THE SCOTTISH SONNET AND RENAISSANCE POETRY

by

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To my parents

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CHAPTER ONE

THE SCOTTISH SONNET

Before attempting to relate the ideas and techniques of the Scottish sonnet to a European background, one must first establish whether Scottish sonneteering is a valuable study in its own right. This is after all the period of Scottish poetry, frequently dismissed under the metaphor of wilderness. Such a judgment results from undue parochialism and a refusal to accept imitation and adaptation as valid poetic pursuits. It stems from Scottish critics searching for national characteristics and outraged by heavy foreign influence.

The main concern of this study is to trace the prevalent attitudes to love, the major themes, the sources and stylistic devices used in the Scottish sonnet of the renaissance. It attempts to trace their variations as the sonnet’s popularity grew and compare them with similar movements abroad. At this point, I shall isolate some of the best Scottish sonnets and discuss their claims to be valued as good poetry. They are not indeed isolated phenomena, but may be taken as characteristic of their authors, when composing effectively. None of Drummond’s sonnets are included because his standing is generally accepted.

STEWART OF BALDYNEIS

Of Ambitious Men

As dryest dust - winddrift in drouthie day -
Quhyls lychts on lords And ladies of renoune,
Quhyls on thair face And quhyls on thair array
And quhyls upon Ane kingis statlie croune,
Yit as it cums sum ay are bussie boune
To cleinge it thence so that it finds no rest,
Quhill to the erth it be again Snipt doune:
So mortall men quho dois thair mynd molest
To be in gloir coequall with the best,
2.

Thocht for ane space thay volt with valtring wind,  
Doune to the ground thay sall againe be drest;  
For few aloft may fortouns firmtie find,  
Bot ay the suyfter And moir high thay brall,  
Moir low And suddane cums their feirfull fall.

Stewart of Baldynneis was the first Scottish sonneteer to follow the inspiration of James VI's critical treatise the \textit{Reulis and Cautelis}.\textsuperscript{1} The title of the poem reflects the general interest in moral and social problems which runs throughout his verse. The sonnet also highlights his ingenious use of imagery, his interest in stylistic devices and his feeling for Scots as a poetic medium.

The theme of the poem – that presumptuous ambition will result in a fall – echoes one of James VI's major philosophical tenets. Stewart expresses it first through the image of "dust", which stretches from 1.1 to 1.7. The dust follows the well known course of Fortune's wheel, suggested implicitly by the "wind" of 1.1. It rises from the ground and climbs to "lords and ladies of renoune" or even reaches the acme of achievement in "ane kingis statlie croune." The path downwards is seen in terms of being brushed off and by 1.7 it has returned "to the erth" again. The idea has been successfully dramatised and if Stewart had done no more, the quality of this portion could not be denied.

But he has done more. He has underlined the major theme of ambition, with its concomitant 'vanity'. The dust is cast down by courtiers anxious to retain their appearance of elegance and nobility. The uncertainty of fortune is thus in part due to the fickle principles of those in power, guided by appearance rather than worth.

\textsuperscript{1} James VI, "Ane Schort Treatise, Containing Some Reulis and Cautelis to be Obseruit and Eschewit in Scottis Poesie" in \textit{The Essaves of a Prentise in the Divine Art of Poesie}, (Edinburgh, 1585).
On a more general level too, the return of dust to dust inevitably suggests decay and death. The fate of all mortality is eventually the same. Ambitious men however "find no rest" before the grave. This many sided approach to an apparently simple theme is characteristic of Stewart's ingenuity.

He is also very interested in stylistic techniques. Although this sonnet is not one of his virtuoso efforts, it is noticeable that he uses the repetition of "quhyls" to underline the various steps in ambition's ascent. After the zenith has been reached, the repetition ceases for two lines, representing the extent of the fall. The variation "quhill" with its final sound then marks the return to obscurity. This technique is coupled with the use of Scots words like "drouthie" and "bussie boun" to gain force through sound and association. There is for example more resistance implied in the sound of "cleinge" than its English equivalent "cleanse", and Baldynneis knows when to introduce Scots words most effectively.

The second seven lines as it were represent the Moralitas, with each image being translated in terms of its abstract equivalent. The dust = men; the wind = Fortune; the crown = aloft; earth = doune to the ground; the noble's array = gloir and the death theme is echoed by the "feirfull fall" of l. 14. Baldynneis as usual has worked out the plan of his poem carefully, leaving no detail unaccounted for. At the same time the two parts of the poem are marked off stylistically by the as/so form, yet linked by the underlying image of Fortune's wheel, never explicitly mentioned, but always imaginatively present.

Alliteration is intelligently used to emphasise moments of
crisis in the argument as in ll. 8 and 10, while the antithesis of
ll. 13 and 14 expresses linguistically the theme of extremities in
life. Scottish words are still introduced to strengthen
alliteration ("fortouns firmtie") or to add drama to the picture
("brall"). Baldynneis in short has a firm grasp of his medium
and a knowledge of rhetoric rivalled by few. To these he adds
sharp vision, careful planning of form and ingenious treatment of
theme or imagery. At his best he is a superb craftsman, a 'makar'
in the true sense of the word.

ALEXANDER MONTGOMERIE

Of the Iniquitie of Man

Iniquitie on eirth is so increst,
All flesh bot feu with falset is defyld,
Givin ouir of God, with gredynes beguyld;
So that the puir, but pitie, ar opprest.
God in his justice dou na mair digest
Syk sinfull suyn with symonie defyld,
Bot must revenge, thair yces ar so vyld,
And pour doun plagues of famin, suord, and pest.
Aryse, O Lord, deluyer from the lave
Thy faithfull flock befor that it infect.
Thou sees hou Satan sharps for to dissave,
If it were able, euen thy aniu elect.
Sen conscience, love, and cheritie all laiks,
Lord, short the season, for the chosens saiks.

Writing his sonnets at the same time as Stewart, he shares
the latter's intelligent use of Middle Scots as a medium. This
sonnet is an example of the rhetorical pulpit-style poetry at which
he excelled. But his love sonnets, narrative and allegorical
verse are also of a high standard.

The first quatraine begins with a general statement of the
situation, devoting a line to iniquity itself, then one to false-
hood, avarice and oppression respectively. The heavy alliteration
on 'f' 'g' and 'p' gives the metre a slow, majestic rhythm,
accentuated by the occasional braking use of parenthesis. The harsh theology of the poem matches the harsh sounds and the doleful metre, for Montomerie accepts that vice is widespread and many are already outlawed from grace. The plea of the remaining lines will be for the "feu".

In the second quatrain the attitude alters from statement to advice. The harsh theology increases with an appeal to divine justice rather than mercy and the hope of punishment through "famin, suord, and pest." The sense of rising to a climax is strengthened by use of alliteration in every line and especially the satanic 's's of l. 6, while phrases like "sinfull suyn" and "vyces vyld" express the extremity of a passion threatening to defeat the capacity for expression. Yet the slow march of the rhythm and the use of parenthesis (l.7) remains constant. Montomerie skilfully controls the floodgates of indigation till the outburst of l.9:

Aryse, O Lord, delyuer from the lave.

This direct approach to the divinity, coming from a devout Catholic, makes a mockery of those critics, who identify it as a solely Protestant attitude.

The climax having been achieved, statement gives way to dramatisation and moral abstractions are converted into the Christian imagery of flock and fold. The use of parenthesis as a slowing element in the style continues, giving it a periodic form. But the alliteration, despite a repetition of the serpentine 's' as an evocation of satanic atmosphere, disappears in l.12 for the first time since l.1. Even the commanding tone of l.9 quickly converts itself into one of passionate rationalisation.

The plea throughout has been for the saved rather than the
sinners. It is probably therefore a comment on the increasing persecution of Catholics within Scotland.¹ Retaining the same sonorous roll of rhythm, words, alliteration and parenthesis, Montgomerie has set the scene, mapped out his scheme of revenge and acquainted God with the likely consequences of inaction. His is the passionate rhetoric of the pulpit, rising from comment to counsel and finally to command. He has used statement, argument and imagery in successive attempts at expressing his point of view. Finally, in sermon fashion he sums up with the call for an early Day of Judgment.

This final couplet brings the welcome return of reason after passionate involvement. The triple phrase "conscience, love and charitie" echoes "faith, love and charity", being its equivalent in a social context. But it is also an answer to the severity of the triple punishment suggested in 1. 8 - "famin, suord and pest." Justice demands harsh sentences for those deeply committed to sin. Montgomerie's is an uncompromising but fair philosophy, though lacking in theological ideas of mercy. As a poet he is to be complimented on the slow march of this sonnet, rising to a passionate climax before subsiding into rationality again. The harshness of the alliterative consonants and the severity of his attitudes make Montgomerie's sonnets masculine in texture and theme. Their orderly form, masterly use of rhetoric and skilful variations of tone or argument all add to this original impression.

One sonnet however cannot do justice to the range of his themes and techniques. The methods appropriate for religious exhortation would be unsuitable when pleading for a pension.

Remember thou in Aesope of a taill?
A louing dog wes of his maister fane;
To faun on him wes all his pastym hail.
His courteous maister clappit him agane.
By stood ane asse, a beist of blunter brane,
Perceiving this, bot looking to no freet,
To pleis hir maister with the counterpane,
Sho clambe on him with hir foull clubbit feet.
To play the messan thoght sho wes not meit,
Sho meinit weill, I grant; hir mynd wes guid:
Bot whair sho troude hir maister suld hir treit,
They battound hir whill that they sau hir bluid.
So stands with me, who loues with all my haurt
My maister best: some takes it in ill pait.

Montgomerie is here referring to his own estrangement from James VI. He is addressing a fellow-poet (Robert Hudson), who he hopes will intervene and persuade James to restore his pension. The opening in contrast with the high style of the earlier example is almost colloquial. The conscious use of rhetorical tricks gives way to a simple narrative style, reminiscent of Henryson in The Morall Fabillis.

The sonnet itself is set in the fable form and the story is developed in Montgomerie's usual logical fashion. The first two quatrains deal with the dog and ass respectively, while the third points the conclusion and the final couplet applies it to the poet's own situation. It is noticeable that Montgomerie keeps his sentence structure very simple and almost always uses the line as a sense-unit. This is especially true of the first four lines, each of which adds one important piece of information. Although the syntax becomes slightly more complicated later, the first enjambement is in the final couplet. This seems to have been an intentional device, for
it throws emphasis on to the isolated phrase, "some taks it in ill pairt", which for Montgomerie is the crux of the situation.

Henryson in the prologue to his Morall Fabillis disclaimed any knowledge of rhetoric. One might be tempted to claim that in this sonnet, Montgomerie is following him in "hamelie language." Yet both pay close attention to style. There are for example nine different vowel sounds in the first three lines. Ll. 2 and 3 have a parallel construction, with variation introduced in the word-play on 'fane' and 'faun', while the overall picture is built up from disjointed pieces of information in ballad fashion.

The comparative clumsiness of the ass is represented by alliteration on 'p' and 'b', as well as in the phrase "foull clubbit feet", which is as cumbersome as the event it describes. The introduction of "freet" in the sense of 'omen' as a rhyming word is rather weak, but "counterpane" (= a similar act) fulfills both rhyming and meaning requirements admirably. The third quatraining introduces Montgomerie's parenthetic style again, while the contrast between generous intention and unfortunate outcome is emphasised by an alliteration contrast. The 'm's of the ass's naive aspirations are quickly brought face to face with the 'b's of "battound" and "bluid". This underlining of thematic points by alliteration is one of Montgomerie's favourite devices.

The application of the fable is particularly apt. Montgomerie cannot openly accuse the king of ingratitude, so he takes refuge behind the word 'some'. Yet the implication clearly is that the master or king was the first to object to the ass's foolish gesture. The fable device is thus used to make indirectly a point, which could not be broached directly. At the same time subtle rhetorical
tricks like the phrasing of the last couplet throw the reader's attention on to phrases which Montgomerie wants emphasised. A master of the flamboyant techniques of pulpit oratory, he also shows himself adept at narrative and less obvious persuasive devices.

The sonnet is of course primarily a love genre and Montgomerie has a number of works dealing with this subject. The following example may be taken as typical.

I dreamit ane dreame, o that my dreame wer trew!
Me thocht my maistris to my chalmer came,
And with hir harmeles handis the cowrteingis drew,
And sueitlie callit on me by my name:
"Art ye on sleip," quod sche, "o fy for schame!
Haue ye nocht tauld that luifaris takis no rest?"
Me thocht I answert, "trew it is, my dame,
I sleip nocht, so your luif dois me molest."
With that me thocht hir nicht-gowne of schc cuist,
Liftit the claiss and lichtit in my armis;
Hir Rosie lippis me thocht on me sche thirst,
And said, "may this nocht stanche yow of your harmes!"
"Mercy, Madam," me thocht I menit to say,
Bot quhen I walkennit, alace, sche was away.

One notices at once the sensuality present in this work. The words "maistris" and "chalmer" introduce physical undertones, which are fulfilled when "hir nicht-gowne of schc cuist". In this Montgomerie echoes Wyatt and especially the second stanza of "They fle from me that sometyme did me seke". He also vies with the English author in his power of dramatisation. The evocative setting, the dramatic drawing of the curtain, the hurriedly exchanged dialogue and the apparent moment of ultimate joy follow each other with expert timing. Then just as the climax appears to have been reached, there is the inevitable "peripeteia", expressed in the melancholy, pause-laden last line.

These are the immediate effects which Montgomerie achieves. As usual there are others, not quite so apparent, but nevertheless
intended. For example the poet was highly critical of courtly love traditions, and, like Chaucer, enjoyed satirising them. This he does by making the poet complain of his sleeplessness while actually asleep. It is thus a love founded on imagination rather than actuality and as such deserves imaginary satisfaction. Yet love is also paradoxical as Petrarchan and courtly writers had both attested. Montgomerie follows the tradition when he refers to the lady's "harmeles handis", before making her comment on her lover's "harmes". This introduces all the oppositions between beauty and cruelty; virtuous intention and vicious effect, which are at the base of most love poetry in the 16th century. While concentrating on the major matters of atmosphere and dramatic presentation, Montgomerie does not omit the chance to make minor, often profound, comments by way of aside.

Stylistic devices are not very noticeable in this poem, although the internal rhyme on "nocht" and "thocht" is continued throughout. The quiet alliteration on 'm', 'h' and 'l' which is meant to evoke the dream atmosphere is broken by the harsher sounds of the dialogue, but Montgomerie was clearly more concerned with situation than style in this instance. Indeed it is his virtuosity as a sonneteer, his ability to range over a wide variety of themes, stylistic levels and rhetorical devices, which make him an outstanding practitioner in the genre.

WILLIAM FOWLER

The day is done, the sunn doth ells declyne, 
Night now approaches, and the Moone appeares, 
The twinkling starrs in firmament dois schyne, 
Decoring with the poolles there circled spheres; 
The birds to nests, wyld beasts to denns reteirs, 
The moving leafes unmoved now repose, 
Dewe dropps dois fall, portraits of my teares,
The waves within the seas theme calmye close:
To all things nature ordour dois Impose,
But not to love that proudlye dothe me thrall,
Quha all the dayes and night, but change or choyse,
Steirs up the coales of fyre unto my fall,
And sawes his breirs and thrones within my hart,
The fruits quhairoff ar doole, greiff, grones and smart.

William Fowler is not one of the best Scottish sonneteers, but even he can produce excellent work, as in this sonnet. His favourite 'listing' technique is for once adapted to avoid monotony, while his interest in nature adds a quality of detailed observation to the poem. Despite a great deal of mediocrity, one cannot dismiss an author, who can occasionally produce verse of such high quality.

Fowler was the first Scottish sonneteer to be heavily influenced by Petrarch and the theme here expounded comes from Statius via Petrarch. The lover mournfully contrasts the harmony of nature with his own chaos, its sleep with his sleeplessness. Fowler begins by banishing both day and sun, before accepting their antitheses, night and the moon. The simplicity of diction and syntax which is evident in this opening couplet, characterises the whole of the octet. Using only three adjectives in the space of eight lines, the poet embarks on a simplified panoramic approach. The first quatrains deals with the heavens (sun, moon, stars, spheres) and the second with earth (birds, beasts, leaves, dewdrops).

In the octet Fowler achieves three main effects. By concentrating on isolated elements like animals scurrying to their lairs or leaves lying limp on the branches, he builds up a convincing general picture of Nature. Its orderliness however is also accentuated, for he remains true to the world system throughout. Beginning with the heavens, he descends rapidly to the levels of
animals, birds and plants. Even the elements are all covered. The sun represents fire, the atmosphere - air, the world - earth, and the tears, dewdrops or waves - water.

This orderly progression is reinforced by a simple, orderly style. Adjectives are kept to a minimum. Apposition clauses are preferred to connectives, of which there is only one. The diction is throughout simple and the only hint of a more complex rhetorical technique lies in the "moving" / "unmoved" word echo of l. 6.

Order and simplicity on thematic and stylistic levels are Fowler's first principles in the octet.

The sestet provides a marked contrast. The earlier situation is summed up in l. 9. Then the change is made from nature in general to the poet in particular, from macrocosm to microcosm. All the elements were mentioned in the portrait of Nature; only 'fire' dominates the lover's soul. The imagery of Petrarchan torment invades the peaceful, ordered scene. Thraldom, "coals of fire", "briars" and "thorns" conquer a world of harmony. Fowler links the two passages by using the fruit and sowing metaphors of the last couplet to retain a nature leitmotiv. This bridging function is also fulfilled by the phrase "days and nights", which echoes ll. 1 and 2, while stressing the continuity of the poet's grief.

But if the lover's chaotic state is expressed by a change of imagery and angle of vision, it is also suggested syntactically. The connectives, absent in the octet, return in the sestet, giving a looser structure. The simple phraseology is replaced by a complex web of subordinate clauses, mirroring the poet's own confusion. Rhetorical tricks are employed to underline his growing desperation.
The favourite one is that of doublets, occasionally alliterating as in "chaine or choise". They also reinforce the loose syntactic form of the sestet, culminating in the quadruplet of l. 14, "doole, greiff, grones and smart".

This sonnet then impresses by various types of progression. The thematic advance from macrocosm to microcosm, from order to chaos, from rest to restlessness is underlined by alteration of imagery, syntax and elemental theory. One moves rapidly from heaven to earth and from thence to the hell of the poet's mind, guided first of all by Fowler's eye for detail in Nature and secondly by his skill in depicting Petrarchan misery. One can endure his less inspired efforts, if occasionally one is rewarded by a work of this standard.

ALEXANDER CRAIG

The Persian King in danger to be dround,
Ask'd if no helpe in humane hands did stand,
The Skipper then cast in the Salt profound,
Some Persians braue, & brought the King to land.
Then Xerxes crowns the Skipper with his hand,
Who saues the King deserv's (quoth he) a crowne:
But he at once to kill him gau command,
Die, die, said he, who did my Persians drowne.
My ladie faire, a Xerxes proud doth prowe,
My worthles Verse she doth reward with gold:
But (O allace) she lets me die for loue,
And now I rew that I haue bin so bold.
As Xerxes crownd, and kild his man; right so
Shee seemes a frind, and proues a mortall foe.

This sonnet from the Amorose Songes of Alexander Craig has been chosen for three reasons. The aim in this chapter is to present poems which are typical of their authors as well as good examples of their skill. This sonnet, although by no means perfect, seems to fulfil both requirements. Also a text of his works is difficult to obtain and some example is necessary for those readers
unable to gain access to the Hunterian Volume. Finally it is necessary to challenge the condemnation of Craig as a pedant and worthless artist.¹

Craig's vast classical knowledge, far from being an impediment is the strongest weapon in his armoury. For any amorous situation he can find an ancient analogy, as the above example suggests. The appearance/reality contrast in the lady was a popular theme in renaissance sonneteering. It had often been expressed using 'mask' and 'clothes' metaphors, by direct antitheses between love and cruelty, by suggesting malevolent mythological influences, but never before by a reference to Herodotus. This is Craig's first strength - originality through unusual associations.

But his classical allusions are always both apt and vivid. The story of Xerxes and the captain is interesting in itself, embodying action, misunderstanding, human passion and a romantic setting. It is also an excellent parallel for the poet's situation, for Penelope is his patron, rewarding him with money as Xerxes gifted his crown to the captain. Like the captain he has devised ways of pleasing her (rescue/verse) and like him, these efforts have been superficially rewarded (crown/money) but actually spurned (death sentence/rejection of love). Both captain and poet look forward to death, after expecting favour from a two-faced tyrant. This satisfactory union of two disparate situations is probably Craig's greatest achievement. He has both the necessary knowledge and the eye for seizing on similarities in unlikely contexts.

Almost half his sonnets are constructed on this pattern.

To use classical allusions is not to be pedantic. On the other hand, intelligent matching of situation with equivalent does not constitute poetry. Craig is in fact neither a pedant, nor the most careful of artists. He seems too easily satisfied with rhymes and uses clumsy inversions to obtain them. For example, 1. 2:

Ask'd if no helpe in humane hands did stand
presents an obvious stretching of syntax to provide a rhyme for land, while introducing an unfortunate association of sounds and ideas. The frequent use of parentheses to eke out metre and unnecessary phrases (e.g. 1. 13, "right so") added for rhyming effect also become annoying. Yet like Walter Scott, Craig knows how to tell a story and this gives his sonnets a powerful appeal, not wholly marred by careless techniques.

His mode of narration is the opposite of pedantic. Indeed it is the racy style of the sagamann or balladist. In this sonnet as elsewhere he concentrates only on the vital elements in the story, connecting them with frequent use of "and" and "but". This is the speedy, informal approach of the sagamann, as is the alternation between direct and indirect speech, the lapses into colloquialism and the sudden movement from past to present tense to give immediacy. Like the sagamann too, he (somewhat optimistically) assumes the audience's acquaintance with the story. Thus personal pronouns are used with no explanation, as in 1. 7, where it is not immediately clear who is commanding whom.

Craig could never claim to be a front rank poet in our national literature. Yet he has been underestimated by previous critics.
For his ingenious classical parallels, his racy narrative style and sudden alterations of tense or tone, one can easily forgive minor laxities in versification. He is a strong second-rank artist and his forceful contribution, though imperfect, is surely more valuable than the timid Petrarchan echoings of some respectable minor English sonneteers.

At times too he shakes himself free from the overtly learned approach. In these instances he often composes sonnets which impress through their simplicity and vivid pictorial detail.

O watchfull Bird proclaymer of the day,  
Withhold I pray, thy piercing notes from me:  
Yet crow, and put the Pilgrime to his way,  
And let the Worke-man rise to earn his fee:  
Yea let the Lion fierce, be feared of thee,  
To leave his prey, and lodge him in his Cauce:  
And let the deepe Diuine from dreaming flie,  
To looke his leaues within his close Conclaus:  
Each man saue I, may some remembrance haue,  
That gone is night, and Phosphor draweth nie:  
Beat not thy breast for mee poor sleepeles slaue,  
To whom the Fates alternall rest denie:  
But if thou wouldst bring truce unto my teares,  
Crow still for Mercie in my Mistris eares.

The development of this sonnet has been carefully worked out. Both octet and sestet begin with the poet and the reasons for his banishing the cock's song. This is balanced by the short pictures of those who would profit from being awakened. In the octet these fall into two groups. The pilgrim and the workman are sent out into the open, although their duties are divine and temporal respectively. The lion and the soothsayer¹ are driven inside, though the motivation in one case is fear and in the other dedication to

¹ "Diuine" is used here in its primary sense of "soothsayer" (Lat. divinus) rather than that of 'cleric'. The character in the poem not only awakens from his dreams, he does so in order to interpret them with the aid of his books.
study. The examples have been aptly chosen to emphasise the variety of reactions occasioned by the cock's call.

Differentiated though they are, all four have some cause to awaken. The poet has not been asleep, nor does he see any purpose in daytime living. His misery is thus established through contrast, as well as by the black and white opposition implied in "night and Phosphor". A climax is reached with the dolorous 'b's and satanic 's's of 1. 11 before the possible solution is reached. At first sight one might suppose that Craig has personified the bird, but there is no need to credit it with the gift of speech. The sound of crowing will remind his lady of daytime, of awakening and of hope and thus by antithesis of her lover's eternal night, sleeplessness and despair.

There is little sign of pedantry or pomposity in this sonnet. A simple message is simply expressed. Yet some might criticise the poet for using "looke" in a rare sense in 1. 8 and for introducing the unusual coinage "alternall" in 1. 12. If these words had been introduced solely for metrical reasons, this would be a valid objection. But Craig all too often values words primarily for their associations. "Looke" for example is a near pun on "locke", thus linking up with the "close Concluae". There is thus an implicit condemnation of the "divine" for keeping his learning locked up instead of spreading it among the people. "Alternall"

1. "Alternall" in the sense of alternate was always a rare word and only used in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. O.E.D. records a 1571 usage in T. Newton's Lemnie's Touchstone Complex, which is strikingly close to Craig's - "That thing that lacks alternall rest continue cannot long." Newton was a cleric, who also wrote a treatise on dreams. He thus united both meanings of the word "divine".
too is used because of its close sound associations with "eternall". The fates not only deny him of alternative rest, but as far as he can see, will continue to do so for ever. If Craig had used unusual phraseology for its own sake, this would have been a fault; aimed as it is at the creation of special poetic effects, it must be considered a virtue.

Especially in his poetry to the courtesan Lais, he is free to use devices other than classical parallels or periodic constructions.

How oft hast thou with Siuet smelling breath, 
Told how thou loud'st me, loud'st me best of al? 
And to repay my loue, my zeale, my fayth, 
Said, to thy captiue thou wast but a thrall: 
And when I would for comfort on thee call, 
Be true to mee dear to my soule, said I, 
Then sweetly quhespering would thou say, I shall: 
And echo-like dear to my soule, replie: 
But breach of fayth now seems no fault to thee, 
Old promises new periuries do prove. 
Apes turfe the whelps they loue from tree to tree 
And crush them to the death with too much loue. 
My too much loue I see hath chang'd thee so, 
That from a friend thou art become a foe.

The intensity of the love expressed in the octet is emphasised by the device of repetition with variation. "Thou loud'st me" is followed immediately by "Loud'st me best of al", while "Be true to me deare to my soule" is echoed two lines later by "deare to my soule". In the same way the "siuet smelling breath" of l. 1 reappears as the "sweetly quhespering" of l. 7. This has two main effects. It suggests that Lais has overexpressed her love. It also conveys the idea that she has only acted as an echo to the writer's own powerful feelings, as explained in the triad of l. 3. The implications of this are clear. If she is Echo, then he is Narcissus and as such in love with himself. This is in a way true, for he loves not Lais, but the Lais of his own imaginings. Craig has introduced a piece of classical knowledge implicitly and not
in his usual clearcut fashion.

Indeed the triumph of the octet is that it conveys the falsity of the lady's love indirectly. The passion of "my loue, my zeale, my fayth" is answered by the most conventional of Petrarchan conceits in the following line. True love is thus opposed to artificial love, a fact made clear in the antitheses of the octet. The ape conceit, although striking is unfortunately not wholly apt as his love has not killed the lady, nor is the failure of their relationship his fault. Yet it is characteristic of an infatuated lover to blame himself, and Shakespeare follows this course in his sonnets. Also, if the real Lais is not dead, the imaginary one is, and it was the latter who had captivated the poet.

The metre of this sonnet might seem irregular but Craig like Donne is trying to follow the rhythms of conversation. The italicising does not only mark out direct speech, it also indicates pauses for the speaking voice. Nor is it necessary to force the poem into a normal iambic scheme, for it reads more naturally on a four stress pattern with an undetermined number of unstressed syllables. This in its turn highlights the greatest error made by the critic of Craig in the Dictionary of National Biography. Like the early critics of Wyatt he has presumed that Craig is a wholly conventional sonneteer. He has missed entirely the poet's metrical and associative innovations; his close links with the metaphysical movement and his ability to move from high style to low, depending on the nature of the lady he is addressing. As a result Craig's standing as a writer must be completely reassessed.
ROBERT AYTON

A Sonnet Left in a Gentlewoman's Looking Glass

To view thy beauty well, if thou be wise,  
Come not to gaze upon this glass of thyne,  
But come and looke upon these Eyes of myne  
Where thou shalt see thy true resemblance twyce,  
Or if thou thinkes that thou profaines thy Eyes,  
When on my wretched heart wherein, as in a shrine,  
The lively picture of thy beauty lyes,  
Or if thy harmeless Modeesty thinkes shame  
To gaze upon the horrours of my heart,  
Come read those lynes, and reading see in them  
The Trophies of thy beautie and my smart,  
Or if to none of those thou'l daigne to come,  
Weepes eyes, breake heart, and you my verse be dumbe.

Ayton introduces a new note into the Scottish sonnet. His verse has a witty, intellectual, sophisticated air, which in many ways looks forward to the Caroline poets in England. He also confirms the trend to English as a favoured poetic medium, yet highlights the orderliness which is typical of most Scottish sonneteering.

The form of the argument is one frequently used by Ayton. As the repetition of 'or' at four line intervals suggests, it constitutes a series of alternatives proffered to the lady. The progression works in reverse, with the poet facing a hypothetical refusal in each quatrain.

1. 1-4: Eyes offered as mirror instead of looking glass.
1. 5-8: Heart offered as mirror instead of eyes.
1. 9-12: Lines offered as mirror instead of heart.
1. 12-14: Possibility of complete refusal.

This highly formalised, overlapping argument, whose movement is determined by the quatrain development, endeared itself to Ayton because of its rigid, orderly progression. His wit always functioned best once a clear logical pattern had been evolved as the basis for its performance.

His ability to play on two possible meanings is also well
illustrated in this sonnet. For the double resemblance which the lady will see in his eyes is not simply a repeated image. She will become "wise" and see her "true resemblance", but in a good and a bad sense. Inevitably she will receive the flattering reflection, which is the result of the lover's passion for her. This is "the lively picture of thy beauty" which he promises her in 1. 8, brought alive by the vitality of true affection. But, by rejecting her looking glass she must also face up to the effects of a beauty, which ravages and destroys. That is why the poet's eyes are "wretched", his heart a "shrine" and her beauty likened to a plunderer bringing home "trophies". It is also why he fears she will refuse all his offers, for the joy of flattery will not compensate for the harsh reality of suffering which she must by implication face.

This poem therefore is another variation on the beauty/cruelty contrast, so popular in sonneteering. It is an opposition of attitudes, that of the lover against that of the lady. To begin with there is the hope that they may find common ground, a fact linguistically suggested by the use of echoing with variation:

Come not to gaze upon this glass of thyne,
But come and looke upon these Eyes of myne.

The antithesis pattern is blurred by an echoing of the underlined words, just as the poet hopes mutual love may blur their differences. This formula is retained in the second quatrains with "my wretched eyes" echoing "thy Eyes". But the antithesis of "my heart"/"thy Eyes" strengthens the sense of distancing. Then in the third quatrains the basic opposition is made explicit - "thy beautie and my smart". This is the climax of the poem, led up to by the excellent enjambement of 11.11#/13. The irreconcilable forces
of 'you' and 'me', 'sight' and 'feeling', 'beauty' and 'cruelty' have been recognized and the double antithesis of I. 14 is the stylistic equivalent of this despairing conclusion.

This basic dichotomy underlines the whole argument, as the poet urges the lady to follow the Ficinian progression from eyes to heart, then retreats to verse again. It involves use of irony (one of Ayton's favourite devices) in the phrase "harmless Modesty" when set against "the horroures of my heart" or in "lively picture" when placed in the context of a "shyre" simile. All this is expressed in Ayton's light, clear style. The gentle use of alliteration betrays his Scottish origins, but his closest links are with the Metaphysical/Caroline school of wit.

MARK ALEXANDER BOYD

Fra banc to banc, fra wod to wod, I rin
Ourhailit with my feble fantasie,
Lyc til a leif that fallis from a trie
Or til a Reid ourblawin with the wind,
Two gods gyds me: the aye of tham is blind,
Ye, and a bairn brocht up in vanitie;
The nixt a wyf ingenrit of the se,
And lichter nor a dauphin with hir fin.
Unhappe is the man for evirmaire
That tells the sand and sawis in the aire;
Bot twye unhappier is he, I lairn,
That feidis in his hairt a mad desyre,
And follows on a woman threw the fyre,
Led be a blind and telchit be a bairn.

The sonnets so far studied are drawn from sizable collections composed by the major sonneteers. There were also miscellaneous sennets however, most of which are of little poetic worth. Among these may be listed the single sonnet in the Bannatyne MS. "lyke as the littill Emmet, Haith hir gall"; the two sonnets composed by Mary Maitland for the Maitland Quarto and commendatory sonnets written by Thomas Cargill, Christen Lindesay, Elizabeth Douglas,
Mary Betoun, M. R. Cockburne, John Murray and John Burel. Robert
Ker's sole surviving sonnet has a certain superficial facility of
expression, but deservedly the most famous is the one quoted above,
by Mark Boyd, a poet who more commonly composed in Latin.

The lover's confused, despairing state is first presented in
pastoral terms. Like the traditional Petrarchan lover he changes
his situation ineffectively and admits that fancy has conquered
reason. The comparisons of 'leaf' and 'reed' hearken back to l. 1
in chiasmatic form, with the leaf more appropriate to the wood and
the reed to the bank. The mention of the wind in l. 4 also suggests
for the first time a malevolent fortune outwith the poet's control.

This suggestion is translated into its mythological equivalent
in the second quatrains. His meandering course is not surprising
when his leaders are a blind God and a sea Goddess. The comparison
of Venus with a dolphin first of all stresses her connections with
the sea. But it also indicates her ambivalent position for the
dolphin was traditionally associated with men through the Arion
legend. Venus and Apollo are also often depicted riding dolphins.
Thirdly, if "lichter" be understood as having the connotation of
'brighter', possibly with wordplay on "fin" = end, a secondary
reference to the dolphin's gaudy death colours can be included.
Venus, like the Dolphin attracts by her beauteous form, but this
gaudy show leads inevitably to death (fin).

The sestet completes the movement from pastoral - mythological -
Biblical. The imagery of tilling the sand and sowing in the air

1. See Scottish Poetry of the Seventeenth Century, ed. George
inevitably recalls the parables of the foolish builder and of the sower. Such pursuits are futile, but pale into insignificance before the fatuity of the poet's own situation. The idea of "twice unhappier" is reinforced by taking twice as long to explain it, but also by the mention of "fyre". This is at once the fire of passion and, in a biblical context, the fire of hell. As the man who built the house on sand and the seeds which were falsely scattered all prefigured damnation, so does the poet's situation. Yet he is powerless to prevent the malevolent influence of Venus and Cupid, who return all-powerful in the last couplet.

