne on a fryday Amo do: 1588" to the more discreet "A calculation upon the birth of an Honourable Lady's Daughter; born in the year 1588, and on a Friday." Constable himself seems to have intended the identity of Diana to remain a flattering, but semi-private, compliment to the Lady Rich. On the other hand, the Todd MS implies that the love sonnets are addressed to Arabella Stuart. Ruth Hughey suggests that the sonnets of Diana were at one time dedicated to Lady Rich, but later transferred, with additional sonnets, to Lady Arabella. For a more thorough discussion of this problem see Hughey, II, 329 ff. and Grundy, p. 33 ff.

11 Grundy, p. 54.

12 Ibid., p. 70.
For of a griffon she doth bear the mind!\textsuperscript{13} He is an eager seeker of public approval, begging his patron, "Master William Essex of Lanesborne," "Deign, sweet Sir, to pardon the matter! judge favourably of the manner; and accept both!"\textsuperscript{14} His appeal to "the Gentlemen of the Inns of Court" is even more perpervid:

It may please you, entertain with patience this poor pamphlet! unworthy I confess so worthy patronage. If I presume, I crave pardon! if offend, it is the first-fruit of any my writings! if dislike, I can be but sorry! Sweet Gentleman, censure mildly, as protectors of a poor stranger! judge the best, as encouragers of a young beginner!\textsuperscript{15}

Yet another featureless collection of sonnets was produced by R. Linche. \textit{Diella, Certain Sonnets adjoined to the amorous Poem of Don Diego and Gyneura (1596)} shows no attempt by the poet to achieve any sort of unity. The persona is almost invisible; the sonnets are burdened with a name-dropping classicism which results partly from a complete lack of particularization. Sonnet XXVII is a good example of this tendency.

Th’ amber-coloured tress which BERENICE
for her true-loving PTHOLEMEOUS, vowed
Within IDALEA’s sacred Aphrodice,
is worthless, with thy looks to be allowed.\textsuperscript{16}

Except for an occasional foray into sensuality, his sonnets are like

\textsuperscript{13}Bartholomew Griffin, \textit{Fidesse, more chaste than kind} (1596), in Sir Sidney Lee, II, 284.

\textsuperscript{14}Lee, p. 263.

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 264.

\textsuperscript{16}Richard Linche, \textit{Certain Sonnets, adjoined to the amorous poem of Don Diego and Gyneura (1596)}, in Sir Sidney Lee, II, 315.
eggs: impossible to tell apart, unobjectionable, and unexciting. 17

None of these sonneteers shows any awareness of either the expressive or the dramatic possibilities of the sonnet sequence, and very little awareness of the convention that the sequence is meant only for the eyes of the lady. No connection between the poet and the persona is intended or even considered as a possibility; the persona never goes beyond an anonymous type. A second group of sonneteers, among them Percy, Tofts, the anonymous author of Zepheria, "I. C.");" Fletcher, and the Drayton of the 1594 Idea, demonstrate their awareness of the expressive radical of presentation, but their adaptation of it never goes beyond lip service to a literary convention. For these sonneteers, the "private" nature of the sonnet sequence becomes a motif to be picked up along with that of the lady's cruelty and the lover's hopelessness. It becomes part of the

17One should do Linson the justice of adding that his sensual sonnets did at least excite the negative response of one critic. In Emily Pearson comments, in regard to his sonnets celebrating the physical charms of the mistress,

One who is forced to read this sequence to Milla wonders that it could be dedicated to a woman, so lacking in all reserve are some of the descriptions which catalogue the lady's beauties.

... This other side of love poetry, the coarse, the obscene, though utterly removed from the Petrarchan, is not a stranger to poetic natures. But when it is found in the verses of a man of small talent, it becomes only disgusting. Sonnets 3, 4, 31, and 32 are of this nature, the last two especially showing to what lengths the poet would go in his coarse game of versifying. (p. 137)

Sonnet III, after praising snow-white Skin, alabaster Neck, ripe cherry cheeks, etc., ends, "Her other parts so far excel the rest,/
That wanting words, they cannot be expressed!" (Lee, p. 302). Sonnet IV is even less titillating. Sonnet XXX1 sings the glories of "fair ivory Brow," "sweet Lips of coral hue," "Fair cheeks of purest roses and white," and "sweet Tongue containing sweeter thing than sweet."
Petrarchan pattern of wooing. The resulting sonnet sequences, however, though more faithful to the convention of the single female audience, continue to lack unity or individuality. Again each sonnet exists in isolation, or the sonnets may be read in groups of two or three. They lose nothing when removed from the total context.

William Percy, whose slender Sonnets to the Fairest Coelia (1594) seems the result of his friendship with Barnaby Barnes, was one of those numerous closet poets "forced" into publication by an eagerly piratical printer. His sequence has little to recommend it, but Percy does show a familiarity, however conventionally expressed, with the three voices (poet to public, poet to beloved, poet to himself) possible to a sonneteer. In his epistle "To the Reader" Percy complains he had been "fully determined to have concealed my Sonnets as things privy to myself . . .," and in sonnet I he states that in

It ends, "The first so fair, so bright, so purely precious! The last so sweet, so balmy, so delicious." (p. 317.) The real culprit is XXXII, which follows,

The last so sweet, so balmy, so delicious!
Lips, breath, and tongue, which I delight to drink on;
The first so fair, so bright, so purely precious!
Brow, eyes, and cheeks, which still I joy to think on;
But much more joy to gaze, and eye to look on.
Those lily rounds which ceaseless hold their moving,
From whence my prisoned eyes would ne'er be gone;
Which to such beauties are exceeding loving.
O that I might but press their dainty swelling!
And thence depart, to which must now be hidden,
And which my crimson verse abstains from telling;
Because by chaste ears, I am so forbidden.
There, in the crystal-paved Vale of Pleasure,
Lies locked up, a world of richest treasure.

(Lee, p. 317)
the sequence he unveils his "Sorrow's Passion." In the same sonnet he makes his bow to the lady by speculating,

*If that, by chance, they fall (most fortunate)*
*Within those cruel hands that did enact it;*
*Say but "Alas, he was too passionate!"*
*My doom is passed, nor can be now uncast.*
*So mayst Thou see I was a spotless lover;*
*And grieve withal that, ere, thou dealt so sore!*

And last but not least he acknowledges his external audience by admitting with unintentional humor, that he has revealed his passion, "That every silly eye may view most plain/ A Sentence given on no occasion." (I.) With Percy as with Fletcher and other soneteers, the tradition that love sonnets are written only for the eyes of the mistress blends with the Renaissance tradition that a gentleman may write poetry, but not for publication, and with the habitual demigration of any work not religious or overtly moral in tone. So Percy declares in his prefatory epistle that he only writes "to beseech you to account of them [the sonnets] as of toys and amorous devices; and, ere long, I will impart unto the World another Poem, which shall be both more fruitful and ponderous."

Percy tries to unify his sequence, but the content is too repetitive for the attempt to succeed. He makes an abortive effort to maintain a narrative line. After a first sonnet dedicating the effort to Coelia, he uses sonnet II to explain how he came to fall in love (Love shot him in the heart from the "chariot of her eyes"). He

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sometimes uses two or three sonnets to relate a small narrative. In
sonnet V, for instance, Coelis steps on his toe; he is in ecstasy, but
decides in VI that she "trod by chance," which spoils all the fun.
However, the memory of his bliss seems to linger, for in IX he mutil-
lates metaphor to declare, apropos of his loss of hopes, "Then whilst
I touch the foot of my Desires,/ A storm of hate doth burst mine
anchor ropes." He also links a few sonnets by repetition of lines.

Another sonneteer supposedly forced into print against his nat-
ural inclinations was Robert Toft. His Laura. The Toy of a
Traveller; or The Feast of Fancy (1597) is accompanied by profuse
apologies by its printer, Valentine Simmes, and by the unfaithful
friend, one R. B., who delivered the work into his hands.\(^19\) Simmes
confesses,

What the Gentleman was, that wrote these verses, I know
not; and what She is, for whom they are devised, I cannot guess:
but thus much I can say, That as they came into the hands of a
friend of mine [presumably the untrustworthy R. B.] by mere
fortune; so happened I upon them by as great a chance.

Only in this I must confess we are both to blame, that
whereas he having promised to keep private the original; and I,
the copy, secret; we have both consented to send it abroad, as
common; presuming chiefly upon your accustomed courtesies.

R. B., for his part, relates that the author, getting wind of the
piracy, "earnestly intreated me to prevent" the publication. But,
alas, "I came at the last sheet's printing," too late to save the
author's private passions from public perusal. Laura is dedicated,
by the author, to "the Honourable Lady Lucy, sister to the thrice

\(^{19}\) In Sir Sidney Lee, II. Citations from Toft in my text are
from this edition.
renewed and noble Lord, Henry (Percy) Earl of Northumberland," but
even here the pose of privacy is maintained. The dedication is
written as if to preface a manuscript version of the poems, the author
hoping her "Ladyship will keep them as privately, as I send them unto
you most willingly." And nowhere in the edition is Tofte identified
except by the initials R. T.

This secrecy does help Tofte preserve the illusion that his
sequence is written for the eyes of his lady alone. He adheres to
the convention that his poetry is caused by and directed to his mis-
tress. In an introductory poem "Alla bellissima sua Signora E. C."
Tofte declares, "Through thee, not of thee, Lady fair I write," and
says of his verses, "For only Thee, they were devised alone;/ And only
unto Thee, they dedicated are." Tofte is faithful to this radical of
presentation throughout the sequence, and his ten and twelve line
"sonnets" are, correspondingly, conventional laments and blasons.

As well as insisting on the single audience for his sequence,
Tofte also attempts to gain continuity in his presentation of his
mistress. As one might expect from her name, she is the typical
Petrarchan lady (though black-eyed like Stella). Tofte singularizes
her to some extent by recurring reference to her clothing,

Like to the blacksome Night, I may compare
My Mistress' gown, when darkness 'plays his prizse; (Part I,

III)

If white's the Moon, thou LAURA seem'st as white;
And white's the gown which you on body wear. (Part I,

XXXVII)
My mourning Mistress's garments, black doth bear;
And I in black, like her, attired am! (Part II, X)

That crimson gown, with drops of blood ywrought,
Which LAURA wears, a token is most true, (Part III, II)

One might add to this list Part I, XXXVIII, a rather sacriligious
verse on the reviving virtue present in the touch of the hem of his
mistress's garment.

But these sonnets, which show that Toftes at least read Italian
poets with an eye for recurring motifs, are unable to prevail against
the contradictory pictures of the mistress put in the sequence either
by Toftes or the printer. The lady is usually pictured as aloof and
lofty, the typical cruel but virtuous goddess, but in XII the lover
declares, "ah, grief to tell!/ Bright Heaven she shows; and crafty,
hides dark Hell." (Part I), and in XVI she is called, "sweet Wench."
(Part I.) A list of these small but jarring discrepancies might be
prolonged, but one more rather glaring example will suffice. In XXXI
the lover admits to having switched allegiance from a "fair, yet
a faithless, Trull," to a mistress "brown and pitiful [to him]."
The "one most beautiful" is now abhorred "as death ... Because to
scorn my service her I found." The second is loved "although that
brown She be;/ Because to please me, She is glad and fain." (Part III,
XXXI.) But, in the very next sonnet we find,

"WHITE art thou, like the mountain-snow to see;
I black, like to the burned coal do show;
Then give some of thy purest white to me!
And I'll some of my black on thee bestow." (Part III, XXXII)
No other reference to the "brown but pitiful" lady occurs in the sequence.

These anomalies were perhaps the fault of the printer rather than of Tofte himself, for his friend R. E. must lament, in a letter attached to the sequence,

... I came at the last sheet's printing; and find more than thirty Sonnets not his [the Author's], intermixt with his. Helped it cannot be, but by the wall judging Reader, who will, with less pain distinguish between them, than I, on this sudden, possibly can. To him then, I refer that labour. ("A Friend's just Excuse About the Book and [the] Author; in his Absence.")

Either Tofte or the printer preferred external to internal principles of organization, for the sequence, as published, is divided into three books of forty "sonnets" each.20

The author of Zephertia (1594) himself gave his sequence to the press, though withholding his identity, yet he wants no one to misunderstand his motives. Following Sidney's example, whose sanction is invoked in a prefatory "Alli veri figlioli delle Muse," he disassociates himself from the common herd of sonneteers;

20 Perhaps Tofte discovered the publication of his "passions" to be less painful than anticipated, for only one year later he delivered Alba. The Months Hinde of a Melancholy Lover (London, 1597), to the printer. This volume, except for a shift to poems consisting of four stanzas of rhymed royal, reads like a continuation of the first. It, too, is split into three arbitrarily divided parts. This sequence is perhaps more topical—his mistress gives birth to a baby girl, she lives in a "northwest village," the poet lost his love while watching Love's Labour's Lost—but Tofte seems even less concerned with the unity of his work. His mistress's hair changes from gold to brown indiscriminately; Tofte seems uncertain as to whether she left him or he left her; and, more disturbing to the reader, Tofte can switch from protesting the virtuous nature of his affection to lamenting that he now tosses alone in a "stately Bed" where late "two loving Bodies" lay.
Lulled in a heavenly Charm of Pleading Passions; Many their well-thewn rhymes do fair attemper Unto their Amours! while another fashions Love to his lines, and he on Fame doth venture! And some again, in mercenary writ, Belob forth Desire, making Reward their mistress! And though it chance some Lais patron it, At least, they sell her praiises to the press! The Muses’ Nurse, I read is EUPHEMIE; And who but Honour makes his lines’ reward, Comes not, by my consent, within my pedigree! ‘Mongst true-born sons, inherit may no bastard! All in the humble accent of my Muse; Whose wing may not aspire the pitch of Fame, My griefs I here untomb! Sweet! then peruse! (Canzon I)

The sequence follows the mode of being addressed only to the lady. The external audience is ignored, and the author emphasizes this exclusion by referring at times to other poems, not printed, which passed between himself and his mistress when he was a favored suitor. In sonnet 30, for example, he laments,

What! Shall I ne’er more see those Halcion days! Those sunny Sabbaths! Days of Jubilee! Whenein I carrolled merry Roundalays, Odes, and Love Songs? which being viewed by thee, Received allowance worthy better writ!

In sonnet 11 he remembers a "Pastoral Ode" that had pleased his lady, and in 22 he refers to a "Canton,/ Wherein I seemed to turn Love out of service"; but, quickly feeling remorse, he "wrote a Sonnet, which, by syllable,/ Eat up the former, and withal crave pardon; . . ." In

21This line was possibly pointed toward Barnaby Barnes, who addressed his own sequence, Parthenophil and Parthenophe, as "bastard orphan."

22Zephemia (1594), in Sir Sidney Lee, II. Citations from Zephemia in my text are from this edition.
another reminiscent sonnet he explains the omission of these earlier poems,

How often hath my Muse in comic poesies, 
To feed thy humour, played a comic part! 
Put, now, the Pastime of my pen is silenced! 
To act in Tragic Vein, alone is licensed. (Canzon 10)

In the last sonnet, preserving the illusion of an audience of one, he cries out

. . . ZEPHERIA, unto thee! these messengers 
I send! O these, my loves, my faith shall witness! 
O these shall record loves and faith unfeigned! (Canzon 40)

Another minor sequence which attempts to create the illusion of picturing a "true" love affair is Alcilia: Philoparthen's Loving Folly. (1595), written by one I. C. It is of interest largely because it is the only sequence of the 1590's which shows directly the influence of Watson's Hecatommethia. I. C.'s "sonnets", really six-line epigrammatic stanzas, are divided into two parts, sixty-three sonnets on the author's unrequited love and forty on the folly of loving. These sections are divided by three longer poems, the longest, "Love's Accusation at the Judgement Seat of Reason; wherein the Author's whole success in his love is covertly deciphered" is an old-fashioned debate between the author and Love, influenced by Gascoigne. The "sonnets" themselves, which include some short debates between Philoparthen and Love, are stilted treatments of conventional themes that would not be out of place in Tottel's Miscellany. Yet, despite his dependence on outmoded models, I. C. does attempt to modernize, however superficially, the relation between poet and persons. John
Lyly, who wrote an introductory letter for the Hecatompethia, expresses extreme skepticism about the reality of Watson's lady but "Philaretes," who does the same for Alcilia, treats the figure of the mistress with the utmost seriousness. Discussing the subject he remarks,

And though I cannot altogether excuse your Loving Folly; yet I do the less blame you, in that you loved such a one as was more to be commended for her virtue, than beauty: albeit even for that too, she was so well accomplished with the gifts of Nature as in mine conceit (which, for good cause, I must submit as inferior to yours) there was nothing wanting, either in the one or the other, that might add more to her worth, except it were a more due and better regard of your love; which she required not according to your deserts, nor answerable to herself in her other parts of perfection.23

In addition to the two-part organization, I. C. follows Watson in being fond of revealing his learning. Though he does not begin to approach Watson's extreme, he occasionally accompanies his poem with marginalia, identifying a reference in the verse ("the Cynic" is identified as Diogenes, "our ancient Poet" as Chaucer) or supplying an appropriate Latin or Italian saying. With sonnet fifty, for example, which ends "Lordship and Love no partners may endure," he "translates" in the margin, "Ne amor ne signoria vuole compagnia."

But the editorial comment preceding the two divisions of the sequence reveals awareness of the need for at least the pretense of sincerity and its accompanying emotional coherence:

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These Sonnets following were written by the Author (who giveth himself this feigned name of PHILOPARTHEN as his accidental attribute), at divers times, and upon divers occasions; and therefore in the form and matter they differ, and sometimes are quite contrary to one another: which ought not to be disliked, considering the very nature and quality of Love; which is a Passion full of variety, and contrariety in itself.

And I. C. himself emphasised the "truth" of his devotion and the exclusive address of the sequence in a long introductory poem,

To thee, ALCILIA! solace of my youth!
These rude and scattered rhymes I have addressed!
The certain Witness of my Love and Truth,
That truly cannot be in words expressed:
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
. . vouchsafe to read this, as assigned
To no man's censure; but to yours alone! (Amoris Praeludium)

He no doubt reveals a more realistic attitude toward his verse, however, when he permits Love to say, in the long debate between Love and the Author,

Now, REASON! you may plainly judge by this,
Not I, but he, the false dissembler is:
Who, while fond hope his lukewarm love did feed,
Made sign of more than he sustained indeed;
And filled his rhymes with fables and with lies,
Which, without Passion, he did oft devise;
So to delude the ignorance of such
That pitied him, thinking he loved too much,
And with conceit, rather to show his Wit,
Than manifest his faithful Love by it. (LOVE's Accusation at the Judgement Seat of REASON: wherein the Author's whole success in his love is covertly deciphered.)

The somnambulist who perhaps best shows awareness of generic possibilities he does not choose to utilise is Giles Fletcher. His LICIA, or POEMS OF LOVE, published anonymously in 1593, is prefaced by coy and contradictory remarks concerning the supposed autobiographical import of his poems. In his dedicatory letter to the Lady Mollineux,
he asserts, "a man may write of Love and not be in love; as well as of husbandry and not go to the plough; or of witches and be none; or of holiness and be flat profane." ("To the Worshipful, kind, wise, and virtuous Lady, the Lady Mollineux, Wife to the right Worshipful Sir RICHARD MOLLINEUX Knight.")

That he knows he should write only for his lady is implied in a letter "To the Reader":

And for the matter of Love, it may be I am so devoted to some one into whose hands these may light by chance, that she may say, which thou now sayest "That surely he is in love:" which if she do, then have I the full recompence of my labour; and the Poems have dealt sufficiently for the discharge of their own duty.

On the question of the lady's identity he indulges in this mystification:

If thou muse, What my LICIA is? Take her to be some DIANA, at the least chaste; or some MINERVA: no VENUS, fairer far. It may be she is Learning's Image, or some heavenly wonder: which the Precisest may not dislike. Perhaps under that name I have shadowed "(The Holy) Discipline." It may be, I mean that kind courtesy which I found at the Patroness of these Poems, it may be some College. It may be my conceit, and pretend nothing. Whatsoever it be, if thou like it, take it! and thank the worthy Lady MOLLINEUX, for whose sake thou hast it: . . . ("To the Reader,"

These remarks are often quoted as evidence of the insincerity of the sonnet sequence tradition; the loves celebrated are purely fictional, the sonneteers never intended to comment on their own love affairs.

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244. Fletcher, Licia, or Poems of Love in honour of the admirable and singular virtue of his Lady. To the imitation of the best Latin Poets, and others (1593), in Sir Sidney Lee, II. Citations from Fletcher in my text are from this edition.
One can hardly doubt that the majority of minor sonneteers, including Fletcher, did celebrate only fictional and conventional loves, but Fletcher's comments do more than add superfluous evidence to the testimony of his own disjointed and artificial sequence. They indicate that Fletcher expected his readers to make the biographical connection. Twice he anticipates that his readers will say, "That surely he is in love: . . .," and all of his obfuscations on the subject seem the forty-year-old author's uneasy response to being considered in that light.

The sequence itself is fairly faithful to the convention of being written for the lady alone. It is preceded by a dedicatory poem "To Licia, the wise, kind, virtuous, and fair," which declares, "I send these Poems to your graceful eye./ Do you but take them, and they have their right." Many of the sonnets address Licia directly, gaining an easy conversational tone learned from Sidney: "Thus whilst I live, for kisses I must call;/ Still kiss me, Sweet, or kiss me not at all!" (XVI.) In XLVII he says he writes only when inspired by Licia's beauty, and in XXXVI he expresses the convention of writing only to gain relief from the pent-up anguish of his soul. In these sonnets he borrows the expression of an attitude toward poetry as in others he borrows conventional metaphors. But the sequence lacks any organic unity or revelation of the personality of a persona, and Fletcher is not above destroying the illusion of a private exchange by inserting a sonnet, "Made Upon The Two Twins, DAUGHTERS OF THE LADY MOLLINEUX, BOTH PASSING LIKE, AND EXCEEDING FAIR" between two sonnets of grief and passion. The motivating force of Fletcher's poems is frankly stated in the subtitle
of his work, "POEMS OF LOVE . . . To the imitation of the best Latin
Posters, and others."