The subtle use of imagery and the creation of three different atmospheres contribute to the success of this sonnet. It is Boyd's skilful use of Scots however, which impresses the reader most. The deceptively soothing tone of the first quatrain for example is largely due to the use of liquids. Most of these are contained in Scots words like "til", "ourhailit" and "ourblawin". The Scots "ingenrit", used in the second stanza to describe Venus's origin, has a solemn grandeur lacking in the English synonyms 'born' or 'nurtured' and a musicality not present in the English equivalent, 'engendered'. By introducing these words, Boyd at once increases the harmony and the vividness of his sonnet. But he is also awake to the effectiveness of Scottish pulpit rhetoric. The dogmatic "yea" of 1. 6 strikes the note of high seriousness, later underlined by "ingenrit". The reader cannot therefore dismiss this stanza as a lighthearted piece of mythological fantasy. It is a serious illustration of the poet's misery. On the evidence of this poem one cannot stifle the futile wish that Boyd had used his vernacular gifts more frequently in the genre.
The ten poems chosen are by no means unrepresentative. There is much mediocrity in the Scottish sonnet, but close study reveals a good deal of skill and talent as well. Drummond may be the best artist of the Jacobean/Caroline era, but he is closely rivalled by the rhetorical skill and manly fervour of Montgomerie or by Ayton's sophisticated wit and incisive intellect. Profiting from the earlier sonnet movements in Italy, France and England, no fewer than ten major sonneteers arose in the period between 1580 and 1625. Their works form the basis of our study of the sonnet in Scotland.
CHAPTER TWO

JAMES VI AND RENAISSANCE POETIC THEORY

During the Renaissance many critical treatises appeared in Europe. Scholars turned to a more minute study of classical authors and discovered that many of the metrical and theoretical principles underlying classical verse could not be applied to works in the vernacular. As a result it became clear that the critical manuals of ancient authors like Cicero and Quintilian were inadequate for evaluating art written in the vulgar tongue. In Italy Trissino had produced his Poetica,\(^1\) in which he distinguished between the Latin and Greek ideas of rhythm, before suggesting that Italian verse worked on a different principle. For Trissino this was intimately connected with dancing:

\[
\text{Rithmo e anchora quello, che risulta dal danzare con ragione, e dal sonare, e cantare; il che volgarmente si kiamo misura e tempo.}\(^2\)
\]

The Pléiade too were concerned with comparisons between classical and vernacular verse. Most of all they were conscious that French could not rival the older tongues in wealth of vocabulary. Thus when Du Bellay argued for the use of the vernacular in composition, it was only after having added the reservation, that "nostre Langue n'est si copieuse et riche que la Greque ou Latine."\(^3\) In England Puttenham spoke out for the superiority of modern poetry in having introduced rhyme. Classical verse is to be condemned for being,

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"without any rime or tunable concord."¹ Even Ascham, who above all admired the works of the ancients, advocated a new type of vernacular writing, adducing rules to bring English into close alignment with Latin. With this aim in mind he favoured a brief, concise style, containing no "inkhorne termes" or "indenture English".²

There was therefore a healthy atmosphere of critical enthusiasm and disagreement, when the Scottish sonnet first appeared. The problem of vernacular writing and how best to exploit one's mother tongue was almost invariably the starting-point for critical works, which went on to deal with problems of rhetoric and poetry's function generally. As this idea of vernacular composition lay behind the treatises, it is not surprising that they betray a spirit of nationalism, ranging from the open chauvinism of Vida's Ars Poetica³ to the more muted patriotism of Puttenham's Arte of English Poesie. Nearly all the critics are agreed that art has degenerated since antiquity and that the Renaissance will herald the first reversal of this process. But the location of the revival depends on the poet's own birthplace. Vida, writing in Italy believes the leaders of the vernacular revolution to be the Tuscan poets under Medici patronage:

Iampridem tamem Ausonios invisere rursus  
Coeperunt Medycum revocate munere Musae  
Thuscorum Medycum, quos tandem protulit aetas  
Europae in tantis solamen dulce ruinis.⁴


³. Ars Poetica Marci Hieronymi Vidae Cremonensis (Lugduni apud Gryphium, 1536).

⁴. Ibid., p. 10.
Ronsard puts his faith in the Pléiade and Puttenham advances a less vitriolic case for English supremacy.

Renaissance literature thus had a strongly vernacular and patriotic bias, the various national movements synthesizing their poetic principles in critical treatises. It is perhaps fitting that the quieter Scottish movement should produce but one contribution to this wealth of critical material and that a work of less than twenty quarto pages, composed by a teenage king. Yet James VI's Ane Schort Treatis Containing some Reulis and Cautelis to be observit and eschewit in Scottis Poesie,¹ shows its youthful author to have been aware of the larger European tradition.

Indeed, the first feature which strikes the reader of the Reulis is its close similarity to earlier treatises in Italian, French and English. Apart from differences in terminology² James approaches poetry in the same way as Vida, Du Bellay and Puttenham. He opens in the traditional fashion by justifying his work in terms of the new problems besetting a writer:

As for them that wrat of auld, lyke as the tyme is changeit sensyne, sa is the ordour of Poesie changeit. For then they observit not Flowing, nor eschewit not ryming in termes, besydes sindrie uthern thingis, quhilk now we observe, and eschew, and dois weil in sa doing.³


2. James's original terminology is in itself an argument against the Reulis being a wholly derivative treatise. He uses terms unrecorded elsewhere, yet never explains them. It seems likely that he is using a poetic vocabulary understood only in Scotland. He calls the caesura the 'section', rhythm becomes 'flowing' and alliterative verse is 'literall'. He uses 'rhyming in termes' for feminine and triple rhymes and 'ballat royal' for ottava rima. Rhyme royal becomes 'Troilus verse', due to Chaucer's having used it in "Troilus and Criseyde".

It was this sense of particular and present need which motivated the major European treatises. Like Vida and Du Bellay he sees the renaissance poet as being in a unique and fortuitous position. He can take advantage of all the errors or advances made by earlier poets and so speak of poetry, "as being come to mannis age and perfectioun".\footnote{1} It was in a similar light that Vida had seen the Tuscan movement, Ronsard and Du Bellay the Pleiade.

The nationalistic bias is reflected in the title of James's contribution and expanded upon in the prologue. One of the king's main justifications for writing, is that among the many critical writers of the period, "there hes neuer ane of them written in our language". Nor is Scots to be confounded with English, for "we differ from thame in sindrie reulis of Poesie".\footnote{2} He is intent on pleading for a Scottish poetic and linguistic autonomy. No language, however similar in structure to another can be equated with it. This type of argument was already familiar to readers from the first chapter of Du Bellay's Deffence, where he put forward his famous account of language evolution. All tongues originate like the plant from a single root and their diverse developments depend on national character and idiosyncrasy.

The Reulis is primarily a technical account of poetry. Like most European critics James is mainly concerned with devising rules for rhyme, rhythm and stanza formation. This prevalent attitude to poetry resulted from its still being considered a secondary branch of rhetoric. The idea of the close relationship of the

\footnote{1}{Ibid.}\footnote{2}{Ibid.}
seven liberal arts had survived the Medieval period. Ramus had seen grammar as the art of writing well, rhetoric as that of speaking well, logic that of reasoning well and then linked all seven as being united in the final aim of a contemplative appreciation of Nature's immense variety. Whereas philosophers generally saw them as having equal claims on man's attention, rhetoric had gained primary importance for literary men since Il Trapezunzio's Rhetoricum Libri of 1435. In this he laid great stress on the concept of 'Veritas', which he understood as the working together of all the rhetorical devices for a persuasive function.

Sèbillet in his Art Poétique Françoys sums up the usual renaissance view:

Et sont l'Orateur et le Poète tant proches et conjoinz, que semblables et égaux en plusieurs choses, différent principalement en ce, que l'un est plus constraint de nombres que l'autre.

Poetry, as Castor suggests, had become the second branch of rhetoric and like the orator the poet had to conform to certain rules. As a result, four of the six books in Trissino's Poetica deal with technical problems, while only the second of Gascoigne's sixteen rules touches on general poetic theory. In the same way, seven of the eight chapters in the Reulis teach the poet his craft by

means of arbitrary laws. Indeed James feels duty bound to explain away his omission of the more formal aspects of rhetoric with the excuse that this realm has been well trodden before. His precedent for taking such an attitude may be Du Bellay:

Quand aux figures des sentences et des motz, et toutes les autres parties de l'eloquution,...je n'en parle point apres si grand nombre d'excellens phylosophes et orateurs qui en ont traité.¹

Similarity to Du Bellay on the other hand does not excuse James. A large gap is still present in the Reulis, preventing it from attaining the comprehensive nature of Puttenham's Arte of Poesie, in which a large proportion of space is dedicated to discussion of figures and tropes. A work which defines art in terms of word manipulation, yet at the same time ignores many rhetorical devices, lays itself open to criticism.

From this brief comparison of the Reulis with other examples of renaissance critical theory, it becomes clear that James's work belongs to the same tradition. It originates from an interest in the vernacular. It shares the patriotic tone and the view of the sixteenth century as a golden age, with many other European manuals. It sees poetry as the metrical branch of rhetoric and devotes a large section to metrical problems. With this general similarity established, a more detailed study of the work in its European context is necessary. Does James follow his predecessors blindly in matters of technique? What is his standpoint on more general critical topics like those of imitation and invention? Once points like these have been clarified, the king's permanent value as a

¹. Du Bellay, La Deffence, p. 159. They are both probably referring to the many medieval treatises on rhetoric.
critic can be more accurately assessed.

In the discussion on rhyming James puts forward three ideas, continuing the almost mathematically logical approach of the prologue. The Medieval system which had encouraged identical rhymes is sternly opposed. One must not rhyme "twyse in ane syllabe".

At this point he clearly has rhymes like Chaucer's:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{How this book, (the) which is here} \\
\text{Shal hatte, that I rede you here,}^1
\end{align*}
\]

in mind. Yet he goes even further and forbids a 'proue'/ 'reproue' or 'houe'/ 'behoue' rhyme. At first sight this stricture seems to be only an echo of Du Bellay's rule in the Deffence:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ces equivoques donq' et ces simples rymez avecques leurs composez, comme un baisser et abaisser, s'ilz ne changent ou augmentent grandement la signification de leurs simples, me soint chassez bien loing.}^2
\end{align*}
\]

But Du Bellay, unlike James, lays the stress on a meaning criterion. 'Baisser' and 'abaisser' were synonyms in sixteenth century French.\(^3\) The Scottish critic is widening the scope of the rule to cover cases in which there is a wide divergence of sense. It would seem that James is no servile imitator, but capable of introducing new ideas.

The tendency of his changes is to a stricter poetics than any hitherto advanced. For example he insists that, without exception, the rhyme should be carried by the last long syllable in the line, even if this involves rhyming on the antepenultimate. No other

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2. Du Bellay, La Deffence, p. 146.

3. In La Dictionnaire de la Langue Française du Seizième Siècle, ed. Huguet (Paris, 1925), p. 459, 'abaisser' is treated as a synonym of 'baisser'.
critic seems to agree with this viewpoint and indeed only Puttenham considers the problem at any length. For Puttenham the cadence rather than the rhyme is all-important and he opposes lines in which the heaviest beat falls on any but the last syllable. But the tone of his comments is less authoritarian than James's. He appeals to the unpleasant effect of antepenultimate stress without explicitly forbidding its use. More aware of the difficulties of poetic composition, he suggests where his younger counterpart commands. James the mature poet was to find his early rules too restricting as well and so be driven to flaunt them. In "The Wiper of the People's Tears" for example he rhymes on a final short syllable:

Kings cannot comprehended be
In Commons mouths coniure ye.

In a way this is the sort of treatise one might expect from a young king. His youthfulness presupposes an ignorance of the subtler problems of art. His kingliness leads to a pontificating tone, very much at odds with the humility of the prologue.

Occasionally his rules are inadequate. His account of rhythm divides syllables into three types - long, short and indifferent. He then goes on to argue that the only type of foot to be used in English is the Iamb. This latter decision he justifies by ear and it seems strange to ignore all the other possible types on the strength of so flimsy an argument. This is especially so, when Puttenham had advocated the use of all the ancient feet. Taking the view that since the Norman conquest so many polysyllabic words had been introduced into English, he used this to argue that dactyls,

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spondees and amphibrachs were quite appropriate to the English tongue. James in opposing him is partly governed by intuition and partly by Gascoigne, whose views on rhythm were at this time widely held.

The king in this case had used Gascoigne's premises but produced a different conclusion. Like James, Gascoigne had divided syllables into "gravis, lenis et circumflexa, the which I would english thus, the long accent, the short accent and that which is indifferent." Both then discuss the monopoly of the iamb, but whereas James considers this desirable, Gascoigne regrets its predominance. The similarity of phraseology suggests that James used the Notes of Instruction as a starting-point. This is typical of his procedure. He may expand or alter views which had already gained wide currency, but he has no entirely new contribution to make. This is hardly surprising. He was still in his teens. Also renaissance critical theory was less heterogeneous than its modern counterpart. It centred round a limited number of ideas like decorum, invention and imitation. Within these limits complete originality would be unusual. James can however be criticized in the present instance for introducing a weaker conclusion than Gascoigne.

Despite the restrictions on originality, James is frequently enlightening. In no case is this more so, than when he treats decorum, one of the main topics in Elizabethan criticism. It was

1. Gascoigne, Notes, p. 34.

then believed that a lofty topic warranted a high style, infused with Latinisms and euphuistic turns of expression. Similarly, low subjects should be expressed in a rough, colloquial manner. This approach was justified by an appeal to proportion. Any disproportion between style and subject was aesthetically unsatisfactory, just as a malformed body was ugly or cacophonous sounds sinned against the principle of harmony. In art therefore the poet should aim for a conformity between sense and means of expression. Beautiful speech was a flaw if it came from the mouth of a peasant. Rough, alliterative speech had its own fitness in flytings and other forms of colloquial verse. The poet erred if he applied a lofty style to mean matters or a base style to subjects of some dignity. It was thus necessary for critics to set out in detail the requisite styles for a given number of themes.

Puttenham in Book 3 Chapter 6 of the Arte of English Poesie had fully sketched out the theory of decorum, defining the three styles as high, low and mean, as well as introducing a series of topics to fit each level. The high style was to be used in hymning the gods or noble princes; the mean style for matters concerning lawyers, gentlemen and merchants, and the base for the "doings of the common artificer". This social division James at first ignores. Instead he confines himself to those aspects omitted by Puttenham or falsely treated in his account. Love for example is passed over and so James urges that in dealing with this topic the poet should "use commoun language with some passionate wordis." On the subject of tragedy he even dares to disagree with Puttenham, who had assigned it to the high style. James advocates the use of "lamentable wordis with some heich", thus extending the
principle to mood and introducing a more complex system of graded levels of diction. The effect of this is to allow a freer, less rigid application of the device, enabling it to enrich rather than restrict the free flowing of verse.

Secondly he extends the principle from the level of style to that of argument. If the lover is to use passionate but unaffected words, his reasoning must likewise proceed from passion rather than logic. If country people are to speak in a colloquial manner, their argument must fit this style. In short, decorum is not only a linguistic but a social phenomenon. He thus takes up Puttenham's social division from a different angle, expanding the implications of his idea to show that the merchant will not only use the mean style but also arguments fitted to his mental capacity and social position. The king breaks down the artificial and harmful rigidity of the three stylistic levels set out by Puttenham. He also extends their relevance from the linguistic to the rhetorical; from style to argument.

This is a fact which must not be underestimated. James at the age of nineteen has successfully dealt with the complex principle of decorum, yet not been content merely to accept the ideas laid down by his predecessors. Rather has he made two meaningful advances, leaving Elizabethan criticism greatly in his debt. His work is no plagiaristic synopsis of Puttenham and Gascoigne. Instead he begins from their ideas and uses them as stepping-stones to further propositions.

Having dealt with the main principle of decorum, James in Chapter 4 adapts it to the problems of embellishment, arguing that comparisons, epithets and proverbs should likewise be "proper for
the subject", something which neither Puttenham nor Gascoigne advocates. In this passage too he anticipates Spenser, by suggesting that the poet should compound words from two simple ones and speak of, "Apollo gyde-Sunne". This device may in part derive from Du Bellay, who also saw the possibilities of compounding, but nowhere so explicitly advances this as a theory. The French writer viewed compounds as a means of expanding the meaning-range of a language. James is not so optimistic, fearing that they may also destroy its original purity. As a result he admits to preferring circumlocution, because it does not make use of "corruptit" words. Nevertheless he is the first British critic to advocate the idea at all and it is just possible that Spenser may have got the idea from him, rather than Du Bellay.

Despite the brevity of his essay, James touches on many general theoretical problems. Imitation for example was a widely treated subject, used in two contexts. It referred to the relationship between a poem and its subject. Art in some way was supposed to imitate Nature, but contemporary writers were uncertain both of the nature of Nature and the closeness of the imitation required. Often therefore, imitation in its first context demanded a restatement of Platonic and Aristotelian arguments. James ignores this subject, probably considering it too metaphysical to be pertinent to his short treatise. Instead he concentrates on the second aspect, imitation as the following of classical authors. Most early critics had based their theory on some modification of Petrarch's statement in the Familiares. He had argued for

1. Castor, Pléiade Poetics, Chaps. 5, 6 for a detailed discussion of imitation.
imitation alongside ingenuity, by seizing on Seneca's image of the bee. The modern poet steals from classical models as the bee steals from flowers:

Apes in inventionibus imitandæs, quæ flores, non quæles acceperint, referunt, sed ceras an mella, mirifica quadam permixtionæ, conficiunt. ¹

This image was a favourite one of Ronsard's and it is easy to see why it appealed to the renaissance mind, searching for a compromise between tradition and originality. It allowed a theoretician to urge imitation of the classics alongside popularisation of the vernacular. For, just as both bee and flower profited from their interrelationship, so imitation of the classics benefited the vernacular. New words were coined from Latin or Greek originals and the vernacular became a more efficient vehicle for expression. This is what Peletier du Mans meant, when he wrote:

les Traduccions quand elles sont bient fêtes, peuvent beaucoup anrichir une Langue. Car le Traducteur pourra faire Françoiese une bele locucion Latine ou Grecque. ²

Also, just as the bee did not retain the pollen in its original state, but converted it into honey, so the good imitator always transformed his model into something new. Imitation did not necessarily imply lack of invention. Some element of ingenuity ought to intrude in any imitation, whether in theme or treatment. As Ascham puts it in The Scholemaster:

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¹ The comparison between the author and the bee becomes a commonplace in classical literature. See Seneca, Epist. 84; Pindar, Pyth. X; Plato, Ion.

This Imitatio, is dissimilis materiei similis tractatio; and also, similis materiei dissimilis tractatio, as Virgill followed Homer; but the Argument to the one was Ulysses, to the other Aeneas.1

The larger school of thought viewed imitation as a means of extending the language and refused to see it as imposing any severe strictures on invention or originality.

James is not of this opinion. Beginning with invention as one of the chief poetic virtues, he says that this quality is best exercised if "ye inuent your awin subiect, yourself," and don't "compose of sene subiectis." Imitation, it is implied, hinders the free action of this prime poetic virtue. This is especially so in translation, where "ye are bound, as to a staik, to follow that buikis phrasis, quhilk ye translate." In his discussion of both imitation and translation James's approach is valuable, for he is thinking of lesser writers, other critics tended to deal with first-rank poets, in whose hands imitation would have the beneficial effects set out. But minor writers, following in their footsteps, adopted a more literal approach, which produced poetry sounding like the first awkward steps in French or Latin translation. While Petrarch's arguments might apply cogently to himself, to Du Bellay or Spenser, the vast majority of versifiers would do well to heed the warning in the Reulis. There, in the face of current critical opinion, James, from a lower poetic level, realistically views the dangers of modelling one's verse too closely on earlier writers.

A salient feature of the king's poetic theory has by now come

to light. He simplifies previous accounts by concentrating on technical rather than metaphysical aspects. By refusing to discuss imitation in Neo-Platonic or Aristotelian terms he is forced into a further simplification, this time with regard to invention. This concept was very important for the sixteenth century critic, who saw it as closely connected with the theory of art as an imitation of nature. By assigning art's terms of reference to the realm of the 'probable' rather than the 'actual', it was an easy matter to reconcile imitation with invention. The poet was not restricted to a reproduction of the real world as sensuously perceived but could imitate the potential values by means of his invention. But James had already ignored art as imitative of nature in this sense and instead confined himself to more technical problems. In the same way he views invention in a narrow way, equating it with originality, the antithesis of literary imitation:

But sen Inuention, is ane of the cheif vertewis in a Poete, it is best that ye inuent your awin subiect, your self, and not to compose of sene subiectis.¹

This limited approach is yet another echo of Gascoigne, who also saw invention as "the first and most necessarie poynt" in poetic craftsman ship.² Both assert that it is opposed to imitation and illustrate this point by condemning a conventional description of one's beloved. James suggests that a poet should omit any mention

¹. James VI, Essaves, p. 79.

of her "fairnes, or hir shaip", probably taking his example from the English writer:

If I should undertake to wryte in prayse of a gentlewoman, I would neither praise hir christal eye, or hir cherrie lippe etc. For these things are trita et obuia.¹

At this point it becomes clear that Gascoigne and James are trying to fulfil a different function from Puttenham, Ascham and Du Bellay. In modern terms, they are producing a text book on elementary versifying rather than a full poetic theory. That is why they put an even heavier emphasis on technical elements than usual. That is why they ignore the far-reaching metaphysical speculations on art's function in order to confine themselves to more practical problems of the poet's craft. They are not writing for the master-poets but for the apprentices. As a result, no discussion of imagination is necessary, for it is a quality, which is inherited, not imparted by means of 'reulis'. Imitation and invention are accepted as tools and their value as such assessed. Wider questions of the relationship of the finished artefact to the world at large are outside the scope of the discussion. Indeed, as far as James is concerned, these and related problems are conveniently dismissed in the discussion on nature at the end of the Prologue:

I will also wish yow (docile Reader) that or ye cummer yow with reading thir reulis, ye may find in your self sic a beginning of Nature, as ye may put in practise in your verse many of thir foirsaidis preceptis, or ever ye sie them as they are heir set down. For gif Nature be nocht the cheif worker in this airt, Reulis wilbe bot a band to Nature, and will mak yow within short space weary of the haill airt.²

2. James VI, Essayses, p. 68.
Such a treatment is in line with our previous assessment of the king's aims. Nature, one of the most diversely applied ideas in renaissance literature is restricted to the sense of 'natural gift or inspiration'. Its allied connotations of 'the ever-changing natural world' and the 'predominant humour' are ignored as being irrelevant to a purely technical discussion. Even in its accepted application it is mentioned only to be dismissed. The tone is that of a conscientious schoolmaster, producing a handbook of versification and unwilling to tempt the untalented into a waste of time and effort.

As the Reulis are directed at the ordinary verse-writer rather than the genius, the concept of the inspired poet, leader of men is played down. The theory of 'divine fury', animating great artists had originated with Horace. The renaissance artist considered that he was returning to this golden age of poetry and so revived the idea. Vida has many passages describing the poet's inspiration, of which the following is typical:

Inspirare animum, templaipse in vestra sacerdos
Sacra ferens iuvenes florentes mollibus annis
Duco audens durum per iter ......  

Du Bellay, Ronsard and Puttenham followed his lead, but the most concise expression of this opinion occurs in Thomas Lodge's Defence of Poetry, where he uses it as a further means of distinguishing the poet from the orator:


2. Vida, Ars Poetica, p. 23.
It is a pretty sentence, yet not so pretty as pithy, Poeta nascitur, Orator fit: as who should say, Poetrie commeth from above, from a heavenly seate of a glorious God, unto an excellent creature man; an Orator is but made by exercise.¹

Such a theory is clearly out of place in a work like Gascoigne's or James's. Yet, while Gascoigne merely ignores it, James feels called upon to question the whole position of the poet. Nor are his remarks confined to versifiers. They seem to embrace all poets, great and small. For James, the poet must avoid "materis of commoun weill", not only because they are poor material for invention to work upon, but because "they are to graue materis for a Poet to mell in."² Uncharacteristically he is departing from purely literary criteria and considering the poet's function in general terms. Such a departure must be accounted for.

The solution probably lies in James's position as king, and in his unshakable belief in Divine Right. For James, the king was the only person inspired by God.³ He was aware that poets, having cultivated the idea of the Platonic "furor", were using this as a basis for challenging the monarch. Ronsard had already implicitly questioned Henri II's claim to Divine Right:

Pensez vous estre Dieu, l'honneur du monde passe,
Il faut un jour mourir,⁴

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2. James VI, Essayes, p. 79.


and chided the youthful Charles IX:

Sire, ce n'est pas tout que d'estre Roy de France,
Il faut que la vertu honore vostre enfance.  

Vida in his Poetica had placed the poet above earthly kings as a subsidiary to God alone. James therefore ignores the technical nature of his treatise on this isolated occasion to warn Scottish poets that interference in court matters will be frowned upon.

A more detailed study of the Reulis has thus revealed that its broad similarity to other European critical treatises goes hand in hand with a number of hidden differences. The most important of these is that the Reulis is a technical handbook of poetry on the model of Gascoigne's Notes of Instruction. As a consequence of this, the emphasis on rhetoric, versification and metre is even more pronounced than in Du Bellay's Deffence or Puttenham's Arte of Poesie. Most of the major theoretical ideas are mentioned but their scope of reference is severely limited, as questions of the nature of poetic imitation or the relationship between invention and imagination would be irrelevant in the given context. On the other hand, the young king shows good sense in realising that his youth and lack of poetic experience render him a poor rival to Du Bellay and Ascham on their own ground. If he had attempted more, he might well have achieved less. As it is, if the Reulis are

2. Vida, Ars Poetica, p. 21,

Ulores sperate Deos, sub numine quorum
Semper vita fuit vatum defensa piorum.
Illi omnes sibi fortunas posuere volentes
Sub pedibus, regumque; et opes, et sceptra superba
Ingenti vincunt animo, ac mortalia rident.
seen as a guide to versification written by a young man and not as a national poetic manifesto, they do constitute a valuable contribution to renaissance learning.

In yet another way James was an innovator. The production in 1583 of the Essayes of a Prentise in the Divine Arte of Poesie, began a new movement in Scottish letters. Earlier in the Renaissance Scottish writers and philosophers had made a strong contribution to knowledge. James's patronage of the arts resulted in this effort being concentrated round a court group. The Essayes heralded the start of this movement. They also contained twelve introductory sonnets by the king and five written by members of his court. This marked the first real interest in the genre north of the Tweed. Whether James's own preference for the form had a marked effect it is hard to say. But in the fifty years following the publication of the Essayes, more than 700 sonnets were composed by Scotsmen. Before embarking on a study of this phenomenon, it may be as well to note James's brief comment in the Reulis:

For compendious praysing of any bukes, or the authouris thairof, or ony argumentis of uther historeis, quhair sindrie sentences, and change of purposis are requyrit, use Sonet verse, of fourtene lynis, and ten fete in every line.1

It is interesting that he does not immediately connect it with love, as most critics would have done, but prefers to stress its secondary function as a popular form for occasional verse. Nor does he indulge in the customary raptures on its Italian origin and formal perfection. But this too is typical, for if James if predominantly a derivative critic, he is most certainly an original sonneteer.

1. James VI, Essayes, p. 81.
CHAPTER THREE

PETRARCHANISM IN RENAISSANCE POETRY

The Scottish sonnet cannot be seen in isolation. Behind it, in the Continent and England, lie larger movements, themselves often imitative and interdependent. Any single Scottish sonnet may be a direct translation, an adaptation or refutation of an earlier work in French or Italian. This tendency is strengthened by the interest taken by Renaissance poets in imitation. Along with translation it was highly revered\(^1\) and even those critics like James, who drew the line at wholesale plagiarism, condoned moderate borrowings from the works of the masters. The themes, conceits and forms of the sonnet are part of a unified poetic consciousness stretching forward in time from the days of Petrarch and in space from the beaches of Italy to the mountains of Scotland. Any detailed study of the Scottish sonnet must begin by placing it firmly in its European context.

PETRARCH: Such an approach in turn demands detailed discussion of Petrarch's \textit{Rime}, for although he was not strictly speaking the founder of the sonnet form, Petrarch was the first to produce a unified and sustained sonnet sequence, capable of containing a coherent attitude to life and love.\(^2\) Much of this was in itself not original but derived from classical and Provençal sources, for

\begin{flushleft}
1. Sebillet, \textit{Art Poétique}, p. 188. "Vertu de version-Glorieux donc est le labeur de tant de gens de bien qui tous les jours s'y emploient: honorable aussy sera le tien quand t'aviendra de l'entreprendre."

\end{flushleft}
Petrarch as a theorist endorsed the view that past literature held a store of wisdom which the modern age ought to draw upon. On the other hand he was an innovator both consciously and unconsciously; consciously because he broke away from the symbolical, philosophical love poetry of Dante, unconsciously because the effect of his revolution was to create another lyrical tradition with even stricter rules and wider influence than those preceding it. No lyrical love poet in the France of the Pleiade, in Elizabethan England or Jacobean Scotland could ignore the work of this notary's son, born almost forty years before Chaucer in the Tuscan town of Arezzo. His attitude to love had become the norm and later poetic contributions were judged by their similarity to or divergence from his gospel.  

It is true that Petrarch did not follow Dante's allegorical approach to love. Laura is no vision as Beatrice was. But there is a strong spiritualising bias in his attitude. Love is not primarily sexual but purifying. It lifts man above the cares of the flesh, rather than lowering him to a bestial level:

Ma rispondemi Amor. Non ti rimembra,  
Che questo e privilegio degli amanti,  
Sciolti da tutte qualitati umane?  

The credit for this is not attributed to the lover, who has all the usual weaknesses of man, but to the lady whose divine beauty leads


him on to contemplation of that God whose emanation she is:

Da lei ti ven l’amoroso pensero,
Che mentre ’l segui al sommo ben t’invia,
Poco prezzando quel ch’ogni uom desia;
Da lei vien l’animosa leggiadra
Ch’al ciel ti scorge per destro sentero;
Si, ch’i’ vo gia de la speranza altero.¹

Human love is the candle, striving to light itself at the burning sun of God’s love, but in the progression upwards, all carnal aspects of love must be cast aside. Petrarch’s attitude to the process of divine purification is indeed much closer to Plato’s in the Symposium than to that of the renaissance neo-Platonists, who argued for spiritual purification with no renunciation of carnal pleasures. For Petrarch in his highest moods the lady is a cult to be worshipped rather than a woman to be loved.

It is in many ways a curious mixture, this love for woman which is part of a wider divine contemplation. Yet it enables the poet to separate, somewhat artificially, the contrarieties of the lover’s condition and view his sensual moments as a falling away from the higher self. It fulfils man’s basic needs for religion and for human union simultaneously and in this lies the main ground for the persistent appeal of the Petrarchan conventions throughout the centuries.

This dichotomy of attitude is nowhere more exactly expressed than in the various comparisons used for the lady. If the emphasis is placed on her function as divine intermediary, she is appropriately linked with the angels. Her beauties are not human, they are angelic:

¹. Ibid., S. 13, p. 15.
Non era l'andar suo cosa mortale,
Ma d'angelica.\textsuperscript{1}

She like them is freed from the constraints of the body and has become a living soul:

\begin{quote}
Uno spirito celeste, un vivo sole  
Fu quel ch' i' vidi, e se non fosse or tale,  
Piaga per allantar d'arco non sana.\textsuperscript{2}
\end{quote}

In terms of the medieval world system these correspondences are especially apt, as the nine ranks of angels stood between man and God in the divine hierarchy.\textsuperscript{3} By comparing Laura to an angel, Petrarch is not indulging in an arbitrary flight of fancy, but emphasising a vital aspect of his philosophy. His love is spiritual, and to justify this spiritualisation, the lady must be spiritualised as well. On the other hand, his passion does not, like Dante's, remain transcendental all the time. Often he longs for her to yield, and that bright chastity, which was a cause for further joy is now compared to the coldness of winter. Her angelic virtues on the spiritual level, become carnal vices. She is a tyrant whose virtue dams him to suffer for ever. She is a murderess who renders his life a futile creeping towards death. She is a warrior who makes him endure never-ending battles:

\begin{quote}
Mille fiate, o dolce mia guerrera,  
Per aver co' begli occhi vostri pace  
V'aggio proferto il cor, m'a voi non piace.\textsuperscript{4}
\end{quote}

Characteristically, however, she is more often an angel than a

\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., S. 90, p. 129.
\item Ibid.
\item Petrarch, \textit{Rime}, S. 21, p. 23.
\end{enumerate}
tyrant, more often a goddess than a serpent. Petrarch's aim is for a love transcending human values and despite consistent suffering and mortification of the flesh, he attains this goal more often than he falls away from it. While he appeals to the universal consciousness with a dual plea for religious and sensual love, his bias towards the first of these is not so commonly shared. Many of his followers were to point the truth of this and diverge from their model in thematic proportions rather than in the themes themselves.

It is gross simplification to see the Petrarchan lover as constantly bewailing his fate. It is true that he suffers greatly and expresses his pain analytically, at times with masochistic delight. But this aspect has been overemphasised through the works of his followers, and critics have attributed to Petrarch an obsession with misery which cannot be justified from a detailed reading of the sonnets. Sometimes, as in Sonnet 61, personal suffering is his main problem, but more often he derives consolation from physical torment. His love is so perfect that every aspect of it is worthy to be blessed:

E benedetto il primo dolce affanno  
Ch'i' ebbi ad esser con Amor congiunto,  
E l'arco e le saette ond'i fui punto, l  
E le piaghe che 'nfin al cor mi vanno.

Physical suffering in fact makes his spiritual joys greater, a fact attested by many of the Christian martyrs. Even the nature of the suffering at times suggests purification. The fire of physical love must burn away the dross of the flesh. Only then will he be a worthy lover for the lady. This process is aptly described in

1. Ibid., S. 61, p. 88.
Sonnet 122, where he regrets that he is still unconsumed by her flame and doomed to remain in a land of variability and imperfection. Perhaps when the flame has fully purified him, he will be able to watch the angelic Laura with no sense of inadequacy. Unfortunately there is no guarantee that this time will come:

Vedro mai il di che pur quant'io vorrei
Quell' aria dolce del bel viso adorno
Piaccia a quest'occhi, e quanto si conviene?¹

Petrarch's lamentation is further mitigated by the consideration that it is the lesser of two evils. To love Laura and suffer for it is always a happier fate than immersing oneself in the pleasures of the world:

Meglio e che gioir d'altra, e tu mel giurai
Per l'orato tuo strale, et io tel credo.²

Faced with this choice, Petrarch is never in any doubt. His fate, however sorrowful, is self-willed. That is why he often expresses his situation by comparing himself to the fly, which destroys itself by diving into people's eyes or the moth wooed by a bright flame to speedy death:

Mio destino a vederla mi conduce,
E so ben ch'i vo distro a quel che m'arde.³

His views on life and love being what they are, he must view Laura from afar, appreciate the moral purification working within him and put up with physical suffering as best he can. When animal passion gains the ascendancy he weeps and moans, calls his lady a tyrant and curses her chastity. But far more frequently he sees

1. Ibid., S. 122, p. 168.
2. Ibid., S. 174, p. 240.
3. Ibid., S. 19, p. 21.
his misery as part of a greater happiness and would not change the
angelic Laura or her virtue for the love of a hundred women;

un piu gentile
Stato del mio non e sotto la luna;
Si dolce e del mio amaro la radice.

He is eternally committed to Laura both as woman and as cult.
He will serve her faithfully in all situations, because she deprives
him of joy on earth, only to grant him a more lasting joy in heaven.
She is, as he admits, the road to God:

Ne quella prego che pero mi scioglia,
Che men son dritte al ciel tutt'altre strade
E non s'aspira al glorioso regno
Certo in piu salda nave. 2

As a result, in Sonnet 118 he can proudly proclaim that his faith¬
fulness has lasted for sixteen years and is ready to endure a
thousand similar tests of fate with equanimity:

Com'io son pur quel ch'i' mi soglio,
Ne per mille rivolte ancor son mosso. 3

A man who would not alter his destiny is not the lovesick neurotic
of courtly tradition, placing love before all other values.
Rather has he a profound vision of that world in which all things,
even human suffering, work together for the greater good. As he
is human, this vision is not always present. At times he laments,
at times he can only see Laura's chastity as inhumane tyranny, at
times he is all those things which have become equated with
Petrarchan love. But more often he has the courage and the philo¬
sophy of the stoic, sees Laura in everlasting, divine terms and is

1. Ibid., S. 229, p. 301.
2. Ibid., C. 29, p. 43. (C = Canzone).
3. Ibid., S. 118, p. 160.
content to serve one who scorns him.

It is because Laura has come to represent ideals over and beyond herself, that the poet stresses his awkwardness in her presence. His is the humility of Adam to Raphael in *Paradise Lost*, a humility which implies no real loss of dignity. Thus in Sonnet 17 he depicts his confused state, when looking at her, but at the same time emphasises that she transcends earthly values. He is humble because she stands above him in the divine hierarchy. The logical conclusion of such an argument is not continued humility, but a freeing of soul from body, so that the two may meet on equal terms:

Largata al fin co l'amorose chiavi  
L'anima esce del cor per seguir voi,  
E con molto pensiero indi si svelle.  

So long as this element of contemplation on his part, divinity on Laura's is present, the humility is not ludicrous, but an intelligent admission of divine superiority. Humility and awkwardness lead not to suicidal loneliness but to spiritual liberation.

As always however, there is the other, equally important side to the poet's predicament. Laura is not only an angel but a woman and often his confusion is occasioned by frustration or excesses of passion. In such instances he either sinks into the mental defeatism of Sonnet 18:

Tacito vo, che le parole morte  
Farian pianger la gente, et i' desio  
Che le lagrime mie si spargan sole,  

or finds himself in a state of tongue-tied stupor:

Che quanto piu 'l tuo aiuto mi bisogna
Per dimandar mercede, allor ti stai
Sempre piu fredda.¹

Once again the opposite poles of divine and sensual produce contrasting arguments. In Platonic terms, if he is searching after the Ideal, reason remains in control and he passes into eternity with Laura. If he allows passion to seize the reins of his soul, chaos reigns, leaving him alone and melancholy. It is Petrarch's greatest achievement that he can at once present such opposing attitudes and synthesize them as consistent components of one man's experience.

So far the main argument has been that there are really two Lauras, the divine and the sensual, distinguishable only in the poet's mind. As a result the love affair begins and ends in two different ways. On the divine level, there is the allegorical birth in Madrigal 106:

Noua angeletta l'ale accorta
Scese dal cielo in su la frescha riuá,
La'nd'io passava sol per mio destino;²

She is an angel who has come to lighten his footsteps and show him the way to God. On the sensual level, she comes as Love's punishment for having so long scorned its laws:

Cantero com'io vissi in libertade
Mentre Amor nel mio albergo a sdegno s'ebbe;
Poi seguiro si come a lui ne 'ncrebbe
Troppo altamente, e che di cio m'avvenne.³

She is the tyrant who has come to subject him to continual imprison-

¹. Ibid., S. 49, p. 69.
². Ibid., M. 106, p. 148. (M = Madrigal).
ment and suffering. But this latter aspect is in a way less real for Petrarch, as is shown by his attitude to her death. The sensual love poet can find few themes after his lady dies. She is beyond sensual contact and so outwith the range of his inspiration. Petrarch on the other hand finds death as fertile a theme as life. Once the early lamentations have passed away and the earthly Laura been buried, he tries to regain contact by encouraging his soul to rise towards God. He sees in retrospect how right she was to retain her chastity and return to her celestial home (Sonnet 289). He rejoices that death can only deprive him of her beauty, not the memory of her virtue (Sonnet 326). Finally he moves towards a spiritual reunion with her:

\[
\begin{align*}
& E' \text{ mi par d'or in ora undire il messo} \\
& \text{Che madonna mi mande a se chiamando;} \\
& \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \\
& O \text{ felice quel di che del terreno} \\
& \text{Carcere uscendo lasci rotta e sparta} \\
& \text{Questa mia grave e frale e mortal gonna.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Death is not the end, for out of it come both the hope of a new life and a justification for their pure love on earth.

A number of minor aspects of Petrarchanism remain to be covered. The poet qua poet is as full of contrasts as the lover. He oscillates uncertainly between pride in poetic ability and fear that his inspiration will be unable to do her justice:

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{Piu volte incominciai di scriver versi,} \\
& \text{Ma la penna, e la mano e l'intelletto} \\
& \text{Rimaser vinti nel primier assalto.}
\end{align*}
\]

But in the end he has little choice, for Love forces him to write

1. Ibid., S. 349, p. 447.
2. Ibid., S. 20, p. 22.
whether he wishes to or not:

Piu volte Amor m'avea gia detto: Scrivi ....
Poi di man mi ti tolse altro lavoro; 1
Ma gia ti raggiuns'io, mentre fuggivi.

The one theme which he entirely avoids is that most popular with Ronsard and Shakespeare, the poet as immortaliser. Laura is immortal already, in her own right. She is an ideal of beauty as much as she is a person and if Petrarch were to justify himself poetically in this way, he would simultaneously be invalidating the spiritual side to his love poetry. The reason for composition would render composition pointless.

Petrarchan style and imagery should not be forgotten. He used certain rhetorical devices frequently and the antithesis particularly was used to depict the contrasting emotional states of love. Wordplay, repetition and question-series were also favoured. Certain key images appeared time and again in the Rime before being perpetuated by Petrarch's disciples. The metaphor of the storm became a commonplace for the turmoils of life. The lady's eyes claimed disproportionate attention. Most frequently they were seen as firing arrows at the lover in imitation of Cupid or putting the sun to shame with their brightness. Various arguments were also derived from the basic situation of the poet losing his heart through giving it to the lady. This could be used diversely as a reason for the poet's early death or the lady's power in keeping him alive; for urging the lady to return it at once or replace it with her own. Everything connected with Laura, the places she had walked, the clothes she wore, even the breeze

1. Ibid., S. 93, p. 132.
which sported with her hair became hallowed through association. Dutifully, often unthinkingly, Petrarch's disciples took up these images and rhetorical devices as well as the larger themes. It now remains to see how close their discipleship was.

ITALY: On the Italian side, imitation is the norm, with only minor divergences. Chariteo calls his collection of strambotti, Endymion and names his lady after the moon because of her whiteness, coldness and chastity.¹ In his conceits and affected rhetorical devices he recalls Petrarch's methods to mind, while like the Florentine poet he derives a good deal of material from classical sources. He is followed in popularity by Tebaldeo, whose main innovations are formal.² He revives the sonnet form but so arranges his themes that the force lies in the last line. This approach destroys the subtlety of Petrarch's formula, substituting a sledgehammer for a violin, but it met with the approval of subsequent poets, both in France and Italy. All the old Petrarchan conceits return in force. On a sea journey he is safely guided to harbour by the beloved's eyes. He consoles himself for death by considering how many arrows she has wasted on him. He confesses his surprise that she uses a mirror, when more flattering reflections dwell in his eyes. At the same time there is a noticeable weakening of her divine character. Less and less is she seen as the 'road to God', more and more as a desirable human creature. This new

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1. Chariteo was born in Barcelona in 1450, coming to Naples in his teens. His real name was Benedicto Gareth, Chariteo being a pseudonym conferred upon him by the Academy. He died in 1514. Opere, ed. Alamanno (Napoli, 1509).

2. Antonio Tebaldeo (1463-1537); most of his works are contained in Rinascimento Ferrarese, ed. S. Pasquazi (Roma, 1957).
attitude is first continually expressed by Serafino,\(^1\) with his 'live for the day' philosophy:

\begin{center}
Risguarda, donna, come il tempo vola  
Et ogni cosa corre a la sua fine.  
In breve si fa oscura ogni viola,  
Cascan le rose e restan poi le spine.\(^2\)
\end{center}

But even this theme, much favoured by the French and especially by Ronsard, is expressed through the Petrarchan rose/thorn image.

Serafino marks the first revolution away from Petrarchanism. Sensuality has partially overthrown platonic love. The strambotto supersedes the sonnet in popularity. Even the sonnet with its new emphasis on the last line is an instrument very different from that used by the earlier master. The poetry of this time may be a distorted Petrarchanism, more frivolous and more worldly, but the Petrarchan influence is still very strong. The conceits of lost heart and life as storm; the contrasts in the lover's condition; his eternal faithfulness; the highly mannerized style with its antitheses and complex pieces of wordplay, all these remain. It is a very timorous revolution, advanced by writers of the second rank. All its effects were soon to be negated by a much more powerful Petrarchan imitator in the shape of Bembo.

Bembo and his followers proudly called themselves the Petrarchists and isolated imitation of the master as one of their critical aims. As Dionisotti-Casalone puts it in his introduction to Gli Asolani:

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1. Serafino de' Ciminelli (1466-1500); most of his works are contained in Opere Dello Elegantissimo Poeta Seraphino Aquilano (Florence, 1516).
2. Ibid., f. 114 v.
L'imitazione (del Petrarca) non è solo istintiva, ma deliberata; non solo e d'un sentimento che declina in reminiscenze facili, ma d'un proposito critico ....

Bembo and Petrarch are therefore as close in inspiration and methods as any two poets can be, a fact which is especially important for a study of the European development of the sonnet, as the French pléiade derived most of its Italian influence from the two Bembist collections of the Rime Diverse. However much Italian poetry might react against Petrarch in later years, it was a predominantly Petrarchan model which lay at the base of the French movement. On the other hand, Bembo and his followers, through the very determination of their imitation produced poetry somewhat different from that of their master. What they lacked in originality of inspiration, they tried to compensate for by means of exaggeration.

Being a student of Petrarch, Bembo was aware of all the main themes favoured by that poet. One by one he reproduces them, but in hyperbolic form. Petrarch had suggested the spiritual nature of his love in the final three lines of Sonnet 1. Bembo, not content with implication, seizes on the 'road to heaven' metaphor at once:

E quella strada, ch'a buon fine porti,
Scorger da l'altre, e quanto adorar Dio?
Solo si dee nel mondo, ch'e suo tempio.

His opening sonnet is based on the earlier model, but in this unambiguous statement of platonic love, as well as in the unparalleled hyperbole of 1. 4:

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2. Ibid., S. I, p. 163.
Cose prima non mai vedute in terra,
the disciple already indicates his dissimilarity to the master. Petrarch felt his way towards the dichotomy of a spiritual-sensual love. Bembo starts with the solution and so the two attitudes of mind are separate from the beginning, branches which do not share the common root of experience. Bembo repeats religious and Platonic sentiments more often than Petrarch. At the same time he is more aware of the divine-physical contrast and the two often combine, as in Sonnet 82:

Gia donna, or dea, nel cui verginal chiostro, 
Scendendo in terra a sentir caldo e gelo, 
S'armo, per liberarne, il re del cielo, 
Da l'empie man de l'avversario nostro.\(^1\)

His sonnets are therefore neater but less satisfying, because they start from the simplified pattern of the critical understanding, rather than the more heterogeneous experience of real life. In the \textit{Canzonieri}, one slowly becomes aware of the conflicts in love through seeing them enacted. In Bembo direct statement becomes dominant. Sonnets formally based on antitheses are much more common in his \textit{Rime}, than in Petrarch's:

\textit{Viva mia neve e caro e dolce foco}\(^2\)

or

\textit{A questa fredda tema, a questo ardente}.\(^3\)

Excesses of spirituality like those previously cited join with excesses of sensuality, stretching beyond Petrarch's intentions:

La fera, che scolpita nel cor tengo,  
Cosi l'avessi'io viva entro le braccia. 1

As a result, although the deviations are as slight as one might expect from a self-confessed imitator, they are enough to upset the delicate balance of the Petrarchan sequence. Bembo's failing is that he is too Petrarchan. He follows the form rather than the feeling and so presents a contrast so clear that it is lifted out of its personal context and becomes ideological. When the French critic reproaches Ronsard or Jafyn for marring sensuality with pseudo-Platonism, or higher aspirations with ill-concealed lust, or both with an inordinate interest in style, he would do well to look at the examples on which he grounds his views. Very often they are influenced by Bembo, who rescued the body of Petrarchanism, only to murder its spirit. 2

Bembo and his followers put so much emphasis on style and polish, that their influence could not endure. Petrarchanism had in its own way provided an answer to man's needs. Petrarchanism without a heart, satisfied only the literary perfectionist. Yet at the same time the Bembists had been successful in forcing poets to work at their art. When the inevitable revolution did come along, it was an advance on the earlier one, led by Serafino, for now the latter's originality and ingenuity of conceit was linked to the pure language and harmonious rhythms of Bembo. If Costanzo,


2. So great was the emphasis placed on stylistic perfection by Bembo, that he had a cabinet with forty compartments, through which he progressively passed his sonnets, making alterations in each compartment.
Rota and Tansillo\(^1\) overthrew much of the formal Petrarchan apparatus; they were close to the medieval poet in their love of the conceit and in the sincerity of feeling, which inspired their work.

Indeed this debt to Petrarch is even greater than might at first be supposed. Often their conceits are mere elaborations on Petrarchan originals. The Florentine poet introduced the idea of the lady's portrait, and Costanzo expands on it. He despairs of ever being able to paint her beauty, which increases daily and has outstripped his powers of conception. In the same way Costanzo adds a novel twist to the old Petrarchan image of the lover lost in a sea of disdain. He is likened to Noah, deprived of his sheltering ark and peace-promising dove. Rota seizes on the theme of the lover's silence and uses it to see the poet as a stone:

\[
e'\text{ non avea parole,} \\
\text{Fatto gia pietra, che si muove e duole,}^2
\]

while Tansillo frequently diverts the symptoms of Petrarchan grief into general world-weariness:

\[
\text{O vita piena di martiri e guai!} \\
\text{Io non cesserò mai} \\
\text{Di dir: ch'è lieto sol chi more in fasce} \\
\text{Ovver chi mai non nasce!}^3
\]

It is once more a timorous revolution, made by poets conscious of a gigantic figure towering above them in the past. They build on old conceits, rather than forging new ones.


2. Lirici del Cinquecento, p. 275.

3. Ibid., p. 237.
The Neapolitan revolution is not so much of a revolt as a synthesis of the two earlier movements. As such, it at times comes closer to Petrarch than either of them. Serafino could not match Petrarch in stylistic perfection, but Costanzo learned this from the Bembists. Bembo failed to bring emotion and unity of inspiration into his works. His lady was a figment of the imagination and his sonnets, stylistic exercises based on Petrarchan originals, Tansillo and Costanzo both sang of real ladies, the latter's being as cold and chaste as anyone alive at the time.\(^1\) Paradoxically too, their originality was a more sincere form of imitation than imitation itself. If Petrarch had imitated some previous writer, he would never have risen to the heights, which justified Bembo's imitation. The Neapolitans, when uniting originality of theme and conceit to a widespread reading of Petrarch, followed his own treatment of classical writers.

Indeed it is Tansillo, often cited as the first major non-Petrarchan poet of the cinquecento, who reproduces most closely the spirit of Petrarchanism. His miseries are the same, yet undoubtedly genuine:

\[
\text{Miseri i miei, che, dopo lunga gioia,} \\
\text{Lontani da le luci amate e sante;} \\
\text{Altro non veggon che tristizia e noia.}\(^2\)
\]

The Marchioness del Vasto shares Laura's dignity and chastity, and Tansillo in his verse often resuscitates the fierce emotional content of the Rime. He may be less of a saintly lover; more subject to

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1. This lady was the Marchioness del Vasto. Although the relationship was platonic, this was not the value it had in Tansillo's imagination.

jealousy, suspicion and sensuality (especially in his early collections), but always the Platonic ideal is at the back of his mind. Love is exalting and purifying, so that he, like Icarus, is raised on its wings to seek out the sun:

Amor m'impenna l'ale, e tanto in alto
Le spiega l'animoso mio pensiero,
Che, ad ora sormontando, spero
A le porte del ciel far novo assalto. ¹

He is faced with the same predicament as Petrarch and uses his own ingenuity as well as a knowledge of the latter's verse to express this problem. Sensual-platonic contrasts, often wider than Bembo's are present but his collection is unified by his own consciousness; primarily inspired by his own genius and aided, never tyrannised, by Petrarchan stylicits. The most spirited revolt away from Petrarchanism ends up by echoing four of its main characteristics.

This short study of the post-Petrarchan writers in Italy has been necessary to evaluate Italian influence on the renaissance sonnet. It would seem that there were three main movements, the first culminating in Serafino, the second led by Bembo and the third comprising the Neapolitan school. They did not break away from Petrarch to any great extent, partly because they were writing in a century which upheld the value of imitation, but partly because of the Florentine poet's firm grip on the Italian imagination. Instead of a revolution away from Petrarchanism, we have three different aspects of the cult stressed, three different types of dissatisfaction expressed. Chariteo and his group show minor dissatisfaction with form and theme. They overthrow the primacy of the sonnet as a genre and understress the Platonic elements in

subject matter. As a result they emphasise the humanity of the Petrarchan lover, his passion and the depth of his misery. Bembo on the other hand stresses the style and form of Petrarch's verse. In his imitation one might think there is no real dissatisfaction, but he transforms the *Rime* into such a neat pattern of ideas, that in practice at least he argues for a less haphazard presentation of themes. Finally the Neapolitans retain Bembo's formal precision and Chariteo's originality of approach, creating a third and better attitude through synthesis. Yet they express perhaps the most complex and deepseated dissatisfaction of all. Petrarchanism is so much a way of thought, that all originality is part of a greater plagiarism. They make more daring breaks with theme and conceit than ever before, but this very originality and personal involvement brings them closer to their master than Bembo the imitator.

The situation is in many ways analogous to that in Scotland after Burns's death. A poet had raised himself so far above the ordinary ruck, that for a while all creativity expressed itself in the form of better or worse imitation. In Italy the conscious championing of Petrarch made the situation worse:

Bembo established a new veneration for Petrarch, not only as a great linguistic and stylistic authority, but also as a lover, whose themes of spiritual love and the conflict of earthly and spiritual interests were readily taken up by neo-Platonic circles of the early Cinquecento. So the sixteenth-century poets were often obsessed by Petrarch — and Canzonieri of Petrarchan verse, and commentaries, rimari etc. are numerous.¹

Later Italian influence and Petrarchanism were therefore very close.

**FRANCE**: When the Pléiade took over the sonnet form, Petrarch

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was by far the most common source, but Bembo had a strong influence and Desportes relied on Costanzo more than any other single author. It is important to realise that secondary influences of this nature were not contrary to the governing force, but closely related with it. The ideas of Petrarch crossed the channel as a body of thought, tried and confirmed by Italian writers since the trecento. They had been modified, followed in letter rather than spirit, elaborated upon and simplified in accordance with the dictates of the critical spirit, but their general influence had been little diminished when they reached France. ¹

There they were altered to suit the French temperament. Love for the French was not a matter of such high seriousness as it was for Petrarch. The French poet found it embarrassing to have to pledge his life away in service of an unrelenting mistress. He was willing to complain and weep for a while, but the reality of love was joy and fulfilment. Marot struck the recognisably French note in Chanson XII:

Tant que vivray en aage florissant,
Je serviray Amour, le Dieu puissant,
En faitz & dictz, en chansons & accords,
Par plusieurs jours m'a tenu languissant,
Main après dueil m'a fait réjouissant,
Car j'ay l'amour de la belle au gent corps. ²

The old Petrarchan model was useful in theory only. In practice the chaste female was liable soon to find herself a solitary one as well. Marot, the originator of the French sonnet propounded this


doctrine frequently and found many imitators. The old idea of chastity as desirable in itself through being a sign of godly derivation gives way to a more human, if less admirable argument based on the fertility of nature. If all nature yields to love, then the lady, following its example, would be part of the divine harmony:

Tout parle de l'amour, tout s'en veult enflammer: 
Seulement vostre coeur froid d'une glace extreme 
Demeure opiniatre, et ne veult point aymer.¹

This was the argument advanced by Milton's Comus to the lady. It is a worldly piece of sophistry advanced against spiritual truth, and the main difference between the Italian and the French sonnet is this increased worldliness of tone.

This is not the same as suggesting the death of Platonic love or the lady as an angel. These elements are still present and especially strong in the poetry of Desportes.² But the Pléiade, being primarily influenced by Bembo, carried his separation of sensual and spiritual one step further, until direct contradiction becomes part of the French poet's creed. It was possible for Ronsard to be at once jealous of his eternal faithfulness and boast of having three mistresses:

Plus tost les cieux des mers seront couverts, 
Plus tost sans forme ira confus le monde: 
Que je soys serf d'une maistresse blonde,³ 
Ou que j'adore une femme aux yeulx verts.

². R. M. Burgess, Platonism in Desportes (University of North Carolina, 1954).
His love is firmly fixed on the girl whose brown eyes first awakened love within him. Yet this is the same poet, who in another mood can make a virtue out of inconstancy:

J'ayme la fleur de Mars, j'ayme la belle Rose.
J'ayme trois oiseletz, l'un qui sa plume arrose. 1

Not only has the strong Platonic current in Petrarchanism been weakened, it has ceased to be a metaphysical creed, a coherent, consistent viewing of life. It has become instead a fund of convenient sentiments, which can be drawn upon with more or less sincerity.

The lover often returns to the Petrarchan view of the passion as a means of transcending worldly values:

Le penser qui m'enchanté et qui le plus souvent,
Selon ses mouvements, m'attire ou me repousse,
Me ravissant au monde, un jour d'une secousse
Jusqu'au troisième ciel m'allait haut élevant, 2

or a process of spiritual refinement via the flame of worldly lève:

Je veus brusler pour m'en voler aux cieux,
Tout l'imparfait de ceste escorce humaine. 3

But in most cases this is mere lip-service to a creed, which is in many respects foreign to the French way of looking at life. It accompanies a greater sensuality than was ever present for the most daring of Petrarch's followers. Which of the Italians would have imitated Balf in naming his sequence Le Baiser? Which of the Italians would have included in his list of beauties, a picture of the lover kissing his lady's nipples as Ronsard does in Continuations 3? Which of the Italians would have removed the

1. Ronsard, Oeuvres, VII, 255.
3. Ronsard, Oeuvres, IV, 134.
seduction scene from dreamland to real garden as Marot does in Chanson IV? Three of the main differentiating characteristics between the two traditions are increased sensuality, loss of metaphysical coherence and diminished grief. The timorous revolutions of Tansillo, Bembo and Serafino are fully realised in France.

Various attitudes, largely dependent on these original differences, can be traced as distinguishing traits of the French lyricist. He follows Petrarch in likening the lady to an angel, but this comparison is not at all popular. He likewise, and with more gusto, compares her to a warrior and tyrant. But both of these devices pale before the ever-favoured list of beauties. The French poet delights in subjecting his lady to close poetic scrutiny, describing in detail, parts of her body which the true Petrarchan ought only to have imagined. Janet's breast is for Ronsard:

Net, blanc, poly, large, profond et plein,
the excessive number of epithets arguing against any modesty on the part of the poet. Her knees are:

Douilletz, charnus, ronds, délics et mous,¹
while even her feet and thighs are granted immortality in verse. Indeed the French poet usually prefers this highly personalized list to the series of more general comparisons favoured by Petrarch. In this connection it is especially interesting to note that both St. Gelais and Du Bellay present versions of Bernini's ironic sonnet on the latter approach.² Attacks like this stem from a dissatisfaction

with the supposed prudery and unreality of the Petrarchan conventions. But it is not Petrarch who is the prude. Seen in the context of his comprehensive attitude to life and the battle between flesh and spirit, the lists of desexualised comparisons, often in the form of divine correspondences, are understandable, even inevitable. The real irony behind the two French versions is directed against the French themselves. They are laughing at a view of womanhood, which is only laughable because it is misunderstood. At the same time, the reader welcomes the more open approach of the French sonneteers, for its freshness and uninhibited joy in life. Somehow by making her an end in herself, Ronsard gives woman more dignity than Petrarch viewing her as a road to God.

On the other hand, sensual descriptions of this nature are not far removed from obscenity, and it is no surprise to find a fairly substantial group of obscene lyrics in French poetry. Strangely enough they are most frequent in the writings of the earliest sonneteers, Marot and St. Gelais. Their comparative closeness to Petrarch and his influence has resulted in a revolt against, rather than a closer fusion with the master. In "Non feray, je n'en feray rien", St. Gelais mocks the lady's chaste fear and culminates with a clever piece of wordplay, uniting the ideas of honour and pregnancy. Does the lady think that he will lessen her honour, by taking it from under her smock?

Allez, vous n'estes qu'une sotte,
Je le veux croistre et augmenter. 1

It is in St. Gelais' work that the ideals of Petrarchan love are

most blatantly perverted. He mercilessly mocks chastity as an important value and subjugates all higher aspirations to sensuality. Even the idea of human love as a spark of the divine is not sacred, and he introduces a blasphemous note into "Je suis jaloux, je le veux confesser." His lady spends too much time with priests, discussing the Passion and the Trinity. His interests lie in another passion and another cross:

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Mais je ne croy qu'elle y scueut rien comprendre,
Quand l'union de deux me sait apprendre,
Ny de ma Croix avoir compassion. 1
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By now opposition has reached the stronghold of Petrarchanism and the French poet feels free to mock the Italian view of woman as shadowing forth God. She may be beautiful, but to equate her with the creator is mere sophistry. It is much more honest to admit the truth of infatuation, expressing itself in religious terms:

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Ma petite Cytherée,
La seule image sacrée
A moy dévôt idolâtre,
Assi toy sur mes genoux. 2
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The simple, physical command of the last line, contrasting with the religious imagery preceding it is comic. Gone is the spiritualising, morbid introspection of Petrarch seeing God IN woman. Instead there is an outward looking joy in the senses expressed by a man relegating God FOR woman. Love is opposed to religion and the two cannot be harmonized as Petrarch suggested. One must make a choice of idols, and for Baif the lady usually wins.

Her superiority too is generally seen in worldly terms. If

1. Ibid., p. 298.

she is an Ideal, it is with reference to Nature, not to God. Scève in Dixain CCXLVII rejoices that his lady surpasses the rest of God's creations:

Nature en tous se rendit imparfaicte
Pour te parfaire, et en toy se priser. 1

But she is still a human creature, something to be loved, not worshipped. Indeed if the French lyricist's major difference from Petrarchan originals was to be identified, it would probably be this 'undeifying' of the lady. Ronsard's lady may be the most beautiful of all creatures, but he emphasises that her superiority is limited to "dessous les cieux". Marot goes one step further, for his lady is no more beautiful than many others. She just happens to be the one who has infatuated him:

Quand j'ay pensé en vous, ma bien aymée,
Trouver n'en puis de si grande beaute. 2

There is a new spirit of realism, invading the lyric. The lady is a target of criticism now, just as much as an angel to be worshipped. She even loses her chastity and becomes an inconstant whore, well-versed in the deceits of love:

En nul endroyt, comme a chanté Virgile,
La foy n'est seure, et me l'a fait scavoyr
Ton jeune cuoeur, mais vieil pour decevoir,
Rompant la sienne infamement fragile. 3

It is clear that a new concept of love has appeared beside Petrarch's. The poet is prepared to admit inconstancy both in himself and his lady; to suggest that her beauty may not be unsurpassed and to see

love and religion as opposites rather than complements. The idealising tendencies in Petrarchanism have been torn away to reveal the truth of weakness and humanity.

Thus when noting the French lyricist's refusal to be so awkward or humble as the Italian in his lady's presence, one ought not to search for an explanation in terms of national character. The Italians are probably as passionate and fluent as the French, but they have a much more idealized notion of the lady, based on Petrarchan tradition and less hindered by the tenets of courtly love. It is logical to be tongue-tied before someone who is a divine messenger, the means of your spiritual regeneration. It is not so logical to freeze in front of a human being, full of faults and perhaps not as beautiful as many others. It is therefore only a poet like Desportes, retaining Petrarch's views on love, who constantly finds himself at a loss for words:

Langue muette à mon secours tardive,
Que m'a servi tant d'heur que j'ay receu
De voir Madame?

When Ronsard (Hélène: Madrigal 1) or Baif (Francine: 59) makes his infrequent contributions to this theme, one remembers previous occasions on which his tongue had been free to scold, and dismisses that particular example as a sop to Petrarchanism. When Scève presents his version in Dixain VIII, one notes that the lady shares the awkwardness of silence and that eventually the situation is resolved by the intervention of Cupid. The French poet seeing his lady as less of a goddess and more of a human being, writes fewer

humility sonnets and even those he does compose show modifications of the kind suggested above.

But if the lady's stock falls, the poet's rises. Petrarch was loath to see himself as the lady's immortaliser. Being God's expression on earth, she was immortal already. The French writer is not troubled by any such problem and so is free to praise his poetic merits. Ronsard may occasionally feel that as a man he is not worthy to love Hélène or Cassandre, but as the foremost poet in France he strongly suspects that she is getting the better part of the bargain:

Vous aurez en mes vers un immortel renom;  
Pour n'avoir rien de vous la récompense est grande.¹

This is advanced as a reason for the cessation of the lady's chaste tyranny in Continuations 18, while in Hélène II ⁴ he points out that old age will leave her the one consolation, that

Ronsard me célébroit du temps que j'estoïs belle.²

Such egoism is far-removed from Petrarch's fear that his muse would not be adequate to praise the lady's perfection. Moreover it implies yet another reversal of Petrarchan values. No longer does the lady grant the poet immortality by uniting him with God; the

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¹ J. B. Leishman, Themes and Variations in Shakespeare's Sonnets (London, 1961), p. 44. "I cannot claim to have noticed every passage in his (Petrarch's) sonnets and canzoni where he speaks of the fame which his poetry has achieved or may achieve for Laura and for himself, but those which I have noticed among the 366 poems of the Canzoniere ... are remarkably few and, for the most part, so modest and tremulous and muted that they might easily escape attention."


³ Ibid., p. 74.
poet grants the lady immortality through verse. The former argues for a solution in divine terms and with feminine superiority; the latter is a human solution assigning greater dignity to the poet as artist and man.

In the light of all this evidence one could almost anticipate the French lyricist's account of love's birth and death. The allegorical description of an angel descending from heaven to unite him with God disappears entirely. It is replaced by a more realistic approach. The lady is commonly seen disporting herself in a meadow:

Dedans des Préz je vis une Dryade,
Qui comme fleur s'assisoy par les fleurs

or described first in physical terms, then with reference to her effect on the poet:

Quand je vous voy, ma soeur et vous ma tante,
L'une en tainot brun et l'autre en blanche tresse,
Lors un désir incroyable me tente
D'avoir des deux l'une pour ma maistresse. 1

This type of opening is of course present in the verse of Petrarch and his followers too, but it is less openly, less frequently adopted. Also, as a consequence of the more realistic approach to women and the admission of their frailties, further differences arise. Infidelity results in the single love affair becoming several. Petrarch met Laura, celebrated the event suitably and that was that. Ronsard has in turn to celebrate his meetings with Cassandre, Marie, Hélène and Astrée as well as many minor figures. There is therefore not the same sense of occasion. The lady is

neither a Goddess nor the only love of the poet's life. She is just another flame that will probably flicker and die. As a result St. Gelais admits that he cannot even remember the day when first he fell in love, and seems more concerned with loss of personal pride than the inception of a grand passion:

Asseuré suis d'estre pris et lié;  
Mais asseurer ne puis l'heure et raison,  
Que je changeay ma franchise à prison,  
Dont mon orgueil fut tant humilié.¹

More noticeable is the vast difference in the treatment of death. Petrarch found as many themes after Laura died as he had in life, for no alternative subject was possible. He was committed to this one love, body and soul. He is thus free to indulge in melancholy and metaphysical speculation alternately. The French poet is neither so deeply involved in his love, nor so concerned with a union after death. He has on one hand a more limited range of death-themes and on the other the ever present possibility of changing his affections. Ronsard may weep for Marie, Balfour Cleonice, but only for a while. Life must go on and they will soon be rapturous over other ladies. They repeat a number of themes from Petrarch, shut that particular book and then open another.

In the foregoing account I have been at pains to stress the differences between the French lyric and Petrarchanism. As a counterbalance, it must be remembered that any divergences went alongside close similarity. The conceits of life as storm, the lost heart and identification with the lady's gloves, ribbon or dog continued. Antitheses, wordplay, lists and all the characteristics

¹. St. Gelais, Œuvres, I, 280.
of Petrarch's mannerised style were echoed by Du Bellay and Ronsard. The alterations made by the French lyricist were largely changes of emphasis. The Platonic side of love was not abandoned, but underplayed, and the sensual elements correspondingly exaggerated. Courtly love played a greater rôle in France than in Italy. The lady was still seen as a Goddess but not so frequently; still as an ideal but in a natural rather than divine context. The poet still suffered, but he was permitted more frivolity and joy than his Petrarchan counterpart. He used many of the Italian's ideas to describe the birth and death of his love, but that love was less enduring and more variable than Petrarch's. The French lyricist retained the foundations of Petrarchanism and the materials, but on that foundation and with those materials, he constructed a very different poetic monument.

ENGLAND: The sonneteering movement and the full effect of pléiade poetics and Petrarchanism reached England in the 1580's, although Wyatt and Surrey remain isolated disciples in the earlier part of that century. Yet they did begin the influence of Petrarchan sonneteering in England. The former translated 15 and imitated 10 of the Rime, while Surrey translated 3 and imitated 2. Yet, as Patricia Thomson has skilfully shown, neither agreed wholeheartedly with the Petrarchan ethic. Surrey lacks the high seriousness of his model, while Wyatt frequently prefers the more sensual love represented by Serafino; Surrey loses the consistent metaphysical system of Petrarch, Wyatt replaces it with one, more in line with

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modern interpretations. The English like the French sonnet begins in a spirit of qualified acceptance of the Petrarchan creed. It works within Petrarchan conventions, yet frequently calls them into question.¹

The English poets in short were faced with two extreme attitudes to love, the spiritual vision of the road to God or the more sensual view favoured by the French. The result is a series of different reactions, typified by those of Sidney, Spenser and Shakespeare.

Sidney is the closest of the three to the original Petrarchan inspiration. As early as Sonnet 5 of Astrophil and Stella, he poignantly expresses the vision of a lover who simultaneously longs for love as a medium to divine truth and is aware that this path may be blocked by sensuality:

True, that true Beautie Vertue is indeed,  
Whereof this Beautie can be but a shade,  
Which elements with mortall mixture breed:  
True, that on earth we are but pilgrims made,  
And should be soule up to our countrey move:  
True, and yet true that I must Stella love.²

There is however a subtle change of emphasis, perhaps fostered by the prevalent French view of love as anti-religion. Sidney finds it difficult to retain love of lady and love of God as complements. Instead an opposition grows up between them, with Stella becoming less a divine intermediary and more a centre of moral tensions within the poet:


A strife is growne betwenee Vertue and Love,1
While each pretends that Stella must be his.

For Petrarch a strife between virtue and love in this sense would have been impossible. In the Italian's creed, love was a shadow of the greater love of God, a manifestation of his goodness. Virtue could only be approached by way of love and the strife lay at the level of means rather than end. Laura always represented both love and virtue. The only doubt was whether the poet's passion could remain pure enough to allow him to advance from a virtuous earthly love to its divine counterpart. Sidney is implicitly introducing a moral standpoint into his poetry. He identifies love with sensuality and then opposes it to spiritual values, thus departing from the Italian's transcendental philosophy.

The other main difference can also be traced to French influence. The French lyricist took a more realistic view of life and love than the Italian. Sidney in a way strikes a balance between the two, for he retains Petrarch's metaphysical idealism, but replaces many of his highflown conceits with homely imagery. Love and economics are linked in Sonnet 18:

With what sharpe checkes I in myselfe am shent,
When into Reason's audite I do go.2

Horsemanship is introduced into Sonnets 41 and 49; the traditional nymph becomes a creature of the garden in Sonnet 82 and in Sonnet 63 he even uses grammar to turn the lady's refusal into acceptance:

1. Ibid., p. 190.

2. Ibid., p. 173.
For Grammar says (to Grammar who says nay)
That in one speech two Negatives affirme.¹

It is difficult to imagine romantics like Petrarch and Ronsard using such imagery without a powerful sense of incongruity. But the English lyricist is the least romantic, if not the least passionate lover. For the first time, morals and economics enter Laura's garden.

Spenser's Amoretti brings the conflict between moral and courtly attitudes to love into the open. It may be true that these contradictions are partly to be accounted for by positing two sequences separated in time.² As Lever suggests, the author was over forty and might well have joined an early 'courtly-love' group to that celebrating courtship and marriage. What is important in the present context is that these two conflicting approaches often appear concurrently in Elizabethan lyrical sequences. It is as if the English poet stood at the centre of literary and moral forces, being pulled now in one direction, now in the other. At times even Spenser can side with the French tradition in openly sensual description:

Her goodly bosom lyke a Strawberry bed,

Her nipples lyke yong blossom Iessemynes,³

but more frequently he adopts the moral tone of a man aware of love as a potentially evil power:

Let not one sparke of filthy lustfull fyre
Breake out, that may her sacred peace molest.¹

Lust was passed over in euphemistic terms by the Italian, accepted
joyously by the French. Only the English see it as "filthy". Such an attitude, being Pauline in derivation, naturally leads to
the Pauline solution of marriage and for the first time Hymen steps
on to the stage in the ode at the end of the volume. However much
the English lyricist may try to adopt the Italian view of love as a
means towards God or the French view of love as an end in itself,
he basically sees it as leading to marriage. He is more of a
moralist than an idealist, philosopher or romantic. Like Wyatt he
may envy those who "live in lust and joyful jollitie", but in the
end his conscience is a strong force against him joining them.