Michael Drayton, unlike Fletcher, is usually credited with having
had a real lady in mind as inspiration for Ideas Mirror (1594). Drayton
may, indeed, have had Anne Goodere in mind as his "Idea," but
her ascertainable effect on his sonnet sequence seems limited to a few
sonnets celebrating the Ankor, the river near the Goodere estate,
Pooleworth, in Arden. This small detail alone individualizes his
lady; otherwise she is the typical cruel, virtuous, inspiring, tor-
menting lady. His sequence is true to the persuasive patterns of praise
and lamentation, and contains the metaphors the Renaissance felt suitable

25 Bernard H. Newdigate, Michael Drayton and His Circle (Oxford,
1941), p. 42, declares that these sonnets, having Anne Goodere, "alone
for their subject," were "hammered out in the white heat of a love pure
and passionate." Kathleen Tillotson agrees that "the sonnets can be
combined with other evidence to provide testimony of Drayton's love for
Anne Goodere," but comments further that the sonnets "would not in them-

26 A discussion of Drayton's sonnet sequence is complicated by the
many revisions it underwent during its numerous reappearances. New
editions appeared in 1599, 1600, 1605, and 1619; reprints occurred in
1602, 1603, 1608, and 1631. Since this chapter is primarily concerned
with initial responses to the sonnet sequence, my discussion will be
confined to the 1594 sequence. For a discussion of Drayton's later
attitude toward the sequence, see below, pp. 284-290.

27 Cf. "Amour" 13 and 24 and the prefatory sonnet signed "Corbo il
fidele." All citations from Ideas's Mirror in my text are from Michael
Drayton, Ideas Mirror, Amours in Gyvorzains (1594), in Poems by
Michael Drayton, ed. J. Payne Collier (London, 1856), p. 149. All
citations from the 1594 edition in my text are from this edition. New-
digate, p. 40, discusses the significance of the Ankor.
for these patterns. The first sonnet (reminiscent of Daniel) begs,
"Reade heere (sweet Mayd) the story of my wo," and promises to raise
her name "to highest heaven." The last sonnet continues this direction,
with Drayton telling his lines, "if you one teare of pitty mowe/ For
all my woes, that onely shall suffice."28 (Sl.) In 28 he expresses
hostility to external comments on his work:

I passe not I how men affected be,
Nor who command, or discommand my verse;
It pleaseth me if I my plaints rehearse,
And in my lynas if shee my louses may see.

A number of the sonnets are addressed directly to his mistress, and
she is credited with having caused Drayton's ability to write.29

Drayton pays very little attention to the figure of the persona.
He occasionally attempts to imitate Sidney's introspective sonnets, but
focus always shifts immediately to conceit or word play. Thus in 10,
he begins,

Oft taking pen in hand, with words to cast my woes,
Beginning to account the sum of all my cares,
I well perceive my griefe innumerable groves,
And still in reckonings rise more millions of dismayes.

The reader, however, is given nothing about the persona's response to
this "griefe." Instead we are asked to admire the manner in which
Drayton sustains the comparison of his love to an "account":

28 This sonnet seems also to allude riddlingly to a broader audience,
for the sonnets are directed to seek out "Minerva," who is associated
with Doro, Pamela, Mars, and Sol. Miss Tillotson, p. 17, sees this as
an intended compliment to the Countess of Pembroke and her circle.

29 Cf. 4 and 12.
And thus, deuding of my fatall howres,
The payments of my love I read, and reading crosse,
And in substracting set my sweets into my sourses;
Th'average of my ioyes directs me to my losse.

And thus mine eyes, a debtor to thine eye,
Who by extortion gaineth all theyr lockes,
My hart hath payd such grievous vsury,
That all her wealth iyes in thy Beauties bookes;
And all is thine which hath beene due to mee,
And I a Banckrupt, quite vndone by thee.30

Similarly, Amour 14, which begins with the poet's "Looking into the
glass of my youth miseries," tells us nothing about the poet's re-
action to what he sees but instead proceeds to the discovery that in
his tears, "the mirror of these eyes;/ Thy fayrest youth and Beautie
doe I see/ Imprinted in my teares by looking still on thee."31 Ideas
Miryour reveals Drayton's thorough familiarity with the poses belonging
to the Petrarchan convention, but his interest, like that of Fletcher,
is in manner, not matter.

Of all the minor sonneteers Barnaby Barnes seems most successful
in grasping Sidney's second radical of presentation, the voice of the
poet addressing himself. This manner is never dominant in his sequence,
Parthenophil and Parthenophe, (1593) but it does exist in a form

30I do not wish to imply that such sustained word play could not
reveal the nature of the grief it purports to describe. Any so-called
"Petrarchan" conceit, however stereotyped, has some relation to an
underlying emotion. But the minor sonneteers, interested in "wit," do
not explore the experience-illuminating qualities of these metaphors.
Their attitudes toward metaphor are manipulative, not expressive.

31Cfr. Amour 31 for a similar shift from introspection to, in this
case, a stylized debate between Reason and Love.
stranger than the repeating of a borrowed convention. Barnes' sequence is perhaps the most novel, one is tempted to say original, of the decade. He is a chameleon of metaphoric styles, using pastoral, metaphysical, emblematical, Anacreontic, Petrarchan, and Ovidian, yet these, infused with his extravagant imagination and expressed in his unusual, often strained, language, undergo a sea-change into something peculiarly the production of Barnaby Barnes. His attitude toward his poems is unusually harsh. It was the custom for sonneteers to dismiss their sonnets as "toys" and "amorous devices," but Barnes totally dis-inherits his works:

Go, RASTARD Orphan! Pack thee hence!
And seek some Stranger for defence!
Now 'gins thy baseness to be known;
Nor dare I take thee for mine own; 32 (I)

In the sequence proper, except for a few appeals to "sweet friends" and to "relenting readers" to pity him, he embraces the traditional reasons for writing. He tells his mistress that the sequence is "this true speaking Glass" of her "Beauty's graces" and of his "sorrow's outrage." He bids her,

... in this Mirror, equally compare
Thy matchless beauty, with mine endless grief!
There, like thyselv none can be found so fair;
Of chiefest pains, There, are my pains the chief.
Betwixt these both, this one doubt shalt thou find!
Whether are, here, extremest, in their kind? (I)

(Barnes was to live up to his promise of "extremity.") He is explicit about his reasons for writing: "Yet by those lines I hope to find the

gate; which, through love's labyrinth, shall guide me right," (XII)
and feels he is unsuccessful because "my grief's image, I can not set
out." (XIV.) His sequence contains the most excited statement of
poetry's persuasive function in the entire production of English son-
ets:

Write! write! help! help, sweet Muse! and never cease!
In endless labours, pens and paper tire!
Until I purchase my long wished Desire.
Brains, with my Reason, never rest in peace!
Waste breathless words! and breathful sighs increase!
Till of my woes, remorseful, you esp'y her;
Till she with me, be burnt in equal fire.
I never will, from labour, wits release!
My senses never shall in quiet rest;
Till thou be pitiful, and love alike!
And if thou never pity my distresses;
Thy cruelty, with endless force shall strike
Upon my wits, to ceaseless write address!
My cares, in hope of some revenge, this seekes. (XVIII)

He supports this declaration with a number of fanciful and hyperbolic
blasons and laments, some addressed to the lady herself ("Turn! Turn,
PARTHENOPHE! Turn and relent!") (XXVII.)

But Barnes also writes several sonnets in which he appears to turn
inward, directing his questions to himself:

How then succeedeth that, amid this woe,
(Where Reason's sense doth from my soul divide)
By these vain lines, my fits be specified;
Which from their endless ocean, daily flow?
Where was it born? Whence, did this humour grow,
Which, long obscured with melancholy's mist,
Inspires my giddy brains unpurified
So lively, with sound reasons, to persist
In framing tuneful Elegies, and Rymms
For her, whose name my Sonnets note so trim
That nought but her chaste name so could assist?33

33See also LIII ("Why do I write my woes! and writing, grieves? To
think upon them, and their sweet contriver,"). and XXVII, LXII.
His desire to win his lady with words leads him to moods of acute frustration with their limitations. They are inadequate to express his grief. In such a mood he exclaims, "So WARRIE out your tragic notes of sorrow, / Black harp of liver-pining Melancholy!" He then protests that "fortune" ever shall remain "where it first made sorrow."

. . . . . and ever shall it plow
The bowels of mine heart; mine heart's hot bowels!
And in their furrows, sow the Seeds of Love;
Which thou didst sow, and newly spring up now
And make me write vain words: no words, but Vowels!
For ought to me, good Consonant would prove.  (L)

In the next sonnet he attempts to clarify his meaning. Consonants alone can not "frame maimed words, as you had throbbed," nor can they, "with sighs, makes signs of Passions sobbed." His couplet sums up, "If with no letter, but one Vowel should be; / An A, with H, my Sonnet would fulfill."  (LI.) The strength of his feeling, he implies, defeats the formality of both literature and language. It finds expression only in means.

On another occasion, meditating on "mine endless fits;/ When I have somewhat on thy beauty pondered," Barnes seems to metamorphose into the literary style he creates. His very punctuation marks are internalized,

. . . thine eyes' darts, at every Colon hits
My soul with double pricks, which mine heart splits:
Whose fainting breath, with sighing Commas broken,
Draws on the sentence of my death, by pauses;
Ever prolonging out mine endless clauses
With "Ifs" Parenthesis, yet find no token
When with my grief, I should stand even or odd.
My life still making preparations,
Through thy love's darts, to bear the Period;
Yet stumblest on Interrogations!  (Elegy II)
Barnes emphasizes, again and again, the internal, deeply felt nature of his love: "I speak these words (whose bleeding wounds be green)", (Elegy IX) or "AH, WERE my tears, as many writers' be, / More drops of ink proceeding from my pen! / Then in these sable weeds, you should not see/ Me severed from society of men!" (Elegy XVI.)

In his attempt to convey the idea of the agonized lover he seeks, at times, to imitate Sidney's use of personification. In _Astrophel and Stella_, addressing "Vertus," "Reason" and "Hope!", Sidney dramatically objectifies the internal debate of his lover. Barnes, however, is rarely successful in presenting the personifications as extensions of the personality of his speaker. In _Elegy VII_, for example, he begins,

Youth, full of error! whither dost thou hail me? 
Down to the dungeon of mine own conceit! 
Let me, before, take some divine receipt; 
For well I know, my Gaoler will not bail me! 
Then, if thou favour not, all helps will fail me! 
That fearful dungeon, poisoned with Despair, 
Affords no casement to receive sweet air; 
There, ugly visions ever will appall me, 
Vain Youth misguided soon, with Love's deceit! 
Deeming false painted looks most firmly fair. 
Now to remorseless judges must I sue 
For gracious pardon; whiles they do repeat 
Your bold presumption! threatening me, with you! 
Yet am I innocent, though none bewail me!

But Barnes switches address abruptly. He ceases to berate the "bold presumption" of his "Vain Youth," and instead begins to implore pardon for his crime, referring to "Youth" in the third person, "Childish Youth did view/ Those two forbidden apples, which they [sic] wished for!" Then, with a bewildering lack of transition, Barnes declares "Those living apples [the lady's eyes] do the suit pursue!/ And are you Judges? See their angry looks!" (Elegy VII.) The remainder of the elegy
alludes to the last judgment and Adam's fall, caused by "two fair apples." Barnes' initial examination through debate of the follies of his "youth" is completely obscured by the succeeding wealth of allusion and conceit.

His other attempts at dramatic use of personification follow much the same patterns. He can begin in the manner of Sidney, "Cease, Sorrow! Cease, O cease thy rage a little!" (Elegy VIII.) "O KINGLEY Jealousy! which canst admit/ No thought of compeers in thine high Desire!" (Sonnet LXIII), or his most famous sonnet, "Ah, SWEET content! where is thy mild abode?" (Sonnet LXVI), but he cannot sustain the manner. Interrogation changes, gives way to rhetorical patterns or introduces metaphor related only to the personification and not to the state of mind which produced it.

In the end Barnes' attempt to create a dominant speaking voice for his sequence, though more successful than that of the other minor sonneteers, is undercut by his most characteristic quality—excessiveness. His poems insisting on the sincerity and uniqueness of his experience or those in which he begins to strike an introspective pose are submerged in the turbulent ocean of conceit he pours upon his reader. He seems to understand the new radical of presentation fostered by the sonnet sequence and practices it, but his main interest is, ultimately, like that of the other minor sonneteers, in conceit, though he excels them in originality and ingenuity.

As one would expect, Barnes' Parthenophil and Parthenopae contains numerous external unifying devices, all of them inadequate to contain
his fertile imagination. Like Smith and Percy he uses repetition to link his sonnets, but he favors more the creation of short narratives within the sequence. Sonnets II through XI relate a complicated story of the adventures of Parthenophil's heart. He also unifies twelve sonnets, XXII through XLIII, by comparing his progress in love to the signs of the zodiac ("Then, like the Scorpion, did She deadly sting me; / And with a pleasing poison pierced me!").

The sequence proper ends with sonnet CIV, but Barnes continues the subject through 21 elegies, one lengthy canzone, several sestinas, odes, and canzons, listed under "ODES PASTORAL," and several odes, one sonnet, and one sestina under "CARMEN ANACREONTICUM." The characters of this part of his work remain the same, Parthenophe as disdainful as a shepherdess, Parthenophil as passionate as a shepherd.

It escapes him and is imprisoned by Laye, but runs away from her when she turns her attention to a Squire; he recaptures his heart, but releases it when Parthenophe offers to "be his bail"; the freed heart rushes to Parthenophe, who refuses to release it or go its bail on a legal technicality.

In following his sequence with miscellaneous poetic forms, Barnes might have been following the 1591 format of Astrophel and Stella. Sidney's songs, though nowhere as numerous as Barnes's, occur after the sequence in this edition.

Barnes gives his own touch to the pastoral mode. Describing a celebration of the coming of May, he begins conventionally enough, describing:

Daisies, cowslips, and primroses,
Fragrant violets, and sweet myrthes,
Matched with purple hyacinth:
Of these, each where, Nymphs make trim posies,
Praising their mother ERYCINTH.

But the classicism soon gives way to a rousing English country-side
To climax this variety, Barnes allows his persona to triumph.

Parthenophil, goaded beyond endurance, invokes Hecate and the Furies to make Parthenophe burn "with desire, by day and night," as he has burned for her. Through the aid of black magic he brings his lady, "naked and bare," "with love's outrage kindled," riding to him on his familiar, a black goat. His spell is a complete success:

... Ah, both embracing bare!
Let nettles bring forth roses in each wood!
Last ever verdant woods! Hence, former Furies!
O die! live! joy! What? Last continual, night!

... . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
'Tis now acquitted! cease your former tears!
For as she once, with rage my body kindled;
So in hers, am I buried this night! (Sestine 5)

On this note the miscellany ends.

None of the foregoing poets produced a true sonnet sequence. 37

-- free-for-all,

The Shepherds poopem in their pipe,
One leads his wench a Country Round;
Another sits upon the ground;
And doth his beard from drivel wipe,
Because he would be handsome found.

To see the frisking and the scooping!
To hear the herdgoes wooing speeches!
While one to dance, his girl beseeches.
The lead-heeled lazy lustins loping,
Fling out, in their new motley breeches! (Ode 11)

It is rather alarming to discover that this crew chooses Parthenope for Queen.

37 One might include with the above productions such contributions as H. Willobie's Arise (1594), R. Barnfield's Cynthia, with certaine Sonnets and the Legend of Cassandra (1595), and E. C. Esquier's Emarioculie (1595). Whatever interest is attached to these works, it is not connected with their status as sonnet sequences, and tedium discourages a detailed examination.
Their collections, lacking all but the most feeble attempts at organization, depend on the encompassing Petrarchan convention to supply them with whatever unity they do possess. They attach sonnets to their ready-made plot of anguished, worshipful lover and distant, deified lady as a child hangs ornaments on a Christmas tree. The Petrarchan substructure was convenient. By enabling them to take content for granted, it permitted great freedom in their search for metaphorical or rhetorical ingenuity. All attention could be given to the polishing of manner.

However, two sonneteers, Samuel Daniel in Delia and Thomas Watson in The Teares of Fancie, did attempt to create unified sonnet sequences. Sidney's major achievements, the creation of individuality within a framework of convention and the production of an organic whole from a collection of single and apparently autonomous poems, both stem from one source, the dominance of an individualized lyric I. Neither Daniel nor Watson creates such a figure. But they were able to use secondary coalescing elements, such as a skeletal plot, grouping of sonnets by content, and repetition of phrase or motif, to give their sequences coherence. These efforts deserve comment.

Since Sidney's manuscript version of Astrophel and Stella was passed among his friends before its surreptitious publication, it is natural that one of these acquaintances should be ready to follow his model into print. Samuel Daniel, who in 1590 was a tutor in the household of the Countess of Pembroke, evidently had little choice in the matter, for twenty-eight of his sonnets were printed following Astrophel
and Stella in the unauthorized 1591 Newman edition. Daniel used this precipitate publication as his excuse to bring out, during the next year, the volume containing Delia and The Complaint of Rosamond. His dedicatory letter "To the Right Honourable the Ladie Mary, Countesse of Pembroke" proclaims the reluctance with which he is forced into the public eye.

Right honorable, although I rather desired to keep in the private passions of my youth, from the multitude, as things yttred to my selfe, and consecrated to silence: yet seeing I was betrayed by the indiscretion of a greedie Printer, and had some of my secrets bewraide to the world, uncorrected: doubting the like of the rest, I am forced to publish that which I never meant.

Despite this unwillingness to make public his "private passions," Daniel added twenty-seven sonnets to the previously published twenty-eight, dropping five of the latter to bring his 1592 Delia to a neat fifty. Each of the sonnets he retained shows traces of careful revision. This care for his work extends to a consideration of the over-all arrangement of his sequence. The arrangement of the sonnets in the Newman edition is almost completely haphazard, but Daniel has clearly taken pains in the ordering of this first authorized version.

This arrangement is, for the most part, externally imposed. No study of Delia fails to mention Daniel's indebtedness to the works of previous sonneteers. Janet Scott, for example, states that a third of his sonnets are translations, imitations, or paraphrases of French and

Italian sonneteers. And even those sonnets lacking specific sources are traditional versions of various metaphors and motifs belonging to the general Petrarchan convention. Daniel's stimulus was then, like Watson's, secondary. But, unlike Watson's practice in the Hecatompethia, he attempted to make a unified sequence of his borrowings. Although he could not, with Sidney, use the convention and the genre to create an individualized work of art, he was able to express conventional materials sweetly and furnish a framework which gave them a semblance of artistic unity.

A characteristic unifying device, and one frequently imitated by following sonneteers, is the habit of beginning a sonnet with the last line of the preceding sonnet. Usually the repetition is exact, as in the cases of sonnets IX and X, which have as last and first line the phrase, "O then louse I, and drawe this weary breath." More rarely the first line of the couplet is repeated to begin the next sonnet, or half a line or only key words will be carried over from the couplet. Sonnets VI-VII, IX-X, XXIII-XXV, and XXXI-XXXIII-XXXV show this linkage. Usually it accompanies and underlines a continuation of theme.

Sonnets XXXI through XXXV, Daniel's most elaborate use of this technique, may be examined as indicative of his approach to the problem of unifying his sequence. Sonnet XXXI, a treatment of the "carpe diem"


40 See discussions of the sequences of William Smith, William Percy, and Barnaby Barnes in this chapter.
theme used by Ronsard, Tasso, and Spenser, among others.\(^4\) warns Delia that her beauty, like that of "the half-blowne Rose,/ The image of thy blush," will fade. Therefore he urges, "O let not then such riches waste in vaine;/ But louse whilst that thou maist be lou'd againe."

The next sonnet reiterates this exhortation, "But louse whilst that thou maist be lou'd againe;/ Now whilst thy May hath fill'd thy lappe with flowers; . . ." (XXXII), and ends with the warning, "Men doe not weigh the stalke for what it was,/ When once they finde her flowre, her glory passe." But the next sonnet, although beginning with the last line quoted above, has moved to a different meditation on the theme of his lady's coming loss of beauty. Daniel has previously pictured Delia as staring enamoured at her own reflection; now he tells her,

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{When men shall finde thy flowre, thy glory passe,} \\
&\text{And thou with carefull brow sitting alone;} \\
&\text{Received hast this message from thy glasse,} \\
&\text{That tells thee trueth, and saies that all is gone.} \\
&\text{Fresh shalt thou see in mee the woundes thou madest,} \\
&\text{Though spent thy flame, in mee the heate remayning:} \\
&\text{I that have lou'd thee thus before thou faest,} \\
&\text{My faith shall waxe, when thou art in thy wayning. (XXXIII)}
\end{align*}
\]

In the next sonnet, again linked by line repetition, Daniel's thought reveals another progression. In sonnet XXXII he told his lady that the effect of her beauty would live in him even after beauty itself had vanished. In sonnet XXXIII he goes further, her beauty will live, "when thou and I shall perish," in the sonnet sequence which is the "lasting monument" of her worth and his pain; "They [the sonnets] will

\(^4\) Cf. Scott, p. 122.
remaine, and so thou canst not dye." (XXXIII.) Sonnet XXXIV, be-

ginning "Thou canst not dye whilst any scale abounds/ In feeling harts,

that can conceiue these lines" continues the "eternizing" theme; he is

no Petrarch, but he may "ad [sic] one feather to thy fame." (XXXIV.)

Sonnets XXXVI and XXXVII are also concerned with the immortality of the

lady, though they are not linked by line or phrase repetition.

It was natural that Daniel would seek by the technique of repeti-
tion to underline the thematic continuity of a section of his sonnets. Devel-

opment of theme instead of narrative or dramatic movement is his

primary method of weaving together these sonnets taken from various

sources. The resulting organization is loose, at times almost neb-

ulous: no one sonnet is necessary for the overall effect, but no sonnet

destroys or runs counter to the dominant tones of the sequence. And

the sonnets are arranged so that meditations on the same subject are

grouped together.