Consequent on this attitude, which may be summed up by
Shakespeare's phrase in Sonnet CXLII, "love is my sin", the most
favoured means of picturing the lady is not by natural description
nor angelic comparison. The lady in the English sonnet is most
frequently a tyrant, a warrior, an enemy. Spenser's lady may be
godlike, but she is also a savage enemy:

Is it her nature or is it her will,
To be so cruel to an humbled foe?²

a merciless predator:

But she more cruel and more saluage wylde,
Then either Lyon or the Lyonesse.³

Drayton's Idea is a "tyrant euer martyring mee", or "three serpents".
Shakespeare reserves the angel image for his youth and sees the

¹ Ibid., p. 576.
² Ibid., p. 569.
³ Ibid., p. 565.
force of the dark lady "to winne me soon to hell". The French joy in sensuality with its detailed, often erotic physical descriptions, produces a strong moral conflict in the English mind when set against Italian idealism.

Nowhere is this more obvious than in Shakespeare's much-maligned sonnet series. He shares the Petrarchan concept of an idealised love (Sonnets 1-126) contrasted with a sensual one (Sonnets 127-154). But there are two very important differences. The sensual love is firmly opposed to the idealised version. It is lust. It is sexual infatuation, leading to Hell rather than heaven. The lady is not drawing him up to God, but destroying his moral character and self-respect:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{my female evil} \\
\text{Tempteth my better angel from my side,} \\
\text{And would corrupt my saint to be a devil.}
\end{align*}
\]

This aspect of the problem is seen in moral and sexual terms with no transcendental reference. Love for the lady draws him into sin and awakens within him a conscience (S. 151, ll. 1-2). It is as far removed from Platonic affection as anything can be and Shakespeare uses the penis image to emphasise this:

\[
\begin{align*}
flesh stays no farther reason, \\
\text{But, rising at thy name, doth point out thee,} \\
\text{As his triumphant prize.}
\end{align*}
\]

Once again love has been equated with lust and this in turn been damned in terms of the poet's moral disintegration as well as the lady's evil influence. If the French poet chose to idealize

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sensual love in romantic terms, the English poet is determined to denigrate in moral ones.

But neither French nor English shares the Italian's predominant interest in the supernatural realm. They do not deny God. Indeed they pay him frequent lip-service. But really they replace him with romantic love, morals or account books. The first group of Shakespearean sonnets intimate that the youth has an importance over and above himself. He is as Auden suggests, "revealed to the subject as being of infinite sacred importance."¹ But this importance stems from the man's own nature, with no necessary religious reference. He represents an ideal of human love, momentarily, perhaps mystically perceived, which later revelation of character threatens to besmirch. This however is not the same as being a manifestation of God. Unlike Laura he turns out to be imperfect, unfeeling and frivolous, all of which would have been impossible, if he were her equivalent in Shakespeare's version. What Shakespeare has done is to retain the sensual and spiritual sides of love but give them separate objects of affection. He has also retained the idea of an archetype of love but removed both the supernatural reference and the equation of personality with imaginative apprehension of that personality's ultimate value. The lust/love conflict has been personified, God has been relegated, Laura given vices and only the idea behind Laura fully justified.

Usually the reaction of the English poet to the divergent foreign influences is not original, but an alternation between given

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¹. Ibid., p. xxx. See also Leishman, Themes and Variations, Chap. 3, pp. 147-77.
As an artist, Petrarch had never boasted of immortalising Laura, while Ronsard continually flaunts his poetic prowess. The English poet sways dubiously from one attitude to the other. Shakespeare for example argues that he will immortalise his beloved through art:

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee. 1

Yet in Sonnet 32 he talks of "poor rude lines" to be cherished "for my love, not for their rhyme". Daniel in Sonnet 48 rejoices that his verse will make Delia's name famous, but in the very next poem of the sequence scorns "unhappy pen" and "ill accepted papers".

Drayton too alternates from the pompous egoism of Amour 22 to the humility of Amour 28, which places all credit on the theme and none on the midwife-artist:

I prove my verse autentique still in thys,
Who writes my Mistres praise can neuer write amisse. 2

Seen from a Petrarchan viewpoint, any specifically English contribution lies in comprehension rather than innovation.

The other type of English reaction is that of the via media. Petrarch's lady had been absolutely chaste. The lover had admired her virtue and regarded sensuality in himself as a weakness. The French lady by way of contrast, yielded frequently and poets like Ronsard or St. Gelais were not slow to broadcast the fact. While both extremes do exist in the vast expanse of the Elizabethan lyric, it is true to say that the typically English heroine is neither the one nor the other. She is neither a chaste goddess nor a wanton

1. Shakespeare, Sonnets, p. 58.
whore. She is the happy amalgam suggested by Spenser in Sonnet 13:

Nyld humblenesse mixt with awfull majesty,
For looking on the earth whence she was borne,
Her mind remembreth her mortalitie,
What so is fayrestshall to earthe returne. 1

As a result she is chaste, but not invincible and the poet stresses the difficulty of seduction, not the impossibility. This is true of Sidney, of Daniel and of Surrey:

Bewty of kind, her vertues from above,2
Happy ys he that may obtaine her love.

On the same principle, as if in deference to the difficulty of the chase he implies sexual victory rather than glorying in it:

Neast of young joyes, schoolmaster of delight,
Teaching the meane, at once to take and give
The friendly fray, where blowes both wound and heale,
The prettie death, while each in other live.3

It is the sort of realistic attitude one might expect from the English lyricist, determined neither to deify nor discredit the lady. Just as he shuns the more affected trappings of conceit, so he throws out the artificiality of godlike chastity and the tradition of poets openly boasting of illicit love. Social conventions as well as morality are more frequently observed by the English lyric writer than by the French or Italian.

There are only two further points which ought to be made in distinguishing the English attitude to love. The first concerns the nature of the love sequences. The Italians had favoured an allegorical opening and the French a more sensual one. Daniel in


his Delia combines the two (Sonnet 5) by suggesting that his chaste goddess has descended from the sky to make him turn from sensual pastimes. But mostly the English sonneteer refuses to base his work on a narrative framework at all. Sidney in Astrophil and Stella admittedly traces his love from infatuation into a deeper passion and then by way of partings, jealousy and unfaithfulness draws to a conclusion in which it is eventually sublimated. He is however an exception. Wyatt and Surrey compose haphazard love sonnets without placing them in a sequence. Shakespeare's sonnets have no obvious plan of development. They deal with what seems to have been actual experience but with the inconsequentiality of the diary rather than the coherence of the novel. Spenser is clearly concerned with the "idea" of love and the unity of his sequence is the unity of a philosophical system not the progression of history. Daniel is limited thematically and merely reiterates the theme of beauty's decay.

All this points to the conclusion that English sonneteering lacked a co-ordinating principle. Petrarch had his passion for Laura and the theory of divine interrelationships which grew out of it. Ronsard was carried along by the force of his love and used its variety to create the progressive unity of the story. Both followed their ladies into death, albeit with different degrees of perseverance. But the major English sonneteers don't comment on their lady's death at all, and this is not because they happened to be linked with females of unusually hearty constitution. The

1. Lever, Elizabethan Sonnet, Chap. 4, pp. 51-91.
English sonneteer doesn't set his sequences in story form or follow his lady into death, because he has a lower opinion of the sonnet genre than either of his predecessors. It is primarily a vehicle for occasional verse, for posturing rather than truth; for idle courting, not for death. That is why Spenser for years stolidly refused to employ it, why Shakespeare used it as a form for diary jottings. The fact that it was not so seriously viewed in England is most clearly indicated in Love's Labours Lost, where Berowne pours scorn on the sonnet in particular, Petrarchanism in general:

0! but her eye, -by this light, but for her eye,
I would not love her; yes, for her two eyes. Well, I
do nothing in the world but lie, and lie in my throat.
By heaven, I do love, and it hath taught me to rhyme,
and to be melancholy; and here is part of my rhyme,
and here my melancholy. Well, she hath one o' my sonnets
already; the clown bore it, the fool sent it, and the lady hath it: sweet clown, sweeter fool, sweetest lady!  

In an age when every lovesick courtier felt obliged to express his passion in sonnet form, it is not surprising that the genre became identified with inferior art. When so many people laughed at its conventions, it was difficult for the good poet to use it as a vehicle for serious expression.

As a consequence, in England more than elsewhere, it became very often a mere rhetorical exercise. As Maurice Evans remarks, it was "the testing ground for the newly revived classical rhetoric .... A reader who dips into the sonnets with his Puttenham beside him will see that the majority of them are organised around one basic figure of periphrasis or metaphor into which all minor figures are incorporated."  

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2. Evans, p. 97.
of course held in higher esteem by the Elizabethans than it is to-day. But even then, the best art was equated with less rigid rules. The sonnet would appeal as a form to critics like James VI or to a mere versifier, conscious of having little to say. For Shakespeare or Spenser, it was a testing ground for their art, the fuller representations of which were to be reserved for the plays or the "Faerie Queene". In one sense at least the progression from Petrarch to Shakespeare marks the relegation of the sonnet from a vehicle for complex philosophy to fulfilling the role of a pencil sharpener.
THE PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND TO RENAISSANCE POETRY

The main critical and poetic influences on renaissance poetry having been discussed, one further source of themes must be explored. At any point in time the current of philosophical thought will influence literature, and never has this been more true than in the sixteenth century. No one philosopher can be isolated as the main source, for a cardinal feature of renaissance philosophy is its syncretic technique. Pico della Mirandola’s attempt to synthesize the works of Plato and Aristotle may be regarded as typical of the period.\(^1\) The discovery of Greek and Latin manuscripts, which raised renaissance poetry to new heights, had the opposite effect on its philosophers. By remaining true to an Aristotelian or Platonic base, they made few innovations. Michelangelo, Ronsard and Shakespeare rank with the best of any land or time, but the names of Ficino, Pico and Vives are known only to specialists in literature or philosophy.

Syncretism and consequent mediocrity are the preliminary indictments against renaissance philosophy. Also, in a study of this nature, it is cowardice to hide behind a facile definition like that of neo-Platonism. Arbitrarily to equate the ideas of the renaissance poets with those of the neo-Platonists is to ignore the presence of other strong philosophical currents. Aristotelianism was by no means dead. Indeed it was still the favoured doctrine at most universities and upheld by prominent philosophers.

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like Pomponazzi and Melanchthon. The influence of the philosophers of nature, who tried to break away from both Greek writers is also prevalent in renaissance literature. Led by Telesio and Bruno, they were primarily interested in cosmology, enquiring assiduously into the nature of the physical world. Their research was less fruitful than it might have been, only because they refused to admit the value of mathematics in conducting scientific experiments, but their metaphysical speculations readily caught the poetic imagination. The label, 'neoplatonism' is therefore a simplification of the situation, ignoring as it does the smaller schools of Aristotelianism, nature, and even Montaigne's revival of Pyrrhonic scepticism.1

It is also misleading, however. The neoplatonism of the renaissance might more exactly be termed 'neo-neo-Platonism', for it stems not only from the works of Plato himself, but from neo-Platonists like Plotinus as well. It is both a reinterpretation of the master's philosophy and an echoing of his disciples' teachings. Neoplatonism as a classifying symbol can only be meaningfully applied once this original distinction has been made.

By now even its function as a peg on which interrelated ideas may be hung has been called into question. A phrase like, 'renaissance poetry speaks with the voice of neo-Platonism' begs no fewer than four major questions. Is the voice of neoplatonism that of Ficino reassessing Plato or Plotinus or both? Is the voice of neoplatonism so loud that Aristotelianism and other opposing views cannot be heard? Does this remark not ignore the syncretic

tendencies of philosophy at a time when attempts to unite Plato
with Aristotle or both with Christian theology were common? Does
every concern with universal topoi like that of the conflict between
reason and passion imply direct philosophical influence, and does
such a supposition not minimise the poet's capacity for original
thought?

In the light of these doubts, it seems wiser to concentrate on
the ideas of individual philosophers rather than groups, which on
closer examination are seen to be as tenuously interrelated as the
Metaphysicals. On the other hand, some categorisation is necessary,
if a swift and profitable journey is to be made through this vast
field. In this connection I have used a hint supplied by Trinkaus
in his essay on Valla:

Although "singularity" might conceivably be regarded
by some scholars as "typical" of the Humanists,
nevertheless, it is clear to-day that there were
certain broad patterns of attitude and behavior that
categorized numerous groups of these writers.1

It is round a number of set topics that I base this study, namely
those of man, love, cosmology, astrology, mythology and nature.
Each attracts the attention of renaissance philosophy. Each is a
major subject in the renaissance sonnet. They therefore provide a
surer basis for investigation, than the somewhat hazy concept of
neoplatonism.

ELEMENTS: The first important philosophical view of man,
frequently echoed by renaissance poets is that of the four elements.
Before Plato, Parmenides had posited the presence of a single

1. Charles E. Trinkaus Jr., "Valla", The Renaissance Philosophy of
Man, ed. E. Cassirer, P. O. Kristeller and J. H. Randall Jr.,
element underlying all physical nature.¹ This element however had no material substance and physical nature itself was an ever-changing, complex phenomenon, which he more or less ignored on the grounds that it was a delusion. It was left to Plato in the Timaeus to expound the theory of the four elements. He argued that fire and earth were the first constituents of the earth, but united by air and water in the proportion Fire:Air = Air:Water = Water:Earth.² The two mean proportionals are necessary, because he had suggested at the outset that fire and earth are volumes. He didn't enlarge on this theory, except to argue that earth is unique in having a different base. As a result, while fire, air and water can interchange and pass into one another, earth cannot. He seems unconcerned with the problem that elements cannot have bases and still remain elemental.

Aristotle took up this theory in the De Caelo. Starting with the proposition that there are only two types of natural motion, he assigns Plato's four elements to the simple upward/downward alternation. This still leaves the circular movement unaccounted for. All that can be said is that it is unnatural for the elements to move in this fashion. But, it necessarily follows that circular movement, being unnatural to these bodies, is the

1. Parmenides, The Way of Truth, Frag. 8. 26-h2. "But it (the One Being) is immovable in the limits of its mighty bonds, without beginning or cessation, since becoming and ceasing to be have been driven afar off, and true belief has thrust them out." Translated by F. MacD. Cornford in Plato and Parmenides (London, 1939).

natural movement of some other.¹ This results in the establishing of the fifth or 'quintessence', the motion of which is circular and whose body is incapable of corruption or decay.

Although the Italian philosophers of the renaissance made one or two alterations to these theories, they had gained such a hold on the poetic imagination, that they remained very powerful themes throughout the period. Telesio removed the emphasis on heat and cold as the two active principles, suggesting that matter was a third and passive principle.² Patrizi made light the unifying force behind all corporeal things.³ But they found few imitators, either philosophical or poetic. Nor indeed was Aristotle's quintessence as common in poetry as the four elements. This was partly because Plato's approach to philosophy was more conducive to the literary mind, estranged by the rigorously logical approach of his successor. It was also in part due to the fifth element's divine reference. Humanists, anticipating Pope's maxim, that "the proper study of mankind is man", felt free to ignore the quintessence without necessarily questioning its existence. Most important of all, however, the four elements fitted in with a numerologically satisfying account of man's situation then prevalent.

1. Aristotle, De Caelo, tr. J. L. Stocks (Oxford, 1922), p. 269a. "And so, since the prior movement belongs to the body which is naturally prior, and circular movement is prior to straight, and movement in a straight line belongs to simple bodies ... it follows that circular movement also must be the movement of some simple body."

2. Bernardino Telesio, De Natura Rerum iuxta propria principia (Naples, 1586). Heat and cold had been advanced as the originating forces in creation by the Pythagoreans, (Cornford, p. 28).

The Pythagoreans had stressed the importance of number and indeed suggested that in number lay the key to the universe. As a result the medieval and renaissance mind rejoiced in the formation of neat numerological correspondences. The most elaborate of these centred round the number four. Man was viewed as being composed of the four humours; placed in one of the four divisions of the world; subject to their respective winds and to the alternation of the four seasons. He passed through four ages and was subject to one of the four zodiacal periods. As a result, the theory that he was composed of four elements found ready support. Both philosophers and astrologers delighted in composing tables which not only set out the groups of four horizontally, but also established vertical correspondences between the individual constituents.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Four Properties</th>
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<th>Warm</th>
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<td>The Four Elements</td>
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<td>The Four Airts</td>
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<td>The Four Winds</td>
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<td>Four Seasons of Year</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>Winter</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Four Humours</td>
<td>Sanguinary</td>
<td>Choleric</td>
<td>Phlegmatic</td>
<td>Bilious</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four Ages of Man</td>
<td>Childhood</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Decrepitude</td>
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</tbody>
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With this background of philosophical thought in mind, it is

1. An Irish Corpus Astronomae, (Being Manus O'Donnell's Seventeenth Century Version of the Lunario of Geronymo Cortes), ed. F. W. O'Connell and R. M. Henry (London, 1915), p. 27. Cortes' Lunario was one of the most influential astronomical text books at the turn of the seventeenth century.
profitable to turn to poetry again. The English sonneteers are the most heavily influenced by the elemental theories, although Bembo makes use of them in Gli Asolani and Le Rime, while Ronsard frequently refers to his melancholic humour. Desportes and Du Bartas are perhaps the most "element-conscious" of the foreign poets however, and frequently link them with the overruling divine purpose:

Tout ce que l'univers enserre,  
Tend au bien, le cherche et le suit,  
Le feu, l'air, les eaux et la terre,  
Et tout ce qui d'eux est produit.  

The belief that earth and water moved downward, in a contrary direction to air and fire is employed profitably by Shakespeare in Sonnets 44 and 45. There he attributes the latter elements to his own "dull substance", contrasting them with "slight air" and "purging fire", now possessed by the beloved. Wyatt links the elements with symptoms of love in Sonnet 31. His heart is composed of fire, his tears are water, his sighs air and his body made of earth. The addition of Aristotle's quintessence however, is left to Spenser in Amoretti 55. His Lady cannot be composed of any of the four human substances. Like Aristotle he is forced to assume the presence of a fifth principle, divine and immortal in nature:

Then needs another Element inquire  
Whereof she mote be made; that is the skye,  
For to the heaven her haughty lookes aspire:  
And eke her mind is pure immortall hye.  

The frequency with which examples of this nature appear in the renaissance sonnet suggests that philosophical ideas were eagerly followed and adapted by the poets. This tendency is of course not

2. Spenser, Poems, p. 571.
surprising in an age when the distinguishing boundaries between poetry, philosophy, astrology, medicine and physics were by no means as clear as they are to-day.

**SOUL:** The soul was another problem discussed at great length by both philosophers and poets. Plato dealt with it closely in the Timaeus, Republic and Phaedrus. In the first of these he was concerned to establish the presence of a world-soul, which was infused throughout the universe. The only major renaissance philosopher to develop this theory was Girolamo Cardano (1501-76). He accepted the Platonic idea of an 'all soul' but united it with the Aristotelian 'indeterminate matter' and 'forms'. It is clear that Cardano had been influenced in this theory, also by Plotinus, who argued as follows:

If the soul in me is a unity, why need that in the universe be otherwise seeing that there is no longer any question of bulk or body? And if that, too, is one soul and yours, and mine, belongs to it, then yours and mine must also be one: and if, again, the soul of the universe and mine depend from one soul, once more all must be one.

Cardano and the neoplatonists are by definition interested in the life of the soul, for if the physical world of sense and emotion is both a shadow and delusion, then only the life of the soul can be real or meaningful. Thus although counter-groups of philosophers deny this conclusion, the soul becomes a dominant topic of sixteenth century thought.

The poets however are more concerned with the individual than with general metaphysics. The doctrine of the world soul thus

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1. Girolamo Cardano, Opera Omnia (Lyons, 1663).
receives scant attention. The two Platonic ideas which are repeated continually are those of the tripartite soul and anamnesis. The first of these theories stemmed from the Pythagoreans, for whom the number three signified immortality. The tripartite soul was thus by definition an immortal soul. Plato adapts this old view to his own purposes in the Republic, book 4, but reserves the most developed account for the Phaedrus. In the analogy there, he compares it to a charioteer, governing two steeds of different natures. The one represents 'honour', the other 'appetite', while the controller is 'judgment'. This image became very popular with poets of the renaissance, but usually in a simplified form. Not being versed in the intricacies of Platonic philosophy, they didn't appreciate the necessity for retaining a distinction between judgment, honour and appetite; the gold, silver and bronze citizens; the life of reason, of understanding and of opinion. Also, the equation on a metaphorical level of man (the charioteer), with part of man (judgment) seems to have proved a further stumbling block. As a result the most common poetic version of the fable equates the charioteer with man and delegates the struggle of the soul to a simple opposition between reason and passion.

The theory of anamnesis is variously described in a number of dialogues, usually in mythological form. In the Timaeus, for example each man is allotted to a star and from this infinite height is allowed to look down on Nature and have its fated laws explained to him. All life then becomes a process of remembering the divine

1. The Dialogues of Plato, tr. B. Jowett, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1931), I, 452. The idea becomes a medieval commonplace, as in Lydgate's "Reason and Sensuality", or "The Cloud of Unknowing".
vision granted before birth.\textsuperscript{1} Virtuous living leads to continual recollection, although in the Republic it is suggested that complete knowledge can come only after several reincarnations. This is why the lover in the Phaedrus is led by physical beauty to a recollection of that divine perfection which once he had known. Whether the poets of the renaissance were attracted primarily by the vividness or the aptness of the myth is uncertain. But they did use it widely, often as a means of accounting for their poetic insight.\textsuperscript{2}

Other theories of the soul were not so popular as Plato's with its mythological and idealising tendencies. Aristotle's views were expressed in renaissance Italy by Pomponazzi, who viewed the soul as the entelechy of the body, and argued that it was not only rational and sensitive but actually dependent on the body.\textsuperscript{3} His arguments are cogent and philosophers held his work in high esteem. But the poetic imagination prefers the mythology of Plato and his chariot to Pomponazzi's deductive logic.

Telesio produced a rather complex account of the soul, which incorporated both Pomponazzi's sensitive spirit, subject to influence from external objects, and the higher Platonic soul. His account is indeed very close to the poetic picture of reason opposing

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Timaeus, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 141ff.
\item \textsuperscript{2} Memory was an important topic in renaissance philosophy. Raymond Lull (d. 1315) wrote a lengthy thesis on the subject. Among his disciples was Bruno.
\end{itemize}
passion, for it comprises two contradictory forces. The one is physical and identified with passion, the other spiritual and identified with reason. As the reason-passion conflict had already been explicitly formulated by earlier philosophers like Boethius and Plotinus, it would be wrong to credit Telesio with originating the idea. On the other hand he did keep it alive and contemporary poets may have derived their ideas from the De Rerum Naturae, rather than the Phaedrus or De Consolatione.

Once again examples of these themes are so common in renaissance poetry, that illustration is made easy. Bembo in Sonnet 12 recounts how the lady's beauty has frightened away his reason, while Sonnet 45 expresses this conflict in terms of battle. Usually passion gains the upper hand, but Scève in Dizain CLXXIX presents a victory for reason:

Fuyant Amour, je suivray la Raison.¹

Ronsard is one of the few to advance Pomponazzi's view that the spirit would be inert without the body:

Bien que l'esprit humain s'enfle par la doctrine
De Platon, qui le vante influxion des cieux,
Si est-ce sans le corps qu'il seroit ocieux,
Et auroit beau louer sa célèste origine.²

Anamnesis is a less popular theme, but Michelangelo discussed it fully in one of his best known sonnets:

Non so se s'e l'immaginata luce,
Che piu e meno ogni persona sente;
O se dalla memoria o dalla mente
Alcun'altra belta nel cor traluce;

¹. Scève, Délie, p. 130.
². Ronsard, Hélène, I, p. 36.
O se nell'alma ancor risplende e luce
Del suo prestino stato il foco ardente,
C'a si caldo desir tiri sovente
Ogni ottimo pensier, c'al ver conduce,¹

while in France, Marguerite de Navarre used it in her 'Prisons'.

In the English sonnet, themes of this nature are manifold.
The battle between reason and love is fought once more in Drayton's
_Idea_, 31, with the former eventually retreating. More original is
No. 14 in which he distinguishes nine capacities of the soul,
including memory, with its concomitant ideas of pre-existence and
anamnesis. Shakespeare in S. 144 produces a version of Telesio's
two-soul theory, equating the lady with the lover, the youth with
the higher spirit. Three sonnets later he returns to the idea of
passion overthrowing reason and thus upsetting the harmony of the
soul. As a result the humours are no longer balanced, so illness
follows. Spenser, with strong Boethian undertones, makes his con¬
tribution in terms of conflict alongside harmony. Reason is
mercilessly defeated by passion and as a result his harp, the symbol
of internal equilibrium is useless:

But when in hand my tunelesse harpe I take,
then doe I more augment my foes despight;
and griefe renew, and passions doe awake
to battaile, fresh against my selfe to fight.²

Theories of the soul's function and nature were thus trans¬
ferred from philosopher's tract to the poet's verse with only minor
alterations of interpretation. The Platonic ideas of anamnesis and
the conflict between reason and passion were especially popular.
But poets like Ronsard and Shakespeare occasionally break free from

¹. _The Sonnets of Michelangelo_, ed. J. A. Symonds (London, 1904),
p. 44.
². _Spenser, Poems_, p. 569.
the Platonic stranglehold to provide imaginative versions of views held by Pomponazzi or Telesio.

**LOVE: FICINO AND CASTIGLIONE:** In the last chapter, the influence of Petrarch on the sonnet was discussed at some length. Most especially his views on love were considered and shown to have been echoed by many of the renaissance poets. His philosophy of love however was modified to fit in with the ideas of later philosophers, especially Ficino and Castiglione. Like Petrarch they began with the Platonic philosophy of love and beauty, but they elaborated on it in two main ways. First of all they complicated Plato's idea of earthly love leading directly to the divine good - Petrarch's 'strada al Dio' - by substituting a ladder metaphor for that of the road. Consequently the progression became compartmentalised, with set characteristics being ascribed to each stage of advancement. In the famous speech made by Bembo in Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*, one can see this attitude to love in action.¹

According to Bembo, the first stage in love is when sight of the lady arouses sensual desire in the youth. This is the bottom rung of the ladder and if reason is speedily brought to the heart's defence, all embryonic passion may be quenched. If instead it grows, the lover must abstain from lust and enter into a holy love guided by reason. In this second stage he must realise that beauty does not come from the body, being bodiless in nature. Then he must school himself in love's altruism, coming to prefer her existence and interests to his own. This naturally leads to the fourth stage

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in which the imagination of the lover must be sharpened so that in absence he can refashion the lady's beauty mentally and so escape the miseries of parting. There follows a generalising stage, in which:

per virtù della imaginazione si formera dentro in se stesso quella bellezza molto più bella che in effetto non sara.¹

He thus passes from rational appreciation of particular beauty, to its universal counterpart. The sixth stage is one of introversion during which the soul, once it is purged of all vices comes to look upon its own substance. The senses are put into a deep sleep and the intuitive understanding takes over. The acme has not yet been reached however, for the intuitive part of the soul still deals only in particulars. The seventh and final rung is reached when the universalising process begins again and love "in ultimo grado di perfezione dallo intelletto particolar la guida allo intelletto universale."²

This type of psycho-physiological analysis of love became so popular that the various stages enumerated above can be illustrated from the works of Spenser and Shakespeare alone. Not surprisingly the first grade is often described. Spenser however almost always links this initial temptation with the lady's tyranny:

See how the Tyrannesse doth joy to see
The huge massacres which her eyes do make.³

He also emphasises the second stage in a number of fierce diatribes

¹ Ibid., p. 431.
² Ibid., p. 433.
³ Spenser, Poems, p. 564.
against lust in all its forms. The harmony of true love is upset by the selfishness of animal passion:

Let not one sparke of filthy lustfull fyre
Breake out, that may her sacred peace molest.  

Shakespeare seldom states his point in this fashion, rather does he enact each hesitant progression. He doesn't counsel the lover to be altruistic, but shows us the mind of an altruistic lover:

Being your slave, what should I do but tend
Upon the hours and times of your desire?
I have no precious time at all to spend,
Nor services to do till you require.  

Already he has reached stage three. Stage four has also been achieved, for in Sonnet 39 we learn that "thoughts of love" make absence bearable. Twelve sonnets earlier he had made the same comment more explicitly, using imagery curiously reminiscent of Castiglione's:

Save that my soul's imaginary sight
Presents thy shadow to my sightless view.  

Spenser in Sonnet 78 makes the transition from imaginative recreation of the lady to an imaginative recreation of general beauty. As a result his own conception of perfect beauty becomes preferable to actual sight of the one he loves. Idealised in his mind she is more desirable than in actuality:

Ceasse then myne eyes, to seeks her selfe to see,
And let my thoughts behold her selfe in mee.  

1. Ibid., p. 576.
2. Shakespeare, Sonnets, p. 97.
3. Ibid., p. 67.
By now the two highest grades have been reached. Shakespeare in Sonnet 113 presents us with an illuminating account of grade 6, involving both introversion and the senses relinquishing their functions to intuition:

\[
\text{Since I left you, mine eye is in my mind,} \\
\text{And that which governs me to go about} \\
\text{Doth part his function and is partly blind,} \\
\text{Seems seeing, but effectually is out.}^{1}
\]

Finally, in Sonnet 88, Spenser reaches the top rung of the ladder. He no longer contemplates the lady or idealised beauty. Instead he has reached the Idea itself. Beyond this no progression is possible:

\[
\ldots \text{beholding the Idea playne,} \\
\text{through contemplation of my purest part:} \\
\text{with light thereof I doe my selfe sustayne,} \\
\text{and thereon feed my love-affamisht heart.}^{2}
\]

Together Spenser the philosopher and Shakespeare the active lover take us on the same journey as Bembo. Substitute for their names, those of Desportes and Ronsard: Tasso and Bembo and the ladder could be climbed again. Such was the influence of Castiglione on sixteenth century poetry.\(^3\)

Castiglione is not alone in exercising this influence. Indeed Bembo’s speech owes a great deal to the foremost of the neoplatonist school, Marsilio Ficino.\(^4\) With him originated the idea that love

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3. R. Ellrodt, *Neoplatonism in the Poetry of Spenser* (Geneva, 1960), pp. 29-30 has a different version of Castiglione’s ladder. He omits stage three and makes an unnecessary distinction between introversion and the development of the intuitive intellect, here joined as Grade 6.
must stem from sensual desire, but be schooled by the reason until it becomes divine in nature and goal. He too used the metaphor of the ladder and stressed that physical union is innocent, so long as it is rationally motivated. Lust as such is madness, but the recognition of beauty in the lady, leading to a wish to propagate it is not. This relaxation of Platonic and Petrarchan celibacy appealed especially to the French poets, but its effect was felt everywhere. The increasingly sensual element in the European sonnet owed a lot to Ficino and his school. They make physical love respectable once more, and so provide Ronsard or Shakespeare with a justification for introducing it into their work. Typical of this new viewpoint was Ficino's attitude to the kiss. Seen as an expression of animal passion, it is to be condemned. But if the two lovers have subdued passion to the control of the higher intellect, it becomes a coupling of souls. This idea is once again elaborated upon by Castiglione:

Perche per esser il bascio congiungimento e del corpo e dell'anima, periculio e che l'amante sensuale non inclini piu alla parte del corpo che a quella dell'anima; ma l'amante razionale conosce che ancora che la bocca sia parte del corpo, nientedimeno per quella si da esito alle parole che sono interpreti dell'anima, e a quello intrinseco anelito che si chiama pur esso ancor anima.1

This focussing of attention upon the kiss as a symbol of the intuitive apprehension and appreciation of beauty finds its way into poetry. Thus Sidney in Sonnet 81 mentions the kiss, "which soules, even soules together ties".2 More often however, the philosophical

2. Sidney, Poems, p. 207.
content is forgotten and gradually it becomes no more than the prelude tolovemaking. This is what happens to the Ficinian ideas generally. They become detached from their philosophical origins and are with each succeeding generation more and more diluted.

A number of common sonneteering conceits have their origins in Ficinian psychology. The conceit of the lost heart in its more complex forms stems from Ficino's commentary on the Symposium. Ficino argued that if A loves B, he lives in her and is himself dead, as his soul can only live in another human body. This is metaphorically represented by the lover's heart passing over to the lady. She is therefore a murderess if she refuses his advances and a thief for stealing his heart while retaining her own. On the other hand, if love be mutual, each lover has a dual life with A living in B and vice versa. All the variations on the lost heart conceit are made more meaningful when viewed with this philosophical background in mind. It is however, highly probable that most renaissance poets used the conceit unthinkingly in imitation of their predecessors, and with no philosophical undertones. After all, Petrarch had used the poetic fiction before Ficino integrated it into his philosophical system. What Ficino contributed was a series of variations on the original theme, which themselves, with time, became conventions. He did however originate the idea of the heart being engraved with a picture of the beloved. This image became very popular during the renaissance, especially in English and Italian poetry. Shakespeare for example uses it in Sonnet 24:

1. See Jean Festugière, La Philosophie de l'amour de Marsile Ficin (Paris, 1941), Chap. 2.
Mine eye hath played the painter and hath steeled
Thy beauty's form in table of my heart.¹

As the eyes were the openings into the soul, it became a commonplace
to urge the lady to discard her looking-glass. In the poet's soul
she would discover a more flattering reflection:

Leaves lady in your glasse of christall olene,
Your goodly selfe for euermore to vew;
And in my selfe, my inwarde selfe I meane,
Most liuely lyke behold your semblant trew.²

After Ficino therefore, the eyes became by far the most important of
human features. The older sonneteers had seen them as firing
Cupid's arrows at the defenceless poet or changing from love to
hatred with some nonchalance. Now they were also necessary for a
man clambering on to the first step of the ladder of love, as well
as being mirrors of the lady's beauty and the poet's soul. Without
eyes a man could not receive the lady's image and so be inspired by
desire. Without eyes he could not mirror that image and persuade
her of his love's sincerity. The renaissance sonneteer's obsession
with heart and eyes therefore is directly dependent on Fician
influence, as well as the traditions of courtly love.

The second main distinction between the Fician and Platonic
creeds lay in their respective definitions of love's aim. For the
Greek philosopher this was an Idea, in which the good and the
beautiful were inextricably mingled and even partially identified.
For Ficino, only beauty was the final goal, although goodness was a
necessary means on the way to attaining it. This alteration of
emphasis was welcomed by the poets. But it once again represented

1. Shakespeare, Sonnets, p. 64.
2. Spenser, Poems, p. 570.
a relaxation of the high tenets of Platonic love. So long as Ficino's condonation of physical love was seen as part of a scheme leading to divine beauty, it was not far removed from the spirit of Platonic dialogue. Dislocated from its context, it soon became for many renaissance poets an end in itself, and later Lauras began to yield with alarming regularity. In the same way, Beauty as a final goal is not very different from Plato's Idea of Beauty and Goodness together. When joined to the laxer moral outlook just depicted however, it soon degenerated into a worship of physical beauty in and for itself. The French poet's delight in detailed anatomical description is ironically connected with Ficino's neo-platonic theory of love as a contemplation of universal beauty.

Ficino incorporated into his philosophy the Platonic view of beauty as a shadow of the divine idea.¹ Concerning himself primarily with the physical side of beauty, he produced a theory which has much in common with the later views of Sir Thomas Browne. The essence of beauty is harmony and proportion, so that beauty may be observed even in rhinoceroses and frogs. Spenser commonly echoed his attitude:

When I behold that beauties wonderment,
And rare perfection of each goodly part:
Of natures skill the onely complement,
I honor and admire the makers art.²

External beauty is however multiple, corporeal and a mere sign of that inner beauty which is both simple and spiritual. It can be seen that this distinction largely echoes the Platonic Idea, as

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² Spenser, Poems, p. 566.
unity and spirituality are two of its main characteristics. What Ficino has done is to relegate these attributes to the level of the human soul. In it lies perfect unified beauty, greater than any multiple beauty represented by the physical presence of a lady. This is why at Stage 6 on the ladder, the poet turns away from mortal love to look into the depths of his soul. Only the final universalising process now stands between the lover and the Ideas which are thus more nearly attainable. Ficino's philosophy once again exhibits two main characteristics. First of all it is very close to Plato's. Secondly any alterations tend to a more worldly, less mystical interpretation of the human state. Physical love is permitted, albeit under severe restrictions; the importance of goodness as a final goal is underemphasised and man can find within himself qualities hitherto reserved for the Ideal world. It is therefore scarcely surprising that his theory of beauty in the hands of later poets became unconnected with its foundations in harmony and proportion. He made the first tentative alterations to the Platonic gospels and left it to Ronsard and his followers to erect their golden calves.

In the treatment of love in the renaissance sonnet therefore, various strains of influence can be detected. Petrarch's viewpoint is the most often stressed, but psycho-physiological analyses like Castiglione's show the counter attraction of Italian philosophy. Conceits like those of the lost heart may be Petrarchan in origin, but they become complicated by association with Ficinian philosophy. The simple Petrarchan outlook is soon lost in a welter of neo-platonic theorising and courtly-love situations. The overall effect of philosophical influence is to increase the worldliness
of the sonnet. Ficino and Castiglione, with their condonation of physical love when subject to higher reason begin this process. Soon it is accelerated by men like Bruno, stressing an opposition between 'heroic' and 'divine' love. The former is concerned with passion, with the senses and intelligible objects. The latter is intuitively apprehended by the higher intellect and need not grow out of the earlier experience. As succeeding writers suggest modifications of the Platonic creed, renaissance poets find more and more precedents for introducing sensuality into their poetry. The new philosophical movements tend to de-spiritualize Laura.

COSMOLOGY: The renaissance poet's interest in man is only matched by his interest in the world generally. Before science came of age, the philosopher felt free to invent cosmological systems of his own. In the seventeenth century, Descartes was still creating worlds from his study, although some precocious minds had the audacity to label his speculations mere 'romans'. Also the astronomers' contributions, though more numerous than before, were too complex for the lay reader, who resorted to simplified handbooks or earlier philosophical treatises. Before Copernicus

1. G. Bruno, Opere Italiane, ed. G. Gentile (Bari, 1908). See D. W. Singer, Bruno: His Life and Thought (New York, 1950). For the nine ways in which the heroic lover differs from his divine counterpart, see Eroici Furori, iv, 486-98, where the nine blind men are described, and iv, 498-506, where their significance as imperfections of heroic love is set out.

2. The writer was Voltaire, who always thought of Descartes as a poet rather than a philosopher. In Les Lettres Philosophiques, ed. F. A. Taylor (Oxford, 1946), No. 14, "Sur Descartes et Newton" we find a typical comment, "Descartes était né avec une imagination vive et forte, qui en fit un homme singulier dans la vie privée comme dans sa manière de raisonner. Cette imagination ne put se cacher même dans ses ouvrages philosophiques ...." p. 46.
the most advanced astronomical theory was Ptolemy's, but his *Syntaxis* sold very badly, because of its advanced geometry. As a result those poets who support Ptolemy, express this support in a rather backhanded way. They use his name but describe his views in terms reminiscent of Aristotle's homocentric spheres. No mention is made of 'epicycles' or of their movement round the deferent with a uniform angular velocity. Instead the basic principle is grasped, seen to be similar to Aristotle's and the simpler system used as a metaphor for the later one, which estranges the poetic imagination by its complexity and scientific terminology. Thus, although the renaissance poet is interested in the various astronomical theories of the world then current, his version of these disputes is often distorted. The first of these distortions comes from inadequate scientific knowledge.

The Aristotelian/Ptolemaic theory remained virtually unchallenged until 1543. Many of its supporters were unaware that Ptolemy had, with reservations, altered the order of homocentric spheres. Aristotle had placed the sun as second of the seven planets, standing just above the moon. Ptolemy reverted to an idea favoured by the stoics and placed it in the middle of the planetary system with three orbs above it and three below. For most people it was enough that they agreed on the earth's central position in the universe, and accepted the doctrine of the four elements. Against the might of this alliance, supporters of Plato, Epicurus or Plotinus were fighting a losing battle. Then in 1543, Nicholas Copernicus,

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disciple of the Neoplatonist Maria da Navara, published his De Revolutionibus orbium coelestium. He used all of Ptolemy's geometrical methods except the equant, but produced a different interpretation. The sun, not the earth stood central in the universe, with the earth rotating round it. In this century we see clearly the advantages of such a system. In the light of sixteenth century knowledge however, both were mathematically foolproof.

Francis Johnson highlights the situation as follows:

Since both the Copernican and the Ptolemaic systems were valid mathematically, and even the bitterest opponents of the new system admitted that it would "save the phenomena," the truth or falsity of the heliocentric hypothesis had to be decided by an appeal to other branches of science and philosophy.

Physics could see drawbacks to both views and as a result people tended to rely on previous philosophical convictions. A Platonist would support Copernicus, an Aristotelian side with Ptolemy. What did not happen was the instantaneous acceptance of Copernican views implied by some historians. The poets like Europeans generally were equally divided, and while Desportes is a Copernican, Ronsard has strong Ptolemaic leanings.

It is also noticeable that no poet of the period condemns the Copernican system for having removed man from his place at the centre of the universe. The reasons for this are clear. The Ptolemaic system had been big enough to remind man of his insignificance. It was not a cosmology which engendered optimism, and encouraged men to regard themselves as the chosen offspring of a

1. The most influential English treatise based on Copernican theory was Thomas Digges' A Perfit Description of the Celestiall Orb (London, 1576).

2. Johnson, Astronomical Thought, p. 112.
benevolent God. Ronsard endorses Ptolemy's views, but sees purposelessness and insignificance as the characteristics of man's situation:

Les petitz corps, culbutans de travers, 
Parmi leur cheute en byaz vagabonde 
Hurtex ensemble, ont composes le monde. 1

Research reveals that the later system actually brings the planets closer together. Measuring outwards to Saturn, the Ptolemaic system is larger than the Copernican. Only in its placing of the fixed stars beyond Ptolemy's outer orbit does it advance a claim to greater size. When such large distances are being considered, minor additions are irrelevant. Man can be aware of his insignificance in a world 10,000 times the earth's radius in dimension, just as easily as in one twice that size. After a certain limit has been reached, the imagination accepts the fact and later accretions become meaningless.

The new universe of Copernicus therefore didn't dwarf man into a sense of insignificance. But surely it moved him from the centre of the world picture and so cancelled the myth of a universe built for him alone? The truth is that Elizabethans didn't see the situation in this way. The theory of the four elements taught them that fire was the highest and most pure, earth the lowest and heaviest. The earth was therefore at the centre of the system because it contained the greatest proportion of the lowest element. The central position was not a matter for pride but humility. The seventeenth century Corpus Astronomae of Manus O'Donnell gives a typical Ptolemaic account of the situation:

1. Ronsard, Oeuvres, IV, 40.
The elemental region consists of every created thing which is from the heaven, or from the sphere of the moon, down to the central point of the earth; and each one of these things is created of four simple bodies which are called elements; and their names are earth, water, air and fire. The earth (since it is a heavy body) is naturally in the centre of the universe and its property is to be cold and dry.\(^1\)

In the same way, renaissance poets express the humility of their state by positing an excess of the lower elements in their make-up:

\begin{quote}
But, ah, thought kills me that I am not thought,
To leap large lengths of miles when thou art gone,
But that so much of earth and water wrought,
I must attend time's leisure with my moan.\(^2\)
\end{quote}

By placing the Earth above Sol, Venus and Mercury therefore, Copernicus was increasing man's stature rather than diminishing it; raising his position in the divine scheme rather than destroying it. The real blow to his self-confidence came with the third major theory to be advanced, that of Tycho Brahe.

Brahe was the most assiduous observer of the skies before the invention of the telescope.\(^3\) In 1588 his *Progymnasmata* was published in part at Uraniborg but the full version had to wait till a year after his death. It was produced in 1602 by one of his disciples, Johann Kepler. His theory combined Copernican and Ptolemaic theory with original research. He destroyed Ptolemy's myth of solid spheres and changeless heavens, but at the same time retained two important Ptolemaic tenets. The earth stood immovable at the centre of his universe and an orb of fixed stars

2. Shakespeare, *Sonnets*, p. 84.
rotated outside the orb of Saturn. Thus far he was merely reallocating the ideas of earlier students. His first important contribution was the centring of all planetary orbits, except Luna, round the sun. The moon's orbit centred on the earth and the orbit of Mars intersected that of the Sun. This system was geometrically accurate in the light of current knowledge, and as the Ptolemaic system became more and more unlikely in the face of accumulating evidence, it appealed to those who refused to accept a heliocentric theory.\footnote{1} James VI was one of this group and composed two flattering sonnets to Brahe, when visiting Uraniborg:

Then if you list to see on earthlie grounde  
There ordour, course, and influence appeare  
Looke Tichoes tooles, there finelie shall be founde  
Each planet dancing in his propre spheare.\footnote{2}

And it was Brahe, not Copernicus, who produced the great astronomical shock of the century. In 1572 he discovered a new star, the Nova Cassiopeiae, thus altering the face of heavens which had remained the same for centuries. If renaissance astronomy altered man's view of his personal situation in the universe, it was via this star, rather than Copernicus's heliocentric system. What is certain is that astronomy and cosmology were fruitful topics of debate in the sixteenth century. Whether one supported Copernicus, Ptolemy or Brahe; whether one preferred Plato to Aristotle or the stoics to both; whether one understood Ptolemy's mathematical theories or not, one had to take an interest in this universe and the various attempts at plumbing its secrets.

\footnote{1}{Its inadequacy was discovered in 1838 with the measurement of the stellar parallax.}

\footnote{2}{James VI, Poems, II, 101.}
The poets of course were not left out. In the sonnet form there is no room for a complete theory of the world, but Pontus de Tyard in "L'Univers"¹ and Ronsard in his 'Hymnes' do attempt this. The lyric poet however tends to concentrate on minor aspects of the problem. In the English sonnet alone, many isolated comments on cosmological subjects could be cited. In Sonnet 9 Spenser suggests that light is the first creative power, a doctrine already suggested by Tasso in Il Mondo Creato. In Sonnet 60 he deals with the planets and the relative timing of their orbits. Drayton in Sonnet 5 suggests fire as the originating power in the universe. He is profoundly influenced by numerology and three sonnets later advances a poetic cosmology based on the number 10. In heaven there are nine angelic orders. Nine muses aid learning. Nine worthy men have lived on the earth. The lady, combining all these virtues adds one to each of these classifications, thus raising them to the perfect number ten. A world based on the number ten is a perfect world and this Drayton emphasises in Sonnet 19, when he mentions the ten regions, each governed by a sibyl. Such poetic views of cosmology are typical of the English sonnet. In Italy the poet contents himself with simple distinctions like Tasso's, between "i lumi erranti e fissi". Only in France does the poet regularly interfere in pseudo-scientific problems like the nature of space:

Pardonne moy, Platon, si je ne cuide
Que soubs la vouste et grande arche des dieux,
Soit hors du monde, ou au centre des lieux,
En terre, en l'eau, il n'y ayt quelque vuide.²

Ronsard in supporting the idea of an empty space, albeit for the sake

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2. Ronsard, Oeuvres, IV, 60.
117.
of a conceit, is opposing Plato, Aristotle and Empedocles. He is also setting himself up against contemporary philosophers like Cardano, who held that all space was filled with an original matter.1 Everywhere however the poets cared about the nature of the world around them. This concern is mirrored in the frequency with which cosmological subjects recur in their verse. The French may be the most detailed in their discussions, the English most fanciful, the Italians most objective, but none ignores the problem entirely.

**ASTROLOGY:** Astrology too was a force in renaissance poetry. The basic astrological theories had originated with the ancients. Their researches showed that the path followed by the moon and planets was almost the same as the sun's course through the stars. They therefore used this ecliptic movement as a base for planetary measurements. Round it they imagined a band, twelve degrees in breadth, called the zodiac. This was divided into twelve, each division corresponding to a month. The first of these astrological divisions was Aries the ram and it began when the sun crossed the celestial equator. According to the time of a man's birth, certain qualities would be dominant within him, determined by the relative position of stars and sun at the given moment. The Arian for example is governed by the planet Mars and so tends to be treacherous, faithless, murderous and boastful. The Aquarian is a subject of Saturn and thus sad, miserly and given to witchcraft. But the stars did not merely influence personality. One remembers that Chaucer's physician was especially fitted to "speke of phisik and

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1. In addition to the matter which filled space, Cardano postulated a productive force and so produced a hylozoistic theory.
of surgrye, For he was grounded in astronomye".¹ This is no joke, but a statement of fact. The head was sacred to Aries, the heart to Leo and the feet to Pisces. As a result, the position of the stars was frequently consulted before treatment, and a reputable doctor would not operate on any part of the body until the stars were favourable.

In the poetic field, this obsession with astrology produced a number of zodiac sonnets, like Drayton's Idea 47:

The golden Sunne upon his fiery wheeles
The horned Ram doth in his course awake,
And of just length our night and day doth make,
Flinging the Fishes backward with his heelees:
Then to the Tropicke takes his full Careere,
Trotting his sun-steeds till the Palfrays sweat,
Bayting the Lyon in his furious heat,
Till Virgins smyles doe sound his sweet reteere.²

More characteristically it aroused, even in intelligent men, the fear of predetermined character traits. Ronsard is a creature of Saturn and more than once bewails his fate as a naturally melancholy creature. Wyatt believes he is doomed to be unlucky, especially in May:

Sephame saide true that my nativitie
Mischaunced was with the ruler of the May.³

The crux of this problem is the age-old battle between free-will and predetermination. It is accepted by many that the power of the stars is invincible by purely human means. A creature of Saturn is bound to be melancholy, no matter how hard he tries to oppose

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2. Drayton, Minor Poems, p. 25.
this trait. Indeed, as a corollary of this, it was frequently argued that as sadness was a feature of the Saturn subject, opposition was evil, being unnatural and contrary to the divine plan. Astrological determinists were nevertheless in the minority. Mere observation showed many Saturnians to be cheerful, Arians to be uninclined to murder or robbery. The Church of the day was stressing free will. Science with its creed of natural cause and effect was gaining in strength. With these influences in mind, some philosophers like Pico denounced astrology openly. It was opposed to his belief in the dignity and liberty of man and so must be rejected:

Est autem haec propria labes omnium superstitionum quorum non alia professio quam praecipita tradere insaniendi; sed in primis hunc sibi titulum vendicavit astrologia, sicut et inter ipsas superstitiones, quorum mater alumnque merito existimatur, obtinet principatum. Astrologiam vero cum dico, non eam intelligo quae siderum moles et motus mathematica ratione metitur ....... sed quae de sideribus eventura pronunciavit.¹

Pico's condemnation is emotional and religious in nature. He is the philosophical voice of the church, speaking out against superstition. Yet his death was turned into one of the cult's greatest triumphs. Astrologers prophesied accurately the very day and hour of his premature death. In life one of their greatest enemies, he became a posthumous ally.

Surprisingly few renaissance philosophers follow Pico's attitude. Pomponazzi is the only one to vie with him in scoffing at astrology. But if Pico is the voice of religion, Pomponazzi is the voice of science. In the De Incantationibus, he suggests a

number of natural causes for incidents previously attributed to
demoniac agency or astrological necessity. But the reaction of
most scholars is typified by Ficino's. Rationally he tends to
scepticism, but never can rid himself entirely of a lingering,
irrational fear, that Saturn is working maliciously against him:

This melancholy temperament seems to have been
imposed on me from the beginning by Saturn, set
almost in the centre of my ascendant sign, Aquarius. 1

When he turns to classical authors he finds them supporting astrology
too. As a result he doesn't know where to turn, and it is this
perplexity, common to most renaissance poets, which renders astrology
such a fertile sonneteering theme. Even branches of the church
accept astrology, though not astrological necessity, into their
creed. But as in the case of astronomy, there is constant debate
on the subject. I quote a lengthy piece from Manus O'Donnell's
introduction to the Corpus Astronomae because he was one of the more
conservative astrologers writing during the renaissance. His
assessment of astrology's powers and limitations; its relationship
with the divinity and with church teaching; its relevance to the
problem of free will would have been accepted by both Ronsard and
Ficino:

Accordingly it has been wisely said: sapiens dominabitur
astris, that is, that the wise man is master of the stars,
for he makes his proud nature mild and gentle, and he
avoids the evil to which he is prone. Further, great
almighty God, to whom we render all praise, has given to
the individual the power of his free will, in such a way
that not only the stars but also the demons, hell, and
every other thing are not able to influence a man unless he
be guilty himself in that regard, much less when he has the
assistance of God's grace. Accordingly I say that the stars
can influence man naturally, but that they cannot force him.

1. See Ficino, De Triplici Vita, Bk. 1 and Theologica Platonica,
Bk. 13.
This in a way represents a via media in renaissance astrological thought. In this sense it is the astrological counterpart of Brahanism. Just as the followers of Brahe stood between the extreme theories of Copernicus and Ptolemy, so the belief in astrological inclination attracted those who could identify themselves neither with Girolamo Cardano's system of astrological necessity nor Pico's wholehearted rejection of stellar influence.

**MYTHOLOGY:** The popularity of cosmology and astrology as themes in renaissance poetry can be explained with reference to the philosophical obsessions of the day. What is not so clear is the prevalence with which classical gods and heroes invade sixteenth century sonneteering. Sometimes the poet uses Venus or Mars as a symbol for love or pugnacity. The gods thus become allegorical in function. Cupid is only a metaphor for love, a way of temporarily objectivising passion:

In youth before I waxed old,
The blynd boy Venus baby,
For want of cunning made me bold,
In bitter hyue to grope for honny.

Instead of talking directly of love, it can be symbolised in the form of the blind god. This is however only one aspect of mythology in the sonnet. Heroes of ancient time like Hector and Achilles appear also. Usually they have almost assumed the dimension of gods, and their feats are viewed as impossible to imitate. Du Bellay in the depths of his despair longs for the idyllic existence of Ulysses or the concrete achievement of finding the golden fleece:

Heureux qui, comme Ulysse, a fait un beau voyage,
Ou comme cestuy là qui conquit la toison,

In the eyes of the renaissance poet there is not much to choose between Ulysses and Mars; Jason and Saturn. Both are ever-present features of his verse, symbolising the various elements in personal experience.

At the same time the gods are not only personal, but cosmic symbols. They not only are a useful means of portraying aspects of man's situation. They influence and override his decisions as well. The gods and fate are so closely linked that Desportes blames his adverse fortune on Neptune and the stars:

Je reclamois en vain la faveur de Neptune  
Et des astres jumeaux, sourds a tous mes propos,  
Car les vents depitez, combatans sans repos,  
Avoyent jure ma mort, sans esperance aucune.

Indeed they come to represent all the implacable, evil forces in Nature, which are beyond man's understanding. Thus when Tasso chooses to depict the adversities of life, he uses the picture of an angry Jove to make his point:

.... ecco vidi fulminar la fronte  
di Giove irato e' l ciel turbarsi intorno,  
e fulminando caddi.

It is not only the frequency with which mythology recurs in renaissance poetry, but the diversity of functions it fulfils, which first startles the reader. Both gods and hero-gods exist in this world. They are used to make the explicable clearer and to shadow forth

1. Du Bellay, Antiquitez et Regrets, p. 56.
123.

the inexplicable. They represent both characteristics within us and powers over which we have little control. They point both to perfection and to chaos, to lives of contentment and frustration.

These approaches to pagan mythology have been extensively treated by Jean Seznec in *The Survival of the Pagan Gods.* What can here be emphasised are a few of the reasons for the popularity of myth in poetry at this time. The use of gods for allegorical purposes is easiest to explain. Earlier Fulvius and Fulgentius had praised the triple approach to literature - semantic, narrative and allegorical. Hugh formulated his triple exegetical procedure - *littera, sensus* and *sententia.* Boccaccio had praised the veil of allegory, hiding profounder meanings from the naive, immature minds incapable of profiting from them. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries debates and fables had revived in popularity. The literary tradition favoured allegory in all its forms and the renaissance remained true to these traditions. At the same time the church could not openly oppose the habit, because 'parables' were an integral part of its own teaching. It therefore condoned the use of pagan myths, provided they were expressing Christian truths. The humanists too welcomed the figures of Saturn, Mars and Venus as a means of expressing their deistic beliefs. Despite a different motivation they often unconsciously echo the earlier medieval writers, when justifying this approach.

With the two strong currents of literature and humanism behind it, allegory in the renaissance widened its horizons and the pagan

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gods became even more often tools of didacticism. Valla is most consistent in his use of pagan legend to express philosophical truth. In his Essay on Free Will he uses Apollo to represent God's omniscience, Jupiter for the Divine will and proceeds to identify all His attributes by means of pagan deities:

Apollo, who was so greatly celebrated among the Greeks, either through his own nature or by concession of the other gods, had foresight and knowledge of all future things, not only those which pertained to men but to the gods as well.1

It is scarcely surprising to find poets imitating his example, when literary tradition and the state of religious belief encourage such imitation.

The process by which myth as a version of history was carried over from classical times is more complex. It almost certainly derived from the euhemeristic tradition, by which gods were explained as great men deified. As a reward for heroic efforts on earth, warriors like Achilles, Hector and Ulysses were deified instead of canonized. But this tradition died an early death, as it failed to satisfy man's longing for the supernatural. Gods who had once been human failed to invoke awe in the minds of would-be worshippers. Seznec suggests that the continuation of Euhemerism was due mainly to its detractors. When the pagans grew tired of the cult, early Christians still used it as a means of mocking paganism:

It was only too easy for Clement of Alexandria, who quoted Euhemerus in his Cohortatio ad gentes (PG, VIII, 152) to declare to the infidel: "Those to whom you bow were once men like yourselves.2

Euhemerism in the Middle Ages was thus revived as a species of sophistry. It was presented by the Fathers as a tenet of pagan belief, when actually it had long since been rejected. But during the Middle Ages, Euhemerism underwent a metamorphosis. The pagan hero-gods became ancestors of races, whose pedigree otherwise spanned only a few centuries. The Trojan hero Francus became the ancestor of the Franks, just as Brutus was held to be the first Briton.

This was only one way in which Euhemerism retained its grip on the poetic imagination. The demi-gods were also hailed as leaders of culture. To Atlas was credited the triumph of teaching the Greeks astrology. Chiron was traditionally the first to practise medicine, while Minerva invented the art of woolmaking.¹

The excessive interest in astrology also contributed to the popularity of pagan myth. By a complex process, the stars and pagan myths had become interrelated in the popular imagination. This had not been the case in Homeric times, when animals or objects had been used as symbols. Most of these early symbols remain in the present-day zodiac—lion, ram, fish and scales. In the third century B.C. the stars became for the first time connected with mythology, although the earlier symbols still remained.

Eratosthenes (284-204 B.C.) fused the two approaches in his *Cataterism*. The lion is no longer a generic figure, but the Nemean lion slain by Hercules. The bull is now a particular animal, the one featured in the Europa story. The dual interest invoked by renaissance research in astronomy and the classics re-inforced this close bond between the stars and paganism. More

specifically, the planets and pagan gods were inextricably connected. Originally the Greeks had used only one god - Venus - as a planetary symbol. Later however the five wandering stars identified by the Babylonians became part of the Greek system, and a Greek god’s name was substituted in each case for its Babylonian counterpart. When the astrologers of the renaissance talk of Mars, therefore, they are suggesting not only planetary but divine interference. It is not only the star, but a god behind the star, which influences man’s personality. It is indeed strange that the humanistic renaissance, boasting of man’s power to mould personal destiny, is revealed on closer study to have entertained simultaneously more supernatural creeds than any other epoch in history.

WORLD-SYSTEM: One further philosophical idea in the renaissance sonnet may be discussed. The medieval system of "an ordered universe arranged in a fixed system of hierarchies" still lingered on.¹ The idea really originated with Plato, who in the Timaeus (90E-92C) pictured a series of creatures placed in a descending order dependent on development of the understanding. Men stood above women, while "from such as followed not after wisdom and truth sprang the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field".² This is a theory which implies that Nature is the actualization of all potentiality.³ Every degree of evil or ugliness that can be imagined must be created if God is to be true to his own divine scheme. It is categorically denied by Aristotle in the Metaphysics.

1. E. M. W. Tillyard, Elizabethan World Picture, p. 3.
2. Timaeus, op. cit., p. 338n.
when he states:

the potency is prior to the actual cause and it is not necessary for everything potential to be actual.¹

The seeds of debate have been sown and renaissance thinkers are soon arguing over the problem.

Thus when Scève writes of the world as an orderly machine in Dizain LIII, referring to God as "l'Architecteur de la Machine ronde"² or Du Bellay deals with correspondences between God, king of all creatures and the monarch, king of men,

(rien n'est après Dieu si grand qu'un roy de France)³

their utterances must be seen against the background of fierce philosophical discussion. The old medieval hierarchy, like all else is being fiercely attacked, and as fiercely defended.

Shakespeare in Sonnet 9 revives the idea that the hierarchy is constructed on an overlapping system, with each inferior level surpassing its superior in at least one attribute. The stones exceed plants in durability. The lion exceeds man in strength. Thus the violet can match his beloved in at least one feature:

Sweet thief, whence didst thou steal thy sweet that smells If not from my love's breath?⁴

But these ideas are no longer uniformly held. They too have been thrown into the melting-pot of uncertainty. While one can detect all the medieval ideas of the chain and its links in renaissance

². Scève, Délie, p. 44.
⁴. Shakespeare, Sonnets, p. 139.
poetry, the very prevalence with which they recur is a hint of growing dissatisfaction with so simple a divine scheme.

Many of the philosophers do retain the hierarchical principle with only minor modifications. Ficino, following close to Plotinus arranges his scheme on five basic qualities - God, the angelic mind, the rational soul, quality and body. The human soul is at the centre of this ladder and man's unique situation lies in his containing the lowest and highest potentialities within him. This attitude is often mirrored by the poets in terms of the theory of elements. The highest element - fire - and the lowest - earth, are constantly warring within man's soul. The effect of love is usually victory for the highest, which purges all else:

Il n'y a rien en moy qui ne fust tout de flamme.¹

Pico has a slightly different approach to the problem. The hierarchy remains but man is no longer part of it. Instead he stands outside being the only creature capable of adopting any form of life at will. His duty is to succeed in assuming the highest possibility open to him - the angelic. Patrizi too accepts the general concept of hierarchy, but adopts his own system of classification, which distinguishes between the One, intelligence, soul, nature and body in Plotinian fashion, but follows Ficino in separating essence and life from intelligence. All three accept the basic Platonic principles of a graded universe and a God who creates every conceivable type of creature as part of the divine plan. Yet even among protagonists there is disagreement.

For another related poetic theme one must return to the somewhat

enigmatic figure of Nicholas of Cusa. Generally regarded as an intermediary between medieval and renaissance thought, he accepted the doctrine of hierarchy, stressing however that each individual is in some way different from all others. He also emphasised that each individual mirrors the whole universe, and thus popularised the idea of the microcosm, so prevalent in renaissance poetry. Man is especially suitable as a microcosm because he combines within himself the qualities of every level of existence. The matter of stones, the organic life of plants, the sensitive life of animals, the spiritual rationality of angels - all unite within him. This idea was a medieval commonplace and conceits based on it are frequent in renaissance sonneteering. Drayton for example uses it in Idea 27, where the elements are paired off with the lover's symptoms of distress:

Thus love, tears, sighs, maintaine eache one his element.
The fire, unto my love, compare a painted fire,
The water, to my teares as drops to Oceans be; 2
The ayre, unto my sighes as Eagle to the flie.

In taking this view, he has strong philosophical support. The German philosopher, Von Nettesheim (1486-1535) had stressed that man is a compound of three separate worlds. Within him he contains the elementary world, the sphere of heavenly bodies and the spiritual realm. Although this theory is overlaid with unorthodox views on the occult, it is clearly derived from the idea of the microcosm, and that of man's middle position in the evolutionary

1. Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464) was a philosopher of some note, who also held a high position in the church. A delegate to the Council of Basle, he later became a cardinal. See Coplestone, III, 231-47.

2. Drayton, Minor Poems, p. 15.
scale. Theophrastus (1493-1541) is yet another to present a variation on this theme, suggesting that man's body belongs to the earthly world, his astral body to the stars and his immortal soul to a spiritual dimension, which transcends both space and time. Despite minor differences of this nature, most philosophers were agreed on man's microcosmic nature. A mirror of the greater world, he is the central link in Nature's immense chain. As late as the eighteenth century, Pope was still advancing this idea as fact:

Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,
A being darkly wise, and rudely great.1

But this is only one side of the conflict. In Italy Tansillo rejoices in upsetting the neat hierarchy, by giving his very human lady power over the stars:

Le stelle, il ciel, la notte e l'ombre istesse
Ridono all'apparir del tuo bel viso;2

He also mocks the system of correspondences by suggesting that the conventional parallels of stars and sun are not adequate in her case:

S'io l'agguagliassi al sol, nulla direi;
Perche l'ho pur vist'io con gli occhi miei,
Vinto da voi nel bel sereno cielo,
Porsi di nubi, innanzi agli occhi, un velo.3

As usual there are philosophers to echo these sentiments as well. Bruno is perhaps the most outspoken in his condemnation of hierarchical theories. The idea of a graded system of being he rejects in his De l'Infinito, Universo e Mondi, as "un prodotto della imaginazione". The Platonic realization of all potentiality

2. Lirici del Cinquecento, p. 247.
3. Ibid., p. 251.
is mere fiction. What we regard as plurality, is really unity imperfectly reported by our senses. The world itself is constant and unified but capable of representing itself to us in a variety of different forms. It is imbued by the world soul, which centralizes all discordant elements and animates the whole. Step by step he draws towards a pantheism, often found in the French poetry of the renaissance, to Ronsard's "âme du monde" or De Tyard's "force vitale", but he stops short of reducing God to the status of a life force.

Montaigne and Telesio also oppose the system of hierarchy, although in different ways. Montaigne is only concerned with man's position in the chain. True to his doctrine of Pyrrhonian scepticism, he refuses to accept man's superiority to animals. Seeing everything through the distorting mirror of his senses, man is incapable of perceiving absolute truth. His claims to rank higher, if based on reason, are therefore rather futile, for that talent is doomed to work with inferior materials. Any piece of human knowledge is therefore suspect. Moreover, if the doctrine of hierarchy is true, isolated germs of knowledge only become relevant when the whole system is understood. This pessimistic view of man's bestiality and futility is diversely expressed by Shakespeare and Ronsard among others:

1. Montaigne, Les Essais, ed. Pierre Michel, 3 vols. (Paris, 1965), I, 221 "Si nous appelons monstres ou miracles ce où notre raison ne peut aller, combien s'en présente-t-il continuellement à notre vue? Considérons au travers de quels nuages et comment à tâtons on nous mène à la connaissance de la plupart des choses qui nous sont entre mains; certes nous trouverons que c'est plutôt accoutumance que science qui nous en ôte l'étrangeté."
I do betray
My nobler part to my gross body's treason;
My soul doth tell my body that he may
Triumph in love,\(^1\)

and

Que suis je, las! moy chétif amoureux,
Pour trop sentir, qu'un Sisyphe ou Tantale?\(^2\)

It is thus wrong to equate the sixteenth century with an optimistic, almost smug world-picture. Troubled minds existed even then and expressed their doubts forcefully.

**NATURE:** One of the main stumbling blocks in the hierarchical system was its implicit assumption that a God who created imperfections and evil must condone these elements. Medieval philosophers like Abelard had escaped from this problem by the a priori assumption that all God wills is good. Thus, if God wills evil, it must be a good thing that evil exist. Telesio chose to adopt a different position. If all levels of good and evil are represented in the universe, then it must have been created by an aboriginal strife between these forces.\(^3\) This leads to the view of Nature, which sees creation as a reconciliation of opposites. In renaissance poetry such an attitude is frequently expressed. Sannazaro likens his lady's eyes to the creation in being able to harmonize so many oppositions:

Ma chi penso che d'un medesmo fonte
Uscir potessi si contrarii effetti?
E son cose a veder aperte, e conte.
Tante grazie del ciel, tanti diletti

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3. A similar view was adopted in England by Bacon. He sees the battle between light and darkness in man's soul as a micro-cosmic symbol of universal nature.
Occhio non colse mai sotto una fronte,  
Ne tanti lagrimosi, e mesti oggetti.  

Desportes gives a more direct account of the theory in *Cléonice* 29:

Bien que l'onde pesante, et l'air humide et pront,  
Pour croisire, leur puissance ayant débat à toute heure:  
La terre en leurs discords immobile demeure,  
Et du grand Univers l'ordre ne se confond.  

Nature can therefore be both *mère* and *marâtre*. It is at one and the same time, constant and mutable, an image of continuity alongside subsidiary variation. This is expressed by comparing the alternation of the seasons with later repetition of the whole cycle. Spring gives way to summer, but next year, both return again:

The weary yeare his race now hauing run,  
The new begins his compast course anew.

It can be a man's sole friend in time of need, acquainting the lady of an otherwise mute distress:

S'il ne m'est pas permis par la rigueur des cieux,  
Champs, préz, bois, vent, canaux, et vous sauvages lieux,  
Faites luy voir pour moy l'aigreur de mon martyre.

Or it can be indifferent to his suffering:

Astres maudits, qui trop pleins de licence,  
Maux et plaisirs aux humains destinéz,  
Puis qu'en naissant de nous vous ordonnez,  
Que nuist la faute, ou que sert innocence?

It loads one person with gifts, only to leave others entirely untalented:

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Let those whom Nature hath not made for store,
Harsh, featureless, and rude, barrenly perish.
Look whom she best endow'd, she gave the more;
Which bounteous gift thou shouldst in bounty cherish. 1

At one moment, man in his constancy seems superior to its lower orders:

ciascuno in bene o in mal cangia fortuna;
sol io sempre in un stato mi rimango.2

At the next he alone is miserable because of his unique state as a fallen creature or a rejected lover. Surrey uses the latter theme in Sonnet 1:

Calme is the sea, the waues worke lesse and lesse;
So am not I, whom loue, alas! doth wring.3

But the governing idea behind all these sentiments is one of contradiction and opposition. And this stems from the philosophical view that Nature is composed of warring elements. Once again philosophical speculation partially determines poetic metaphor.

Indeed almost all the main themes of the renaissance sonnet are simultaneously topics for philosophical discussion. The theory of the four elements is set out by Desportes, Shakespeare, Rota and others, but it is also discussed by Telesio and Patrizi. When sonneteers write about the soul, their ideas are influenced not only by Plato and Plotinus, but by the philosophers of the Italian renaissance. Their theory of love, though Petrarchan in form, is modified by the Ficinian school's psychological analyses. The prevailing poetic interest in cosmology naturally follows from

2. Tansillo, Lirici del Cinquecento, p. 239.
3. Surrey, Poems, p. 56. (Originally this was a classical theme, probably derived from Statius, Ἐπομενή, v, 4.)
Copernicus' and Brahe's attacks on the old Ptolemaic system. The poets however, unable to follow advanced mathematics, prefer to identify themselves with philosophical versions of the debate. The same argument applies to astrology, where Pico led the sceptics against Cardano's firm belief in sidereal influences on the sublunar world. Mythological figures abound in renaissance poetry, either as allegories or as cosmic symbols. But this trend is paralleled and encouraged by Valla's philosophical treatment of the pagan gods. The hierarchical theory is questioned by the philosopher Bruno and the poet Shakespeare. It is upheld by the philosopher Ficino and the poet Desportes. The various attitudes to Nature in poetry, its variations and contradictions, arise from philosophical accounts of creation as a reconciliation of opposites. Everywhere a knowledge of philosophical currents is necessary for a true understanding of the renaissance sonnet.
In the year 1585, the Italian sonnet was on the decline. Tasso, Bembo and Tansillo had produced their main collections, and only minor poets like Bartolomeo Bonanno or Francesco Coppetta were regularly composing in the genre. In France it had just passed the heights of popularity. Ronsard's *Sonnets pour Hélène* had been out for seven years, and Desportes was already taking over the mantle of 'premier poète'. In England, a second group of sonneteers, led by Spenser were already preparing to follow the early lead of Wyatt and Surrey. Yet it was in this year that the first group of Scottish sonnets to be published made their belated appearance. Seventeen appeared in the introduction to King James VI's *Essays of a Prentise*, no fewer than twelve having been written by the king himself. The other five were composed by a group of poets whom he had encouraged to associate with the court, in order to advance cultural interests.  