This grouping is made easier for Daniel because the scope of his

sequence is limited. The lover is faithful and humble, the lady highly
disdainful. Her "flintie hart" is sorrowfully mentioned in a number of

sonnets, as is the unworthiness of the lover. Perhaps, as several

critics have suggested, the dedication of the sequence to the Countesse

of Pembroke caused Daniel to weigh carefully the propriety of the son-
nets he chose for inclusion. At any rate, two of the five sonnets

omitted from the first edition of 1592 were apparently passed over be-

cause of their sexual implications. In sonnet III in the 1591 edition

the poet contrasts himself with the phoenix. The phoenix dies in flames
only to live again while the poet burns continually without being

granted death. He then bids his lady,

O sovereign light! that with thy sacred flame
Consumes my life, revive me after this?
And make me (with the happy bird) the same,
That dies to live, by favour of thy bliss! \(^{42}\) (III)

The obvious pun on the sexual meaning of "die" is out of place in the

"pure" love Daniel pictures. The same restrictions would have applied
to sonnet XIV, in which the poet laments that the lady "now scorns per-
formance of the passion" even though the poet has "dearly bought it"
with "the price of blood and body's wasting." (XVI.) Daniel also
omitted XIII, a very commonplace treatment of the "shipwreck" metaphor,
and X, a rather strained comparison of the lady to a "sly Enchanter"
and the poet to the wax effigy she torments. The fifth deleted sonnet,
XXIII, declares that Daniel will protect the good name of his lady in
the underworld even though it is her cruelty which hastens his death.
Daniel's reasons for disdaining this sonnet must remain his own. Al-
though not one of his best it is on a par with many which he continued
to favor. \(^{43}\)

In addition to omitting these five sonnets and changing the order

\(^{42}\) Citations from the sonnets printed following Sidney's Astrophel
and Stella in the 1591 Newman edition are from Sir Sidney Lee, I.

\(^{43}\) Daniel himself seems to have been of two minds about this son-
net. He reprints it in the second edition of 1592 as one of the four
additional sonnets, but drops it from the 1594 edition and thereafter.
Martha Foote Crow, Elizabethan Sonnet-Cycles (London, 1896), I, 78-9,
wrongly believes the sonnet printed for the first time in this second
edition of 1592. For an account of the appearance or disappearance of
sonnets in Delia see Sprague, p. 180 ff.
of the ones he retained to agree with his thematic lines. Daniel has strengthened the primary rhetorical function belonging to the sonnet sequence, that of persuading the lady to love. The first four sonnets of Dalia establish this radical of presentation. Two sonnets, II and III, both present in the 1591 grouping, acknowledge the presence of an external audience. Sonnet II calls the sequence "A Monument that who- soever reedes,/ May justly praise, and blame my loues Faire." (II), and sonnet III commends the volume to those "who like afflicted are" that they may "yet sigh their owne, and move my wronges." (III.) But sonnet II, though acknowledging others, is primarily aimed at the lady. Daniel bids his verse to,

   Press to her eyes, importune me some good;
   Waken her sleeping pittie with your crying.
   Knock at that hard hart, beg till you have moou'd her;
   And tell th'unkind, how dearly I haue lou'd her. (II)

And he added to these two introductory sonnets two more which emphasize the pose of privacy appropriate to a sonnet sequence. Sonnet I, titled "To Dalia," declares that in the sequence Daniel will "eulogise the booke" of his "charg'd soule." (I). Sonnet IV contains a Petrarchan disclaimer of ulterior motives in writing:

    Nor are my passions liamed for outward heaps,
    . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
    No Bayes I seeke to deck my mourning brow,
    O cleer-sye Rector of the holie Hill;
    My humble accent crause the Olyue bow,
    Of her milde pittie and relenting will.
    These lines I use, t'unburthen mine owne hart;
    My louse affects no fame, nor steemes of art. (III)

To reinforce this radical of presentation Daniel writes fourteen sonnets employing direct address, six of which call Dalia by name.
Three others mention her specifically. In contrast, only two of the twenty-eight sonnets in the 1591 edition appeal directly to the mistress, and in none of these sonnets is Delia mentioned by name.  

Daniel changes three of the 1591 sonnets to make them name Delia. Thus sonnet V’s "Why doth my mistress credit so her glass" becomes "O why dooth Delia credite so her glasse," (XXIX). Sonnet VI’s "Good lady! loose, quench, heal me now at length!" is changed to "Good Delia lose, quench, heale me now at length." (XIII), and sonnet XXV, which is drastically changed to become the summing-up sonnet 1 of Delia, ends with an interpolated reference to "Delia’s hart.

Contrary to Sidney’s pattern, Daniel does little to vest Delia with a personality or to connect her with any real person in his life. Only one sonnet contains specific detail to aid readers to guess the identity of his lady. Here Daniel, while declaring, "None other fame

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44 A feminine name, though not Delia’s, is mentioned in this first publication. Sonnet XIII refers to "My Cynthia," and, oddly enough, the same name reappears in the 1592 version, sonnet XL. This had led Scott to state that "les premiers sonnets de Daniel sont escrits pour une certaine Cynthia . . .," though she later points out that Delia and Cynthia are both names of the goddess Diana (pp. 116-117). The mention of Cynthia in a sonnet sequence dedicated to Delia might seem a woeful blunder on Daniel's part, but the context of the poem shows clearly that he is using the name as synonymous with the moon and not to designate a particular female. Thus the poem begins,

My Cynthia hath the waters of mine eyes,
The ready handmaids on her grace attending;
That never fall to ebb, nor euer dryes,
For to their flowe she never graunts an ending. (XL)
He goes on to say that the Ocean has never attended "the nights pale Queene" more faithfully than he attends his love. Perhaps Daniel's contemporaries shared Miss Scott's confusion, for he later does change the name to Delia.
my vnambitious Muse,/ Affected ever but t'eternize thee," states,

... Aue rich in fame, though poore in waters,
Shall have my song, where Dalia hath her seate.
Aue shall be my Thames, and she my Song;
He sound her name the Ryuer all along. (XLVIII)

As has been pointed out, the Wiltshire Avon flows by Wilton, the home of the Countess of Pembroke. In all other ways the lady is featureless—the disdainful, golden-haired beauty of Daniel's sources.45

Nor does Daniel individualize the persona of the poet or connect this persona to his own identity. He has adopted the conventional pose of the "Petrarchan lover," but makes no attempt to express himself through this mask. The affirmation that Dalia contains "the books of my charg'd soule" (I) is made because Daniel understood the radical of presentation required by the genre, but his sonnets never seek to communicate an internal experience. Rather, they praise the lady, they lament her cruelty, and they protest the faith and pain of the poet. The most pleasing sonnets are those which meditate the lady's mutability.

45To the bewilderment of some critics Daniel deals with the question of the color of his lady's hair somewhat light-heartedly. In the 1592 edition he mentions Dalia's hair in four sonnets, it is "amber" in XIII and golden in XVIII, XXX, and XXXIII. This is satisfactorily consistent, but in the 1623 edition which, supervised by Daniel's brother, probably contains the poet's final revisions, "amber locks" have been changed to "snary," and "golden," though retained in two sonnets, becomes "sable" in the third. These changes have caused rather intricate analysis in some critical works. Martha Foote Crow, who identifies Dalia as the Countess of Pembroke, has hypothesized that the poet has slyly changed the word "amber" to "snary" in sonnet xiv and "golden" to "sable" in sonnet xxxviii... to shield her personality from too blunt a guess." (Elisabethan Sonnet Cycles, II, p. 10.) Scott points out that "Les'amber looks'de Cynthia (cf. footnote 41) representent les cheveux d'or de l'Olive, celebre par du Bellay, et rien de plus." She believes, however, "Le changement de cette couleur en 'sable' est important, et il se peut que Daniel ait rencontrer une dame brune a qui il voulait offrir ses vers." (p. 117.) The true reason for these
Daniel's main interest in Delia was with the perfecting of individual sonnets. Thus, though he added few sonnets to the collection (the final version contains only fifty-seven) and preserved, except for additions, the ordering of the 1592 edition, he made innumerable changes in the content of the sonnets themselves. The results were usually fortunate, for most critics who comment on the imitative basis of Daniel's sequence also point out that he frequently improved upon his models. And his most beautiful lines are often absent from his sources. Daniel's focus on the perfecting of the single sonnet links him with the minor sonneteers already mentioned, but his respect for the unified nature of the sonnet sequence led him to avoid the discrepancies in tone and metaphor so glaring in their productions.

Thomas Watson, as well, profited by Sidney's example. His changes becomes clear if a little attention is paid to the context of the various references. Daniel constantly tampered with the wording of his sonnets. Each new edition reveals a myriad of minor changes made to improve rhythm, rhyme, sound, diction, or to strengthen a metaphor. Thus the lady's hair is changed according to the needs of the encompassing sonnet. "Amber locks" become "snaky" in later editions because Daniel is comparing her hair to "nets" and the change strengthens the metaphor. (1592, XIII - 1623, XIV.) Similarly the line "when Winter snowes upon thy golden heares" gains in alliteration and contrastive vividness when "sable" is substituted for "golden". (1592, XXXIII, 1623 - XXXIX.) With the constant references to the lady's hair, "Restore thy tresses to the golden Ore," is unchanged because the comparison would be meaningless or satirical with the substitution of any other color, (1592, XVIII - 1623, XIX), while in "I once may see when yeeres shall wrek my wronge, / When golden haires shall change to siluer wyer; . . . ." a comparison to ore is clearly implied. (1592, XXX - 1623, XXX.)

response must be of special interest to the critic since his first attempt at the genre, the Necatompethiea, has often been pointed to as predicting the character of the on-coming vogue. His second sequence, The Tears of Fancie. Or Love Disdained, published posthumously in 1593, is usually dismissed as yet another of the minor sequences of the decade, and it does resemble them in several ways. But more important than this kinship is the way it fails to resemble Watson's own earlier work. The Necatompethiea was a collection of disparate "sonnets", but The Tears of Fancie is an earnest effort to create a sonnet sequence.

It is admittedly risky to discuss a posthumously published work. The author might have made changes. One is further handicapped in discussing The Tears of Fancie by the fact that the only extant copy lacks two leaves, which should have contained eight sonnets, IX-XVI. The work that has come down to posterity, however, bears the marks of a finished product, and its most striking feature, considered against the Necatompethiea, is the care Watson took to unify his sequence.

For unity he depends most heavily on plot. His speaker adopts the tone of one meditating on the past; sonnets recalling past experiences in the love affair are interspersed with sonnets in the present tense which lament the writer's current state of unhappiness. The sequence opens with an account of how the poet fell in love. Sonnet I reveals that the lover was once a sceptic who scorned Cupid as a "boy not past the rod."47 Sonnets 2 through 7, despite their regular...
abab cdcd efef gg form, read like one continuous narrative relating his downfall before the assaults of Cupid.\textsuperscript{48} Sonnet 17 begins, "Then from her fled my hart in sorrow wrapped./ Like vnto that shund pursuing slaughter," and obviously continues a narrative line already begun.

The next three sonnets deal with the poet's sad welcome to his heart, and various recriminations hurled between his heart and his eyes because of their present state of bondage.

Several later sonnets are tied together by being treatments of the same motif. Watson's use of the pastoral convention in the middle of the sequence is the most extended development of the one motif. He does not damage the unity of his personas by suddenly converting him into a rustic shepherd lover, but uses the pastoral convention to emphasize the loneliness of the lover, a loneliness so heartbreaking that the natural world sympathizes with it—Petrarch with a dash of the Shepherd's Calendar. The first sonnet of this grouping relates that the poet is in the habit of lamenting in a grove full of trees upon which he has, in\textbf{ As You Like It} fashion, carved his lady's name. In sonnet 26 his lady walks in a woods and hears the birds singing of the poet's sorrow. She is unmoved. Sonnet 27 pictures the poet weeping on a

\textsuperscript{48}Cupid's arrow rebounds from the poet's breast (2); Venus, at first amused by Cupid's failure, becomes alarmed at his rage and swears to help capture the poet (3); they obtain an arrow from Vulcan and Cupid removes his blindfold for a better aim, but this arrow also fails (4); Venus advises Cupid that his reputation will suffer if this state of affairs continues (5); as a final attempt Cupid hides within the eyes of the poet's lady, and is flung by her beams into the poet's breast. In sonnet 7 the poet laments that his neck is bowed "To Loues false lure (such force hath beauties stroke)." Sonnet 8 continues his lament.
banke "plac'd at the bottome of a mirtle tree." The flocks, of out
pity, refrain from eating grass which, watered by his tears, "sacred
is become." Even the trees, with the exception of the sad myrrh, for-
bear to "let fall, / Their dewie drops among any brinsh teares." The
"myrrh" shares his sorrow and "melts" with him, "That still we wept and
still the grasse was springing." In time these tears form a fountain;
Echo inhabits it and keeps company with his "smiles moane." (28.)

Sonnet 29 contains a dialogue of sorts between Echo and the poet,

| 0 deere copartner of my wretched woe, |
| No sooner saide but woe poore echo cride. |
| Then I againe what woe did thee betide, |
| That can be greater than disdayne, disdayne; |
| Quoth echo. Then sayd I o womans pride, |
| Pride answered echo. . . . . . . . . . . . . 49 (29) |

Sonnets 30 through 32 continue the pastoral mood. 50

49 It is interesting to compare this sonnet with a similar dialogue
between Author and Echo in the Hecatommathia. In the earlier work, part
of which is quoted on page 116, the dialogue begins without intro-
duction, except for that supplied in the preface, "... the Author
walking in the woods, and bewaying his inward passion of Loue, is con-
trasted by the replies of Echo; whose meaning yet is not so much to
gainsay him, as to express her own miserable estate in daily consuming
away for the loue of her beloved Narcissus: whose unkindness could de-
scribeth at large, together with the extreme loue of Echo." (XXV.) Both
are artificial, tour de force poems, but by The Tears of Fancie Watson
had learned to integrate such poems into the fabric of his sonnet
sequence.

50 Sonnet 30 describes the trees growing about his fountain, in-
cluding the "mirrh sweet" who "Into the christall waues her teares did
power; . . . ." This time he writes "Forlorn" on the trees surrounding
the fountain. Sonnet 31, beginning "I wrote vpon there sides to ek
their plaining," would be bewildering without the surrounding sonnets,
for it nowhere identifies the pronoun in the first line. Sonnet 32 ends
this series; "kind harts" take his lady to the fountain of tears, per-
suading her to shed some tears "Into the wall in pitty of my pining;"
As she bends her head she sees the reflection of her beauty and, with a
variation of the Narcissus motif in keeping with the sonnets on Echo,
"Which seeing she withdrew her head purt vp with prid/ And would not
shed a teare should I have died."
Another motif favored by Watson, which ties in nicely with the pastoral sonnets, contrasts the joyful coming of spring with the hopeless condition of the lover. Sonnets 47 and 48 are on this subject, and sonnet 51 ties the motif to the earlier section on the solitary poet lamenting in nature.

    Each tree did boast the wished spring times pride,
    When solitarie in the vale of loue;
    I hid my selfe so from the world to hide,
    The uncouth passions which my hart did prove.

In addition to the unity Watson gains through narrative or through repetition of subject or motif, he takes pains to link several sonnets by carrying over lines, phrases, or words. For example, sonnet 37 ends with the line, "That loue at last would though too late lament me," and the next sonnet begins, "O Would my loue although too late lament mee." Sonnet 38 ends with the couplet, "Here end my sorrowes here my salt teares stint I;/ For shees obdurate, sterne, remorseless, flintie," and sonnet 39, in its turn, begins, "Here end my sorrow, no here my sorrow springeth." Sonnets 23 and 24 are similarly joined.

Finally, by a more simple rhetorical structure, Watson links sonnets 41 through 44. The first three consist of prayers to "Imperious loue," Fortune, and "Sweete death." In the last sonnet of this group the poet muses,

    Long have I sued to fortune death and loue,
    But fortune, loue, or death will daine to hear me:
    I fortunes frowne, deaths spight, loues horror prove,
    And must in loue dispairing line I feare me.

Through such devices Watson succeeded in producing a sense of unity and coherence in his sequence. In the interval between the
writing of the Hecatompathia and The Tears of Fancie he had become aware of the necessity of design. He also essayed the more difficult task of creating a personality for his speaker and mistress, but his efforts here result only in rigidity of posture. Both lady and lover are identifiably the same throughout the sequence, and both are highly artificial. The lover is no more individualized than a mask of tragedy. Watson attempts to supply depth by giving him a past, but his past, concentrating on the attacks of Cupid and Venus, is too artificial, too patently literary, to develop the figure of the poet. The numerous sonnets with a pastoral setting, picturing the poet carving his sorrows upon trees or weeping upon a bank, have charm, but again fail to convince the reader of the poet's sincerity. The flocks that refuse to eat the teardampened grass, the myrtle tree that weeps with the poet, the wall created by the poet's tears, and the birds that sing of his woe—these are pretty fancies, but clearly not intended to be taken seriously.

Sonnets of introspection are rare, and usually belong to the generalized love lament category, as sonnet 34, lifted almost verbatim from a poem by Gascoigne,

Why liue I wretch and see my ioyes decay,
Why liue I and no hope of loues advancing:
Why doe myne eyes behold the sunny day,
Why liue I wretch in hope of better changing.

He also shows a fondness for expressing a state of mind through antithesis, but his use of this device, unlike Sidney's, is static. It
gives no insight into the tensions of the lover, and the antitheses are mechanical listings of opposites,

Here end my sorrow, no here my sorrow springeth,
Here end my woe, no here begins my wailing:
Here cease my griefe, no here my griefe depees wringeth. (39)

If Watson's persona has one claim to fame among the creations of the English sonneteers it may be that of shedding the most tears. Watson evidently tried to justify his title, for tears flow copiously in a number of the sonnets.

The lady receives very little characterization. In one sonnet she appears in a crimson dress. She is beautiful and terribly vain, but her outstanding characteristic is her cruelty. She never falters from her determination to cause the poet pain, and the poet never weakens in his ability to respond.

Watson is only moderately successful in creating a consistent style for his sequence, but at least he made the attempt in the latter sequence, whereas the Hecatompethia was a hodgepodge of styles. His most characteristic rhetorical figure is reduplicatio, a figure he used also in the Hecatompethia. But he has grown more subtle. Instead of creating an entire poem for the sake of the figure, he limits himself, using it for only two or three lines at a time,

The private place which I did choose to waile,
And deere lament my loues pride was a groue:
Plac'd twixt two hills within a lowlie dale,
Which now by fame was cald the vale of loue.
The vale of loue for there I spent my plainings,
Plaits that bewraid my sicke harts bitter wounding:
Loue sicke harts depees wounds with dispaire me paining, . . . (25)
He also favors repetition, often beginning a series of lines with the same words or coming back to the same phrase to begin consecutive stanzas in his poems. The sequence remains imitative. Echoes of Sidney and Daniel occur, and his "imitations" of Gascoigne are blatant. He has leaned heavily on Petrarch and continental sonneteers for motif and metaphor. Nevertheless, in this sequence, his borrowings are subdued by the design of his sequence. He takes only what will fit into his pattern, and he has apparently reworked his imitations with enough care to make them sound like the work of a single poet.

The sonneteers surveyed here vary greatly in the quality of poetry they produced, as they vary in their understandings of the Petrarchan sonnet sequence. For a few, if we can judge from their productions the term implied, no more than a collection of autonomous sonnets, generally linked to the theme of unrequited love. A larger number show awareness of the need for a more definite pattern of organization; that is, they consider the sonnet sequence as a single poetic unit. Their sequences usually adhere to the convention of being written exclusively to the lady, and they often attempt to organize their sonnets on narrative or mechanical patterns. At times they move haltingly toward a conception of poetry used to express the private feelings of one specific poet, but this manner is so poorly sustained one must usually assume it results from the accidents of imitation.

\[\text{Cf. Scott, pp. 66-68.}\]
rather than from the perception of a new manner. None of these poets take the logical step of concentrating his attention on the figure of the speaker, be he a persona or the poet himself. The mistress, it is true, is always seen through the eyes of the lover; it is he who vests her with her hypnotic beauty and cruelty. But the poet's gaze is directed outward; rarely does he turn his attention to himself. Though he may state his grief and suffering, he seldom examines or attempts to individualize his emotions.

With these "secondary" poets, the Petrarchan convention which accompanied the genre of the sonnet sequence, proved too strong for the sequence's focus on the expression of the emotions of a specific individual. Once and for all, apparently, Petrarch had crystallized the language and posture of unrequited love. Thus the function of any poet who chose Petrarch's subject and genre seemed to be that of expressing well what had been said many times before. The natural result was concentration on a single pattern or conceit. Wit, ingenuity, and skill became the desiderata. Repetition, excess, and monotony seemed the inevitable result. But this is only one side of the picture. The best sonneteers were able to follow Sidney's example, to subordinate convention to the purposes of a larger plan. For these poets, Petrarch was not a dead end, but a stepping stone to individual expression.
CHAPTER VI

SPenser

Neither Daniel nor Watson, despite their good intentions, was able to create a dominant lyric speaking voice or a feeling of actuality in their sequences. The unity they achieved, though pronounced against the disunity belonging to Lodge, Fletcher, Barnes, Drayton, or Constable, is due to externally imposed factors and will not bear the deeper analysis sustained by the sequence of Petrarch and Sidney. Spenser's use of the sonnet sequence was much more successful. In the Amoretti (1595) he has produced one of the best-integrated and most original sequences of the English Renaissance.¹

Spenser openly identifies himself with the poet/persona of his sequence. He echoes Sidney's claims that his sonnets are at least partially the product of an irresistible desire for self-expression:

1To call Spenser original may at first seem paradoxical, for source studies by Sir Sidney Lee; L. E. Kastner, "Spenser's 'Amoretti' and Desportes," MLR, IV (Oct., 1908), 65-69; and Janet Scott, have shown how highly Spenser was indebted to his predecessors. Scott, for example, closes her remarks on Spenser by commenting, "Le recueil de Spenser n'est pas un des plus originaux. Qu'il s'agisse de sonnets imités du Tasse, ou de Desportes, de "sonnets-types" écrits sur les themes à la mode, ou de variations sur un sujet tel que l'immortalité conférée par la poésie, Spenser est rarement libre. Le poète, il est vrai, égale et surpasse parfois ses maîtres." (pp. 176-77.) Her evidence should be read, however, with the detailed comparisons J. W. Lever, The Elizabethan Love Sonnet (London, 1956), pp. 195-214, makes
WNquiet thought, whom at the first I bred
Of th'inward bale of my love pined hart,
and sithens have with sighes and sorrowes fed,
till greater then my wombe thou waxen art:
Breake forth at length out of the inner part,
in which thou lurkest lyke to vipers brood,
and seeke some succour, both to ease my smert
and also to sustayne thyselffe with food.2 (II)

And Spenser emphasizes the fact that the lover thus driven to expression is not an anonymous poet, not even Colin Clout, Spenser's sometime prototype, but Edmund Spenser. He does this by identifying his persona as the author of The Faerie Queene. In a sonnet addressed to "Lodwick" (his friend in the Irish civil service, Lodwick Brysket), Spenser declares, "Great wrong I doe, I can it not deny, to that most sacred Empresse my dear dried, not finishing her Queene of faery,

..." (XXXIII.) This identification is underlined in a second sonnet. "After so long a race as I have run/ Through Faery Land, which

between Spenser and his modals. Using four representative sonnets and their sources for analysis, Lever finds that "Spenser not only maintained an independent attitude towards his originals, but evinced a unity of thought for which he has rarely been given due credit." Spenser's genius was always assimilative; all of his works have "sources," and he was both a humble and a competitive student of his predecessors. To him, as to the Renaissance as a whole, literature was highly organic. Although models have been found for individual sonnets, Spenser seems always to have molded his sources to his own ends. His borrowings are caused by an affinity in thought, not by a dearth in his own imagination.