There can be no doubt that James saw himself as a latter day Maecenas, for he frequently refers to himself in these terms, both in prose and poetry. The principle members of this entourage were Alexander Montgomerie, whom James called his 'maister poete', William Fowler, later secretary to Queen Anne and two English brothers, Robert and Thomas Hudson. Each of them

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1. James VI, *Essays*, pp. 3-5. The five signatures are R. H. (Robert Hudson); T. H. (Thomas Hudson); M. VV.; M. W. F. (Master William Fowler) and A. M. (Alexander Montgomerie).
contributed a single sonnet to the *Essayes*. As it was for everyone his first attempt at the genre, it seems likely that they chose this form either in imitation of the king or at his command. James may well have been a "prentise in the divine art of poesie", especially when compared with experienced practitioners like Montgomerie, but he seems to have originated Scottish interest in the sonnet.

There are two further reasons for crediting James with this achievement, one educational, the other historical. Of the earliest group of Scottish sonneteers, James although the youngest, was the most learned. George Warner in *The Library of James VI* records a most impressive list of books possessed by the king.¹ The large Latin bias (Virgil, Martial, Lucan, Plutarch etc.) is due to the prevailing interests of his tutor George Buchanan. Also present however are the works of Petrarch in Italian, the *Amours* of Ronsard and Du Bellay's *L'Olive*, and these may be a truer guide to the king's own tastes. Certainly he was interested in the ideas of the Pléiade and in the sonnet as a form, while his opposition to Buchanan's tyrannous regime as tutor is expressed in a heartfelt remark, "Thay gar me speik Latin ar I could speik Scotis". With this wide reading in classical and continental languages behind him, he would be better equipped to understand the sonnet, which was an essentially international phenomenon, than most of the court poets.

By 1585 however he also had for the first time in his reign all

1. See George F. Warner, 'The Library of James VI (1573-83)', *Miscellany of Scottish History Society* (Edinburgh, 1893), Vol. I for a complete list of the books. As many were gifts from other libraries, they do not give a wholly accurate account of James's interests.
the power usually connected with the monarch. Although he had been crowned in 1567 at the age of one, his life had so far been ruled by others. At study he had been sternly supervised by Buchanan and Peter Young. In affairs of state he had bowed to the rule of successive regents. For a time it looked as if his cares were at an end, for his favourite D'Aubigné, later Earl of Lennoxx eventually replaced Morton and became effective ruler of Scotland. But his authority was short-lived, for in August 1582 a group of protestants overthrew the regime and held James himself prisoner in Ruthven for almost a year. When he escaped in 1583, the king immediately placed himself at the head of an anti-Ruthven group and declared himself active ruler of the country.

The Essays of a Pretise are therefore the work of a young man of nineteen, anxious to establish himself, not only as a king, but a personality. In his introduction he forcefully advocates composition in the vernacular, despite his tutor's preference for the Latin tongue. In Ane Metaphoricial Invention of a Tragedie called Phoenix, he gives a veiled account of the Earl of Lennoxx's career in Scotland and its fatal end. In his hope that a new phoenix will arise out of Lennoxx's ashes he prophesies the later visit of his son Ludovic to Scotland and his successful political career there as the Master of Gray. The king is asserting his freedom in both learning and politics. He is making clear his intention of being for the first time a power in the land. In the light of this evidence, it does seem likely that one of his many innovations was

the Scottish sonnet. His new literary freedom allowed him to indulge in his enthusiasm for the pléiade and its teachings. His new political freedom allowed him to influence others in following his example.

ATTITUDE TO LOVE

Petrarchan love is almost entirely absent from James's sonnets. He does occasionally suffer excessive grief, as in Am 5d, delighting like the Petrarchan lover "to pance upon his smart". But soon he remembers that the lady suffers similar pain and counsels the two negatives to join in forming a positive:

Then since we bothe like sorrows doe sustain
Both preasse to turne in pleasure all our paine. 1

Melancholy is not the norm in James's verse. He more frequently finds some ingenious means of consolation. The lady in Am 5b has deprived him of three elements, leaving him composed only of earth, but the final note is one of hope - "or els restore me to myself again". The Scottish sonnet thus opens with a highly original collection, which replaces sorrow with joy.

The reasons for James's revolt against Petrarchanism are easy to find. First of all his sonnets of love are specifically marriage sonnets addressed to Anne of Denmark. They cover the period of courtship and early marriage, before the king, prevented by protocol, had really got to know his wife. They are therefore characterized

1. Ibid., II, 72. When the sonnets are numbered, the reference is to Craigie's divisions. Those in Amatorìa are preceded by Am and multiple sonnets like 'The Cheuiott hills doe with my state agree' (p. 71) are numbered 5a, 5b, 5e etc. Sonnets in the 'Miscellanea' are numbered S. 13 etc., the number being that in Craigie, while those in 'Uncollected Poems' are designated by U.P.
by a very formal style, with Anne being addressed in the 'you' plural form:

Although Madame I ought not to refuse
What yee request ...
But what Madame and shall I then denie
Your just demaunde.

These sonnets are not an expression of scorned passion, but polite stylistic exercises presented by a king to his intended wife. Their inspiration is the Reulis and Cautelis, not the heart.

They have two main themes. The first is James's voyage to Denmark in 1589. Having learned that contrary winds threatened to delay his wife's arrival in Scotland, he sailed in the opposite direction, and married her in November of that year. This was his only positive action in a courtship, which had otherwise been handled by ambassadors. Poetically he uses it as a proof of his love, but fails to convince his readers of any strong passion. After all he had not met Anne, so that her 'fame' rather than her beauty is the motive of his journey:

As on the wings of your enchanting fame
I was transported ou'r the stormie seas
Who coulde not quenche that restles burning flame
Which onlie ye by sympathie did mease?

Witty conceits and mythological learning are introduced to fill the gap left by love. Although a trifle ponderous in the working out of parallels, James is an efficient sonneteer. Most often he likens the queen to a doctor, curing his melancholy with kindness or to a divine creature created by the gods. This latter theme allows

1. Ibid., II, 70.
2. Ibid., II, 69.
him to use his knowledge of mythology. In Am 3 he likens her to the three goddesses Minerva, Diana and Venus, each of whom agrees to protect her. The compliments of wisdom, chastity and beauty are thus presented in a neat, logical fashion, with learning trying to substitute for emotion.

It is to James's credit that he did not try to feign a passion he could scarcely be expected to feel, nor should the critic blame him for lacking what he never pretended to give. The journey from Denmark is not romantically treated. Instead the intellect moulds it into an orderly conceit. The poet-king rules all elements but the wind, and this prevents his union with Anne. He can

Make rockes to danse, hugge hills to skippe and playe
Beasts, foules, and fishe to followe them allwhere
Though thus the heauen, the sea, and earthe obeye,
Yett mutins the midde region of the aire.¹

The charm of James's verse lies in his learned parallels and the orderly development of ideas. They are intellectual exercises on the subject of marriage and as such should be judged. If the critic accepts this and attributes the thematic limitations to circumstance rather than inability, he will not be disappointed in James's collection.

The second main theme of the Amatoria is the joy of marital love. Now Petrarchanism in its original form had been unconnected with marriage. Later, due to the influence of courtly tradition, love had become associated with adultery. James's advisers had not been slow to indicate the evils of such an association as exemplified in the life of his own mother, Mary. As a result James in the

¹. Ibid., II, 68.
Basilicon Doron commented very harshly on the sin. "I trust I need not to insist here to dissuade you from the filthy vice of Adulterie". Marriage on the other hand represented two extreme possibilities. It was "the greatest earthly felicity or misery, that can come to a man", depending on the nature of the couple concerned.¹ Petrarchan misery within the context of marriage thus represented a weakness of the personality. This is why James's sonnets, contrary to European tradition, are so determinedly optimistic. He feared intensely the misery of broken marriage, which actually was to overtake him, and so writes of joy and conjugal fulfilment.

While his fellows despair and propose illicit relationships, James remains cheerful and celebrates a happy marriage. No European sonneteer, conscious of the traditions underlying the genre would have dared to write a sonnet glorifying the occasional domestic quarrel. Yet in U.P. 9 James does just this:

Even so this couldnes did betwixt us fall
To kindle pur love as sure I hope it shall.²

Although this is a classical convention, it is one ignored by most sonneteers. Likewise no European sonneteer, aware of the misery required from a Petrarchan lover would have admitted this misery to be a pose and confessed the truth of wedded bliss. Yet James, imbued with his love for Anne, and relief that his marriage is proving more successful than his mother's, makes this very admission:

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². Poems of James, II, 171.
My Muse hath made a willful lye I grante,  
I sung of sorrows neuer felt by me;  
I haue as great occasion for to wante,  
My loue begunne my blessing for to be.

Already it can be seen that the Scottish sonnet originates, not in unthinking agreement with convention, but in an original, highly personal attitude to love. The unrelenting melancholy of the Italians, the lax moral code of the French and the love-lust conflict of the English are all rejected by James.

Most noticeably the king never indulges in excessive compliments of the sort favoured by Petrarch and his followers. This is partially due to the official nature of his courting, but also to religion: philosophical and legal influences. For example, the spiritualising note, so frequent in the Rime is seldom heard in the Amatoria. However dear the queen may be to him, his religion forbids any confusion between her and God. In Am 3, it is true he compares her to the three goddesses mentioned above, but they are pagan goddesses, sharing human weaknesses, as James is at pains to indicate:

... being as Goddesses of equall might  
And as of female sexe like stiffe in will.

The errors of Mary had made him aware of female weakness and so his view of Anne is a realistic one. She is neither an angel nor a tyrant, although in Am 5b he does refer to her as a "crewell Dame". She is instead to be a staff in times of melancholy and a wife worthy of a king's love. Despite their formal tone, these sonnets

1. Ibid., II, 78. This sonnet ends a long Petrarchan poem entitled 'A Dier at her Mties desyer'.
2. Ibid., II, 69.
tell us more of their author's fears and hopes than many more passionate sequences. For all his classical allusions, and somewhat pompous style, James is writing sincere love poetry. The difference is a social one. His wife was chosen a priori, so he writes not of his passion but of his hopes; not of her beauty, but of the type of wife he wishes her to be.

At the same time he is somewhat pedantic, introducing modes of argument unfitted to romantic verse. In the Basilicon Doron he had praised temperance above all other virtues and it is this quality which permeates his love poetry too. He refuses to mouth high-sounding conceits, not only if they are blasphemous in his eyes, but also if they exaggerate on the truth. As always his guide is "That wise moderation, that first commanding your selfe, shall (as a Queene) commande all the affectiones and passions of your minde, and (as a Physition) wiselie mixe al your actiones according thereto."¹

As a result the 'via media' which he followed in politics and philosophy, appears in his poetry as well. Anne is praised but not excessively and he remains aware of woman's changeable nature:

O womans wit that wauers with the winde
When none so well may warie now as I
As weathercocke thy stablene I finde
And as the sea that still can never lie.²

It is as if, true to his habit of comparing two extremes and then accepting a midway truth, the king has opposed his romantic conception of Anne to the warped accounts he had received of his mother and identified woman's nature as lying between these two falsehoods.

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2. Poems of James, II, 72.
Certainly he is too reserved in his flattery to make an excellent love sonneteer. Even in stylistic matters he refuses the extremes of aureation and expresses his love in everyday imagery. His passion is like the little spark which slowly gains control of "the greene and fizzing faggots made of tree" (Am 5e). His blood "as in a pann doeth play" (Am 1b), with the reference being to an ordinary bed pan. In this use of homely imagery he resembles Sidney, but lacks the latter's romantic vision. The mines and cherry trees of Astrophil and Stella become elements in a romantic world of passion and adventure. James's bed pan only serves to underline the bourgeois conventionality of his poetic land.

The cult of temperance is not unconnected with the scholastic exercise of arguing on both sides of the question. All lawyers and students at James's court were acquainted with this discipline, which involved arguing wholeheartedly for and against a proposed thesis. The effect of this was to produce a balanced viewpoint, reached after the widest possible cogitation. In legal and intellectual matters, such a procedure was no doubt highly desirable. James however applies it, most unwisely, to the subject of love. In Am 4 he discusses whether love poetry or affairs of state ought to be given precedence. Arguing for the latter first, he decides that pressure of work and growing maturity make poetry an increasingly foolish pastime. He concludes:

Now ar Castalias floods dried up in me
Like suddain shoures this time of yeere ye see.  

Only in the second sonnet does the romantic argument come to the fore.

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1. Ibid., II, 70.
He recollects his journey to Denmark and the wonder of the queen's power over him. This point decides the case in Anne's favour, but she would be an exceptional woman to be pleased at such a narrow victory over the cares of kingship. James is letting his wisdom impede his understanding. In the study he has learned the advantages of temperance and balanced argument. He now tries to apply these principles in a realm where their antitheses are virtues.

When these religious, philosophical and legal influences are set beside his belief in the Reulis and Cautelis, that any description of physical beauty should be avoided, the lack of passion in his Amatoriar becomes understandable. Yet despite, perhaps because of his weaknesses, James is a reasonably successful love sonneteer. He composes only fourteen out of fifty-eight sonnets on this topic, when on the continent almost eighty per cent dealt with it. He has no complex conceits, no elaborate pieces of flattery, no vows of eternal devotion. His official courtship produces a hesitant formalism and some thematic limitation. His strict theology prevents a Petrachan view of the lady as a road to God. His philosophy of moderation renders him a tepid expresser of affection. His scholastic education produces as many arguments against women as for them. His dignified position as monarch forbids excessive humility or despair. The fact of marriage makes complaints against the rigour of chastity impossible. He is indeed the most unpetarchan of sonneteers.

Yet his sonnets have an undeniable appeal. Once the historical background to his love is understood, one can sympathise with this king, trying to make learning speak in the language of passion. For there is a sincere emotion behind the Amatoriar, the need for
love and the fear of marital failure. These speak through his pride in the Danish journey and frequent prophecies of happiness. They give his sonnets a dramatic interest, controlled by the workings of an orderly, ingenious intellect. At the same time he turns his back on all artificiality and plagiarism. This he does in accordance with his critical precepts as set down in the Reulis and Cautalis:

Ye man also be warre with composing ony thing in the same maner, as hes bene ower oft usit of before. As in speciall, gif ye speik of loue, be warre ye descryue your Loues makdome, or her fairnes. And siclyke that ye descryue not the morning, and rysing of the Sunne, in the Preface of your verse: for thir thingis are sa oft and dyuerslie written upon be Poetis already.¹

In the wider context of the Scottish sonnet, his contribution means that it originated with an individual theory of love, not an unconsidered echoing of Petrarchan or courtly traditions. Marriage, realism and optimism were the keynotes. It remains to be seen how closely the 'brethren of Castalian band' followed his lead.

OTHER THEMES

If opposed to Petrarchanism, James was a friend to European influences generally. His debt to Du Bellay and Ronsard has already been mentioned in Chapter 2. He also tried to attract foreign poets to the Edinburgh court. His most influential visitor was the French writer Du Bartas, whose Première Sepmaine had been gifted to the king in 1579. A literary friendship grew up and Du Bartas stayed at the Scottish court in 1587 for six months. In the light of this rapport between Scotland and Europe, it is not

¹. James VI, Essayes, p. 78.
surprising to find many European themes being echoed in the Scottish sonnet.

The elements especially interested James, so that when Shakespeare in Sonnet 74 suggests that he is composed of earth alone, he is unconsciously echoing James's argument of Am 5b:

As I of mankinde all am he alone
Who of the fourr possesseth onelie one

Now onelie earthe remains with me at last.1

James further uses the elemental theories in Am 1a with its fourfold division of the world into earth, sea, air and heaven. Also in the longer poem 'A Dreame on his Mistris my Ladie Glammis' he includes a creation theory which contains not only the four elements, but the four humours and four seasons as well. In this he was certainly influenced by Du Bartas' Première Sepmaine, part of which James had translated. In the second day Du Bartas links elements, humours and seasons in a way similar to 'A Dreame on his Mistris'.

For both James and Du Bartas however, this interest in the four elements and the correspondences based on them may have been part of a deeper interest in numerology. Alistair Fowler in Spenser and the Numbers of Time has clearly indicated Du Bartas' reliance on this Pythagorean theory.2 His definition of three for example:

whose inclosed Center
Doth equally from both extraims extend,3

1. Poems of James, II, 71.
3. Bartas, his Deuine Weekes and Workes, tr. Jostah Sylvester (London, 1612), p. 361. (This version is used, because James possessed a copy.)
is a synopsis of what was meant by the Pythagorean Triad. His account of the creation begins with the monad and works towards diversity in strict accordance with numerological tradition. There is even an unusually heavy emphasis on numerology in the 4th day, symbolising the primacy of the tetrad. Du Bartas' interest in numerology cannot be challenged, but it does seem that James shared this enthusiasm.

The number four is very common in his verse due to the elemental theories there expounded. But the tetrad symbolised order and power rising out of chaos. These are the characteristics applied by James to Tycho Brahe in 15a and 15b. It is explicitly stated that he is a "commander" and an interpreter of order, but this is also implied through use of four. Tycho rules the four elements. He also controls beasts, men, the earth and the planets. In U.P. IV four punishments are meted out to the rebelling Angels, thus symbolising God's power over them; four comparisons between James and Demosthenes are established in the preface to the Essays of a Prentise, thus symbolising their respective powers over poetry and rhetoric. This device is used so often and so effectively that one feels it cannot be accidental.

The Triad reconciled the oppositions of the Dyad. It was connected with the Christian Trinity and came to represent integration of the personality and harmony in general. With this in mind it is interesting to notice the occasions on which James uses triple groupings in his verse. When the queen is born she must be protected by three goddesses (Am 3). When she is viewed as making his state worse than blindness, she deprives him of eyes, Sun and heart (Am 6). Sidney's personality is composed of three
qualities represented by Mars, Minerva and Apollo (Am 18). When the sad state of Scotland's politics are brought under discussion, three questions spring to the poet's mind:

How long shall Furies on our fortunes feede
How long shall vice her raigne possess in rest
How long shall Harpies our displeasure breede.\(^1\)

Mystically interpreted these instances could be accounted for as follows. The queen at her birth shares the blessings of three goddesses, symbolising the blessings of the Trinity. Pagan goddesses thus transmit a wish for Christian grace. When the lady steals three qualities from the poet, she is upsetting the peaceful integration of his soul, bringing chaos and leading him into that very despair, which poetically he describes. Sidney on the other hand with his tripartite personality is the perfectly integrated man. His soul in Platonic terms is at harmony. Finally the triple description of Scotland's misery is an implicit plea for the re-establishment of the harmony that has been lost. In describing injustice James is advocating a return to lost standards of order and law by means of the triple conceit. The study of numbers may allow us to penetrate to deeper meanings in his work.

Other number groups are also consistent with theme. Five, the symbol for man and usually connected with greatness, is used in the poem celebrating James's greatest counsellor, Maitland:

His wisdome and his uprychtenes of harte,
His pietie, his practise of oure stait,
His quick ingyne so vearsit in everie art.\(^2\)

Nine, the perfect number, being the square of three appears in S 13.

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1. Poems of James, II, 111.
2. Ibid., II, 167.
Creation is divided into nine parts, culminating with man, who is the justification of all that has gone before. James is implicitly stating his faith in an ordered, divine and perfect world by using the only number which combined these qualities. S. 27 with its opening invocation to:

Apollo, Pan, and ye o Muses nine
And thou o Mercure,¹

introduces the number twelve, which was naturally most favourably regarded being the product of three and four. James is not only asking for power over his pen but that his poetry be skilfully integrated (i.e. $12 = 4 \times 3$; power $\times$ integration).

One cannot be certain that James used numerological symbolism in his verse, but it does seem likely in view of the examples adduced above and the known influence of Du Bartas. Moreover it would be consistent with the generally idiosyncratic nature of the king's interests.

In cosmological matters James follows his principle of avoiding extremes. With Buchanan's De Sphaera advocating a Ptolemaic theory and Du Bartas' Sepmaines siding with Copernicus, James chose the via media, by praising Brahe. Yet from time to time he unconsciously echoes the French poet. When praising Brahe for example he suggests that Ticho has brought order out of chaos and proved himself ruler of the planets:

As heauenlie impes to gouerne bodies basse
Be subtle and celestiall sweete accord
Then great is Ticho who by this his booke
Commandement doth ouer these commanders brooke.²

1. Ibid., II, 112.
2. Ibid., II, 101.
Du Bartas, addressing all astronomers, uses the same themes of order and super-rule in the Seconde Sepmaine 'Columns':

Tis you that Marshall monthes, and yeeres, and dayes:  
Tis you that quoat for such as haunt the Seas.  
Tis you that (greater then our greatest Kings)  
Possess the whole World in your Gouernings.  

While Buchanan remains consistent throughout, both Du Bartas and James occasionally cut across rigid astronomical divisions of opinion.

In matters of astrological and demoniacal influence too James opposes his old tutor in favour of Du Bartas. In De Sphaera Book V Buchanan disagrees with Brahe and especially the supernatural elements in his theory. His superstitious views on lunar eclipses are rejected for Gallus's mechanical theories. In II. 80-85 Buchanan counsels his pupil, Timoleon not to believe in magic of any form. Du Bartas on the other hand admits the presence of devils in the first day of the Première Sepmaine. He sees comets as a sign of supernatural wrath:

A new strange Starre, presaging wofull doomes,  
and in The Deceit accepts the Devil's ability to assume different disguises.

James agreed with this last point in his Daemonologie. "Yet to these capped creatures, he (the Devil) appeares as he pleases, and as he findes meetest for their humors." But this was only part of a wider belief in all supernatural forces. In S. 13 he

1. Sylvester op. cit., p. 492.  
2. Ibid., p. 53.  
gives an account of the world, which includes:

    The sadd and bearded fires, the monsters faire
    The prodiges appearing in the aire
    The rearding thunders and the blustering windes. 1

As a man of the renaissance he clearly belonged to the group which saw their fate as governed by a number of imponderables rather than wholly self-willed. When political affairs are getting out of hand, he like Wyatt or Ronsard blames the malicious influence of the stars:

    O cruell constellation that conspird
    Before my birth my bale sa sharpe and saire. 2

The only apparent exception to his belief in supernatural forces appears in the poem with which he greeted the comet of 1618. At first sight he seems to be mocking those who see it as a presager of doom. Sir Philip Mainwaring in a letter to the Earl of Arundel remarks, "The King takes no more notice of the blasing starre than he hath alwayes done of the day-starre, nor will acknowledge it for any other." 3 In fact James was not questioning the possibility of a supernatural message, only man's ability to interpret that message. He warned his people against idle fancies, leading perhaps to national panic:

    The character you see on heauens heights:
    Which though it bringe the World some newes from fate,
    The letter is such as none can it translate. 4

1. Poems of James, II, 99.
2. Ibid., II, 119.
3. Ibid., II, 173. The letter is cited by Craigie in his note on p. 256. See also John Nichols, Proffesses of King James I (London, 1828), III, 495.
4. Poems of James, II, 173.
Indeed when Anne died fully five months later, he was the first to attribute this tragedy to the comet in his poem, 'Thee to invite the great God sent a starre.' If he had not connected the comet with doom he would scarcely have seen any relationship between it and a catastrophe occurring almost half a year afterwards.

In his treatment of the elements, numerology, cosmology and astrology James seems to rely on Du Bartas rather than Buchanan. Yet, as his embracing of Brahe's theories suggests, he never loses his individuality. When he calls Brahe "Urania's eldest fostre deare", it is possible that he means Brahe's Progymnasmeta to be an advance on Du Bartas' views. The line would then be doubly meaningful. Certainly he does seem to sift the best points from various authorities and then construct his own theory.

He also makes frequent use of the medieval world system as adopted by many European sonneteers. His world is one in which each object has its own fixed place, deviation from which upsets the heavenly harmony. This soon develops into a view of the world as a graded chain of existence. At the foot stand stones and metals, then above them in neat gradations are plants, animals and men. This order is only rendered meaningful through being an expression of God's benevolent purpose and each creature fulfils himself only insofar as he realises this. In S. 13 James elaborates on this basic scheme:

In earthe the saucourie flowres, the metall'd mindes
The wholesome herbes, the hautie pleasant trees
The siluer streames, the beasts of sundrie kindes
The bounded roares, and fishes of the seas
All these for teaching man the Lord did frame
To honour him whose glorie shines in them.1

1. Ibid., II, 99.
Underlined by the numerological symbolism of a list of nine, this is the world picture shared by Sannazaro in Italy, Desportes in France and Spenser in England. Indeed he expresses it so accurately that he must have received it as a developed philosophy rather than an embryonic personal theory struggling towards coherence.

James applies the system of orderly hierarchy to every realm of activity. It implies order in the emotions under the rule of reason, while in the state it involves harmony of moral order. Justice, honesty and virtue must rule over their antitheses. Any upsetting of this harmony will plunge the land into chaos:

For manie now abroade doe daylie blaize
That iustice hath her hart infected sore
How can she then be cleane in anie wayes,
Bot must become corrupted more and more.

This extension of the principles of harmony from body physical to body politic had been anticipated by Buchanan in the De Iure Regni. "Now, just as in human bodies, composed as they are of conflicting elements, there are diseases ... so, of necessity, the men associated in these bodies which we call states are of diverse and often opposing sorts." But they only agree on this common need for order, not on the hierarchy which will produce it most efficiently. In the Basilicon Doron, James asserts the king's divine right to stand at the head, subject to God alone. In Chapters 10, 20, 22 and 28 of the De Iure, Buchanan argues that the people should set out those rules by which the country should be governed. The king must obey these rules or be named a tyrant, who will then be driven

1. Ibid., II, 111.
out by the people:

What of that public enemy the tyrant, with whom every good man is eternally at war? May not every member of the human race justly demand that all force of arms be employed against him?¹

The tutor places men of learning at the top of his hierarchy. His royal student reserves that place for himself. While the first hierarchy is united by the principle of common good, the second is united by obedience to the king. This doctrine James sums up in his sonnet to the Prince of Wales:

God gives not Kings the style of Gods in vaine,
For on his throne his Scepter do they svey;
And as their subjectts ought them to obey;
So Kings should feare and serve their God againe.²

He does not remove from the monarch's shoulders his responsibility to rule in his people's interests. What he does do is to remove from the people their right to assess and punish such a failure. This is God's task and to Him alone is the king answerable. It is the sort of code advanced by Holinshed and adapted by Shakespeare in his historical tetralogies.³

Order in man, order in the state, order on earth - all these naturally lead to order in the universe. It is for James one of Brahe's most meaningful achievements that he has made spatial order understandable. Not only do grasshoppers and cows have their appointed place in a harmonious universe, Saturn and Mars have as well. Moreover he has explained this divine order within the

¹. Ibid., p. 143.
². Poems of James, II, 170.
confines of a book - a human product made possible by the leather of animals and the paper provided by plants. Cooperation of the lower orders is necessary for comprehension of the higher. It is with this topic and not the planetary order that the final couplets deal:

Then greate is Ticho who by this his booke Commandement doth ouer these commanders brooke. (To Brahe 1)

There fires diviue into his house remaine Whome sommerlie his booke doth here containe. (To Brahe 2)

It is no digression however, but another way of expressing wonder at the complex order of God's universe in which lower and higher contribute aids to cover each other's deficiencies. In this way as well as in the relationship drawn between microcosm and body politic or between grades of existence on the divine chain, James shows himself aware of the world system most commonly accepted abroad.

In fact, James deals at some length with all the major European themes considered in Chapter 4. In addition to the elements, numerology, cosmology, astrology and the world system he makes frequent use of the pagan gods, employing them both as cosmic symbols and allegorical devices. If he is an innovator in his attitude to love he is most conservative in his choice of themes. At the same time he does make one or two innovations, which are specifically Scottish. Most of these arise from his definition of the sonnet in the Reulis and Cautelis as being suited primarily for the praising of books and authors. This change of emphasis is echoed in his verse. The thirteen love sonnets are matched by thirteen others, praising books or poets. There are a further six devoted to friends

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and acquaintances. This represents a marked change from the division observed in France, Italy and England and suggests a possible relationship with the Horatian ode. In Europe the sonnet form is frequently used for occasional poetry of this nature, but its status as a love genre is never seriously challenged. James on the other hand uses it time and again to praise his favourite authors - Du Bartas, Sidney, Maitland; to evaluate particular works like Fowler's version of the Trionfi or Adamson's paraphrase of Job; to praise friends or loyal servants like Montgomerie and John Shaw. In later centuries the sonnet elsewhere began to loosen its bonds with love and become the main vehicle for occasional verse. James mixes the two in almost equal numbers at the very start of Scotland's contribution in the genre.

Whether his lead were universally followed by his compatriots remains to be seen. James himself wrote fewer love sonnets because his views on adultery, his realism and official courtship all estranged him from Petrarchanism. At the same time the forces demanding occasional verse were very strong. As king his sonnets were much in demand as introductions to an author's latest book. Fourteen lines of verse were also a much cheaper way of recording gratitude than awarding an annual pension and James VI in the midst of a financial crisis was not slow to benefit from his poetic gifts in this fashion. On critical grounds too he had decided that the sonnet was ideally suited to this type of verse. With these considerations in mind, one can understand why the Scottish sonnet originated with such an unusual thematic division.

This preference on James's part is not without its advantages. It allows us to gauge his literary tastes and discover his
opinion of the court poets around him. Montgomerie, a much older man, is regarded with some awe. He is "Belouit sandirs maister of our airt" and is usually addressed as the "maister poete", but this doesn't prevent James from lamenting his boastfulness and drinking habits. At his death the king expresses deep sorrow and remembers "his suggred stile his weightie words diuine". Although no bell rang out when he was buried, the bell of fame would always knell his praise. William Fowler is also highly praised in a sonnet, which is nevertheless written in a conventional form. Thus when the king compares him with Homer and Virgil or raises him above Petrarch, this should not be viewed as a serious literary judgment. It is a conceit widely used abroad but the king in choosing it for Fowler does express a sincere belief in his prowess. Sir William Alexander, a sonneteer more closely connected with the London period of his reign comes in for severe criticism on the other hand. He has been "bath'd in Castalias fountaine cleare", that is, nurtured by the earlier sonneteers in the use of Scots. His sojourn in England has led him to anglicise his verse, thus producing in James's opinion, a harsh, untuneful metre. He has imitated poor English models:

And borowing from the raven there ragged quill
Bewray there harsh hard trotting tumbling wayne
Such hamringe hard the mettalls hard require
Our songs ar fil'd with smoothly flowing fire.

The overall picture, which one can draw from a study of his

1. Ibid., II, 121.
2. Ibid., II, 108.
3. Ibid., II, 114.
occasional verse is that of a very close poetic group at the court, each well read in the other’s work. Montgomerie seems to be regarded as the finest artist but James’s position as monarch makes him the real head of the group. Nor is he a mere puppet in this position. He is the Du Bellay of the Castalians, formulating critical precepts which are basic to the practice of this Scottish pléiade. He seems to have originated not only the Scottish sonnet but a rather original Scottish sonnet both in terms of Petrarchan love and in the importance granted to occasional poetry.

INFLUENCES

While James is predominantly an original sonneteer, the most powerful influences upon him seem to have come from France and Scotland. English poets were always welcome at his court and Constable arrived two years after Du Bartas’ departure, but their influence on the king was slight. Constable’s ‘If I durst sigh still as I had begun’ is a reply to Am 1 but few of his themes recur in the king’s poetry. The only notable exception is in Diana Part 3 No. 1 where he comments:

My heart was hetherto but like green wood
Which must be dry’d before it will burne bright,

This calls to mind Am 5e, where James uses the same image to express the gradual growth of his passion:

Although that crooked crawling Vulcan lie
An-under ashes colde as oft we see
As senseles deade whill by his heate he drie
The greene and fizzing faggots made of tree.1

The conceit is not uncommon, being found in No. 6 of Spenser’s

Amoretti as well as many classical texts. Too much weight should therefore not be placed on this isolated parallel. The other possible English influences seem to me somewhat tenuous. The vision of his lady as the "onelie Medicinar" is to be found in Sonnet 14 of Daniel's Delia, while the riddle on sleep has certain similarities to Sidney's poem on the same topic, "Come Sleepe, of sleepe, the certaine knot of peace". It is perhaps typical that the only really close parallel is between the 'cheviot hills' sonnet (Am 5a) and No. 19 in Wyatt's collection, "Like to these unmesurable montayns", for closer research proves that they have a common parent in Melin de St. Gelais' "Voyant ces monts de veue ainsi lointaine". James's version definitely stems from this French sonnet rather than the later English adaptation.

This conclusion is not surprising. Scotland and Scottish literature in the earlier part of James's reign stood at the centre of the European tradition, while England was already cultivating parochial tendencies. Thus, although the avenues of influence across the border were kept open, the Edinburgh court had closer relationships with France and Du Bartas, than with England and Sidney.

Du Bartas indeed is the most important single influence on the king, although this influence is of a general rather than particular nature. His advocation of a heavenly muse opposed to the rather earthy one supported by Ronsard, appealed to James and probably accounts for his translation of the Uranie. It must not be forgotten that while in favour of the pléiade, James disliked Ronsard's lax morality as expressed in his verse, and could not forgive him for openly praising a mother whom the king had been taught to hate. Moreover, while Ronsard had been undisputed French laureate during
Montgomerie's youth, the king grew up in the period after the publishing of *Amours de Diane*. Desportes was in this era as important as the older poet, while the heavy platonic bias to his verse set him apart as one of the disciples of Du Bartas. In this context it is scarcely surprising to find James borrowing more from the *Amours d'Hippolyte* than the *Amours pour Hélène*.

The opening to James's "A dreame on his Mistris", with its emphasis on night bringing sadness and heaviness to mortals may well have been inspired by the similar beginning to *Hippolyte* 31:

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Quand le Soleil dore laisse nostre hemisphere,
Tournant ailleurs le cours de ses chevaux ailez
S'il paroist peu souvent, si les jours sont gelez,
Le desir des humains par l'espoir se modere.
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James's emphasis on the four elements too should be seen alongside the comment in Chapter 4 that Desportes is perhaps the most "element-conscious" of the European sonneteers. Thus the conceit of Am 5b, that the king is deprived of three elements and composed of earth alone, may have derived from *Cléonice* 39. In this Desportes undergoes a similar process, although his unique element is fire:

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Il n'y a rien en moy qui ne fust tout de flamme.
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Both poets also share an interest in wing imagery, commonly used to express the heights of love's aspiration or poetic genius. Desportes uses it in *Hippolyte* 26 to depict the divinity of his lady alongside his own humility:

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Mais las! Madame, où vollez-vous si haut?
Je n'en puis plus, une frayeur m'assaut ....
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The king employs it in Am 2, when celebrating his journey to Denmark:

As on the wings of your enchanting fame
I was transported ou'r the stormie seas. 1

Throughout his work it reappears like a leitmotiv, notably in Am 4b, the epitaph to Montgomerie, and Nos. 4 and 9 of the invocatory sonnets. The prevalence with which both writers employ this image is a mark of their common adherence to the school of Du Bartas. It incorporates the spiritualising and transcending elements emphasised by the Sieur d'Aubigne and ignored by Ronsard.