2All citations from the Amoretti and "Epithalamion" are from The Minor Poems, II, in The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition, edited by Edwin Greenlaw, et al. (Baltimore, 1947). Part of Sonnet II seems an elaboration of Sidney's more terse metaphor, "Thus great with child to speake, and helpless in my throes;/ Biting my trewand pen, beating myself for spite;" "Fool!" said my Muse, "look in thy heart, and write!" (I, Astrophel and Stella. For a discussion of this sonnet see Chapter IV above, pp.
those six books compile,/give leave to rest me..." (LXX.) Sonnet LXXIV, which celebrates his gratitude to the "three Elizabets," his mother, his queen, and his love, continues the addition of self-identifying details, as does sonnet LX in which he declares that the one year of his courtship seems longer than "al those fourty which my life outwante." (LX.)

Other personal allusions are more casual, for Spenser, writing after the sonnet vogue was well under way, could depend upon his public to notice even minor biographical clues. The glimpses he does give into the personality of the suitor are in keeping with Spenser's own. The suitor's maturity and experience are taken for granted, as is his right to claim the fame due an acknowledged poet. Thus he can refer to the "laurel leafe" as "the badg which I doe beare" (XXVIII), and comment plaintively that his " rude musick" was once "won't to please." (XXXVIII.) And his consciousness of his poetic worth no doubt accounts for the confidence with which he rings variations upon the immortalizing theme so often favored by poet lovers.3

For the Renaissance reader, who, by the time of the 1595 publi-
cation of the Amoretti, needed little prompting in the way sonnet sequences were read, Spenser's intentions would be clear. He meant the love and courtship described in the Amoretti to be taken as his own.4

3 Cf. LIX, LXXV, LXXXII, LXXXIV.

4 For the critic, who is always suspicious of taking a poet at his word, further evidence of Spenser's earnest sincerity in presenting this love affair lies in its integration with his other works. Despite this occasional debt (more apparent than real) to other sonneteers, almost every sonnet in the Amoretti can be cross-referenced to one or more of...
The Amoretti, like Astrophel and Stella, falls into three movements. The first part of the sequence, through sonnet LXII, is an account of the poet's long and often frustrating courtship, the second part contains the poet's celebration of the return of his love, and the third part is a brief and baffling account of a rupture in the relationship. The first movement of the sequence accords with the conventional subject of the sonnet sequence, unrequited love. Both courtly love and the dominant examples of Neo-Platonic love share the basic premise of the unobtainability of the lady. Under the courtly convention the lover desires above all things a physical consummation of his love. This goal results in the paradox most strikingly expressed in Sidney: the virtuous beauty of the lady arouses love, but love arouses desire which seeks to destroy its cause by destroying the virtue of the lady. Theoretically the only end for the unsuccessful lover is death; for the lover, responding to the contradictory nature of his emotions, both fears death as the result of his frustration and anticipates it as a means of preserving the virtue of his beloved.

Thus courtly love is a relationship of mutual nemesis.

The alternative to death or conquest is to escape the torments of such a love by denying the demands of the body. The old relationship is infused with a Neo-Platonic glorification of the power of love;
the lady becomes a sexless embodiment of truth and beauty. Spenser utilizes to some extent these two dominant modes of the conventional sequence. But Spenserian love rests on a premise which diametrically opposes it to the preceding conventions, that is, the attainability, the *honorable* attainability, of the lady. The importance of this fact has been appreciated in regard to the second movement of the sequence, those twenty or so sonnets which have found most favor with the critics. What perhaps has not been sufficiently noted is the effect this premise has on the relationship set up between the two lovers in the first movement of the sequence.

Under the courtly convention, love is viewed from a distinctly masculine perspective. The lady is conceived as the reward awaiting the lover who proves his worthiness. If the lover observes all the rules of the game and loves hard enough long enough, the lady is rightfully his, rather like a retirement benefit. That the lady may simply dislike the shape of his nose or his lamentable habit of clearing his throat doesn’t enter into it. Her refusal to yield to a worthy lover (and all sonneteers are, perhaps by virtue of their poetic endeavor, worthy lovers) can only be a sign of her cruelty and frigidity or, depending on the spiritual inclinations of the lover, her goodness. Most sonnet sequences, then, have the effect of demonstrating that the long-suffering lover has fulfilled his side of the bargain and of lamenting that the lady refuses to fulfill hers. In the *Amoretti*, however, the love examined can be returned with the full sanction of society. The whole stance of the lovers is subtly but importantly altered since
the lady can function in a positive as well as a negative capacity. She is the real opponent, not some code of honor or moral restriction. Thus the courtship must involve a very real consideration of her self-hood.

One effect of this shift in emphasis is to increase the role of the lady at the expense of that of the lover. Accordingly, the expressive function of the sonnet sequence is checked in favor of the persuasive, or "rhetorical." Since the lady can be won, the lover is motivated to be more active in her pursuit. Also, Spenser was able to woo his lady unhandicapped by the moral ambiguities inherent in the courtly mode. Laura and Stella aroused contradictory impulses in their lovers. Petrarch alternated between praising Laura for her virtue and lamenting that this virtue prohibited the return of his affection. Sidney, even in his moments of intense infatuation, saw the paradoxical, almost self-destructive, nature of his desire. The tensions resulting from this element of irrationality in their emotions forced both poets toward self-analysis. They needed to understand, as well as express, their feelings. Thus their sonnets directed to the objects of their loves are interspersed with sonnets of introspection. In Sidney's case, a dichotomy developed between the "expressive" and "persuasive" voices of the poet, the latter labeled as "conventional" by critics of his sequence. Petrarclh's emotional stalemate resulted

5For an elaboration of this idea see Chapter IV above.
in the tone of gentle melancholy so characteristic of the _Canzone_.

Spenser, on the other hand, does not often question the nature of the love he feels. His problem is not an internal questioning of his motives, but the less psychologically complex task of winning an available, if disdainful, lady. Her nature, in particular that pride which forms the greatest barrier to her acceptance of his love, is what he must come to understand. Throughout the first movement of the sequence Spenser wrestles with this problem,

So oft as I her beauty doe behold,
    And therewith doe her cruelty compare;
I maruaile of what substance was the mould
    the which her made attone so cruel faire. 6 (LV)

His sonnets addressed to himself are in the nature of pep talks,

"Retourne agayne, my forces late dismayed,/ Vnto the siege by you abandon'd quite." (III.) In place of searching for metaphors to describe the state of his own emotions, he bolsters his faltering spirits by seeking examples in nature to help explain his lady's recalcitrance:

    Sweet is the rose, but growes vpon a brere;
    Sweet is the Junipere, but sharpe his bough;
    Sweet is the Egplantine, but pricketh nere;
    Sweet is the fyrbloomes, but his branches rough;

So every sweet with sourc is tempred still,
    that maketh it be counted the more;
    for easie things, that may be got at will,
    most sorts of men doe set but little store. Why then should I accoumpt of little paine,
    that endlesse pleasure unto me shall gaine? 7 (XXVI)

6Cf. also XLIX and XLI for overt statements of the theme implied in so many sonnets.

7Cf. also LI.
As well as increasing the importance of the mistress's role, Spenser, in the first movement of the Amoretti, at least tacitly acknowledges the presence of a more general audience. At times this audience is called upon to join the poet in lauding the lady's superiority, "The soverayn beauty which I doo admyre,/ witnesse the world how worthy to be prayzed,"^8 (III). In other sonnets a more specifically visualized public seems addressed, as in sonnet V, "Rudely thou wrongest my desire harts desire,/ In finding fault with her too portly pride." or XXIX, "See how the stubborn damsell doth deprave/ My simple meaning with disdainfull scorne."^9

Spenser's most characteristic approach to his subject, one that subtly acknowledges the presence of a third party, is that of "relating" or "meditating upon" his involvement. These sonnets provide information about the progress of the love affair or the state of the lovers. In XI, for instance, Spenser recounts,

DAYly when I do seekes and sew for peace,
And hostages doe officer for my truth,
she cruall warriour doth her selfe addresse
to battell, . . .

In LII, he continues, "So oft as homeward I from her depart,/ I go lyke one that having lost the field,/ is prisoner led away. . . ."

Often he recounts in detail a single incident from their courtship, "One day as I unwarily did gaze," (XVI), or "Long languishing in double malady,/ of my harts wound and of my bodies greife,/ there came to me

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^8Cf. also XIV.

^9Cf. also XL and LXI.
a leach, ..." (L.) Frequently these small anecdotes and with a
couplet appeal to the lady, but Spenser's use of the third person and
the past tense give a feeling of distance to the incident related. A
narrative substructure is plainer in the Amoretti than in any other
English sonnet sequence. 10

Further, Spenser draws heavily upon conventional language and
imagery in the first part of the sequence. This has led some critics
to dismiss the sequence as Spenser's off-hand attempt to write some-
thing that would "sell." But Spenser's treatment of convention is
well worth noting. By the time the Amoretti was published, the sonnet
vogue had passed its peak. Sequences by Sidney, Daniel, Drayton,
Constable, Lodge, Fletcher, and Barnes had already appeared in print.
Spenser could thus anticipate an audience thoroughly familiar with the
ramifications of the Petrarchan mode. He builds the first movement of
the Amoretti against the background provided by these earlier sequences,
playing, at first humorously, then sardonically, with the expectations
he knows his public will bring to their readings of his love affair.
The result is a subtle but sharply pointed critique of the very

10 The narrative effect of these sonnets is reinforced by the
sonnets containing references to the time of year or the passing of
time. Sonnet IV mentions New Year's Day; in XIX Spring has come; XXII
refers to Lent; in LX Spenser says he has loved one year; LXVIII cele-
brates Easter, and LXIX once more celebrates Spring. William Nelson,
The Poetry of Edmund Spenser (New York, 1963), p. 88, connects Sonnet
LXVIII with Christmas. He does not explain this reference, and I am
at a loss to since the sonnet clearly states that Christ "on this day"
triumphed over "death and sin,/ And having harrowed hell, didst bring
away/Captivity thence captive . . ." The harrowing of hell, of
course, occurred between Christ's death on the cross and his resur-
rection.
convention Spenser seems to use. In the process he details the most graphically presented courtship, and the most distinctly presented mistress, in the English sonnet sequences.

The courtship, involving as it does an even match between two clearly delineated personalities, anticipates the "merry war" between Shakespeare's Beatrice and Benedick. In every opening "skirmish of wit" Spenser is the loser. His initial mood is one of almost complacent self-confidence. In the fourth sonnet he bids the lady prepare to receive his love as gladly as the earth receives the coming of spring,

*For lusty Spring now in his timely howre,*  
is ready to come forth, him Love to receive;  
and warres the Earth with divers color'd floweres  
to decke her self, and her faire mantle weane,  
Then you faire floweres, in whom fresh youth doth raine,  
prepare your selfe new love to entertaine. (III)

Against all this the lady has but one defense, but, as Spenser is to discover, it is adequate—her "portly pride." His first reaction to her pride is to defend it. It is "The thing which I do most in her admire." He praises her "lofty lookes" as implying "Scorn of base things, and sdesigne of foule dishonor." (V.) But by the next sonnet Spenser has discovered that he himself as well as "base things" is scorned, and his reaction, juxtaposed against the laudatory ending of sonnet V ("Was never in this world ought worthy tride,/ without some

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11 The lady's pride, which seems to be more a healthy sense of her own worth than an unfounded vanity, is a recurring motif in the sequence. It is mentioned or alluded to in sonnets V, VI, X, XIII, XIV, XVII, XIX, XX, XXI, XXIV, XXVII, XXXI, XXXII, XXXIII, XLVII, XLIX, LV, LVIII, LIX, LXI, and LXXX. William Nelson, pp. 87-92, discusses the importance of this attribute.
spark of such self-pleasing pride."), is intentionally comic: "Be nought dismayed that her unmoved mind/ doth still persist in her rebellious pride: . . ." (VI.)

He has begun to see how formidable a task he has undertaken in loving this proud lady, and the following sonnets of praise and gentle remonstrance break on a note of distinct exasperation,

Vnrighteous Lord of love, what law is this,  
That me thou makest thus tormented be?  
the whiles she lordeth in licentious blisse  
of her freewill, scorning both thee and me.  
See how the Tyranne doth joy to see  
the hugh massacres which her eyes do make;  
and humbled harts brings captiues vnto thee,  
that thou of them mayst mightie vengeance take.  
But her proud hart doe thou a little shake  
and that high look, with which she doth comptroll  
all this worlds pride bow to a baser make,  
and al her faults in thy black booke enroll:  
That I may laugh at her in equall sort  
as she doth laugh at me and makes my pain her sport. (X)

His failure to achieve an easy victory forces him into the language and metaphor of his courtly predecessors. The lady becomes a "cruell warriour" (XI) who disdains "To make a truce." (XII.) He images the love affair as a siege, and advises himself,

REtoure agayne my forces late dismayd,  
Vnto the siege by you abandon'd quite,  
great shame it is to leaue like one afrayd,  
so fayre a pece for one repulse so light. (XIII)

He vows to "lay incessant battery to her heart," (XIV) using "Playnts, prayers, vowes, ruth, sorrow, and dismay" as "engins" of warfare which "can the proudest love convert." "If these sayle," he promises to "fall down and dy before her;/ So dying live, and living do adore her." (XIV.) In these sonnets he writes from the center of the courtly pose.
The lady becomes an object, to be won by any means at hand. His behavior here is dangerously akin to that of the false lover, Paridell, who, in Book III of *The Faerie Queene*, guilefully lures Hellenore, the young wife of an old man to adultery. Paridell is reprehensibly "perfect in that art" of false love. Commenting on Paridell's skill Spenser declares,

No fort so sensible, no walls so strong,
But that continual battery will pine,
Or daily siege through dispassusavance long,
And lacks of reskewes will to parley drive;
And peace, that vnto parley ease will give,
Will shortly yeeld it selfe, and will be made
The vassall of the victors will byliue;
That stratageme had oftentimes assayd
This crafty Paramoure, and now it plaine displayed.\(^12\) (Fq III, X, x)

Paridell is something of a poet, for he, like Spenser, woos his lady with verse,

Now singing sweetly, to surprise her sprights,
Now making lays of loue and lovers paine,
Bransles, ballads, virelayes, and verses vaine; (Fq, III, X, viii)

His behavior is carefully calculated for effect,

But when apart (if ever her apart)
He found, then his false engines fast he plyde,
And all the sleights vnbosomed in his hart;
He sigh'd, he sob'd, he swownd, he perdy dyde,
And cast himselfe on ground her fast besyde;
The, when againe he him bethought to liue,
He wept, and wayld, and false laments belyde,
Saying, but if she Merrie would him giue,
That he mote algates dye, yet did his death forgiue. (Fq, III, X, vii)

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Spenser tries these same techniques on his lady, but she is proof against all his strategy:

But when I plea, she bids me play my part,
and when I weep, she sayes tears are but water,
and when I sigh, she sayes I know the art,
and when I wail, she turns her selfe to laughter. (XVIII)

Spenser may borrow the tools of a Paridell, but his lady is not to be confused with Bellenore.

In their verbal exchanges the lady usually seems to make the last point, as in sonnets XXVIII and XXIX. In the first Spenser declares,

The laurel leafe, which you this day doe weare,
gives me great hope of your relenting synd;
for since it is the badg which I doe beare,
ye bearing it doe seems to me inclind: (XXVIII)

But in the next sonnet he is forced to exclaim,

See how the stubborne damsell doth deprave
my simple meaning with disdainfull scorne;
and by the bay which I vnto her gauze,
accoumpts my selfe her captive quite forlorn.
The bay (quoth she) is of the victors borne,
yielded them by the vanquiht as theyr meeds,
and they therewith doe postes heads adorn,
to sing the glory of their famous deedes. (XXIX)

The lady's wit becomes the more pointed when one realizes that the poet had artfully set the scene, by presenting the lady with a laurel leaf, for his little homily on the "simple meaning" of the laurel.

This note of humor recurs throughout the early sonnets. In sonnet XXIII he compares his lady to Pandora,

Whom all the gods in counsell did agree,
into this sinfull world from heauen to send:
that she to wicked men a scourge should bee,
for all their faults with which they did offend.

He ends in mock humility, "But since ye are my scourge I will intreat/
that for my faults ye will me gently beat." In sonnet XLVI his lady sends him home in a "most hideous" storme. Spenser debates his departure, for it seems to him that the storme is "willing me against her will to stay." Since the lady is adamant the poet must obey the will of his "lower heaven," but, this being the case, he implores "ye high heavens, that all this sorowe see," to "Aswage your stormes." For, as he points out, "Enough it is for one man to sustaine/ The stormes which she alone on me doth raine." In other sonnets the humor is less underlined, often residing in the witty exaggeration of a light conceit. "Legions of loves with little wings" fly in his lady's glances. He sees one aiming its "arrow at my very hart." Luckily the lady breaks the aim with a "twinkle of her eyes," and Spenser exclaims in mock relief, "Had she not so done, sure I had bene slayne;/ Yet as it was, I hardly escap't with paine." (XVI.)

Exaggeration is also used with humorous intent in many of the sonnets on the lady's cruelty. Some critics have exhibited an unfortunate tendency to take these sonnets too seriously. One has only to bear in mind the context carefully created by the sequence—Spenser's proud, witty lady, who insists on mocking his best poetic efforts, receiving sonnets from a poet who, himself, sees the humor of his pose. Thus he complains.

IN vaine I seeke and swee to her for grace,   
and doe myne humbled hart before her poure:  
the whiles her foot she in my necke doth place,  
and tread my life downe in the lowly floure.

From this metaphorically absurd position Spenser declares that even a "Lyon," "in his most pride" refuses to slaughter the "silly lambe that
to his might doth yield," while his lady, "more cruell and more salv-
vage wylde," glories in her triumph. Again the final touch is mock-
serious, "Fayrer than Fayrest lest none ever say,/ that ye were blooded
in a yealded pray." (XX.)

The lady, perhaps justly, suspects the poet of artifice, for he
laments throughout the courtship the rebuffs accorded his poetic en-
deavors. At times a note of quite human, wounded vanity is heard,

But my rude musick, which was wont to please
some dainty eares, cannot with any skill,
the dreadfull tempest of her wrath appease,
nor moue the Dolphin from her stubborne will,
But in her pride she doth perseuer still, . . . (XXXVIII)

On another occasion he tells of an "INnocent paper," which is sacri-
ficed "vnto the greedy fyre" that "so bad end, for her stickes ordayne;"
merely because it contains "The piteous passion" of the poet's "dying
smart." (XLVIII.)

His frustration finds expression in a mock-serious comparison of
himself to a "smith," his poems to a "heavy sledge" and his lady's
heart to the resisting iron. The dominant note in the sonnet is one of
humor. The courtly Petrarchan convention had stylized love into an
elaborate game full of prescribed poses and attitudes, with move and
countermove enacted like the measures of some patterned dance—grace-
ful, exact, and unreal. Spenser is seldom blind to the comical aspects
of its unreality, even as he utilizes its mode. Thus in sonnet XXXII
he mocks both himself and his lady, but, above all, he mocks the
monotonous posture forced upon them by the courtly mode:
The paynemfull smitt with force of fernen heat,
the hardest yron some doth mossify;
that with his heavy sledge he can it beat,
and fashion it to what he it list apply.
Yet cannot all these flames in which I fry,
her hart more harde than yron soft awhit;
ne all the playnts and prayers with which I
doe beat on th'andwyle of her stubberne wit;
But still the more she fernen sees my fit,
the more she friesth in her wilfull pryde;
and harder growes, the harder she is smit,
with all the playnts which to her be applyde.
What then remains but I to ashes burns,
and she to stomes at length all frozen turns?13 (XXXII)

Spenser's attitude toward his lady's stubbornness is, at times,
one of grudging admiration. The pains caused by her resistance testify
to her worth, and, thus, justify his torment. Throughout the first
part of the sequence he comforts himself with variations on the theme
first stated in VI, "Such love, not lyke to lusts of baser kynd,/ The
harder womne, the firmer will abide." But the lady's posture is not
only one of resistance. Her position is, at first, one of a moral
superiority which emolishes the poet by example. His gratitude is most
beautifully expressed in sonnet VIII,

Through your bright beams doth not the blinded guest
shoot out his darts to base affections wound?
but Angels come to lead fraile mindes to rest
in chast desires on heavenly beauty bound.
You frame my thoughts and fashion me within,
you stop my tong, and teach my hart to speake,
you calme the storme that passion did begin,
strong through your cause, but by your vertue weak.

13Rosamund Tuve, pp. 322-23, refers to the "tone of delicate
mockery" in the Amoretti. Of Sonnet XXXII she comments, "The light-
hearted and entertaining self-criticism in the implied comparison be-
tween the smith's heavy sledge and all the poems which Spenser has
composed to 'beat on th' andwyte of her stubberne wyt' is not noticed
in this or other poems by those who are convinced that 'Spenser had no
humor.'"
This is the most idealized response Spenser makes to his lady's position of spiritual guide. By sonnet XXI he has begun to question her behavior,

For with mild plesance, which doth pride displace,
    she to her lover doth lookses eyes allure;
    and with sterne countenance back again doth chase
    their looser lookses that stir vp lustes impure.
With such strange termes her eyes she doth inure,
    that with one looke she doth my life dismay;
    and with another doth it straignt recure,
    her smile me draws, her frowne me drives away.
Thus doth she traine and teach me with her lookses,
    such art of eyes I never read in bookes. (XXI)

And by sonnet XLIII his mood is that of a pupil who has rebelled against his mentor,

What tyranny is this both my hart to thrall
    and eke my tong with proud restraint to tie?
    that neither I may speake nor thinke at all,
    but like a stupid stock in silence die.

He is in a state of mutiny, wishing to reverse their roles,

Yet I my hart with silence secretly
    will teach to speak, and my iust cause to plead;
    and eke mine eies with meek humility,
    love learned letters to her eyes to read:
While her deep wit, that true harts thought can spel,
    will soone conceius, and learne to construe well. (XLIII)

The tone of the sequence darkens as it progresses. Humor gives way to frustration. The lady's pride ceases to be admirable and her cruelty is less a laughing matter. The metamorphosis takes place in direct proportion to the lover's growing weariness. Further, the lady's position has become more ambiguous, for she now entertains the lover's suit and seems to encourage him while persisting in her refusal
to submit. Thus in sonnets XXXIX and XL Spenser rejoices in receiving
the sweet smiles of his lady, but in XLVII he writes, in anger,

Thus not the treason of those smyleing looke,
vntil ye have theyr guylefull traynes well tryde;
for they are lyke but vnto golden hookes,
that from the foolish fish theyr bayts do hyde:
So she with flattering smyles weake harts doth guyle
vnnto her loue, and tempt to theyr decay,
whome being caught she kills with cruel pryde,
and feeds at pleasure on the wretched pray:
Yet even whilst her bloody hands them slay,
her eyes looke loualy, and ypon them smyle:
that they take pleasure in her cruell play, . . .

He strengthens this accusation in LIII, a sonnet which at first
seems to pick up the mock-serious exaggerations of earlier sonnets.
The lady is compared to a panther, for this animal, "knowing that his
spotted hyde/ Doth please all beasts, but that his looks them fray,
within a bush his dreadful head doth hide/ To let them gaze whylest
he on them may prey." "Right so," he continues, "my cruell fayre with
me doth play." But his analogy swells to a tone of moral indignation
against the lady who uses her "goodly semblant" to lure the poet to his
own "decay:"

Great shame it is, thing so divine in view,
made for to be the worlds most ornament:
to make the bayte her gazers to embrew,
good shame to be to ill an instrumint:
But mercy doth with beautie best agree,
as in theyr Maker ye them best may see. (LIII)

By the sonnet's end Spenser has placed the lady in willful opposition
to her own nature (for she misuses a natural gift), and in rebellion
against the example set by God.

The stalemate between the lovers reaches its apogee in sonnet LIV.
The cycles of complaint and praise have become endless and repetitive:

Of this worlds Theatre in which we stay,
My love lyke the Spectator ydly sits
beholding me that all the pageants play,
disguysing diversely my troubled wits.
Sometimes I joy when glad occasion fits,
and mask in myrth lyke to a Comedy;
soone after when my joy to sorrow flits,
I wailles and make my woes a Tragedy.
Yet she beholding me with constant eye,
delights not in my merth, nor rues my smert;
but when I laugh, she mocks, and when I cry
she laughs, and hardens evermore her hart.
What then can move her? If not merth nor mone,
she is no woman, but a sencelesse stone. (LIII)

Humour can no longer disguise the futility inherent in the
courtly pose Spenser has utilized as part of his courtship. The woman
is frozen into her negative position. And the lover is himself unreal,
imaged as an actor adopting various "disguises" for his unresponsive
audience. His posturing involves an element of that narcissism un-
pleasantly present in the portrayal of an extended, unreciprocated
love—the lover falls in love with his own suffering and self-
consciously manipulates them to show to his best advantage, "I waile,
and make my woes a tragedy."14 This climactic sonnet is followed by
another speculation on the unlikely combination of cruelty with beauty
(LV), by a highly rhetorical and fierce indictment of the lady's
cruelty (she is a tiger oppressing a "feble beast," a storm beating a
"tree alone all comfortlesse," and a rock which wrecks a ship "of
succour desolate.") (LVI), and by a return in sonnet LVII to the war-
fare metaphor.

14It is interesting to compare, in this respect, Sidney's sonnet
XLV, "I am not I, pity the tale of me!"
But the end of the courtship is in sight. Following two rather homily-like sonnets on the transience of life (titled "By her that is most assured to her selfe") and the virtues of self-assurance, Spenser comments that the one year of his courtship has seemed longer than the forty years of his life and hopes for an immediate end to his "Long languishment." By the next sonnet he is once again reconciled to his lady's pride, and again, defends it to the world,

The glorious image of the Makers beautie,
By soveraynse saynt, the Idoll of my thought,
dare not henceforth, above the bounds of dewtie,
t'acuse of pride, or rashly blame for ought. (LXI)

His capitulation is total. In view of his lady's spiritual superiority, he asks,

what reason is it then but she should scorne
base things that to her love too bold aspire?
Such heavenly formses ought rather worshipt be,
then dare be lou'd by men of meane degree. (LXI)

Even so, in the next sonnet he welcomes the new year with the hope that a change for the better in the weather will be matched by a corresponding change in the attitude of his lady. And in sonnet LXXIII, a bridge sonnet between the first and second movements, he rejoices at seeing "the happy shore,/ In which I hope are long for to arryve... Whose least delight sufficeth to deprive/ remembrance of all paines."

This fast moving account of the give and take of Spenser's sometimes witty, sometimes painful courtship is accompanied, particularly at the beginning of the sequence, by several sonnets in which Spenser presents his idealized view of the lady. The experience of Spenser's courtship is most often presented in the courtly mode, but the ideal
underlying and motivating the experience usually finds expression in
the language of Neo-Platonism. For example, Spenser is first attracted
to the lady by her beauty, a reflection of divine beauty,

    the light whereof hath kindled heavenly fyre,
    in my fraile spirit by her from baseness raysed.
    That being now with her huge brightnesse dased,
    base thing I can no more endure to view;
    but looking still on her I stand amazed,
    at wondrous sight of so celestiall hew.
    So when my toung would speak her praises dew,
    it stopped is with thoughts astonishment;
    and when my pen would write her titles true,
    it rauisht is with fancies wonderment; . . . (III)

The spiritual quality of his lady is mentioned as well in sonnets V,
VII, VIII, IX, XIII, XV, XXI, XXII, XXIII, and LXI, although the Neo-
Platonism is usually more overtly Christianized. In sonnet LXI, for
example, the lady is "The glorious image of the Makers beautie, . . .
of the brood of angels heavenly borne,/ and with the crew of blessed
saynts vpbrought, ".

One final aspect of the courtship which should be noted is
Spenser's early declaration of his goal. He is much more specific
(perhaps with good cause) in stating his aims than most sometowers.
Consoling himself for his lady's stubborn pride, he comments, "Such
love not lyke to lusts of baser kynd,/ The harder wonne, the firmer
will abide." Then he continues,

    So hard it is to kindle new desire,
    in gentle brest that shall endure for ever:
    deepe is the wound, that dints the parts entire
    with chaite affects, that naught but death can seuer.
    Then thinkes not long in taking little paine,
    to knit the knot, that ever shall remayny. (VI)

The allusions to marriage are too clear to miss. Spenser's aim is
"Love," not "Lust"; only "death can sever" the "knot" that binds the two lovers. Further mention of the "chast desires" of the lover and the virtue of the lady occur in sonnets VIII, XV, XXII, and LXI.15

The possibility of a happy culmination to the sequence, therefore, exists even in the first movement. And Spenser keeps this possibility before the mind of the reader. He often weighs the pains of the present unrequited love against the pleasures he will feel when his love is returned, "Why then should I accoumpt a little paine,/ that endlesse pleasure shall vnto me gaine?"16 (XXVI.) This idea lends a note of suspense to his exercises in the conventional mode, but the movement is the opposite of steadily increasing anticipation. As we have seen, Spenser begins the courtship full of a confidence that progressively dwindles as he encounters the lady's proud resistance. The relationship described in the majority of the sonnets follows the courtly pattern of intensifying cruelty on the part of the lady and growing passivity and melancholy on the part of the lover. Spenser's emphasis is on the most unendurable aspect of the courtly relationship—that it moves to no conclusion of any sort. The lovers are in limbo.

15The nature of the love Spenser intends to celebrate is signaled initially by his choice of a title. Amor, in The Faerie Queene, personifies married love, and is "th' ensemple of true love alone,/ And Lodestarre of all chaste affection/ To all Fayre ladies..." (FQ, III, VI, iii.) Nor can one overlook the linkage of Amor and Epithalamion on the title page of Pensonby's publication and their joint entry at the Stationer's Register. Spenser intended the Amoretti to be interpreted as a sequence inspired by the love celebrated in its companion marriage hymn, and this intention is made obvious by the many parallels between the two works.

16Cf. also XXVI, II, and XIV.
All paine hath end and every war hath peace,
    but mine no price nor prayer may surcease. (XI)

Such labour like the Spyders web I fynd,
    whose fruitlesse worke is broken with least wynd. (XXIII)

How long shall this lyke dying lyfe endure,
    And knowe no end of her owne mysery:
    but wast and weare away in termes vnsure,
    twixt feare and hope depending doubtfully? (XXV)

Tell me when shall these wearie woes have end,
    Or shall their ruthless torment never cease:
    but al my dayes in pining languor spend,
    without hope of aswagement or release? (XXXVI)

The resolution to his dilemma, the yielding of the lady, though
anticipated or at least longed for, is thus surprising. If the
Amoretti had ended with sonnet LXI, Spenser's contribution to the genre
would have been minor. Only the strong narrative-element, the vivid
portrayal of the lady, the unusual rhyme scheme, and the sometimes
humorous, sometimes sardonically critical treatment of the courtly mode
would have distinguished it from other sequences. But this changes
with the capitulation of the lady. Even though predicted with varying
degrees of hope by the lover, it comes as an almost unexpected gift.
To a Renaissance reader, familiar with the poetical fusion of the
Petrarchan convention with the sonnet sequence genre, this break with
the accustomed mode must have seemed startlingly original.

Also original is Spenser's description of the lady's final
capitulation. Reminiscent from the vantage point of the accepted love,
the poet recalls the failure of his conventional pursuit, and its un-
expected postscript:
Lyke as a huntsman after weare chace,
Seeing the game from him escaet away,
sits down to rest him in some shady place,
with panting hounds beguiled of their pray.
So after long pursuit and vaine assay,
when I all weare had the chase forsooke,
the gentle deare returnd the selfe-same way,
thinking to quench her thirst at the next brooke.
There she beholding me with weilder looke,
sought not to fly, but fearlesse still did bide;
till I in hand her yet halfe trembling tooke,
and with her owne goodwill hir fyrmyly tyde.
Strange thing me seemd to see a beast so wyld,
so goodly wonne with her owne will beguyld. (LXVII)

The mock warfare between the lovers had reached that impasse where a
shift in the patterned relationship could only be achieved by the
abject surrender of the lady or the indifference of the lover. But indif-
ference was the lady's role, surrender that of the lover, and the
oft-emphasised pride of the lady would make her unbending extremely
unlikely. Spenser despair of the "weary chase," but the lady, having
triumphed twice, proving both her power to attract and her power to
resist, and having thoroughly tested her lover in the process, can now
yield of her own "goodwill." The sonnet is perhaps an object lesson
to courtly lovers; in the final analysis the lady must "beguyle" her-
self.

The second part of the sequence is marked by a greatly increased
intimacy in tone which corresponds exactly to the new intimacy of the
lovers. Spenser begins only seven of the first sixty-four sonnets with
direct address to his lady. The tone is hardly intimate, for the lady
is variously "you," (XXV, XXVIII), "ye" (LVI), "faire proud" (XXVII),
"lady" (XLV), "Faire cruall" (XLIX), and "sweet warrior" (LXIII). On
eleven occasions Spenser uses the couplet to address the sonnet to his lady. Again, most of these addresses are distant, "faire flower" (III), "ladie" (XII), "you" (XIII), "Fayer than fayrest" (XX), "O goddesse" (XXXII), "ye" (XXXIII, LVIII, LV, and XXXVI), "you" understood (XXXVIII), and, in a sonnet anticipating her surrender, "love" (LXII).

This formality is in marked contrast to the mood of the second movement. Though this movement is less than half the length of the first, the lady is addressed directly five times, usually in terms of endearment. She is "fayre love" (LXV), "sweet love" (LXX), "joy of my life" (LXXXII), and, in couplet address, "deare love" (LXVII) and "sweet love" (LXX).

The second movement properly begins with sonnet LXIII. Despite the brevity of this section, it supplies a positive model of reciprocal love to contrast with the previously delineated picture of the frustrations of the courtly mode. Spenser begins the contrast by rejoicing at having found the grace to kiss his lady's lips. In the next sonnet, as if anxious to assert that the kiss was not granted lightly, Spenser reassures the lady about the nature of the relationship she has just entered. It is appropriate, considering the amount of independence the lady has shown in the earlier sonnets, that Spenser feels he must allay her fears of losing this independence. The sonnet serves a dual purpose, for it also emphasizes to the reader the entirely lawful nature of the love described:

The doubt which ye misdesme, fayre love, is vaine,
That fondly fear to loose your liberty,
when loosing one, two liberties ye gayne,
and make him bond that bondage earest dyd fly. (LXV)
References later in the same sonnet to "the bands which true
love doth tye, without constraint or dread of any ill" make clear the
marital nature of the love. The characteristics of the reciprocated
love of this second movement are almost diametrically opposed to the
love usually celebrated in sonnet sequences. Far from being at
variance with the claims of society and religion, it is strengthened
by their precepts. Its sanctity is given full expression in sonnet
LXVIII, a prayer to Christ on the day of his resurrection:

Most glorious Lord of lyfe that on this day,
Didst make thy triumph oer death and sin,
and hauing harrowd hell didst bring away
captiuitie thence captiue vs to win:
This joyous day, deare Lord, with joy begin,
and grant that we for whom thou diddest dye,
being with thy deare blood oleme washt from sin,
may liue for ever in felicite.
And that thy loue we weighing worthily,
may likewise loue thee for the same againe;
and for thy sake that all lyke deare didst buy,
with loue may one another entertayne.
So let vs loue, deare loue, lyke as we ought,
loue is the lesson which the Lord vs taught. (LXVIII)

The shift in address of the couplet, with its abrupt abandon of the
formal rhetoric of prayer, is at first disconcerting, for it places the
lovers in intimate proximity with the loving sacrifice of Christ. Yet
the implication that Christ died in order that the lovers might live
and love "in felicite," is theologically sound, the love between man and

17Spenser reinforces this sonnet's clear reference to matrimony
by other more casual descriptions of their relationship. In LXVI he
laments that his lady, who "Could not on earth have found one fit for
mate," must settle for him. In LXX he tells her she must join her
"make" "To wayt on Loue amongst his lounely crew." And in LXXI he al-
ludes once more to the bonds of marriage by telling his lady she is
"captived" in love's "Streight bands" that she "never may remoue."
wife being a mirror of the relationship between Christ and His church. Thus the marriage ceremony of the Church of England describes matrimony as, "an honorable state, instytuted of God in Paradise, in the time of manes innocencie signifying vnto the mistrical union that is betwixt Christ and his Churche: . . ."18 The relationship of the lovers is symbolically the relationship sanctified by His death.

It is thus highly meaningful that Spenser frequently praises his lady's physical beauty in imagery evocative of the Song of Solomon, for it was interpreted as an allegorical description of Christ's love for the Church.19 The first exchange of a physical nature between the two lovers, the kiss described in sonnet LXIV, is therefore described in terms whose connotations were both sensuous and holy.

COMming to kisse her lyps, (such grace I found)  
Me seemd I smalt a garde of sweet flowres:  
that dainty odours from them threw around  
for damzels fit to decke their lovers bowres.  
Her lips did smell lyke vnto Gillyflowers,  
her ruddy shekes lyke vnto Roses red:  
her snowie browes lyke budded Bellamoure,  
her lovely eyes lyke Pimocks but newly spred,  
Her goodly bosome lyke a Strawberry bed,  
her neck lyke to a bouch of Callambynes:  
her brest lyke lillyes, ere theyr leaues be shed,  
her nipples lyke yong blossomed Iesseynes: (LXIII)

The first-line assertion that Spenser "found" the "grace" to kiss

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18Queen Elisabeth's Prayer Book (1599), (Edinburgh, 1911), p. 120.

19Fonsonby, in the preface to the Complaints volume of 1591, refers to a translation of the Canticum Canticorum which Spenser supposedly wrote. The possibility might account for the naturalness with which he uses canticle imagery in the Amoretti and the Epithalamion.
"her lips" sets the tone for the rest of the sonnet, for the lovers are in a state of "grace" which sanctions sensuality.

In sonnet LXXVII the sensuality of the experience described is almost obscured by the abstract and allegorical images in which it is presented. The lady's bosom is compared to,

a goodly table of pure ivory:
all spred with lions' fit to entertaine
the greatest Prince with pompous royality?
Mongst which, there in a siluer dish did ly
twoo golden apples of valorewed price:
far passing those which Heroules came by,
or those which Atalanta did entice;
Exceeding sweet, yet voyd of sinfull vice.
That many sought yet none could ever taste,
sweet fruit of pleasure brought from paradise
by Loue himselfe and in his garden plaste.
Her brest that table was so richly spredd;
my thoughts the guests, which would theereon have fedd. (LXXVII)

The idea of tasting the breasts, the "sweet fruit of pleasure," of his lady is the most sensual that Spenser permits himself in the sequence, but to relate symbol to reality here requires an enormous effort. Spenser acknowledges this effort in his first line question, "Was it a dreame, or did I see it playne?"

But Spenser was not always able to translate his desire into the symbols of a dream world. He emphasizes in the second movement, as in the first, virtue's superiority to beauty, and celebrates his lady's inner perfection in several sonnets. He declares, "the trew fayre, that is the gentle wit/ And vertuous mind, is much more prized of me." (LXXIX.) At the same time, he finds the lady's "outer" perfection too tempting for his own peace of mind. His lady's "fayre bosome" may be

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\textsuperscript{20}Cf. LIX, LXXVI, and LXXXI.
"fraught with vertues richest tresure" and "the sacred harbour of that heavenly spright," but, he confesses,

How was I raiseth with your louely sight,  
and my frayle thoughts too rashly led astray?  
whiles dining depe through amorous insight,  
on the sweet spoyle of beautie they did pray.  
And twixt her paps like earely fruit in May,  
whose harvest seemed to hasten now space:  
they losely did theyr wanton winces display,  
and there to rest themselves did boldly place, . . . (LXXVI)

Soon he is forced to exclaim, "Let not one sparke of filthy lustfull fyre/ break out, that may her sacred peace molest." (LXXXIII.)

It is of interest that the issue of lust does not arise directly until the second movement of the sequence, that is, until the lady has returned his love. In this Spenser is being both realistic and psychologically subtle. He realized that the possibility of gratifying a forbidden desire must be present before one can seriously experience the temptation to do so. Obviously Spenser had little basis for more than wishful thinking until he could bring his lady to return his love. Yet why, one may wonder, does Spenser here make an issue of resisting a desire which he sanctions as a lawful part of conjugal love?

But for Spenser an impassable gulf separated the realms of love and lust, a gulf not to be bridged by marriage. Marriage permits a physical as well as mental and spiritual union, but it is not to be "taken in hande unadvisedly, lightly or wantonly, to satisfy mannes carnall lusts and appetite." Spenser does not forget that reciprocal love carries with it responsibilities as well as delights. And

21 Queen Elizabeth's Prayer Book, p. 120.
he was aware that the operation of lust, involving as it does the gratification of one partner at the expense of the other, is unforgivable in the marriage relationship meant to symbolize the most sacred of human ties. Spenser thus makes a point of the necessity to limit desire, even though there is a rather plaintive suggestion, in sonnet LXXXIII, that he feels his lady is perhaps demanding too much restraint. After telling himself to subdue even "one spark of filthy lustfull fyre" or "one light glance of sensual desire," he bids,

... pure affections bred in spotlesse brest,
and modest thoughts breathd from well tempred sprites;
go e visitt her in her chast bowre of rest,
accompanyd with angelick delightes.
There fill your seife with those most joyous sights,
the which my seife could never yet attayne;
but speak no word to her of these sad plights,
which her too constant stiffnesse doth constrayn.
Only behold her rare perfection,
and bless your fortunes fayre election. (LXXXIII)

A second tension thus seems to be establishing itself in the sequence; the lady has yielded her love, but the gift is incomplete until the marriage is consummated. This tension, broken by the abrupt separation of the lovers, finds resolution in the "Epithalamion."

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22 The attempt to distinguish love from lust occurs throughout Spenser's works. He had dealt with the problem allegorically in The Faerie Queene, and one incident, dealing with Amoret and Scudamour, is of interest here. Scudamour is able to win Amoret, but she is taken from him and imprisoned in the House of Buayrane, or Lust. Scudamour is unable to pass through the wall of flame which protects the house, and despair of ever again seeing his pledged bride. Amoret is saved by Britomart, or Marital Chastity, the antithesis of lust. Even Britomart, however, is wounded in the struggle, "Albe the wound were nothing deepse imprest," perhaps to indicate the difficulty of subduing lust. (FQ, III, XI, xxxiii.)
Despite this one note of disagreement, the emphasis of the sequence has shifted to the delights of reciprocated love, delights in marked contrast to the futilities of the earlier courtship, but the personalities of the lovers remain recognizably the same. The dialogue between them continues. The lady has given her heart, but she has retained her wit and independence. The note of humor returns in sonnet LXXI when Spenser remarks,

"I joy to see how in your drawen work,
Your selfe vnto the Bee ye doe compare;
and me vnto the Spyder that doth lurke,
in close awayt to catch her vnaware."