Other possible influences exerted by the French poet are not lacking. Hippolyte 53 reintroduces the conceit of the lover's illness which can be cured by no doctor but his lady. The argument is identical to that paraphrased in Am 1b and 2. Du Bartas was probably the ultimate source of all three sonnets, but James's particular debt is to Desportes. Similarly Diane I, 5 has much in common with the king's Spring sonnet, No. 23:

Haill mirthfull May the moneth full of ioye
Haill mother mild of hartsme herbes and floures
Haill fostrer faire of euerie sporte and toye
And of Auroras dewis and summer shoures. 2

Like James, Desportes begins with a joyous greeting, and both elaborate their theme in terms of fertility, the chasing away of winter, and pagan gods. One would not expect close translation from the king after reading his views in the Reulis, but variation on an original theme is probable. This seems to be the relationship between the two poems under discussion. Desportes' spring is "heureux" and James's "mirthfull"; Desportes' "fait que l'hyver

2. Poems of James, II, 108.
James in his version even repeats the Latinized name-form:

James, in his version, even repeats the Latinized name-form, 'Lyk as the dum
Solequium', with 'Ouerorum', and 'Hinges down his head, And droups as dead', as in Montgomerie's 'Solsequium', and in the Marigold, in 'A complaint of his mistress's absence from court', can only be explained in these terms. Montgomerie had written in this manner:

"Lyk as the dum
Solequium,
With oerorum,
Hinges doun his head,
And droups as dead."

This, however, can be understood as an echo of the Latinized name-form, even if it is not directly cited. Montgomerie's preference for the marigold is reflected in his Scottish predecessors, as seen in the verse of the 'maister poete'. His imagery too is occasionally echoed. The relationship between the king's poetry, the works of Ronsard's successor, and James's poetry is not one of disciple and master, but rather of two musicians offering different interpretations of similar works. Although strongly influenced by French writers, Montgomerie is the dominant force in this connection and many of the examples cited in the Reulis come directly from the verse of the 'maister poete'. His process of imitation alongside invention advocated by James the critic. He accepts the themes present in Desportes but alters them to suit his particular vision. There seems to be a direct connection between the king's poetry and that of Ronsard's successor. The common theme of sport and toy is introduced in Desportes, while people enjoy "euerie" and "hartsume" and "floures" flourish, while people enjoy "euerie" and "hartsume" and "floures" flourish. Montgomerie had written in his version:

"Lyc as the dum
Solequium,
With oerorum,
And droups as dead."

James in his version even repeats the Latinized name-form.
Bot what my Muse, how pertlie thus thou sings
Who rather ought Solsequium like attend
With luckned leaues till wearie night take end.  

He also imitates Montgomerie in the frequent use of proverbs or
gnomic comment, a notable feature in Scottish literature since the
time of Henryson's aphorism-loving animals. With Montgomerie
however this tradition reached new heights. There is therefore
deep irony in James's Admonitioun, when he tries to persuade the
Ayrshire poet to mend his ways by quoting a proverb:

The prouerbe sayes that mends is for misdeed,
Cracke not againe no forder then the creede.  

His wide learning however prevents the Scottish elements in his
verse from being as strong as in the works of some of his contem¬
poraries. Indeed the only other Scottish poet whose voice can
occasionally be heard is David Lindsay. In condemning the state of
Scotland, they are remarkably close in style and thought. The
following eight lines ought to make this point clear:

All kinde of wronge allace it now aboundes
And honestie is fleemed out of this land
Now trumprie ouer trueth his triumpe soundes
Who now can knowe the hart by tongue or hand
Our gentyll men are all degenerat;
Liberalitie and lawte boith ar lost;
And cowardyce with lords is laureat;
And knychtlie curage turnit in brag and boast.  

Few people could distinguish the hands of two authors in this stanza,
but the first four lines come from the king's third sonnet on
Bothwell, the second four from Lindsay's early allegory, The Dreme.

   Society (Edinburgh and London, 1887), p. 148.  Poems of James,
   II, 81.
2. Poems of James, II, 128.
3. Ibid., p. 111.  The Works of Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, ed.
   D. Hamer, Scottish Text Society, 4 vols. (Edinburgh and London,
   1931-6), I, 38.
In both the note of simplicity allied to indignation is noticeable, while the various moral vices are numbered off in the manner of early reformation preachers like Robert Bruce.¹

The various influences so far indicated do not alter the basic fact of James's originality. The English sonnet he almost entirely ignores; he is attracted to the more spiritual side of the French pléiade as represented by Du Bartas and Desportes; the influences of his tutor Buchanan, of scholastic philosophy and the reformation pulpit form part of a well-planned education; Montgomerie as the laureate of his reign, Lindsay as the 'laureate' of a generation before are almost inevitable models - but James transforms all this material and makes a unique poetic contribution. Always at the back of his mind are the Reulis and Cautelis, not only a critical manual but also a declaration of personal poetic principles. With the problem of James's originality in mind, it is profitable to return to the Reulis and observe how closely he follows them in later life.

STYLE

The fact of his extreme youth when the Reulis appeared must be stressed at the outset. One would not expect an experienced poet to follow in detail each of a group of very rigid rules drawn up

¹ Robert Bruce was minister at St. Giles when James was composing his sonnets. He was the successor of James Lawson and John Knox, but fully lived up to the reputation of his predecessors. The logical development of his sermons, the quiet philosophical tone and reliance on the numbering of arguments all reappear in James's verse. The king held him in high esteem and Melville records in his Diary that James "once gave the testimony before many, that he judged Mr. Bruce was worth the half of his kingdom". For his style, see Robert Bruce, The Mystery of the Lord's Supper, ed. T. F. Torrance (London, 1958), p. 59, from "Here we have to consider" to "in the same way or not."
when he was a teenager. What may seem very desirable in theory can become impossible in practice. James the mature poet found this to be the case and overthrew a number of his stipulations, when they became too restricting. His principle of rhyming always on the last stressed syllable is generally observed, but exceptions like the couplet quoted in Chapter 2 are not hard to seek:

Kings cannot comprehended be  
In Commons mouths, conjure ye.¹

Similarly, final rhyming on words of three or more syllables is to be avoided as often as possible. Yet this excerpt from Song 1 proves that often is not to be equated with always:

The proverbe makis relation  
That likes in tribulation  
Is wretches consolation  
So now are we.²

The bob and wheel effect so skilfully created owes a lot to the rhyming of polysyllabic words and there can be no doubt that James was right in overthrowing his critical convictions. This he does whenever poetic effect demands it, but otherwise he departs from his youthful rule-book surprisingly seldom.

In Chapter 3 for example he advises "that ye eschew to insert in your verse, a lang rable of mennis names or names of tounis, or sik uther names. Because it is hard to mak many lang names all placit together, to flow weill."³ In almost all his poetry James remains true to this cautel. Writing to the queen in Am 3 he likens her in turn to Juno, Phoebus, Minerva, Diana and Cytherea

2. Ibid., p. 96.
3. James VI, Essays, p. 75.
but spaces these comparisons at regular intervals throughout the poem. In the Sonnet on Fowler's *Trionfi*, the author is compared to Homer in 1. 5, Virgil in 1. 7, with Petrarch being reserved for 1. 9 and the final couplet. Other devices employed to avoid a series of names are to be found in S. 27 and S. 32. In the first of these a collective noun is used to prevent listing:

Apollo, Pan, and ye o Muses nine.¹

In the second a long series is expanded by adding to each constituent an apt descriptive phrase:

Not orientall Indus cristall streams;
Nor frutfull Nilus, that no bankes can thole;
Nor golden Tagus; where bright Titans beames,
Ar headlongst hurled .......²

Continually James strives to remain true to this cautel, and only once does poetic practice contravene poetic theory. This occurs in U.P. 2, when James is describing Hell. In this instance he may consider the "lang rable of names" a good vehicle for expressing the chaos of the nether regions:

It nou appeares that persephone the aufull quene of hell
Unlousing megere, alecto, and tisiphone furies fell
Ellis wearie on the stigien boundis more residence to make
Transportis betuixt us and the heaven her horrible hell and blake.³

Certainly the king in later life still considered his early rule a wise one. Just as he guided his life by the abstract principle of temperance, so he guided his poetry by an abstract body of rules. In both instances however he was usually willing to waive these rigid laws when the occasion so demanded.

Yet there were a few instances when the rules were applied arbitrarily. His command that the iamb be the only foot used in verse construction is probably his most foolish contribution to poetic theory, but he himself obeys it without question. Also his 'reulis' are often based on a sensible viewpoint, but expressed in an unnecessarily extreme form. His opposition to plagiarism soon becomes confounded with the view that convention in artistic matters is always and necessarily vicious. This in turn leads to the belief that when describing a lady one "sall rather prayse hir uther qualiteis, nor her fairnes, nor hir shaip";¹ because physical descriptions have become common. This largely accounts for the formality of his love poetry. A poet who is committed only to speak "some lytill thing" of beauty, and commonly dismisses the topic in a hurried final couplet:

(Bot since your beautie hath this wonder wroght
I houpe Madame, it shall not be for noght)²

is unlikely to scale any heights of passion. James proves this point admirably.

Finally, the reader might be surprised that the originator of a specifically Scottish renaissance writes in such thin Scots. There are two main reasons for this. The king revised much of his Scottish verse when in London, substituting English vocabulary. It is recorded however, that he often retained Scottish words, when he thought them effective, thus outraging his son Charles, who considered it a barbarous tongue. The sonnets to Anne on the other

1. James VI, Essayes, p. 78.
2. Poems of James, II, 72.
hand had contained few Scotticisms from the beginning in case she could not understand them. One is thus faced with the paradox of a Scottish Renaissance led by a poet writing predominantly in English. All his major castalian disciples wrote in Scots.

Yet he gave the Scottish sonnet a most auspicious start. He produced a critical proclamation of intent similar to Du Bellay's Deffense. He used intelligently the best French and Scottish influences open to him and clearly aligned the Scottish movement with the spiritual side of the Pléiade. He had the courage to place himself confidently in opposition to the all-powerful Petrarchan tradition, on grounds of realism and morality. He paid close attention to style, alloying the intricate devices used in the European sonnet to the more deliberate, sonorous tones heard in the pulpits of Edinburgh. If the sonnet had died a sudden death in Scotland, no blame could have been attached to James VI.
STEWART OF BALDYNNEIS

BIOGRAPHY

At least one of James's courtiers was inspired by the Essayes of a Prentise. Shortly after it was printed, a book appeared containing a version of Ariosto's Orlando Furioso, an allegorical work entitled Ane Schersing out of Trew Felicitie and various shorter poems, including 33 sonnets. In his introduction, the author immediately identified his source of inspiration:

Sir, haifing red your maiesteis maist prudent Precepts in the deuyn art of poesie, I haif assayit my Sempill spreit to becum your hienes scholler.¹

This piece of information enables us to date the sequence after 1585, when the Essayes first appeared in print although a few of the pieces were composed earlier. A closer placing is however possible. The writer takes every opportunity of flattering King James and no fewer than nine sonnets deal with this topic. Yet no mention is made of the wedding to Anne. It seems unlikely that this event would have been omitted in the various listings of the king's achievements, unless it had not yet taken place. In all probability therefore the book appeared between 1585 and 1589.

Its author was John Stewart of Baldynneis, perhaps the most enigmatic figure among the poetic group at the Edinburgh court. He is never praised by the king, like Fowler or Montgomerie, although his work is almost as good as the 'master poet's'. This problem is partly resolved when the relationship between poet and monarch is

¹ The MS is in the National Library, Edinburgh. From it Thomas Crockett compiled Poems of John Stewart of Baldynneis, Scottish Text Society (Edinburgh and London, 1913).
Baldynneis was the second son of one of James V's mistresses, Elizabeth Betoun and the young Maecenas may not have cared to have his grandfather's misdemeanours continually forced upon him, through the poet's presence at court. Certainly the affair with Elizabeth Betoun had shocked even James V's acquaintances, because it had flourished at the same time as active marriage negotiations with France. When James married Madeline, the King of France's rather delicate daughter on January 1st 1536, the affair had not finished. He therefore decided to farm out his mistress on a respectable Scottish family and only seven days after his own marriage, Elizabeth became the wife of John Stewart, 4th Lord of Innermeith. Baldynneis was the second son of this match.

Little is known about the poet's life, although he possibly can be identified with the John Stewart, who signed the matriculation roll of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews in 1557. Only in one context does his name appear frequently in *The Privy Council Register*, *The Acts of the Scottish Parliament*, and *The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland*. Once again his claim to fame is closely connected with his mother, and the incident clearly reveals the state of political chaos in Scotland towards the turn of the sixteenth century.

The 4th Lord of Innermeith died early and in 1572 Elizabeth Betoun married again. She was by this time nearly 60, but chose a husband (James Gray) who was a little older than her children. It seems to have been a marriage of convenience between "ane young gentilman unlandit or providit of leaving" and a foolish old matron who hoped "That he sould have mantenit and defendit and done the
dewitie of ane faithfull husband to hir in hir aige.¹ Barely five years later she discovered that Gray was responsible for the pregnancy of her niece, Isobel Beatoun. She at once began divorce proceedings, but he replied by trying to sell the family estate, Redcastle to her elder son, the 5th Lord of Innermeith. This move was illegal for her first husband had bequeathed all rights in the estate to her during her lifetime. Law enforcement at this period was very weak and she found herself enduring a lengthy siege led by the forces of Lord Gray and the Earl of Crawford. The poet and one Alexander Gray were her main allies but they could not hope to match the strength of their attackers.

Despite the propriety of their case, the defenders found that charges had been brought against them. The might of Gray and Crawford was a stronger argument in the corrupt courts of the day than wills and deeds of sale. The poet refused to appear in court, but Andrew Gray represented the besieged. He was found guilty and all the defenders were forcibly apprehended by order of Erskine of Duns. The letter authorising this act was written by James. The object of flattery in the 1580s had thus consigned the flatterer to prison about six years earlier. He appeared before the Privy Council in May 1579 and was committed to the custody of Robert, Earl of Lennox.²

¹ For accounts of the incident see Matthew P. McDiarmid, 'John Stewart of Baldyneeis', Scottish Historical Review, XXIX, 1950, 52-63; I. Ross, Court Poets in the Reign of James VI (Unpublished B.Litt. thesis, Oxon., 1954). The latter is available on request from the Bodleian Library.

² Register of Privy Council of Scotland (1578-85), III, 154-6; 125-6; 188; 171-2. (R.P.C.S.)
James discovered his error, four months later, when the full extent of Gray's trickery became known. In September 1579 he urged Erskine to hand over the castle to John Stewart. Trusting in the king's promise of safety the poet returned to Redcastle with his mother, his wife Katherine (the daughter of Alexander Gray) and sister Marjory. Yet in 1580 Gray attacked the estate once again. Somehow he had won the poet's father-in-law over to his side, and together they besieged the castle. The poet and his small group of defenders retreated to a small tower on the west wing, which was virtually impregnable. Gray however used a sulphur and pitch solution which caused suffocating. As a result Marjory, who was pregnant, lost her child.1 Injustice of this nature continued unopposed by authority until March, when the Provest of Dundee intervened and chased the Grays into hiding at Dunninald. He was unable however to prevent them gaining booty, or to prevent another siege during February of 1581.

Indeed the state of Scotland, as revealed by this incident is one of near anarchy. Gray's claim to the estates was illegal, even when he was ostensibly acting on behalf of Lord Innermeith. Later, when Innermeith had relinquished his claims, the continuing sieges were flagrant breaches of the law. Yet they lasted from 1579 to 1581. The poet was wrongly put in jail; his mother was nearly rendered bankrupt, and had to give up her town-house in Edinburgh because of constant plundering; his sister lost a child because of the 1580 siege; his wife's father was corrupted into attacking the castle, when he knew she was one of the occupants. In addition,

the king's infrequent interventions were almost entirely ignored. He confirmed the poet's right to Redcastle and four months later heard that Gray had begun another siege. He proved powerless to prevent this. He ordered Gray to appear before Parliament, but he refused to do so. It was not until 1581 that he was formally declared a traitor, and even then he escaped punishment until 1586, when he was slain in Dundee, during a brawl. In the light of this knowledge, Stewart's choice of the king as a patron seems unusual, and only explicable in terms of genuine admiration of the Essays or hope of advancement.

It is almost certain that Baldynneis did not go south to the London court in 1603, for he achieved no political eminence and James makes no comment at all on his poetic prowess. Moreover, he must have died some time before 1607, as a document dated December 1st of that year refers to his son David as the "aire of umquhill Johne Stewart sometyme of Baldynnes". Even in the Edinburgh court he was something of an outsider and his poetry often expresses a feeling of loneliness and exclusion consequent on this. As one probes deeper into the relationships within the Castalian band, the bonds between poets and monarch are revealed to be looser than James suggests. Stewart is not wholly accepted. His praises of James and his work mask a knowledge of the king's weakness, when opposed by the nobles. It is more difficult to envisage a happy


poetic group, centred round the king, when one knows that James sent one of them to prison on a false charge. Yet this did happen and the histories of other Castalians will bring further examples of injustice and bitterness. Poetically, they were to some extent unified, but personally and politically, the note of hostility is dominant.

Despite this the Laird of Baldynneis is one of the king's closest disciples in style, themes and influences. A study of the early Castalians leads inevitably from the regal figure of James to the enigma of Stewart; from the head of the court group to one who is almost an outcast and seems to be aware of it: from the Essays of a Prentise to those of the prentise's prentise - Rapsodies of the Authors Youthfull Braine.¹

ATTITUDE TO LOVE

In his attitude to love poetry, Baldynneis is closer to James VI than to any of the major European sonneteers. He follows the king's advice in the Reulis and concentrates on occasional verse just as James had done. Of the 33 sonnets in the Rapsodies, only 9 deal with love in any form, while 15 are occasional in nature and 9 have moral themes. In both cases occasional poetry is the major contribution, with the king more productive, largely because of his unique social position. Both show an interest in moral problems, with Baldynneis the more concerned because of his fear of oppression. But as far as the proportion of love poetry is concerned, they could scarcely be closer. The first two Scottish sonneteers wrote roughly

¹ The title given by Baldynneis to his collection of shorter poems, including the sonnets.
one love sonnet out of every four composed, while Shakespeare, Ronsard and Petrarch hardly ever departed from that theme. Paradoxically enough the first similarity between Stewart and James as love sonneteers is that they are not primarily love sonneteers at all.

Nor are they predominantly Petrarchan in their attitude to love. Just as James had only two sonnets which were truly Petrarchan in tone, so Stewart writes two, each dealing with a different element in the Petrarchan creed. In 'Of the Assaultis of Luif' he dwells upon the melancholy of love as James had done in Am 5e. Like Petrarch he is ill with grief; held captive by the lady; burnt by inextinguishable flames of love and longs for Cupid to kill him with his dart. Like James however he turns to a more optimistic note in the final couplet:

Ooh, ons sic ioy to grant me or I die,
That paine I drie may pleis my ladie frie. 1

Neither of the first two Scottish sonneteers writes predominantly pessimistic poetry, and even in their gloomier moments, some form of consolation is seized upon finally. In 'To Echo of Inwart Havines' Stewart's second Petrarchan sonnet, he also finds a reasonable solution to his problem. This time he is primarily concerned with the Petrarchan lover's inability to give expression to his grief, either on his own or in presence of his lady. He therefore appeals to the echo which cries mournfully through forest, rock and hill because of Narcissus' tragic love:

1. Poems of Stewart, p. 182; No. 56. The sonnets are indicated by the short titles set above them in the MS. The number assigned to them by Crockett in the S.T.S. edition appears in the notes.
Supplie my speitch now till exprime my paine
In euerie thing coequare to thy smart,
That growous groning may sum confort gaine
Be the furthschawing of my painfull part.¹

As a result he hopes to be able to bear his misery, which, if contained within him would swell up until it became some sort of apoplectic fit. These two sonnets are however the only two which could be called without reservation Petrarchan. Baldynneis like James omits entirely the spiritualising tendencies of the creed. He refuses to see it as a shadow of divine love, to liken his lady to an angel bent on purifying him or idealise her beauties and virtues until they bear no relationship to actuality.

Yet there are three other sonnets which could be seen in a Petrarchan light. They would all fit easily into a sequence which had been labelled a priori 'Petrarchan', but in Stewart's mere realistic sonnet-group, some reservations must be added in each case. 'Of Chastitie' for example is a eulogy on that virtue, which any Petrarchan lover would have to endorse. It is compared in Petrarchan fashion to the Phoenix and the "vermell Rois", as well as being valued for its rarity and beauty. Most important of all, its divinity is emphasised:

O cumlie celest chastitie preclar;
Quhilk hich exaltit in the heavens dois ring,
To Quhat sail I thy vertew great compair?²

Baldynneis was almost certainly not thinking in Petrarchan terms when he wrote this sonnet, for it forms but one of a series, celebrating various virtues. It should therefore be seen as part of

¹. Ibid., p. 154; No. 30.
². Ibid., p. 179; No. 53.
the new moral earnestness, introduced into the Scottish sonnet by James and be grouped with 'Of Trewth' and 'Of Amitie' rather than the excessive grief of the Petrarchan sonnetteer. Indeed one of Stewart's primary characteristics as a love sonneteer, is the re-adaptation of Petrarchan themes for non-Petrarchan purposes. Chastity is praised, but as an absolute rather than in the context of frustrated courting. Grief is delineated in Petrarchan terms as in 'Ane Literall Sonnet':

Dull dolor dalie dois detlyt destroy,
Vill vatantith vit vaist vorn with vickit vo

or 'Of the Signification of Colors':

Quhan I this sonnet of thir hews did mak,
For my estate, thocht I, aggriis the blak,

but once again it is divorced from a personal context of unrequited love. No reason for the grief is given and no lady mentioned, yet the Petrarchan misery remains. Moreover in each case it is secondary in importance to formal elements, to the necessity for constant alliteration or the symbolising of attitudes by colours.

It is as if Baldynneis reached a compromise between Petrarch and James VI, by retaining the former's themes and conceits but altering them to harmonize with the king's interest in style, his opposition to conventional love poetry and preference for moral topics. Thus chastity remained as an abstract virtue, not part of a vitally human problem. Grief remained and was described using Petrarchan conceits and vocabulary, but with no reference to love and subsidiary to the device of alliteration advocated by James in the Reulis. If the influence of the medieval Italian poet

1. Ibid., p. 185; No. 59 and p. 170; No. 45.
remains in Stewart's verse it is so severely altered by Jamesean theory as to be almost unrecognizable.

The realistic attitude to love and hostility towards conventional attitudes before noted in James reappear in Baldynneis. In 'Of the Qualiteis of Luif' he draws a balanced portrait of its advantages and drawbacks:

Luif is ane aigre douce delyt and greif:
Greif is in luif ane lustie langing lyf:
Lyf may not last Quhair luif pretend mischeif:
Mischeif of luif is euirlasting stryf.¹

The antithetical form of this poem guarantees that it will advance a balanced approach to love and so underline James VI's ideas on 'temperance'. Stewart will not suggest an evil caused by love without mentioning a corresponding good. At the same time he introduces conventional images such as those condemned in the Reulia, before showing their inadequacy. Love may be a knife, capable of wounding sharply, but shortly afterwards the lover can completely recover, be "haill and sound" once more. The conclusion is that physical injury is worse than romantic injury through being more lasting and having no corresponding benefits:

Sueit luif heyrith dois suffer monie stound,
Stound both with cair And confort lairge repleit.²

James would have applauded both the realistic view of love, temperately advocated, and the implicit criticism of a banal image.

'Upone the Portrait of Cupid' would appeal on similar grounds for in it Stewart presents another analytic view of love, using the Cupid metaphor to make his point. Instead of showing the

1. Ibid., p. 157; No. 33.
2. Ibid.
inadequacy of the god as symbol however, he uses the opposite approach and finds six ways in which it is peculiarly appropriate. Cupid's youth represents love's preference for young people; his smile shows his cunning; his nudity indicates lack of shame; his blindness, a poverty of judgment; his bow and arrow, the promptness with which he will chase his victims and his wings suggest a wavering and unreliable personality. The criticism is this time directed not against the image per se but against unthinking, shallow usage of it. Baldynneis is aware that James's opposition to conventional images was not absolute, but derived from their vicious influence in cramping "your awin Inuention, quhilk is one of the chief properteis of ane Poet". A poet need not ignore traditional imagery therefore. He can, like Stewart, point its inadequacies or suggest further hidden parallels. At this Baldynneis is especially talented, for his analytic mind is capable of multiplying significances round a central image for lines on end.

So far he has proved to be an excellent prentise of the prentise, following his preference for occasional poetry, his adaptations of Petrarchanism, his realism and opposition to unthinking imitation of convention. Before turning to his innovations, there is one further similarity, which should be mentioned. Like the king, he uses common imagery drawn from everyday observation whenever possible. James compared the state of his blood to water boiling in a bed pan and Baldynneis not to be outdone, complains that no pail of water could extinguish the flames of his love. Both too use woodland imagery very frequently. The king's passion dries like a piece of damp wood and then kindles into a huge fire, while Stewart likens friendship to a pair of wooden boards nailed together:
The dourrest nails dois not so suirlie clos
Two hardnit buirds conionit both in one,
As faythfull freinds be faith affixit gois,
or to

........ vyn branchis linkit growand greine
About the stoups of that kyndlie trie,
Qhilk luifinglie againe dois tham susteine. 1

Baldynneis is more successful in his usage of this sort of imagery, because he does not introduce it suddenly into a piece of aureate verse as James did, nor does he use images whose concrete functions destroy any possibility of effective associations. Both nevertheless introduce bed pans and pails into verse for the sake of similarities existing alongside greater dissimilarities, and so have something in common with the metaphysicals.

James was rather stereotyped in his love poetry, because of his unusual courtship and the rigidity of his critical rules. Baldynneis was much more versatile and indeed calls to mind the range of Alexander Scott, who was capable of moving from deification of women in 'I wilbe plane' to near obscenity in 'Ane Ballat of Wantoun Women', from realism to idealism, from courtly tradition to Petrarchan with no sense of inconsistency. Stewart's 'In Going to his Luif' seems to be the first example of a courtly love sonnet written in Scotland. The poet describes himself waiting for his lady and lays the utmost importance on the secrecy of their meeting:

I staying stand in feir for to be seine,
Sen yndling eine Inwirons all this place,
Qhois cursit mouths ay to defame dois meine. 2

This is one of the poet's best sonnets. In it he carefully builds

1. Ibid., p. 175; No. 49 and p. 177; No. 51.
2. Ibid.; p. 188; No. 62.
up an atmosphere of fear and mystery, strongly suggesting an illicit relationship. Everything is in hiding. The poet stands in the darkness, while round about him lurk various busybodies, waiting to seize on a chance to gossip. In the streets all is shadow and darkness, but this atmosphere is echoed in the heavens as well, for the poet begs the moon to hide behind a 'mistic vaill'. It refuses to obey and as a result the lady does not appear. The leitmotiv of shadow and mist runs through the whole poem, casting doubts on the intentions of poet, onlookers and lady in turn. Baldynneis skilfully expresses the secrecy and furtiveness of courtly love, by alloying dramatic presentation of characters to a background of foreboding, uncertainty and mystery. James's formal love poems seem rather insipid when compared to the intense drama here enacted.

The other branch of love poetry which Stewart follows without a kingly precedent is that of obscene sonneteering. This is most uncommon in Europe, where the sonnet was held to be too formal and stylised a form for such topics. Baldynneis however composes two poems, 'Of ane Salutation of ane Host to his Hostes' and 'The Ansuir of the Foirsaid Hostes', which throughout deal with sexual intercourse. The man has failed to consummate his desires and expresses this by a 'lodgings' metaphor:

'Guid day, madam, with humyll thanks also, That me unto your ludgeing lairge did gyd. Yea, skairs I knew quhan I thairin did go Quhair I sould wend, the wallis war so wyd, Thocht than I slippit quhan ye bad me byd, Excuse my part, the falt was not in me.'

With his usual ingenuity Baldynneis maintains the metaphor until the

1. Ibid., p. 180; No. 54.
end of the sonnet, when the unsuccessful lover suggests that his hostess's "lodgings" are extensive enough to "serwe the turck and all his camp about". The hostess or whore replies using the same metaphor and heavy alliteration reminiscent of the flyting tradition. Her vituperations rise to a climax in the last four lines, where she openly accuses him of impotence and suggests that homosexual activities would be more suitable for one of his nature:

But laik of boldnes on the sam to brall
Meid yow to slip; Ye haid no strenth to byd.
Heirfoir your pithles person to repois
Tak my bak chalmer for your guckit nois. 1

The success of these two sonnets depends on that same ingenuity, which was shown in 'The Portrait of Cupid'. Baldynneis almost exhausts the parallels suggested by the lodgings metaphor, but keeps the double-entendres varied and effective throughout. Moreover he distinguishes between the ironical tone of the man and the openly vilifying scourgings of the whore, whose insults are more biting. Finally he makes sure that each sonnet ends with the contestant's most outrageous suggestions, giving each a climactic form.

Baldynneis's contribution to Scottish love sonneteering at once confirms and adds to James's. The sonnet in Scotland is still mainly an occasional genre, with love only second in popularity. Petrarchanism attracts in its less idealistic aspects and even then, modifications have to be made. Stewart echoes his king's realism, theory of temperance, preference for everyday imagery and his distrust of blind imitation, unallied to the practice of 'invention'. Although he lacks the tenderness of James's verse to Anne, he

1. Ibid., p. 181; No. 55.
surpasses his master-prentise in extending conceits and metaphors into multiple-reference parallels. To this ingenuity he adds a genius for dramatic presentation and the creation of evocative backgrounds, as in 'In Going to his Luif'. Being untrammelled by James's views on adultery and a spiritual muse, he enters the realms of 'Courtly' and 'Obscene' verse, both of which were closed to the king, and indeed composes some of his best poetry, when not conscious of James's example behind him. His Rapsodies thus have the effect of stabilising the king's innovations without fossilising them. It is indeed regrettable that James did not confess admiration for the work of his first imitator, as perhaps encouragement might have produced another, more mature collection, to follow a most promising debut.

OTHER THEMES

In thematic content, Baldynneis proves much more parochial than James. Few of the favourite European themes recur with any frequency in the Rapsodies. One exception is the Platonic conflict between reason and passion in the soul. Stewart differs from most of the French and Italian sonneteers, in that he strongly advocates the predominance of reason. His advice 'To his Familiar Friend in Cowrt', for example, ends with an appeal to rationality:

Lat Reson reuill, and do the best,  
First servyng God, and nixt our king,  
With loyal hart above all thing.¹

In this he is like James VI, and the glorifying of reason in their love poetry has the effect of rendering it rather unpassionate.

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¹. Ibid., p. 124; No. 11.
The early Scottish sonneteer prefers a harmonious soul, fit to appear before its Maker, to one upset by his lady's beauty. In 'To Death' Stewart makes this very plea:

Sen that our saull of deuyn mater meid
..............................
O pleand death, Quho onlie dois prepair,
The fatall key this preson to disclois,
Our saull upsending to the heawen preclair.  

This positive, optimistic approach to death is unusual in Scottish Literature before the eighteenth century, although Henrysén's 'Prais of Age' is another exception. What is most intriguing about Stewart's treatment of the soul is his movement of emphasis from passion to reason, from a romantic to a religious context. The European love sonneteer was usually proud of his passion-blinded soul. The early Scottish sonneteer looks to reason as a cure for earthly chaos and infatuated love. A strong philosophical note, uncommon in Europe, enters into the Scottish treatment of this topic.

Like James, Stewart is concerned with the problem of Fortune. The Redcastle affair must have caused him to face the disparity between human suffering and the theory of divine benevolence. His solution, like the king's, involves a dual belief in God and a secondary, semi-controllable force called 'Fortune'. The vicious effects of the latter may be minimised by following a life of firm moral convictions. In 'Of Fidelitie' he comments:

Fors of firm faith No fortoune may confound,
For fidell faith is of itself so fair.  

This belief in an explicit philosophy as a weapon against Fortune

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1. Ibid., p. 183; No. 57.
2. Ibid., p. 175; No. 49.
was also expounded by James in the Basilicon Doron.

Likewise in 'To his Familiar Friend in Cowrt', he expounds the doctrine of the 'via media' as practised by the king. To counteract the misfortunes of court life, one must beware of extremes:

Heyis not ourhich in prosperus air,
Nor yet for stormie blast dispair,
Bot soundlie saell with modest wind.¹

This balanced life, together with the balanced life of the soul will help you to bear the alterations of Fortune's wheel, without wholly preventing them:

Great welth will welter oft to wo,
And wo revert in weill also,
As plesis fortoune change hir quheill.²

This philosophy of Fortune is summed up in 'Of Ambitious Men', where the advantages of a temperate life are advanced in terms of one's situation on the wheel. Those who strive for high positions are soon hurtled to the foot, while the followers of temperance endure lesser movements:

Bot ay the suyfter and moir hich thay brail,
Moir low and suddane cums thair feirfull fall.³

In Mythology he is a closer follower of the Reulias than their author, making use of unusual legends, while James confined himself to the conventional ones he had critically rejected. Yet he follows his master in adhering to the clearcut divisions of the Elizabethan world system. Fittingly he incorporates the corres-

pondences favoured by this system into the sonnets addressed to James. They are therefore not only direct pieces of flattery; they also imply flattery by echoing one of the king's favourite devices. In 'At Command of his Maestie' James is compared to the sun, King of planets, while 'In Praise of His Maestis Work' uses the God/King correspondence to explore the paradox of James writing in praise of the divinity:

Ane sacred sang heir soundit is so suait
In gloir of God, be ane maist godlie king.  

When Stewart wishes to stress the difference between James's poetry and hack writing he uses the two extremes of the social hierarchy, then adds the highest reference, God:

The mychtie Muse is no subiectit slave
To mundan mater, bot with dyt celest
The gloir of God immortall thou dois crave.  

The effect of this sonnet lies in the juxtaposition of hierarchical levels. One is presented not with a verbal, but a planar paradox.

An even fuller expression of these correspondences appears in the fourth of the group 'In Prais of his Maestis Work'. Here James is compared not only to the sun, but to gold, the king of minerals, and the phoenix, which was the eagle's rival as king of birds. This orderly universe, not surprisingly, is explained in equally orderly verse, using readily understandable illustrations. The Scottish prose tradition, and the deification of reason strengthen this tendency towards a poetry of logic and compartmentalization. James in addition has his interest in numerology to

1. Ibid., p. 159; No. 35.
2. Ibid., p. 160; No. 36.
encourage the formation of neat idealogical patterns. This is matched by Stewart's habit of dividing his sonnets into a given number of exempla followed by a general application. Both emphasise the sonnet form's suitability for the orderly development of logical argument. This process is at times carried too far and the reader feels he is faced with a geometric deduction rather than a work of art.

Before moving from the general discussion of themes to a more particular study of influences, two further parallels with James VI should be noted. Stewart also adopts the rhetorical device of arguing on both sides of the question, used by James. The host and hostess sonnets fall into this classification and call to mind the flying disputations between Dunbar and Kennedy, Montgomerie and Polwart. In a rather different fashion the fortune sonnets, 'To his Familiar Friend' and 'Of Ambitious Men' present opposing viewpoints. One explains the advantages of a philosophy of temperance, the other shows the drawbacks of allying oneself with an extreme position. The technique of approaching a single problem from opposite directions however remains constant.

It reaches its finest expression in the two 'Of ane Poet' sonnets.¹ The miseries of poetry as an occupation are first of all set out and then, in the later sonnet, corrected. Taken together they represent two sides of a case, prosecution and defence, with a verdict of 'not proven' being the reader's likely verdict. The prosecutor argues that poets have to work hard, and

All wordlie welth als from them slyds away.

¹. Ibid., pp. 189, 190; Nos. 63 and 64. No. 63 represents the prosecution and No. 64 the defence.
To this the defender replies that their poverty is compensated for by divine wealth and food:

Quho sups the sacred Nectar but compair
And drinks the doucest Ambrose maist deuyn.

They are social outcasts, suggests the prosecutor, despised by their fellow men. His opponent skilfully counters this by once more moving the problem on to a higher plane. In worldly terms the poet may be poor, but in fact he dwells on the heights of Parnassus. Despite this, the prosecutor points out, he toils for little profit:

For thocht thay paine thair self both nycht and day,
Perfume of candill is thair greatest gaine.