In sonnet LXXXV Spenser must once again defend the merits of his lady to a fault-finding world. In words reminiscent of sonnet V he declares,

"The world, that cannot deeme of worthy things,/ when I doe praise her, say I doe but flatter." And he advises, "rather than enuy let them wonder at her." And in sonnet LXXV Spenser gives the reader, once more, an echo of the lovers' conversation:

One day I wrote her name vpon the strand,
but came the waues and washed it away;
agayne I wrote it with a second hand,
but came the tyde, and made my paynes his pray.
Wayne man, sayde she, that doest in vaine assay,
a mortall thing so to immortalyze,
for I my salue shall lyke to this decay,
and eek my name bee wyped out lykewise.
Not so, (quod I) let baser things devise
to dy in dust, but you shall live by fame;
my verse your vertues rare shall eternize,
and in the heuens wryte your glorious name;
Where whanas death shall all the world subdue,
our love shall live, and later life renew.

The final impression a reader carries away is that of a love remarkably "human" to be celebrated in a sonnet sequence. Spenser
makes vital his abstract meditations by embodying them in the context of the everyday lives of his lovers. Their personalities never lose reality. Spenser first rationalizes his failure to finish the Faerie Queen by claiming he had to concentrate on winning his lady. (XXXIII), but, the lady once won, he begs leave to "sport" himself in the "pleasant mew" of his hard-earned pleasure. (LXXX.) His lady, who once threw his poetry in the fire, continues to mock his claims of being able to bestow immortality (LXXV). Spenser must continue to defend his lady against a hostile world (LXXXIV); his lady gives her heart but wants to keep her independence (LXV). The love can range from the poet's sensuous dreams and half-stifled chafing at his lady's propriety to his earnest and exalted prayer that their love may be a worthy mirror of Christ's sacrifice. Perhaps above all, Spenser, the didactic poet as well as lover, emphasizes the "equality" and "mutuality" of love, for when true love exists,

There pride dare not approach, nor discord spill the league twist them, that loyal love hath bound: but simple truth and mutuell good will, seekes with sweet peace to salue each others wound; There fayth doth fearlesse dwell in brassen towre, and spotless Pleasure builds her sacred bowre. (LXV)

The last four sonnets, forming the third and final movement of the sequence, are a problem for which criticism has found no satisfactory conclusion. Sonnet LXXXIV tells of a sudden rupture in the love affair, caused by the "false forged lyes" of a "venemous toung." The last three sonnets lament this enforced separation. It has been previously noted that the three movements of the Amoretti, courtship,
reciprocated love, and separation, parallel and comment upon the three movements of *Astrophel and Stella*. In thus ending his sequence on an unhappy note Spenser may have been motivated by nothing more than an inclination to follow Sidney's example. He might also have been influenced by the fact that the majority of his predecessors had been faithful to the convention of the despairing finale. However, Spenser had shown such deliberate originality in his treatment of the love celebrated in his sequence that one doubts seriously whether such considerations would have troubled him. And the presence of the *Epithalamion*, that triumphant celebration of the success of his love affair,23 make the last four sonnets even more jarring in tone.

This flaw in the structure of the sequence may be merely another case of truth interfering with fiction, for Spenser may refer to a rupture which did temporarily separate himself and his betrothed.

J. W. Lever, in support of this idea, points out that book six of *The Faerie Queene*, written not long before the last four sonnets of the sequence, contains a similar anomaly.24 In the last canto the Hlantant

23It is of interest that Spenser breaks with Epithalamia convention to alter the relationship of the "singer" to the wedding he celebrates from that of a well-wisher or attendant overseeing the wedding to that of the groom himself. He thus continues the personal involvement begun in the *Amoretti*, begging the Muses, "Helpe me mine owne loves prayses to resound," and declaring, "I unto my selfe alone will sing." See Nelson's discussion, p. 92 ff, and Thomas M. Greene, "Spenser and the Epithalamic Convention," *Comparative Literature*, IX (1957), 215-28, for a discussion of Spenser's use of the convention.

24Lever, p. 129.
Beast of Slander is captured and led in triumphant bondage by Sir Calidore. In the last four stanzas of the book, however, the beast escapes, to do more damage "than he had done before." A like bitterness toward slanderers breaks out in *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*, (lines 688 ff), which was published in the same year as the *Amoretti*.

In *The Faerie Queene* and in *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* Spenser apparently has in mind slander on a wider scale than the petty tale bearing referred to in somet LXXXIV, but his larger grievance against the vice would no doubt have made even a small evidence of it particularly unbearable.

Further, the puzzling envoy to the *Epithalamion* may, as Lever also suggests, be read as an apology for the abrupt ending of the sequence,

```plaintext
SONG made in lieu of many ornaments,  
With which my love should duly have been drest,  
Which cutting off through hasty accidents,  
Ye would not stay your dews time to expect,  
But promist both to recomplus,  
Be unto her a goodly ornament,  
And for short time an endless moniment.
```

This ending is as unwarranted by the thematic development of the *Epithalamion* as are the last four sonnets of the *Amoretti*. It does

\[25\] Part of the damage was done to Spenser himself, for he complains,

```plaintext
He may this homely verse, of many meanest,  
Hope to escap his venomous despite,  
More than my former writs, all were they cleanest  
From blamerefull blot, and free from all that wit,  
With which some wicked tongues did it backebite,  
And bring into a mighty Peres displeasure,  
That never so deserved to endite. (Fr. VI, XII, xli)
```
not mar the poem, for an envoy is traditionally the poet's signature or postscript, structurally unconnected to what has gone before. And the envoy messages are often, as in the case of Petrarch, cryptically personal. Spenser's envoy seems both, and we must assume for lack of other evidence that the "hasty accidents" mentioned have some reference to the temporary misunderstanding which was allowed to form the ending of the Amoretti.

Whatever the reasons for this ending, Spenser's contribution to the genre was important. He was able to take the sonnet sequence and mold it to his own ends. He preserved and intensified the radical of presentation identifying the speaker of the sequence with the poet himself, though he did not further the genre's introspective possibilities. The "Spenser" presented in the Amoretti is no doubt stylized, for Spenser intended his sequence to comment on the current Petrarchan courtly convention as well as to relate the emotions of a specific love affair. Nevertheless, the portrayal was intended to pass current for the truth. The unity of the Amoretti is due more to the development of a relationship than to the portrayal of a dominant personality. The experience of love was a subject of meditation to Spenser rather than a cause for self-analysis and his problems in the sequence are external: he must demonstrate his love to his lady and, through this demonstration, he must reveal the qualities of true reciprocal love to his readers.

It is perhaps this last intention on Spenser's part that led him to break with sonnet convention. Spenser's attitude toward the
Petrarchan convention made the writing of a sonnet sequence a problem. He had already dealt with the theme of unrequited love in the Shepherd's Calendar, and had rejected that emotion on moral grounds. And the disgust he felt for idle versification on the subject of love is strongly set forth in Colin Clout's Come Home Again. The quotation is worth repeating in full for its revelation of Spenser's contempt for the superficial playing with love common in court circles. To Corylus' wondering question, "Is Love then . . . once knowne/ In court, and his sweet lore professed there?" Colin gives this rejoinder,

... 'love most aboundeth there.
For all the walls and windows there are writ
All full of love, and lous, and lous my deare,
And all their talke and studie is of it.
Ne any there doth braue or valiant seeme,
Whilesse that some gay mistresse badge he beares:
Ne any one himselfe doth ought esteeme,

26It is perhaps worth mentioning here that Spenser, although one of the first English poets to experiment with the sonnet, was not drawn to its customary association with the Petrarchan theme of unrequited love. In 1569 he contributed some rough translations of Marot and Du Bellay to Van der Nooit's Theatre for Worldlings. All but one of the "sonets" were fourteen line rhymeless stanzas; two of the "epigrams" used Surrey's rhyme scheme, and all were on soberly didactic themes. He republished these early attempts, somewhat revised and polished, in the 1591 volume of Complaints, under the titles "Visions of Bellay" and "Visions of Petrarch." His own sonnet sequence was not written until after the first enthusiasm for the vogue had caused the publications of the efforts of Watson, Sidney, Daniel, Barnes, Lodge, Fletcher, Constable, and Drayton, among others.

27Thus Colin, in the December eclogue, after relating in pastoral images the sad ruin of all his hopes ("the flattering fruite is fallen to ground before,/ And rotted are they were halfe mellow ripe:/ My harvest, wast, my hope away dyd wipe."), exclaims, "Alas who has wrought my Rosalind this spight,/ To spill the flowres that should her girland dignit?" He then rejects his wasted love by commenting, "The losser lasse I cast to please nomore:/ One God if I please, enough is me therefore." (Shep. Cal., p. 54.)
Vnlesse he swim in love vp to the eares.
But they of Louse and of his sacred lere,
(As it should be) all otherwise devise,
Then we poore shepheardes are accustomd here,
And him do sue and serve all otherwise.
For with lewd speeches and licentious deeds,
His mightie mysteries they do prophane,
And use his ydle name to other needs,
But as a complement for courtins vaine.
So him they do not serve as they profess,
But make him serve to them for sordid vses,

... But we poore shepheardes whether rightly so,
Or through our rudenesse into errour led.
Do make religion how we rashly go
To serve that God, that is so greatly dree; 28 (CCCCHA, l. 775-798)

No doubt Spenser considered a majority of the sonnets and sonnet sequences written before the 1595 publication of Colin Clouts Come

Home Againe mere "complement for courting vaine," and a "prophaning" of the "mightie mysteries" of love.

Spenser would not then, be inclined to produce yet another mis-representation of love; rather, he would tend to set forth love "as it should be." His procedure, typically Spenserian, was to utilize those parts of past traditions which would lend themselves to his ideal picture of love. Naturally enough he relies on these traditions most heavily in the first movement of the Amoretti, for Spenser, there, woos a proud lady who is slow to respond to his love. Even there, however, Spenser, through the lady, rejects the posturings of the courtly mode. He uses the convention with a humor which anticipates later more definite burlesques of the convention, yet reveals, finally, the stalemate to which it must lead. He makes use of Neo-Platonic idealism, yet,
rejects as well its super-sensory focus. The second movement, placed in the climactic position in the sequence, expresses Spenser's final individualized conception of reciprocal love.

Spenser thus continues the identification of poet with persona which is fostered by the genre, and, further, demonstrates that this identification will, inevitably, carry the genre away from its associated Petrarchan courtly love convention.
CHAPTER VII

SHAKESPEARE

The genre of the sonnet sequence as created in the Canzoniere is most aptly described as a body of lyric poetry which attains the coherence of a single work of art by centering on the focal figure of the poet in the process of reacting to a profound emotional experience. Narrative or dramatic sub-structure may underlie the action of the sequence. The dominant coalescing element, however, is the presence of a distinct and individualized speaking voice, the result of stylistic and metaphorical consistency and a sustained, artistically believable relationship between the voice and the emotional experience it relates.

As we have seen, few English sonneteers approach this achievement. They were unable to separate the sonnet sequence from its associated Petrarchan language and attitude. The result was often disastrous, for the expressive attitude toward poetry contained in the genre was inimicable to the transmission of convention. If the poet is to communicate the unique emotions of one specific individual, he must find postures and language which distinguish this individual from others. He must escape convention. And yet the "truth" present in all conventions makes utter avoidance an absurdity. If the love described
resembles no other love, no reader will believe the emotion described called by the right name. If the persona created resembles no other persona he will appear false. As George T. Wright comments, "the poet's choice of personae always reflects the reader's sense of what is permissible, and the reader's sense of this is based on his past experience of personae and of the works of art in which they appear." Some middle ground between convention and singularity must be found. This problem was particularly acute for Sidney, who used Petrarch's theme of unrequited love. His effort to set Astrophel and Stella apart from other lovers and mistresses results in a series of protestations of sincerity and uniqueness. Spenser, coming late to the vogue, is able to use the convention with humorous and sardonic effect since he contrasts it at last with the portrayal of an un-Petrarchan love. The minor sonneteers, on the other hand, exhibit the triumph of convention at the expense of genre. They largely ignore the problem of individuality as they ignore Petrarch's shift from the mimetic and pragmatic to the expressive use of lyric. One agrees with C. S. Lewis that these poets wrote "not to tell their own love stories, not to express whatever in their own loves was local and peculiar, but to give us others, the inarticulate lovers, a voice . . ."2

The poet most successful in separating the demands of the genre


2English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama, p. 490.
from the obscuring convention is Shakespeare. In this respect he is Petrarch's truest English follower. With Petrarch, Shakespeare might have said, "Ma pur quanto l'istoria trove scritta/ In mezzo 'l cor, che si spesso rincorro." ³ (The Canzoniere, CXXVIII.) It is ironical that his very success has led critics to consider him scarcely related to the sonnet sequence vogue. Yet his individuality is surely predicted by Sidney's emphasis on the specific reality and truth of Astrophel's love, and finds parallel in Spenser's departures from Petrarchan attitudes.⁴ Significantly, Shakespeare's most obvious debt to the sonnet sequence genre occurs in those sonnets describing his ostensible reasons for writing. At times he supplies the traditional mimetic and rhetorical explanations. He writes to imitate and "eternalize" the beauty of his friend, "So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,/ So long lives this, and this gives life to thee."⁵ (18.) The initial impetus of the sequence seems to have been rhetorical; to persuade the fair friend to marry and have children. Shakespeare follows as well the sonnet sequence practice of attributing his poetic inspiration to his beloved. In sonnet 38 he asks,

³"But I will tell the tale I find designed/ Within my heart, which I always pursue." (The Canzoniere, CXXVIII.)

⁴I choose to skirt carefully around the briar patch arguments over the dating of Shakespeare's sonnets. His response to the genre, not the date of his response, is the relevant issue here.

How can my Muse want subject to invent
While thou dost breathe, that poor'st into my verse,
Thine own sweet argument, to [sic] excellent
For every vulgar paper to rehearse? . . .

Like other sonneteers, Shakespeare wavers between the boast that he
can immortalize his subject and a humble confession of the inadequacy
of his talent for this task:

O blame me not if I no more can write!
Look in your glass and there appears a face
That over-goes my blunt invention quite,
Dulling my lines, and doing me disgrace,
Were it not sinful then straining to mend,
To mar the subject that before was well,
For to no other pass my verses tend,
Than of your graces and your gifts to tell; . . . (103)

Similarly, he finds himself unable to express his true emotions. He
is like "some fierce thing replete with too much rage,/ Whose
strength's abundance weakens his own heart," and "Ore-charg'd with
burthen of mine own loves might," he forgets to say "The perfect
ceremony of loves right." (23.)

Like Sidney, Shakespeare attempts to separate his poetry from
that of other lovers by comparing his unfurbished truth with their
effusions:

So is it not with me as with that Muse
Stirr'd by a painted beauty to his verse,
Who heaven it selfe for ornament doth vse,
And every faire with his faire doth rehearse,
Making a coopelment of proud compare
With Sunne and Moone, with earth and seas rich gems:
The Aprills first borne flowers and all things rare.
That heavens ayre in this huge rondure hems,
0 let me true in love but truly write,
And then balseme me, my love is as faire,
As any mothers childe, though not so bright
As those gould candelas fixt in heauen ayer:
Let them say more that like of heare-say well,
I will not praise that purpose not to sell. (21)
The last line implies that other poets, in their ingenious flattery, act as panders for the objects of their praise, and that their main purpose in writing is profit. They "sell" their loves in the process of selling their verse.6

But Shakespeare carries his preoccupation with speaking the truth far beyond a merely conventional concern. The average sonneteer worked from a series of givens: It is true I love; it is true my mistress is beautiful; it is true she torments me and I suffer. The resulting sequence served to demonstrate these truths. His problem was to picture a "one-dimensional," because artificial, reality. But Shakespeare's concern to provide a "true" picture of his subject involved him in the attempt to understand the "reality" he wanted to convey. And his problem was complicated by the fact that he was forced to submit his picture, in competition with an alternate view, to the evaluating judgment of its subject. Hence Shakespeare's strongest feelings in the "rival poet" sonnets dealing directly with this problem seem directed against the falsity involved in indiscriminate flattery, and against the even more painful discovery that his friend may prefer lying rhetoric to plain truth.

6The same dislike of falsity emerges in sonnet 130, in which Shakespeare refuses to "belie" his mistress with "false compare." But Shakespeare also follows other sonneteers in committing the very mistakes he lays at their feet. His fair friend is compared, extensively, to the "sun" and to "April's first born flowers," and, of his flattery to his mistress, he must declare, "For I have sworn thee fair; more perjur'd eye, / To swear against the truth so foul a lie." (152.)
... yet when they have devise,
What strained touches Rhetorick can lend,
Thou truly faire, wert truly sympathisde,
In true plain words, by thy true telling friend.
And their gross painting might be better vs'd,
Where cheekes need blood, in thee it is abus'd. (82)

Shakespeare's allegiance to the truth of his own perceptions establishes a tension between the two purposes of the sonnet sequence: to praise and thus win the beloved, and to express the "true" emotions of the loving poet. In sonnet 83 Shakespeare exclaims,

I Neuer saw that you did painting need,
And therefore to your faire no painting set,
I found (or thought I found) you did exceed,
The barren tender of a Poets debt: ... 

His position has become like that of Cordelia, who was asked to parade her love for her father in competition with other claims; like Cordelia, he is unable to praise on demand:

This silence for my sin you did impute,
Which shall be most my glory, being dombe,
For I impair not beautie being mute,
When others would give life, and bringe a tombe. (83)

The friend seems to share Lear's confusion between words and reality, for Shakespeare tries to make him see that the true value of praise is to be found in the person praised, not in the language which describes him. Thus Shakespeare describes the deceit of the rival poet, in pretending to bestow favorable attributes, and the gullibility of the friend, in being grateful for such falsegifts;

Yet what of thee thy Poet doth invent,
He robs thee of, and pays it thee againe,
He lends thee virtue, and he stole that word,
From thy behaviour, beautie doth he gume
And found it in thy cheeks: he can afford
No praise to thee, but what in thee doth live.
Then thank him not for that which he doth say,
Since what he owes thee, thou thyself doost pay. (79)

Shakespeare has already hinted that the rival poet "uses" his friend ("In others workes thou doost but mend the style,/ And Arts with thy sweet graces graced be") (78), but here, in the last line, he implies that the friend, like a woman with a gigolo, "pays" for favors she herself bestows.

The "truth" of Shakespeare's praise is thus inextricably bound up with the "truth" of the emotion aroused by the friend. ("But thou art all my art...") (78.) That the friend seems to prefer a false report to a true must inevitably lead Shakespeare to question his own analysis of the friend's worth. Thus sonnet 84, which at first attacks the rival poet for falsifying his subject, ends by shifting at least part of the blame to the friend himself,

But he that writes of you, if he can tell,
That you are you, so dignifies his story.
Let him but copy what in you is writ,
Not making worse what nature made so clear,
And such a counter-part shall fame his wit,
Making his style admired everywhere.
You to your beauteous blessings add a curse,
Being fond on praise, which makes your praises worse.

The couplet does not follow from what has gone before. The last line

7J. W. Lever, p. 230, has pointed out the similarity between the metaphor in sonnet 80, in which the Friend is the ocean and his competing poets two ships sailing there, and that of 137, where Shakespeare berates himself because, in loving the dark lady, he is "anchor'd in the bay where all men ride." Lever suggests that Shakespeare is implying that "the Friend by his acceptance of flattery" is "spiritually just as promiscuous" as the dark lady is physically accessible.
moves in two directions, neither flattering to the friend. On one hand, his fondness for praise encourages the strained and untrue flattery of other poets. On the other, his susceptibility undercut the very qualities in himself which make the mere act of writing of him result in eulogy, for "Who is it that says most, which can say more/Than this rich praise, that you alone, are you, . . ." (84.)

The result of the friend’s betrayal is that the poet loses his subject. "My sick Muse doth give another place," he declares, using "Muse" to signify both his skill in writing and the inspiration for his skill, his friend.\(^8\) It is this loss, and not fear of competing with the "proud full sail" of his rival’s verse, that silences the poet. "I was not sick of any feare from thence," he comments, "But when your countenance filld vp his line,/ Then lackt I matter, that ineffable mine." (86.) Again the implication occurs that the friend willingly permits his own use, for he lends himself to "fill up" the rival poet’s otherwise incomplete line. It is noteworthy that Shakespeare seems to prefer silence, even at the expense of losing his friend, to competing on the rival poet’s terms. Such competition would indicate Shakespeare’s acceptance of the rival’s analysis of the friend: that he does, in truth, "need painting," and is thus no better than the "painted beauty" sold" in the verse of insincere poets.

Shakespeare’s initial concern to provide a true picture of his

\(^8\)In sonnet 38 Shakespeare bids his friend become the tenth Muse, and in sonnet 78 he calls his friend "my Muse," and "all my art."
subject subtly metamorphoses into a concern that his subject be true--to those qualities the poet has seen in him. His final concern is with a "personal" rather than an artistic truth. The Petrarchan anguish over the poet's inability to represent adequately the value of the beloved has become the Shakespearean questioning of the beloved's true value. Shakespeare discovered that "picturing" reality, when that reality depends on one's own emotion, involves understanding it. Thus the subject of his sequence becomes the mind of the poet himself, and the sonnets become the expression of that mind. Shakespeare clearly recognized this aspect of the sonnet sequence, and attempted to communicate his insight to the "fair friend":

But be contented. When that fell arrest
With out all bayle shall carry me away,
My life hath in this line some interest,
Which for memoriall still with thee shall stay.
When thou reueuest this, thou dost reuew,
The very part was consecrate to thee.
The earth can haue but earth, which is his due,
My spirit is thine the better part of me,
So then thou hast but lost the dregs of life,
The pray of worms, my body being dead,
The coward conquest of a wretches knife,
To sic base of thee to be remembred,
    The worth of that, is that which it contains,
    And that is this, and this with thee remaines. (74)

With Shakespeare the distance between poet and persona is completely eliminated.

The majority of Shakespeare's sonnets present quite plainly the poet in a state of meditation or self-examination. This is true even though 134 of the 154 sonnets are addressed to the friend or mistress. For very few of these sonnets of direct address follow the traditional persuasive patterns of assertion and praise. Instead they turn inward,
to the mind of the poet, rather than outward to the person addressed or the subject discussed. The first seventeen sonnets, those urging the young man to wed, provide Shakespeare's most extended series of externally directed sonnets. Yet even in these we find the subtle shift in focus which indicates the direction to be taken in the majority of the sonnets.

The poet's presence is not overtly felt in the first nine sonnets. Theme and metaphor circle around two ideas: the beautiful young man and his obligation to reproduce this beauty. The sonnets both address the young man and have him as their subject. But in sonnet 10 the poet enters the verse. In the first two quatrains the fair friend is told he cannot claim to bear "loue to any," since he is "so possesse with murderous hate" that he can even "conspire" against himself. In the third quatrain the poet bids,

O change thy thought, that I may change my minde,
Shall hate be fairer log'd than gentle loue?
Be as thy presence is gracious and kind,
Or to thy self at least kind hearted prowe.
Make thee an other self for loue of me,
That beauty still may live in thine or thee.

The emphasis is still on the friend, though Shakespeare has placed himself in an intimate proximity to him not predicted by the previous poems. But in sonnet 12 the focus has shifted to the poet meditating on the beauty and mutability of the friend,

When lofty trees I see barren of leaues,
Which erst from heat did canopie the herd
And Sommers greene all girded vp in sheaues
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard:
Then of thy beauty do I question make
That thou among the wastes of time must goe, . . .
The sonnet ends with the old exhortation, "And nothing 'gainst Times
sieth can make defence/ Saue breed to braue him, when he takes thee
hence," but the main action of the poem takes place in the poet's mind.

Sonnet 14 is still more clearly about the poet, even though it
contains the most sweeping praise of the beloved yet expressed,

Not from the stars do I my judgement plucke,
And yet me thinks I have Astronomy,
But not to tell of good, or euii lucke,
Of plagues, of dearths, or season's quallity,
Nor can I fortune to breese mynuits tell;
Pointing to each his thunder, raine, and winde,
Or say with Princes if it shall go wel,
By oft predict that I in heaven finde.
But from thine eies my knowledge I deriue,
And constant stars in them I read such art
As truth and beautie shal together thrive,
If from thy self, to store thou wouldst convert:
Or else of thee this I prognosticate,
Thy end is Truthes and Beauties doome and date.

In the first eight lines the poet discusses his inability to foretell
the future by conventional methods. In the third quatrain he declares
he can prophesy, by the knowledge he receives from his friend's eyes.
The sonnet expresses the poet's fascination with the friend, the last
line emphasis falling on the catastrophic destruction, with the
friend's death, of all those beneficial qualities Shakespeare has fore-
seen. The remedy for this calamity, the usual bidding to propagate,
is almost lost sight of. And in the next sonnet, like sonnet 12 on
the friend's beauty and mutability, the poet has taken upon himself the
necessity of preserving for eternity the perfection he has found:

Then the conceit of this inconstant stay,
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,
Where wastful time debateth with decay
To change your day of youth to sullied night,
And all in war with time for love of you
As he takes from you, I engraft you new. (15)

Most of the remainder of the sonnets of direct address are even more markedly descriptions of the emotions the poet feels. It is this effort to express, with an honesty rare in either poet or lover, the true nature of his love for the young man and his passion for the dark lady which accounts for the "unconventionality" of his sonnets. In Shakespeare we find example of the poet who took seriously Sidney's advice to, "Look in thy heart and write!"

Undoubtedly the unusual nature of the emotions Shakespeare seeks to express helped free him from the pull of the Petrarchan convention. In this he was perhaps luckier, as an artist, than Sidney or Spenser, who both wrote (Sidney in loving a woman who could not or would not return his affection; Spenser in courting a woman who was at least temporarily disdainful) within the traditional postures. In contrast, Shakespeare's love for the young man is described as reciprocated as soon as it appears in verse.9 And his love for the dark lady is presented as a passion in which physical satisfaction is wed to spiritual degradation. The subsequent betrayal by both intensifies emotions too complex to find adequate expression within the conventional love vocabulary.

9Sonnet 22 ends, "Presume not on thy heart when mine is slain,/ Thou gav'st me thine, not to give back again." and Sonnet 25 rejoices "Then happy I that love and am beloved/ Where I may not remove, nor be removed."
Shakespeare's few clear uses of the Petrarchan convention, therefore, usually occur in those complementary sonnets directed to the friend or the mistress. Sonnets 127 and 132, on his mistress' black eyes, and 128, on his mistress playing the virginal, are of this nature, as are several of the praises paid to the fair friend.\textsuperscript{10} And Shakespeare also includes sonnets of a generalized nature in which matters which have tormented or obsessed him on a personal level find perspective and at least a partial solution. Such are 129 ("TH'expence of Spirit in a waste of shame,") 65 ("Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea") and 146 ("P0ore soule the center of my sinfull earth"). But these sonnets, which in isolation might be labeled conventional or impersonal, in the context of the sonnet sequence contribute to the rich texture which reveals Shakespeare's thoughts.

Shakespeare's efforts to discover and present the truth of his experience and his sustained focus on the experiencing self results in the most completely unified Elizabethan sonnet sequence. The organic nature of his sequence is perhaps best demonstrated, paradoxically, by the discontented critical response to the arrangement of Thorpe's 1609 edition. Several critics have felt driven to seek a more satisfactory arrangement.\textsuperscript{11} Naturally enough, each critic has selected a different

\textsuperscript{10} In sonnet 24, for example, the friend's image hangs in the poet's bosom, in 28 both day and night torture the poet when he is absent from his friend, and in 53 he is compared to Adonis and Eilen.

\textsuperscript{11} See C. Knox Pocler's edition of The Works of Shakespeare: The Sonnets (London, 1913); Sir Denys Bray's The Original Order of Shakespeare's Sonnets (London, 1925), and his Shakespeare's Sequence
rationale and the end results differ. But all of these critics have worked on the assumption that the sequence should be considered as a single entity, not as a disparate collection of sonnets. Tucker Brooke, for example, whose version has won a respectable following\textsuperscript{12} has rearranged the sonnets in the order of their "psychological necessity," a term which takes for granted the presence of sonnets which delineate psychological motives and which are interdependent and mutually illuminating. Few sonnet sequences can support such rearrangement. One need only think of the folly of attempting to rearrange Lodge or Fletcher, for instance, to appreciate the organic nature of Shakespeare's work. The metaphorical consistency of the sequence is such that no sonnet stands alone. Each sonnet is linked by metaphor and theme with other sonnets in the sequence, so that any attempt at extended analysis of a single sonnet involves the critic in a multiplicity of echoes and foreshadowings. The sonnet may find its closest expositors in its immediate context, since Shakespeare often writes two, three, or more sonnets on a certain experience, for instance, the sonnets on absence, or on the rival poet. But these small groups in turn depend on and create the encompassing frame of

\textsuperscript{12}Edward Rubler, in his The Sense of Shakespeare's Sonnets (New York, 1952), for example, follows Brooke.
the sequence, the sonnet groupings to the fair friend and to the dark lady forming one continuous and simultaneous whole—the love experience of the poet.

Several valuable studies of Shakespeare's sonnets exist which demonstrate the toughness of the sequence's consistency by subjecting it to rigorous analysis. It is not to the point here to add another interpretation to the list. But one sonnet may be studied as exemplary of the metaphorical consistency of the sequence, of Shakespeare's shift from the mimetic or rhetorical to the expressive use of lyric, and of his creation of "private" poetry. Sonnet 35 is fairly representative of these qualities:

No more be grieved at that which thou hast done,  
Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud,  
Clouds and eclipses stain both Moone and Sunne,  
And loathsome Canker lives in sweetest bud.  
All men make faults, and even I in this,  
Authorizing thy trespass with compare,  
My self corrupting, salving thy amisse,  
Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are;  
For to thy sensuall fault I bring in sense,  
Thy adverse party is thy Advocate,  
And gainst my self a lawfull plea commence,  
Such cruel war is in my love and hate,  
That I an accessory needs must be,  
To that sweet theafe which sourly robs from me.

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There are several links between this poem and other sonnets. The comparisons of the first four lines are, at first glance, commonplace, and if this sonnet occurred in isolation in some anthology, they would elicit little interest. Yet these commonplace metaphors gain depth and importance from their recurrence in other sonnets of the sequence, as Petrarch's puns on the name of "Laura" become charged with meaning as the Canzoniere progresses. In the early sonnets urging the young man to marry, Shakespeare establishes two metaphors symbolic of the qualities the poet perceives; the youth is "beauties Rose" (1, 5) and the sun on "goulden pilgrimage." (7.) These two images naturally occur to Shakespeare when he seeks similies with which to excuse his love's faults, thus, "Roses have thorns," and "Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun." The latter comparison is used at length in sonnets 33 and 34 to describe the friend's betrayal of the poet; in 33 the friend has permitted "baset cloudes to ride/ With ougly rack on his celestiall face," and in 34 Shakespeare declares, "Tis not enough that through the cloude thou breake,/ To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face."

The initial use of roses leads Shakespeare, in the same sonnet, to comment on another more distasteful fault common to flowers: "And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud." The comparison, here intended to excuse his friend, recurs later in the sequence as bitter condemnation. The eternally puzzling sonnet 94, in which Shakespeare
seems to struggle unsuccessfully to give the distance of artistic expression to a painful awareness, ends,

The sommers flowere is to the sommer sweet,  
Though to it self, it onely live and die,  
But if that floweres with base infection meete,  
The basest weed out-breues his dignity;  
     For sweetest things turns sowrest by their deedses,  
     Lillies that fester, small far worse than weeds.

The next sonnet picks up the image, beginning,

     How sweet and lounely dost thou make the same,  
     Which like a canker in the fragrant Rose,  
     Doth spot the beautie of thy budding name?

The connection between these sonnets and thirty-five is clear: all three use the "cankerred rose" image to express the fair friend's fault. But the image recurs in an unexpected context—an apparently direct Flattery of the beloved's beauty. The poet accuses nature for its theft of various aspects of his friend's beauty. The violet has stolen his love's breath and the color of his cheeks; the lily has taken his hands, buds of marjoram his hair. But the roses are the worst culprits,

The Roses fearfully on thorns did stand,  
One blushing shame, an other white despare;  
A third nor red nor white, had stolne of both,  
And to his robby had annex thy breath,  
But for his theft in pride of all his growth  
A vengeful canker eate him vp to death.15  (99)

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15As critics have pointed out, this sonnet was probably influenced by Constable (Diana, I:IX). His sonnet begins, "My Lady's presence makes the Roses red, / Because to see her lips they blush for shame," and proceeds with comparisons to describe his lady's effect on nature, eg., "The living heat which her eye-beams doth make/ Warmeth the ground, and quickeneth the seed." The canker image is Shakespeare's addition, as is the idea that nature's attributes are stolen from the beloved instead of emanating from her.
The strange reappearance of the ruined rose calls the sincerity of the entire sonnet into question. "Roses have thorns," Shakespeare had stated, and here he pictures the roses standing "fearfully on thorns," in shame of their thievery. Instead of direct images of the red and white they have taken from the friend's cheek, one rose is "blushing shame," the other shows "white despair." Perhaps these emotions, as well as the colors, were found in the cheeks of the modal. The third, "nor red nor white," had "stolne of both," and, in addition, "annex thy breath." His punishment for the "theft" is to be eaten "to death" by "a vengefulanker." Could Shakespeare imply that the infection was stolen together with the friend's "breath"? The canker destroys the rose "in pride of all his growth," and, earlier in the sonnet, Shakespeare had chided the violet as a "sweet theefe" who stole "the purple pride" of its cheeks from "my loues veins." Is the final destruction of the rose intended as a veiled warning to Shakespeare's own "sweet thief," who has been blamed earlier in the sequence for his false pride? The allusions are delicate and will not bear heavy handling, but the images Shakespeare uses here, as elsewhere, are charged with the connotations they have gathered in other contexts. An apparently straightforward statement becomes shadowed with subtle dimensions.

The presence of these charged metaphors is a natural result of the second attribute of the sequence, Shakespeare's shift from the mimetic/rhetorical to the expressive use of lyric. This shift, already noted in connection with the first nineteen sonnets, may be
briefly examined in the smaller framework of the thirty-fifth sonnet. The first quatrain is clearly directed to the young man. In it Shakespeare attempts to justify the actions of the fair friend by seeking examples in nature of excellence associated with things discredit able. The listing of examples is almost mechanical in feeling. But the focus of the sonnet shifts abruptly in the fifth line. From addressing to the young man a series of emblematic sops for his ego, Shakespeare turns to a perplexed examination of his own motives:

   All men make faults, and even I in this,
   Authorizing thy trespass with compare,
   My self corrupting, saluing thy amisse,
   Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are:
   For to thy sensuall fault I bring in sense,
   Thy adverse party is thy Advocate,
   And against myself a lawfull plea commence,
   Such civill war is in my lous and hate,
   That I an accessory needs must be
   To that sweet theefe which sorely robs from me,

The reader is thrown off balance in the fifth line and must teeter uncertainly during the remaining ambiguities of the sonnet, just as Shakespeare must waver uncertainly between love and hate in his "civil war." On the one hand Shakespeare attacks himself bitterly for attempting to authorize the misdeeds of his friend with "compare,"16 In "salving" his friend's wounds he "corrupts" himself, and this self-corruption is worse than the original fault he seeks to excuse since it involves misuse of the "sense" or reason, man's most godlike part.

16 Again one is reminded of Shakespeare's dislike for the "complement of proud compare" in 21 and his refusal to "belie" his mistress with "false compare" in 130. This flattering misrepresentation of his friend puts Shakespeare on the level of the rival poet.
while the friend's error, being "sensual," is less serious in nature. On the other hand, Shakespeare may imply that he is too harsh with his friend, and that the act of "excusing" gives an exaggerated importance to a minor offense. 17 The reader's difficulty with the sonnet reflects Shakespeare's difficulty with the thought. The poet is unable either wholly to blame or to exonerate, and the last line finds Shakespeare brought back to the unsatisfactory position of the first quatrain; he is an "accessary" "To that sweet thief which sourly robs from me." The traditional oxymoron of the last line restates the earlier comparisons, the "thief" is "sweet" although he "sourly robs," as the "bud" is "sweetest" although containing "loathsome canker."

In the above poem the act of writing poetry has become a reflection of the thought processes of the poet. The reader is presented with a self who attempts to discover the emotional response which will resolve the tensions created by a painful experience. To follow the movement of this poem the reader must join the poet in its center—within the experiencing mind of the persona. Poetry has become a means of self-discovery for the poet, for the necessity of subjecting the incoherence of strong emotion to the coherence of a literary form forces the crystallization of thought which is the poem. In sonnet 35 this process occurs in a single poem. More commonly we find Shakespeare's dissatisfaction with one verbalization of experience

17 Edward Hubler, p. 101, prefers this interpretation of the sonnet, saying that Shakespeare forgives a trespass and then, "apologizes for the presumption of forgiveness, for, in his words, 'excusing thy sins more than thy sins are.'"
leading him to attempt a second working out of his thought. This perhaps accounts for the large number of paired sonnets on one theme found in the sequence. Shakespeare's practice is here quite distinct from that of the other sonneteers, who use companion sonnets on one theme to reveal their poetic skill. In these cases the experience expressed and the poet's attitude toward this experience remain the same even though the presentation varies. With Shakespeare the poet's changing response to a situation motivates his reworking of the theme. Sonnets 57 and 58, for example, convey the poet's attitude toward the absence of the fair friend. Both comment on the poet's subservient position: he must wait upon the pleasure of the beloved. But in the first sonnet the ostensible response, though undercut by a current of irony, is loving humility,

Nor dare I question with my jealous thought,
Where you may be, or your affairs suppose,
But like a sad slave stay and think of nought
Save where you are, how happy you make those.
   So true a fool is love, that in your will,
   (Though you do any thing) he thinkes no ill.

In the second irony has become barely suppressed anger, and accusation overrides the poet's claim to patience.

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18 See my study of Watson's Hecatombastia, p. 108.

19 Daniel's practice in this respect is closest to Shakespeare's, for Daniel's sequence contains several sonnets linked by development of thought. But in the Delia the theme moves naturally from one sonnet to another, each building on its predecessor. There are no reversals of thought or shifts in attitude on the part of the poet, though he may utilize different arguments to support a single idea. Cf. above discussions of his sonnets on mutability and the poet's ability to eternize his mistress, pp. 197-199.
Be where you list, your charter is so strong,
That you your self may priviledge your time
To what you will, to you it doth belong,
Your self to pardon of selfe-doing crime.
   I am to waite, though waiting so be hell,
   Nor blame your pleasure be it ill or well.

That Shakespeare was consciously aware of poetry's power to
reveal the mind of the poet to himself as well as to an audience is
shown in sonnet 77, apparently written to accompany the gift of a
book of blank leaves. He contrasts the book with the "glass" and the
"dial," which reveal the passing of time to the friend. "Time's
thievish progress to eternity" will steal experiences from the mind
as it steals beauty from the face, but the book can provide solution,

Looke what thy memorie cannot containe,
Commit to these waste blakes [sic] and thou shalt find
Those children nurst, deliver'd from thy braine,
To take a new acquaintance of thy minde.

Shakespeare was aware that the act of writing down an experience could
invest it with such independence that the experience, thus fixed, must
thereafter strike its creator as to some extent unfamiliar, something
which was able "to take a new acquaintance" of the mind which had
originally created it.

The impression that Shakespeare's sonnets are often poems
written about and, to some extent, for himself is strengthened by the
large number of "private" poems contained in the sequence. Sonnet 35
is again a case in point. The actual occasion which gave rise to the
sonnet is never explained; the friend's "sensual fault" remains uniden-
tified. Shakespeare is not at all concerned to give a reader the sort
of information which would enable him to consider analytically the
the poet's situation. Instead we have only the poet's private response to his pain. And the same ambiguity marks the two preceding sonnets, also about this offense. In sonnet 34 Shakespeare declares, 'Th'offender's sorrow lends but weak reliefe/ To him that bears the strong offense's losse,' and implies that his friend's actions have brought him "disgrace." Yet in 36, apparently related to this group, the poet states, "I may not ever-more acknowledge thee,/ Last my bewailed guilt should do thee shame." This abrupt transfer of guilt leaves the audience utterly mystified.

Critics have proposed various explanations in attempts to supply the facts Shakespeare saw fit to ignore, and they have been provoked to various reactions by his omissions. Ivor Winters believes Shakespeare's lack of clarity to be one of his major weaknesses, stating, "... Shakespeare often allows his sensitivity to the connotative power of language to blind him to the necessity for sharp denotation, with the result that a line or passage or even a whole poem may disappear behind a veil of uncertainty."20 Of Winters comments,

No poem is wholly self-contained, but most poems work within frames of reference which are widely understood. This poem appears to have a very particular frame of reference about which it will always be impossible to be sure. The poem is almost all connotation, with almost no denotation; ... .
It would be easy to say that such a poem is a kind of forerunner of some of the deliberately obscure work of the past hundred years; but this work is all based on closely related theories—those of Mallarmé or of Pound, for example—and Shakespeare had no such theories. Shakespeare's ideas about

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the nature of poetry were those of his age, but he was often unable to write in accordance with them. Such a poem as this must have been the result of inadvertence. 21

Yet Shakespeare, in writing these "obscure" sonnets, is following the example of his age, for he writes his sonnets with a deep understanding of the relationship between post and poetry established by the sonnet sequence. Since the dominant functions of the sonnet sequence are to woo the beloved and to express the feelings of the poet, the only frame of reference necessary is that already understood by Shakespeare and his friend. The result is lyric "overheard" but not directed to an external audience.

Furthermore, the estrangement between Shakespeare and his "two loves" separated the poet from even the single audience traditionally set him by sequence convention. Critics have rightly commented that it is difficult to imagine the dark lady or the fair friend actually reading a number of the sonnets Shakespeare addresses to them. But Shakespeare seldom writes to woo; the disappointments suffered and his growing disillusionment with himself as well as with the faithless friend and mistress turned his sonnets ever more inward. In the sonnets of Sidney the sonnets directed outward to the mistress outnumber those sonnets in which the poet turns inward to examine or meditate upon his own emotions. In Shakespeare the opposite is true. A large number of the sonnets ostensibly written to the friend or dark lady

21Winters, p. 55.
belong to that category of imaginary letters mentally written and addressed, but never sent, that all lovers write. In these poems, to draw upon Northrup Frye, Shakespeare presents "the image in relation to himself." 22

22p. 249.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

In Shakespeare's sonnet sequence the possibilities always implicit in the genre find English expression. To use an emblem beloved of sonneteers: phoenix-like, Shakespeare sprang full grown from Petrarch’s ashes. But what of the apparently sudden demise of the vogue? Why did a genre exercising such fascination on Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare, Daniel, Drayton, and a host of minor sonneteers seem to lose its appeal for their successors?

The traditional answer is the exhaustion of the Petrarchan convention. Thus Lowes declares, "the sonnet became, in the hands of innumerable practitioners, a thing of frigid conceits worn bare by iteration; of servile borrowings; of artificial sentiment, flat as the lees and dregs of wine. One has only to read seriatus the Elizabethan sonnet cycles (with their glorious islets rising here and there out of the general base) to find every ear mark of the incorrigibly case-hardened convention."¹ This assertion is based on the common critical

¹John Livingston Lowes, Convention and Revolt in Poetry (New York, 1931), p. 104. Like most critics, Lowes exempts Shakespeare from the general condemnation, saying, "Will Shakespeare responded to the vogue and made of the sonnet, with lapses here and there, the vehicle of the very quintessence of poetry."
assumption that Elizabethan poets were attracted to the sonnet sequence by the convention that accompanied it, and this assumption, as we have seen, is only partially true. Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare all resisted the convention. Sidney takes great pains to distinguish the sincerity of his sequence from the pretensions of other poets; Spenser uses the convention only to reject it, and Shakespeare turns from it almost completely as inadequate for the emotions he is trying to express.

Further, critics sometimes seem to have depended on reverse reasoning, apparently using the decline of interest in the sonnet sequence as leading evidence for the disappearance of the Petrarchan convention. Actually, this sudden disappearance is more a myth of criticism than a reality. Even at the height of the English vogue, numerous sonnet sequences demonstrated the Proteus-like quality of the Petrarchan convention—its ability to assume the nuances of both complementary and competing conventions. Thus the Petrarchan convention, even in the most derivative Elizabethan sequences, is seldom found in an "undiluted" form; instead we find Petrarchan-Ovidian, as in Linowe and Barnes, Petrarchan-Fastoral, as in Lodge and Smith, Petrarchan-Anacreontic, as in Fletcher, Petrarchan-Religious, as in Constable, or Petrarchan-Metaphysical, as in Cowley. These various guises live on even after the vogue itself has waned. A glance at any anthology of the first fifty years of the seventeenth century supports this contention. The same images and themes used by the sonneteers appear and reappear, though in various metamorphoses.
The sonnet sequence itself, as the Renaissance understood it, took its time in disappearing. Modern critics have an understandable tendency to expect fourteen line sonnets in their sonnet sequences, but Renaissance poets were not so bound to mechanics. Petrarch's _Canzoniere_ contains a variety of verse forms in addition to the more numerous sonnets, and the majority of Elizabthan sonneteers followed his example. Some, indeed, such as Watson in his _Hecatompathia_, I. C., and Toft saw fit to scorn the "quatorains" altogether.

Thus Abraham Cowley's _The Mistress, or Several Copies of Love-Verses_, published in 1647, unquestionably links Cowley with earlier miscellany writers. With his preface to the 1668 edition of the work, we find ourselves back in Fletcher's coy world—where the desire to appear to write of personal experiences was with a self-conscious reluctance to be held personally accountable for all the wanderings of poetic fancy:

The second, part of his collected works is called, _The Mistress_ (or) _Love-Verses_; for so it is, that Poets are scarce thought Free-men of their company, without paying some duties, and obliging themselves to be true to Love. Sooner or later they must all pass through that Tryal, like some Mahometan Monks, that are bound by their order, once at least, in their life, to make a Pilgrimage to Mecca... 

In furtis Iuvenae; res sum; amor omnibus idem. But we must not always make a judgment of their manners from their writings of this kind; as the Romanists uncharitabile do of Pana, for a few lascivious Sonnets composed by him in his youth. It is not in this sense that Poetic is said to be a kind of Painting; it is not the Picture of the Poet, but of things and persons imagined by him. He may be in his own practice and disposition a Philosopher, nay a Stoick, and yet speak sometimes with the softness of an amorous Sampho.

... . . . . . . . . Neither would I here be misunderstood, . . . . as to be ashamed to be thought really in Love. On the contrary, I
cannot have a good opinion of any man who is not at least capable of being so. But I speak it to excuse some expressions (if such there be) which may happen to offend the severity of supercilious Readers; for much Excess is to be allowed in Love, and even more in Poetry; ... 2

The work itself contains almost a hundred poems of varied lyrical measures and contradictory moods. But the genealogy of The Mistress is clear; it is Petrarch Domn over. From the beginning of the sequence where Cowley firstprotests his freedom from love ("The Request") then immediately declares, "A pointed pain pierc'd deep my heart;/ A swift, cold trembling seiz'd on every part;" the reader is on familiar ground. Here we find the despairs, and persuasions, and recriminations of the poet's three-year courtship of a lady of high rank. Here also the runaway and the murdered heart, the "Vessel torn and shipwrecked" which "never more abroad shall come;/ Though it could next voyage bring the Indies home" ("Resolved to be Beloved"), the "Army" wasted "in vain,/ Before a City which will ne'er be tame" ("The Same"), the lady who, "like a Deity is grown" ("The Discovery"), and this familiar advice to Love,

I'll teach him a Receipt to make
Words that weep, and Tears that speak.
I'll teach him Sighs, like those in Death,
At which the Souls go out too with the breath: ("The Prophet")

At times Cowley sounds amazingly like Watson in the Necatompithia, despite the sixty-five years separating the publication dates of the

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2 Citations from Cowley in my text are from A. R. Waller, The English Writings of Abraham Cowley. 2 vols (Cambridge, 1905-6).
two works. And, throughout, his poems evince that hyperbolic literalization of metaphor characteristic of poets who seek to be witty at the expense of being convincing.

Cowley, a confirmed bachelor, never takes advantage of the sequence's invitation to personal expression. Like earlier dabbler with the genre, he uses the Petrarchan convention as frame and easy reference for flights of wit and rhetoric. But his work, like that of William Drummond of Hawthornden (1616), the Castara of William Habington (1634), and Pair Virtue, The Mistress of Phil'arie (1622) by George Wither, testifies to a continuing interest in and use of the conventional qualities of the Petrarchan sonnet sequence.

The convention continued, even if it lost its once numerous following. Donne, who is so often pictured as sweeping aside these last remnants of courtly love, was largely responsible for its survival; for he adapted the language of the Petrarchan convention to a posture

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3Thus Cowley, in "The Monopoly," writes,

What Mine of Sulphur in my breast do ly,
That feed th' eternal burnings of my heart?
Not Asia flames more fierce or constantly;
The sounding shop of Vulcan smoky art;
   Vulcan his shop has placed there,
   And Cupid's Forge is set up here.

With this compare Watson's more extended analogy:

There is a monstrous hill in Sicily soyle,
Where workes that limping God, which Vulcan sight,
And rebell Gyantes lurke, whose Ions did foyle,
When gainst the heau'ns they durst presume to fight;
   The toppe thereof breathes out a burning flame,
   And Flora sittes at bottome of the same.
My swelling heart is such an other hill,
Wherein a blinded God beares all the swaye, . . . (LVIII, The Hecatompathia)
of love considerably different from the original hopeless worship of an unobtainable lady. But what of the genre as opposed to the convention? At first glance the answer seems an unqualified no; it did not continue. This is puzzling, for if the exhaustion of a sterile convention did not drag its associated genre to oblivion, what reasons can we supply for its disappearance? The answer again lies in emphasizing the distinguishing characteristic of the genre—the relationship it established between the poet and his poetry.

As this work has attempted to demonstrate, the history of the English sonnet sequence reveals the efforts Renaissance poets made to adapt their theories and practices of poetry to the Petrarchan practice of poetry as a vehicle of self-expression. In most cases, the old way of viewing poetry prevailed, and the Petrarchan identification of poet

4 The omnipresent appearance of these metaphors in sonnet sequences allows Donne to use them in a condensed, elliptical manner.

In "The Sonne Rising" he bids the sun, "Looke, and to morrow late, tell mee./ Whether both the' Indias's of spice and Myne/ Be where thou lefts them, or lie here with mee." In "The Canonization" he declares, "The Phoenix ride hath more wit/ By us, we two being one, are it." Petrarchan attitudes toward the mistress are incorporated, though often with tongue in cheek, into Donne's love poems. In "The Baite," he tells his mistress, "If thou, be so seeming, beest loath,./ By Sunne, or Moon, thou darkest both,./ And if my selfe have leave to see,/ I need not their light, having thee." In "The Dampe" he combines the Petrarchan lover's accusation of cruelty with the "portrait in the heart" motif for a witty conceit:

When I am dead, and Doctors know not why,
And my friends curiosities
Will have me cut up to survey each part,
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.

His reasons for writing poetry are often reminiscent of sonnet sequence
with persona appears as a conventional frame for a number of separate
poems. Sidney, however, in *Astrophel and Stella*, as well as providing
secondary poets with an imitative pattern, created a sonnet sequence
unified by the dominant, individualised speaking voice of Astrophel
and further suggested that his persona might be transparent—a mask
for the poet himself. Sidney was followed, though at a distance, by
Daniel and the Watson of *The Teares of Fancie*, who, lacking indi-
vidualised personae, sought through narrative, linking devices, meta-
phorical consistency and thematic development to create unified
sequences. In the *Amoretti*, the I of the sequence is clearly in-
tended as the poet himself, but Spenser's interest was in the creation
of a pattern of ideal reciprocal love in contrast to that usually
celebrated in the sonnet sequence, and the "expressive" possibilities
of the genre, as contrasted to the narrative, dramatic, or meditative,
are not emphasized. In Shakespeare, however, persona has dissolved
into poet, and poetry is used as a direct expression of the most

convention. Despairing of winning his love, Donne declares, "And all
my treasure, which should purchase thee,/ Sighs, tears, and oaths,
and letters I have spent, ..." ("Lovers infinitenesse.") In "The
triple Poole" he is driven to say, "I thought, if I could draw my
painses,/ Through Rimes vexation, I should them allay,/ Griefe brought
to numbers cannot be so fierce,/ For, he tames it, that fetters it in
verse." Donne's use of Petrarchan motifs is not always, however, flipp-
pant or sardonic. They occur in his most serious poems. In his "Holy
Sonnets," for example, he writes, "Marke in my heart, O Soule, where
thou dost dwell,/ The picture of Christ crucified, and tell/Wether
that countenance can thee affright, ..." (XIII), a somber use of the
"portrait in heart" motif he used so lightly in "The Dams." And in
the next sonnet, XIV, he reverses the Petrarchan comparison of the
lady to a besieged fortress to beg God to "batter" the "usuert towne"
which is Donne's heart. Citations from Donne are from *The Poems of
private and deeply felt of the poet's emotions. The genre finds complete expression.

And, paradoxical as it may seem, the success of the sonnet sequence accounts for its downfall. It was the vehicle of a new poetic. Once this poetic was grasped, the necessity for the catalytic agent disappeared. A poet need no longer depend on the "convention" of self-expression found in the sonnet sequence, nor limit himself to its customary concentration on love, once he sees self-expression to be a natural and understood function of poetry. This does not mean there was a widespread rejection of the old manner of writing poetry. George T. Wright comments that "The 'I' of most English lyric poems is identified by his vocation of song, not by his physical and social existence as a man. The lyric persona is man singing, man as composer or singer of songs."5 The pose of "man singing" continued to be the most popular role of the Renaissance poet. But the sonnet sequence did serve to make the poet self-conscious about his relationship with the previously unobtrusive lyric "I." Wright further comments that in the "earlier lyrics" the poet "takes no pains either to identify his own person with that of the persona or to disclaim any such identification."6 But we have seen that the sonnet-sequence move toward particularization led several composers who preferred the pose of "man singing" to disclaim the implied identification of poet with persona.

5Wright, p. 30.
6Ibid., p. 36.
while it encouraged others to attempt to blur the distinction between biographical and poetic reality. If he chose, the poet of the 1590's could, through an individualized speaking voice, through focus on the figure of the poet/persons, and through specific non-conventional details, emphasize the historical, unique aliveness of a particular "I." He could invite the reader to consider not only a given subject, but the poet's individual response to that subject. And he could accomplish this in the framework of a single poem.

With this discovery, the sonnet sequence lost its unique generic significance. Its decline was inevitable, and was accelerated by its association with a posture of love inharmonious with the Jacobean spirit. The sonnets of Michael Drayton provide interesting, though abbreviated, comment on the decline of the sonnet sequence, for Drayton was the only sonneteer who, attracted to the genre at its inception, continued to work at his sequence after the vogue's loss of popularity. Drayton's first sequence, Idea's Mirror (1594) celebrated a conventionally Petrarchan and featureless love. Drayton, at times, paid lip service to the expressive radical of presentation, but his sequence is largely faithful to the persuasive tradition of praise and lament. The figure of the persona seldom intrudes, for the poet's

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7 The final form of Drayton's Idea appeared in 1619. Twenty of its sonnets date from 1594, nineteen from 1599, seven from 1600, one from 1602, and seven from 1605. The remaining ten make their first appearance in 1619. See Tillotson and Newdigate, p. 137 ff.
attention is usually focused on the lady or the conceit. The introductory sonnet to the sequence calls it, the "mirror of Ideas Praise," and the first sonnet bids the mistress, "Reade heere (sweet Mayd) the story of my wo." But by 1599, when the sequence, now titled Idea, next appears, Drayton has reevaluated the purpose of the sequence. Attention has shifted from the mistress to the figure of the poet himself. The introductory tone struck in 1599, and retained throughout later revisions, is in direct contrast to his earlier attitude. In the poem entitled "To the Reader of these Sonnets," Drayton declares,

Into these Loves, who but for Passion looks;  
At this first sight, here let him lay them by!  
And seek elsewhere in turning other books,  
Which better may his labour satisfy.  

No far-fetched Sigh shall ever wound my breast!  
Love from mine eye, a Tear shall never wring!  
No "Ah me!"s my whining sonnets drest!  
A Libertine! fantastically I sing!  

My Verse is the true image of my Mind,  
Ever in motion, still desiring change;  
And as thus, tovariety sic inclined;  
So in all humours sportively I range!  

My Muse is rightly of the English strain,  
That cannot long one fashion entertain.

8 For a more detailed account of the 1594 Idea's Mirror see Chapter Five.  
10 Y. St. Clair, "Drayton's First Revision of his Sonnets," SP, XXXVI (1939), p. 40 ff, alludes to this shift. He speculates that the difference between the 1594 and 1599 versions was caused by Drayton's intervening experience as a playwright, but does not supply specific evidence for this thesis.  
11 Citations from Idea (1619) in my text are from Elizabethan Sonnets, ed. Sir Sidney Lee (New York, 1964).
This avowal has been used as testimony of Drayton's lack of sincerity. But, on the contrary, it is the manifesto in which he declares he will be sincere, but to "the true image of my Mind." One sees in this last quatrain an attitude toward his subject rather similar to that expressed by Montaigne, in his essay "Of Repentance,"

I cannot keep my subject still. It goes along befuddled and staggering, with a natural drunkenness. I take it in this condition, just as it is at the moment I give my attention to it. . . . This is a record of various changeable occurrences, and of irresolute and, when it so befalls, contradictory ideas: whether I am different myself, or whether I take hold my subject in different circumstances and aspects. So, all in all, I do indeed contradict myself now and then; but truth, as Demades said, I never contradict. If my mind could gain a firm footing, I would not make essays, I would make decisions; but it is always in apprenticeship and on trial. 12

Drayton's intent to focus the sequence on the experiences of the persona receives further emphasis in the sonnet written to initiate the 1619 sequence. By this time Drayton has worked on his sequence for at least twenty-five years. Not unnaturally, he views his sonnets as the results of a long voyage:

Like an adventurous seafarer am I,
Who hath some long and dangerous voyage been;
And called to tell of his discovery,
How far he sailed, what countries he had seen;

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Thus in my Love, Time calls me to relate
My tedious travels, and oft-varying fate. (I)

In keeping with these announced changes of attitude, the majority of the sonnets Drayton adds in his later editions of Idea create a

picture of the poet/persona. Sonnet 21, first printed in 1619, is indicative of this trend:

A WITLESS Gallant, a young wench that woced
(Yet his dull spirit, her not one jot could move),
Intreated me, as e'er I wished his good,
To write him but one Sonnet to his Love.
When I, as fast as e'er my pen could trot,
Poured out what first from quick Invention came;
Nor never stood one word thereof to blot;
Much like his wit, that was to use the same.
But with my verse, he his Mistress won;
Who doated on the dolt beyond all measure.
But see! For you, to heaven for praise I run,
Andransack all APOLLO's golden treasure!
Yet by my fruth, this Fool, his Love obtains;
And I lose you, for all my wit and pains!

The poet's stance is that of a man telling a joke on himself; he is amused and exasperated at the same time. The lady's role in the anecdote is important only as it adds to the nuances of emotion experienced by the persona.

In sonnet 24, first printed in 1602, Drayton, like Sidney, answers criticism of those who say, "This man is not in love!" He replies by explaining his individual psychology:

O, judge not rashly, gentle Sir, I pray!
Because I loosely trifle in this sort,
As one that fain his sorrows would beguile:
You now suppose me, all this time, in sport;
And please yourself with this conceit the while.
Ye shallow Censures! sometimes, see ye not,
In greatest perils, some men pleasant be;
Where Fame by death is only to be got,
They resolute! So stands the case with me.
Where other men, in depth of Passion cry;
I laugh at Fortune, as in jest to die!

In sonnets 31 and 49 (both first printed in 1599) he stoutly defends his manner of writing verse against hostile critics. In sonnet 47,
first printed in 1605, he refers to his success in writing for the theater. In sonnet 51, also printed in 1605, he meditates on the things, "mine eyes amazedly have seen/ ESSEX's great fall! TYRONE his peace to gain!/ The quiet end of that long living Queen!/ This King's fair Entrance! And our peace with Spain!"

Drayton at times emphatically rejects his old practice of using the sonnet sequence to praise the lady. Sonnet 4, first added in 1602, begins as an exercise in the rhetorical blason,

BRIGHT STAR of Beauty! on whose Eyelids sit
A thousand nymph-like and enamoured Graces,
The Goddesses of Memory and Wit,
Which there in order take their several places.
In whose dear Bosom, sweet delicious Love
Lays down his Quiver, which he once did bear,
Since he that blessed Paradise did prove;
And leaves his mother's lap, to sport him there.

But the angry voice of the poet suddenly intrudes,

Let others strive to entertain with words!
My soul is of a braver mettle made:
I hold that vile, which vulgar Wit affords,
In me's that faith which Time cannot invade!

Drayton's new attitude toward love, that most commonly expressed in his later sonnets, is flippant, cynical, objective, even directly hostile to love and the lady. Although he retains a number of more idealistic sonnets from Idea's Mirror, he usually drops those in which the persona's attitude toward the mistress is that of the conventional lamenting lover. Drayton also moves from derivative imagery drawn from the Petrarchan convention towards imagery which expresses his own

\[\text{13 Cf. Idea's Mirror 15, 16, 29, 30, 35, 39, 40, 41, 42, and 45.}\]
interests. Tillotson speculates that it was this later tendency which led Drummond, whose own sonnet sequence was more traditional, to comment that Drayton, "by I know not what artificial Similes . . . sheweth well his mind, but not the Passion." 14 And, finally, Drayton's sequence shows a movement from the rhetorical patterns which call attention to the poem as artifice, as something made by a poet, to the colloquial rhythms and diction which carry the speaking voice of the expressing persons.

The final impression of the 1619 Idea is not, however, that of a unified work of art. Idea's Mirror, in which Drayton leans heavily on the encompassing Petrarchan convention, has more unity of tone and style. By 1599 Drayton had chosen to sacrifice consistency to individuality, and in all the later revisions, he is at least constant to this decision. He has grasped the sonnet sequence's focus on the specific emotions of an individualized persona, but his persona is elusive. Considered as single poems, or in short groups, Drayton's sonnets please, but his sequence, as a sequence, falls between two poles. He has partially, but not completely, freed himself from the attitudes of the Petrarchan convention, but he continues to identify the expressive use of lyric with the sonnet sequence genre. Yet Idea lacks the dominant emotional experience which could stabilize the fluctuations of the persona. The sequences of Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare show the reactions of the poet to a single emotional experience. Love is seen from the viewpoint of the persona, and the

14 Quoted in Tillotson and Newdigate, p. 139.
persona defines himself in relation to this central emotion. Drayton's sonnets, written over a period of twenty-five years, show no such unity. The attitudes of the poet have changed over the years, and Drayton's persona reveals a slightly different face in the varying strata of the several revisions. Further, treatment of the persona changes from sonnet to sonnet. At times, particularly in the later sonnets, he is insistently visible; at times he retreats toward anonymity. Drayton's prefatory poem "To the Reader of these sonnets," (already quoted) shows Drayton's awareness of this inconsistency, and his practice, begun in 1599, of giving separate titles to a number of his sonnets perhaps further acknowledges Drayton's effort to free himself from the single emphasis demanded by the sonnet sequence.

If Drayton is caught between two poles, the poetry of John Donne demonstrates the result of the expressive radical of presentation cut loose from its hampering sonnet sequence context.\(^{15}\) In Donne's poetry we find the dependence on Petrarchan metaphors (though usually used as ironic counterpoint to a non-Petrarchan attitude toward love), the hostility toward or ignoring of an exterior audience, the use of the distinctly individualized speaking voice, and the creation of poetry of limited or "private" rather than "public" significance.

\(^{15}\) The fact that Donne was often attempting to convey, in a single poem, a persona as emphatically experienced as that created in an entire sonnet sequence, may help account for the insistent strength of the opening lines of many of his poems. He must shock his reader, at once, into an awareness of the individual experiencing the expressed emotion.
characteristic of the genre. In Donne, as well, we find the sonneteers' struggle to find new images or refurbish old to express the supposed uniqueness of their experiences, and the occasional triumph of metaphor at the expense of significance. It is difficult, almost impossible, to believe that Donne could have written as he did without the examples of the sonnet sequences. And it can be no accident that Donne, turning from love to religion, saw fit to express his deep fears of death and sense of unworthiness in twenty-six Holy Sonnets.16 Nor is it accidental that Milton, skilled in matters of poetic decorum, chose the single sonnet in which to express some of his most intimate emotions.

I know of no critic who doubts Milton's "autobiographical" sincerity in his "On His Blindness," nor of any critic who claims Donne had other than himself in mind when writing,

I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
Swear by Thy self, that at my death Thy Son
Shall shine as he shines now and heretofore;
And, having done that, Thou hast done.
I fear no more. ("To Christ")

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16 The religious sonnet sequences have not been considered in this study. A number were written, many by writers who had first tried their skills with the subject of profane love. Thus we find Henry Constable's Spirituall Sonnettes to the honour of God and bys Sayntes, not printed until the nineteenth century but ascribed to 1594, Barnaby Barnes, A Divine Centurie of Spirituall Sonnetes (1595), and H. Lok's Sonets of Christian Passions (1596) preceding Donne's Holy Sonnets. These sequences, and their continental predecessors, demonstrate the early desire of Renaissance poets to apply the practices of the sonnet sequence to a new subject. One might add to this expansion George Chapman's brief A Coronet for his Mistress Philosophy (1595) in which he pointedly renounces "Muses that sing love sensory Experie, . . . ."
And few yet deny Shakespeare's actual involvement with a fair youth and a dark woman.

The use of poetry as a vehicle of self-expression is so common to us today that critics have been justly at much expense to remind us that other quite different uses have been prevalent in the past. But in the 1590's, and for a time thereafter, a shift of sensibility took place that led to the writing of Shakespeare's sonnets and the poetry of John Donne. The factors involved in the shift are complex; corresponding changes may be noted in drama in the growing use of scenes of self-analysis, and in prose in the shift to a plainer, more personal style. Thus to single out the lyric, and to concentrate on one factor involved in its development, is of necessity to over-simplify. But poets descend from other poets, despite an occasional impression that one has sprung full grown from some critic's inventive brow. And efforts to account for the appearance of Shakespeare and Donne lead one persuasively to the sonnet sequence. The genre of the sonnet sequence does embody a new poetic, and it is this new poetic which attracted the attention of the major poets of the period—Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare. The secondary poets of the Renaissance, like the secondary poets of any period, attempted, although haltingly, to follow their leads. The sonnet sequence, called the "adopted way of the old,"17 was actually the stimulus to the new, being instrumental in the shift of sensibility which took place in the last decade of the sixteenth century.

17Cruttwell, p. 2.
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