But lack of wealth is fully compensated for by fame; all pain is made worthwhile and converts itself into pleasure:

Thocht welth ye want, yit worschip dois inclyn
For guerdon dew unto your guid desert.
Your paine is plesour ......

These sonnets therefore are directly in the debate tradition, offering one argument countered by another.

In two distinct ways they anticipate Milton. The attitudes to poetry are both valid at different levels, and one could be at the same time the poverty stricken poet of the first sonnet and the idealistic one in the second. The opposition is apparent only, just as that between 'Il Penseroso' and 'L'Allegro'. The sadness of deep meditation accepted in the former is not the superstitious, introverted melancholy rejected in the latter. Instead the two poems together present a comprehensive, consistent philosophy of life. Thoughtful sadness and innocent pleasure are welcomed; unhealthy morbidity and giddy gaiety are shunned. In the same way, Baldynneis urges the poet to accept the privations and miseries of the poet's material existence and justify them in terms of
aesthetic satisfaction.

The other Miltonic device which Baldynneis anticipates is that of resolving an argument by referring it to a higher sphere. Milton cannot reconcile himself to the death of Lycidas, when thinking in terms of human worth. It is only when he considers his loss in the context of the redemptive plan, that he can triumphantly conclude that he is not "sunk low, but mounted high, Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves".¹ Baldynneis does just this in the second sonnet, when he answers material arguments in aesthetic terms. He may indeed starve, but the pleasures of art are such that one would willingly endure misery for them.

The first three portions of this study - Historical, Petrarchan and thematic - have stressed Stewart's similarities to James, as well as his own unique traits. His love poetry proved to be wider in range and more ingenious in content, yet in many ways was based on the Reulis. He shared with James an interest in fortune, in the hierarchical world system and in arguing on both sides of the question. He echoes the king's philosophy of moderation and the orderly, logical progression of his sonnets. Yet once more his greater ingenuity becomes evident in the choice of mythological parallels and in the 'varius sis' device. It now remains to discover, whether he follows James in being primarily influenced by French and Scottish poetry, or whether other forces become dominant.

INFLUENCES

English sonnets have little or no effect on Baldynneis's verse.

One might permissibly suppose that the line:

As wattir wasik to mix your mychtie yvn, ¹

which appears in the dedicatory sonnet to his Roland Furious, comes from Sonnet LXII of Sidney's Astrophil and Stella. The common source however is Ariosto, who uses it in Satire I, l. 59. 'For Confirming of ane Faithfull Promeis' shares the same form and theme as Wyatt's sonnet 'Ever myn happ is slack and sla in comying'. Both list a number of impossibilities, which the poet proclaims will occur before he will find peace in loving. This form is however conventional, and the individual impossibilities are not closely related.

The Italian influence too is slight. Despite having translated Ariosto's Orlando Furioso, Stewart incorporates little of that poet's work into his shorter poems. An exception is the line cited above in the first satire, 

.... et inacquarmi il vino. ²

Generally speaking Baldynneis seems to echo Ariosto unconsciously, rather than intersperse his verse with translations from the Italian. In the sonnet 'To His Maiestie' for example he regrets that he has not scaled the heights of Parnassus, and therefore is afraid to gift his work to a more experienced poet. ³ This compliment is strongly reminiscent of the final lines of satire 7, probably the last words of poetry which Ariosto wrote. He laments his own

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1. Poems of Stewart, p. 10.
3. Poems of Stewart, p. 103; No. 1.
failure to climb Parnassus and hopes that his son will succeed, where the father failed:

La tua prudenza guida, che in Parnasso, 
  Ove per tempo ir non seppi io, lo scorga. ¹

Matthew McDiarmid suggests a further relationship between Petrarch, Sonnet 145 and 'Of Ane Thochtles and Frie Hart from Worldlie Cair', but the former laments a weary heart, harassed with the cares of love, the latter glories in possessing an innocent, free one. The Italian influence outside Ariosto is almost non-existent.

Without doubt Baldynneis like James owes most to the French sonneteers, and especially to Desportes.³ Many of his best sonnets are free translations from the Amours de Diane or Cléonice. 'Of ane Fontane', with its vivid natural description of the "fresche fontane", "holsum herbis", "tuynkling stremes" and "bonie birkis", proves to be a resuscitation of the French fountain described by Desportes in 'Cette fontaine est froide'. 'In Going to his Luif' derives from 'Contre une Nuict trop Claire', although Stewart provides a more haunting, fear-laden background than the original. There is a looser, but nonetheless definite connection between 'For Confirming of ane Faithfull Promeis' and 'On verra defaillir tous les astres aux cieux'. The French version begins with a list of unlikely events:


2.  McDiarmid, op. cit. in Scottish Historical Review, p. 54, 10 n. He also introduces a possible common source in Horace, Ode XXII.

On verra defaillir tous les astres aux cieux,
Les poissons a la mer, le sable a son rivage,
Au soleil ses rayons bannissoyeurs de l'ombrage,
La verdure et les fleurs au Printemps gracieux. 1

This Baldynneis replaces with a list of his own:

The suelling sie sall first rewert in fyre,
And mollifeit sabie ilk dourest stone,
The erth above the heavens sall Impyre,
Of sone and mone the lycht sall als be gone. 2

There follows a passage which shows the Scottish sonneteer actively
turning a passage on love into one with a more strongly moral bias.
Desportes will see all these impossibilities happen before her
image will vanish from his soul. Baldynneis refuses to follow
this Ficinian sentiment and instead introduces first of all God and
then a moral duty:

Yea, godis works decay sall euerie one,
Befoir that I the sacred oth repent,
Maist firmlie meid to yow my luif alone. 3

Thus although he uses Desportes' "imprint" image of 1. 7, the two
sonnets diverge greatly towards the end. Desportes concludes with
a romantic avowal that he will die for his love. Baldynneis calls
God to witness his intention of remaining true to his promise of
eternal faithfulness. As a disciple of James VI he can use foreign
models, but must give his 'invention' free scope. This he
invariably does, not only in the sonnets, but Roland Furious as well.
As a disciple of James VI he must beware romantic emptiness and
introduce some moral or philosophical note into his work. Once

p. 312.
2. Poems of Stewart, p. 168; No. 43.
3. Ibid.
again he follows the king's example, so that a protestation of eternal devotion is in great danger of becoming a treatise on keeping your word.

The final example of Stewart's indebtedness to Desportes is of particular interest. 'To Echo of Inwart Havines' seems to owe a great deal to the 47th sonnet in Cléonice, 'Echo, nympe jadis d'amoureuse nature'. It is important first of all because it confirms his interest in unusual parallels. He chooses a model which contains the lesser-known version of the Narcissus legend. Excessive vanity is sent to Narcissus as a punishment for ill-treating the water nymph Echo. The octet of both sonnets traces this legend in some detail:

Echo, nympe jadis d'amoureuse nature,
Qui n'es rien maintenant qu'image de la voix,
Et qui dans ce val creux, caché d'un peu de bois,
D'air et de bruit lasché prens vie et nourriture:
Si tost que je me plains du tourment que j'endure,
Pour avoir désiré plus que je ne devois,
Tu m'annonces mes maux, taschant si tu pouvois
Me divertir de suytre une beauté si dure,

and

O elresche Echo, that dois schout so schill,
Quham NARCISS luif constraneth to complaine
Throch daill, throch vaill, throch forrest, rock, and hill,
In cair consumit for his cald desdaine,
Supplie my speitche now till exprime my paine
In euerie thing coequall to thy smart,
That grewous gronyng may sum confort gaine
Be the furthschawing of my painfull part.1

Desportes goes on to ask questions to the echo, using the last phrase of the question to provide the answer. (i.e. "Comment finiront ces clameurs? Meurs").) Stewart ignores this clever device and merely

1. Desportes, Cléonice, p. 67 and Poems of Stewart, p. 154; No. 30.
asks the echo to grant him some sort of fluency to prevent him "suelling into ane radge".

Three important features of the Scottish poet's translating techniques are here underlined. He is initially attracted by a less common version of the Narcissus legend. This reaffirms his preference for unusual parallels. The translation is of ideas, not verbal in approach. His 'invention' is ever active. As in the previous example, the similarity between original and imitation lessens as the poem progresses, and it becomes clear that he will not allow his model wholly to dictate the progression of his work. His final rejection of the echoing device is more puzzling, for his version is trite by comparison, but probably he felt that imitation of this as well would have come too close to that plagiarism, condemned in the Reulis. A title like the Scottish Desportes, therefore is only appropriate for Stewart if the Scottish element covers a refusal to be dominated by his model.¹

Ironically enough, while Stewart's greatest individual debts belong to Desportes, generally he comes closer to Du Bellay. Their poetry shares a sense of unrest, of frustration and loneliness. The French poet felt as out of place in Rome where he was unable to satisfy his cousin the Cardinal Jean Du Bellay, as Stewart must have felt at the Scottish court, when ignored by James. Discontented and angry at fate, both composed a number of sonnets lamenting fortune. 'Of Fidelitie' and 'To His Familiar Friend' share this topic with Regrets 6, 45 and 96 among others. Ambition too is

¹ This title was originated by Dunlop in his article and adopted by Matthew McDiarmid. It is of course helpful, but only if the nature of Desportes' influence is first defined.
fiercely condemned by these unsuccessful poets and Baldynneis's 'Of Ambitious Men' can profitably be compared with Regrets 27, 38, 39 and 73. 'Of Fidelitie' deals with the same problems as Regrets 63, while the Nisus incident in 'Of Amitie' may have derived from Regrets 70, which also discusses friendship:

L'Amitié de These' seroit ensevelie,
Et Nise par sa mort n'eust la sienne ennoblie,
Sil n'eust veu sur le champ Eurlial' estendu.  

Further parallels are not hard to find. Stewart's advice to his friend at court is echoed by Du Bellay's similar counsels contained in Regrets 139-142. The material and aesthetic sides to a poet's life, handled in the 'Of Ane Poet' sonnets are also considered in Regrets 153 and 154, with Du Bellay anticipating his Scottish counterpart's conclusion - "le plaisir mesme en est la récompense". Flattering sonnets to the king also appear in the Regrets, the most noteworthy being Nos. 178 and 191, as they consider the relationship between God and King as Stewart does in 'In Praise of his Maiestis Work':

Both James and Stewart are strongly influenced by French writers and most especially by Desportes. The strange thing however, is that his voice is only heard in translation sonnets. James as a man and poet has more in common with Du Bartas and Stewart with Du Bellay. Their influence is all-pervasive if more thinly spread and the designation of Baldynneis as the Scottish Du Bellay seems to me to be more accurate in a sense than Dunlop's tag.

2. Ibid., p. 131; No. 153.
While insisting on this distinction between general and particular influences, one must also note that the three main French sources for the early Scottish sonnet, come from the spiritual, moral writers in the pléiade, rather than their romantic counterparts. The name of Ronsard is conspicuous by its absence. Instead James and Stewart turn to the Platonism of Desportes, the semi-religious world picture of Du Bartas and the moralisings of Du Bellay.

Scottish influence is also both particular and general. The only semi-translation concerns 'To His Familiar Friend in Cowrt' which depends on Quentin Shaw's 'The Voyage of Court', (No. CXLVI in the Maitland Folio MS). The latter is a 30 line poem, which Stewart has condensed into fourteen lines, without losing any essentials of the argument. The metaphor of court life as a tempestuous sea voyage remains constant in each. Fortune is represented by the variations in weather, and the solution is to:

Set your sale a little lawar, (Shaw)

or

Soundlie saell with modest wind (Stewart)

Having enacted all the varying fortunes experienced by a sailor in stormy weather, the poets apply them to court life:

Dreid yis danger gud freind and brudir
And tak exemple befoir of uther
Knew courtis and wynd hes oft syss vareit
Keep well to your cours and rewle your rudir
And think with kingis ye are not mareit. (Shaw)

Than rychtie row, for courts will cast:
Great welth will welter oft to wo,

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Sen erdlie state is so molest,  
Lat Reson reuill, and do the best,  
First serwing God, and nixt our king. (Stewart)

Baldynneis by shortening a rather loose argument and drawing a clearer division between illustration and application, improves upon the original without losing any of its charm.

In a more general sense however, he stands in direct line of evolution between the two fabulists Henryson and Ramsay. Frequently he uses animal illustrations to point moral truths, matching the makar in his detailed observations of the habits of smaller creatures. In 'Of Fidelitie' he does not confine himself to a statement of his views, but represents the purity and durability of true faithfulness through the story of the ermine:

For fidell faith is of itself so fair,  
That faithfullie but spot it dois abound,  
As Armein dois from filthiness repair,  
Preserving so hyr fynnest furring clair  
Of euerie tasche, that scho dois rather chois  
The duilfull death than ons hir bodie spair.\footnote{Poems of Stewart, p. 175; No. 49.}

This parallel is effective on two levels. The first reference demands knowledge of the ermine's life cycle, for in summer its fur is a reddish brown shade, changing to white only in the winter. Baldynneis thus is imaginatively supposing that the animal could control its colour change, but prefers to show its white fur, even at the risk of death. The less pure colour (brown), like a less perfect friendship does not involve self-sacrifice, but complete purity either of colour or love does. Underlying the natural application there is a legal one, for the idea of 'spoiling the ermine' refers to the conduct of a judge in office. Baldynneis is
therefore touching on one of Henryson's favourite themes by implication. Many judges at the time were not true to their vows of impartiality, but preys to corruption and bribery.

Baldynneis's ingenuity is particularly noticeable in this sonnet, for he does not confine himself to one double-reference parallel, but introduces another:

The dourrest nails dois not so guirlie clcis
Two hardnit buirds conionit both in one,
As faythfull freinds be fayth affixit gois.¹

This is on the surface another natural image, emphasising the closeness of friendship. But the two boards nailed together also call to mind the cross, and the ultimate exemplar of disinterested fidelity, Christ. The sonnet closes with the equivalent of a moralitas, in the form of a couplet explicitly summing up all that has gone before:

Yea, in guid faith my faith in dout dois stand
Gif death it self may break any faithfull band.²

The other moral sonnets follow the same pattern, but observe the principle of 'varius sis'. In 'Of Fidelitie', two illustrations were followed by a general application, with 'Moral' and 'Fable' being kept separate in the manner of Henryson. In 'Of Amitie', the same development takes place, with friendship being likened to vine branches winding round a tree and then exemplified through the story of Nisus. This is another double parallel, but the sonnet does not draw a clear line between enactment and statement, between 'Fable' and 'Moral'. Instead it ends with the

¹. Ibid.
². Ibid.
account of Nisus' death, drawing no explicit moral. This blurring of the distinction between example and application appears occasionally in Henryson, but is much more often found in Ramsay. Fables like 'The Twa Cats and the Cheese' or 'The Chameleon' end with the voice of one of the participants, not the author pointing his readers' reactions. In using both methods Stewart reasserts his claim to be considered an intermediary between the two fabulists. He also demonstrates once more the art of skilful variation on a similar pattern of poetic development.

'Of Trewth', 'Of Ambitious Men', 'Of Chastitie' and 'Of Deth' further confirm his interest in the 'varius sis' tradition. In the first he uses a list of minor parallels for truth. In all, ten attributes are suggested including truth as a shield and as a victor over all foes. Finally the poet resolves to keep singing of truth because it has made his cause prevail and produced the downfall of his enemies. A single moral characteristic is thus developed in a number of directions at once without following any one path in detail. The opposite technique appears in 'Of Ambitious Men', where only one illustration is used. The course of ambition is like that of dust, it swirls up into the air, clings to "ane kingis statlie croune" for a while and then is swept to the ground again. As explained in Chapter 1, the parallel is appropriate and manysided. On natural grounds, dust blown by the wind from one extreme to the other is an adequate representation of the ambitious man's situation, blown from heights of renown to obscurity.

1. Life and Works of Allan Ramsay, ed. George Chalmers (Edinburgh, 1933), III, 135, 137.
by the malicious forces of fortune. The detail of clinging to a king’s crown highlights the situation of the flattering courtier, hoping to rise through favouritism, while the final picture of dust returning to dust introduces the medieval topic of death and man’s ultimate inconsequentiality. The difference between these two sonnets is not so much a single illustration against many, as various parallels with or without a linking conceit.

In 'Of Chastitie' yet another method is employed. Stewart as it were allows us to see him in the act of composition, searching in his mind for likely parallels. He considers a number of possible comparisons, all of a conventional nature. The carbuncle is rejected as inadequate. The phoenix highlights the rarity of chastity but is left undeveloped. Only the rose unites appropriateness to the possibility of profitable expansion as poetic metaphor:

For as the Rois of flouris all the chois
Maist semlie sproutith from the scharpest thorne,
So thow (I dout not) dois with pane inclois
All sort of thois be quhom thy blis is borne.

Stewart seems unhappy with such traditional imagery and rounds off an unsuccessful work by repeating the phoenix/rarity comparison in the final couplet. In terms of technique the sonnet stands midway between 'Of Trewth' and 'Of Ambitious Men' for it unites unextended parallels (phoenix, carbuncle) to a developed one (rose). 'Of Deth' is based on a logical argument and does not depend primarily on metaphor or illustration at all. The images of "fattall key" and "deidlie dart" do appear, but it is one of the few moral

1. Poems of Stewart, p. 179; No. 53.
sonnets which avoid the fable approach.

The moral sonnets are the most successful group written by Stewart. The logical, ingenious mentality, which was cramped by the love sonnet's demand for passion and dependence on convention, is allowed to develop freely. It expresses itself in multiple-reference parallels like that of the ermine and the joined boards, as well as in variations of technique. In the works discussed, the following methods have been traced:

- single illustration - Of Ambitious Men
- double illustration with explicit moral - Of Fidelitie
- double illustration without explicit moral - Of Amitie
- series of illustrations - Of Trewth
- developed and undeveloped illustrations - Of Chastitie
- argument approach - Of Deth.

These poems with their interest in moralisation and natural life, their movement from enactment to statement and delicate balance between amusement and instruction are the obvious successors to Henryson's Moral Fabillis. Scottish and French influences thus mingle in the Rapsodies as well as in the sonnets of James VI.

**STYLE**

The discussion on style inevitably takes us back to Jamesean influence. Baldynneis set out to be a disciple of the king, and this in turn involved a close following of the Reulis and Cautelis. When apologising to the king for the poverty of his verse, it is the technical problem of metre, which is usually uppermost in his mind. It is his metre which he hopes will prove acceptable in the introduction to Roland Furious. In 'To his Maistie' he pleads that:

> Your hienes will my minchit meiter mend.¹

---

Always the demands of rhetoric are observed by him. The Reulis were after all primarily a technical treatise, so that any disciple of them would naturally tend to be interested in stylistic problems. In a manneristic period of Scottish literature, Baldynneis is the first stylistic virtuoso.

His interest in rhetoric betrays itself in the dedicatory sonnets, where he observes many of the classical formulae for opening and closing his verse. Cicero had emphasised the need for assumed modesty on the part of the orator in order to gain his audience's sympathy. Classical authors had thus feigned humility in writing to their patrons. The following couplet composed by Eugenius of Toledo is typical:

Haec tibi, rex summe, iussu compulSus herili
Servulus Eugenius devota mente dicavi.

Without exception, Stewart employs this topic in his sonnets to the king:

Thocht source I souok not on the sacred hill,
Bot poems spill, yit humylie I pretend
My paine to spend ........... (To his Maiestie).

Wey not the versis of my dull Ingyn,
Bot schers the center of my secret thoacht (Introd. to Roland)

Another common form of excuse adopted in classical times was that the theme proved too high for the poet's limited talents. This device, summed up by Fortunatus in the phrase, "Materia vincor et


2. Cited by Curtius, p. 85.

3. Poems of Stewart, p. 103; No. 1 and p. 10.
quia lingua minor" also appears in Baldynneis's verse, usually when he is dealing with the king's poetry:

My sclender skill thy gloir may not defyn (At Command of his Maiestie)

That muse of mortall men may not be meit
His dew deservit lowing lowd to sing. (In Praise of his Maiestis Work 1)

Muse, than assist me with sum mater meit,
Meit mychtie mater as his muse dois use. (Ditto 3). 1

Other topoi are more sparingly used. In the 'Dedication' he follows his modest opening with a justification in terms of content and the motive behind his writing, both arguments approved by Cicero. Moreover, by constantly repeating topoi he achieves sonnets with similar frameworks but slightly different arguments. The 'varius sis' device noted elsewhere in his work is thus most obvious in his dedicatory verse. A comparative table of the topics handled in the three introductory sonnets will illustrate this fact.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introd. to Roland</th>
<th>To His Maiestie</th>
<th>With this Volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>His lack of skill</td>
<td>His lack of skill</td>
<td>Wishes king health, glory, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No inspiration</td>
<td>King's generosity</td>
<td>His lack of skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification in terms of content and intention</td>
<td>People will slander him</td>
<td>No inspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King's generosity</td>
<td></td>
<td>King's generosity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The topics of lack of skill and the patron's generosity are common to all three, but the variation in other themes gives each sonnet its individuality.

His vast variety of verse forms inevitably recalls the poetry

1. Ibid., p. 129; No. 15, p. 159; No. 35, p. 161; No. 37.
of the grands rhéoriqueurs in France, but it would be wrong to suppose that they constitute his only source. Scottish influence is also strong and often Stewart is only echoing techniques employed by sixteenth century lyricists like Maitland or Alexander Scott. Complex internal rhymes like the following from 'To his Maiestie' are common:

Men dois declar thair happie skair of lair,¹

and do occur in the work of Molinet and his French contemporaries. They also appear in Dunbar's 'Ane Ballat of our Lady' and Scott's 'I wilbe plane'.² Stewart is a master of internal rhyme, using many different types, stretching from the linking rhymes of 'To his Maiestie':

Sum be ane ryt, and uthers of dispyt
Will me bakbyt, yit not any myt I cair,
For nane thay spair quhan thay prepair to flyt³
to the sudden introduction of a double internal rhyme in the last couplet by way of emphasis:

Heirfor, O fame, reserve for me guid name,
And give tham schame, quho speikith to my blame.⁴

He is however only carrying on and perfecting the rhyming techniques used by Scott in 'Quha is pefyte' and 'Leif Luve and lat me Leif Allone' or Maitland in 'Aganis the Theivis of Liddisdaill' and

¹. Ibid., p. 148; No. 26.
⁴. Ibid., p. 191; No. 65.
'Aganis the Division of the Lordis'.¹ The stylistic virtuosity of Baldynneis is the culmination of a manneristic movement traceable in sixteenth century Scottish poetry, and ultimately having its roots in Dunbar.

Repetition is another device shared by Baldynneis and the rhétoriqueurs. In 'Of Trewth' for example various forms of that word occur no fewer than 16 times. In 'Of Fidelitie' the same process is applied to faith, which occurs in simple or compound form on 9 occasions. This technique is again no innovation, for an anonymous sixteenth century Scottish lyricist had adopted it in one of the most popular poems of that period:

Haief hairt in hairt ye hairt of hairtis haill
Trewly sweit hairt your hairt my hairt sal haif
Expell deir hairt my havy hairtis baill
Praying yow hairt quhilk hes my hairt in graif ...²

The techniques of the rhétoriqueurs had therefore been imported before Baldynneis's time. He is however their finest exponent in Scotland, as well as employing a wider range than any of his predecessors. In addition he made one new contribution. No-one before him appears to have written 'vers enchayenne' in Scots.

In his 'L'Art de Seconde Rhétorique' Jean Molinet defines 'vers enchayenne' as follows - "Autre taille de rimes se nomme enchayennée, pour ce que la fin d'un mètre est pareil en voix au commencement de l'autre, et est diverse en signification." The example given is:

Trop durement mon cœur souspire,
Pire mal sent que desconfort.³

2. Bannatyne MS, III, 293.
Baldynneis uses it in Rapsodie 27, calling it 'Ane new sort of rymand rym'. Only two sonnets employ it, with the minor modification that neither shows a difference in meaning between first and second usages. The following lines from 'Of the Qualiteis of Luif' may be taken as typical:

Sueit luif heirwith dois suffer monie stound,
Stound both with cair and confort lairge repleit:
Repleit with luif hes bein both gods and men:
Men luif obeyis, Gods will not luif misken.¹

It is arguable that no more ambitious attempt at 'vers enchayenne' in Scots is possible, as the language provides far fewer examples of echoed sound with dissimilar meanings than French. Baldynneis is justified in limiting his aims to suit his medium.

The influence of the rhétoriqueurs therefore is either channelled through later Scottish sources or adapted to fit in with the demands of the Scottish language. In the use of heavy alliteration noted in the hostess's reply or 'In Praise of his Maistis Work' (1) however, Baldynneis is free from romance influence almost entirely. The later retention of alliteration is a northern characteristic and in this aspect Stewart allies himself with the general Scottish tradition. The interest in alliteration culminates with the virtuoso 'Literall Sonnet' in which every single word in a given line begins with the same letter:

My myrthles mynd may meruell monie mo,
Promp peirles proper plesand perll preclair,
Fair fremmit freind, firm fellest frownyng fo.²

Admittedly the rhétoriqueurs had cultivated this verse form too,

1. Poems of Stewart, p. 157; No. 33.
2. Ibid., p. 185; No. 59.
calling it 'vers lettrisé', but the alliterative tradition is basically Germanic and stretches back in time to the Roman grammarians.\textsuperscript{1} In making the last line of this sonnet echo the first too Baldynneis is closer to native than French tradition. In Northern Romances like 'Gawyn and the Green Knight' or 'The Aowyng of Arthur', echoing of this type appears, but it was uncommon in their southern counterparts, which depended more strongly on French influence. The echoing of

\begin{quote}
Dull dolor dalie dois delyt destroy,
\end{quote}

then, reaffirms the basically Scottish element in Stewart's stylistic techniques.

Just as, thematically, Stewart was at once indebted to Desportes and Henryson, to Du Bellay and Shaw; stylistically he relies on the rhétoriqueurs and Alexander Scott. French and Scottish influences mingle and it is at times difficult to decide whether his frequent repetitions come directly from Molinet or indirectly via 'Haif hairt'; whether the 'Literall Sonnet' should be seen as an example of vers lettrisé or obedience to James's dictum, "lat all your verse be Literall, sa far as may be". Just as his use of James's coinage "literall" argues for the primacy of Scottish influence in the latter case, so one feels that generally Stewart owes more to the Scottish explorers of style than their French counterparts. It is

\textsuperscript{1.} Curtius \textit{op.cit.}, relates that Buchald wrote a poem of 140 lines to Charles the Bald with every word beginning on 'c'.

\textsuperscript{2.} \textit{Poems of Stewart}, p. 185; No. 59.
nevertheless a problem, which cannot be solved dogmatically, as the two influences combine to produce the works of one of the most successful mannerists in the Scottish Renaissance.

Stewart is probably a better sonneteer than James VI and his contribution certainly widens the scope of the Scottish sonnet. Like James his love poetry is neither the best nor the largest part of his work. It is too realistic and optimistic to be truly Petrarchan and he introduces into it courtly and obscene topics omitted by the monarch. He emphasises the moral side to verse, which is not so fully developed by James, and in so doing shows more ingenuity and metaphysical traits than the latter-day Maecenas. He looks back to Desportes and Du Bellay rather than Desportes and Du Bartas; to Henryson rather than Lindsay, but he retains the general primacy of French and Scottish influence. Stylistically he is much more of a virtuoso than his master and if James had composed the Reulis after the appearance of the Rapsodies, that stylistic treatise would have been more detailed than it is now. Here indeed was a disciple capable of teaching as much as he learned.
ALEXANDER MONTGOMERIE

BIOGRAPHY

Alexander Montgomerie was the most accomplished of the Castalian band. Although he was writing poetry when James first began his lessons under Buchanan, he is here considered last, because he seems to have taken up sonneteering later than the king. None of his sonnets can be dated prior to his contribution in The Essays of a Prentise. Most, like the group concerning his pension and occasional poems to Maitland or Patrick Galloway were written between 1585 and 1595. Like Baldyneis he was a sonneteering disciple of the Prentise, but as a mature poet already has many of his ideas hardened, he is unlikely to follow James as closely as Stewart had done. Indeed, often the king turns to Montgomerie for poetic models in the Reulis. James may be Montgomerie's sonneteering senior, but in all else 'belouit Sanders' leads the way.

Much has been written about the poet's life and it is not my intention to retrace trodden ground. Among earlier biographies the most reliable versions are to be found in Rudolf Brotanek's monograph, Untersuchungen über das Leben und die Dichtungen Alexander Montgomerie and in George Stevenson's introduction to the supplementary volume of Montgomerie's poems (Scottish Text Society series). The later studies of Mark Dilworth and Helena Shire have however thrown new light on the subject and emphasized

2. This table is a simplified version of that which appears in Appendix A (p. 253) of Stevenson's edition.

the return to power of the catholic group at court, after the defeat of the Ruthven raiders. The Montgomerie family along with their allies the Barclays and relatives the Earls of Eglinton and Winton had always been identified with catholicism, and Montgomerie's position at court rises and falls in accordance with James's attitude to that religious group.

There is indeed strong evidence to show that Montgomerie was one of the active Catholic pirates, aiding Spain in her battles with England during the 1580's. Stevenson reproduces in Appendix D of the Supplementary Volume documents referring to the purchase by the poet and two others of a ship called the 'James Bonaventur'. The merchant from whom the boat was obtained not only complains of lack of payment, but considers the business an admiralty matter. He produces 'lettres of our admiralite of Ingland', and clearly thinks the purchase is connected with the active plotting of Catholic powers. Montgomerie is finally dismissed but charges are brought against his partners, Richard Ramsay and Andrew Martin.

In 1586 he offered to accompany the Master of Gray to the Netherlands. In addition he got a royal licence to leave the kingdom for five years and 'visit pairtis of france, flanderis, spane and utheris beyond'. This was the period when Catholic plotting and piracy was at its height and Montgomerie himself records in 'If lose of guids' and 'No wonder thoight I waill' that he was imprisoned during his stay abroad. The probability of


2. Calendar of Scottish Papers (1585-86), VIII, 410.
having been caught while engaged on some Catholic errand seemed strong, but no clinching evidence was forthcoming. I have discovered, however, two documents in The Calendar of State Papers (Foreign), which clarify the situation.

The first is a letter from Sir Thomas Cecil to Burghley, dated 26th June, 1586:

We embarked at Gravesend at 5 o'clock on Thursday morning (June 23) and did not reach the Brill until 4 o'clock of the next afternoon. "We had like to have had some little fights by the way with our pinnace, by meeting of a Scottish bark of eight score ton, with six score Scottish soldiers within her, and one Montgomery, one as he saith himself, near in credit and place to the King of Scotland; one that hath served in the Low Countries and captain of that ship. There is great suspicion, as the Scottish man saith, that he was a taking man, notwithstanding his excuse was that being without a pilot, he durst not put in, neither into Flushing nor the Brill; but bearing into the wind of us, by the nimbleness of our pinnace we won the wind of him, and so wafting him to come near and to strike his bonnet, finding him unwilling to do it, we made so near a shot at him as at the length we made him and the master of the ship to come aboard of us with her skiff, and sent two of our mariners aboard of her, where we found unlawful lading, both sea coal and barrels of salt, without cooquet." We kept the Captain and master aboard of us, and brought the ship into this haven, where she is now. The captain is gone with letters of credit to his Excellency, and I stay both men and ship until his return.¹

There can be little doubt that the Montgomery in question is the poet. He had served in the Netherlands and bore the rank of captain. He was at that time "near in credit and place" to James, being his 'maister poete'. His Catholic sympathies too explain his strange cargo and behaviour. This was the period shortly before the Armada, when James VI was secretly aiding Philip of Spain, while proclaiming allegiance to Elizabeth's cause. Montgomerie was almost certainly one of the Scottish pirates, encouraged by their king to give assistance to the Spaniards. This is

¹. Calendar of State Papers (Foreign), (1586-87), XXI, 56.
what Thomas Duff refers to in his first poem on Montgomerie, when
remarking that the poet pleased both Philip and James:

Regis et extabam pergratus in arce Philippi,
Semper honoratus Rex Jacobe tibi.¹

Yet just as Elizabeth could offer Drake no protection in the event
of capture, James could not officially condone piracy in the
Catholic cause. The papers he was going to present to the author-
ities would probably be those permitting him to travel in the
Netherlands, France and Spain along with a general character refer-
ence. They could not justify his cargo nor his strange behaviour.
As Cecil was keen to extirpate piracy of this kind, Montgomerie's
imprisonment may well have resulted from this incident.

Significantly there is a gap before the next relevant document.
This is dated March 1589. It is a letter to William Humberston
from the French town of St. Omer and refers to the political
situation in the Low Countries at that time:

Next day the Spanish infantry and 2,000 others
marched without baggage "towards your coast there."
His friend is still in France, so he cannot learn
their purpose. Great (noise) of Gitternebergen.
Six companies of horse sent thither. Captain
Montgomery, a Scot, who lately came from thence
with intelligence, is hurried back thither by way
of Holland.²

Gitternebergen (or Geertruidenberg) was one of three major defence
bastions in the Low Countries. It was at this period held by the
States General and England together. Disagreement between these
allies had produced considerable friction. The States General

2. Calendar of State Papers (Foreign), (Jan-July, 1589), XXIII,
   189.
under Count Maurice of Holland felt that Elizabeth was ignoring her duties in the Low Countries in her enthusiasm for the counter-armada against Spain. Elizabeth for her part claimed that Maurice and his supporters ignored the authority of her lieutenant general. Various problems arose from this situation, not the least of which was disagreement over who should pay the defence garrisons. In Gitternebergen, lack of pay had led to a mutiny and the garrison in March 1589 was holding the town in the face of a determined siege by Count Maurice.

Montgomerie's appearance assumes a new significance, when it is learned that the Spanish hoped to take advantage of this situation in order to hinder the counter-armada. If they could capture Gitternebergen, Elizabeth might be forced to withdraw troops to cope with the new crisis in the Low Countries. To this end the Spanish troops under the Duke of Parma were already encamped only a short distance from Gitternebergen, in Breda. What Humberston's correspondent has noted is the movement of Spanish reinforcements into Holland, presumably from ships lying off the north-west coast of France.

In the light of this knowledge, Montgomerie's movements become logical. He has travelled from Gitternebergen to St. Omer with information. His route would necessarily pass through Breda, where he could confer with Parma. His journey to St. Omer then brings him close to the French coast, where Spanish reinforcements were waiting. It looks as if he was acting as a link between the garrison, Parma and his reinforcements. Having done this he returned to Gitternebergen and almost immediately Parma walked into that town and possessed it for Spain. The garrison offered no
resistance, a fact which suggests a previous agreement between them and Parma, possibly engineered by Montgomerie.

By this time, James's sympathies towards the Catholic cause had cooled markedly. As a result, Montgomerie fell out of favour and his pension was withheld, despite lengthy litigation. To the end he remained true to his beliefs and in 1591 received a gift of 400 marks a year from Ludovic, Duke of Lennox, leader of the catholic party in Scotland. The latter in the course of the ratification states that the gift is:

for guid & thankfull service done, & to be done, be the said capitane alexander to us, and to gif him occasioun to continew therin.1

It would appear that Lennox if not the king, appreciated Montgomerie's services to the Catholic cause. Nor were his hopes of future service illfounded, for in 1597 the poet was denounced by the privy council for having aided Hugh Barclay of Ladyland in his attempt to capture Ailsa Craig for the catholics.2

This plot had been hatched by Barclay in conjunction with Hakerson the Spanish ambassador in France and a leading English catholic, Richard Skeldon. The island was to be a haven for Spanish troops approaching England. Ladyland, the poet and some other prominent Scottish catholics rigged out a warship for the purpose, but were discovered by a Paisley minister, Alexander Knox. Ladyland, who himself composed a sonnet to Montgomerie, was taken by surprise on the island and fell backwards over a cliff to be drowned. No punishment appears to have been exacted from the poet,

but this tragic escapade marks the final estrangement with James. If domestic troubles produced the gulf between Baldynneis and his king, politics and religion were responsible for distancing James and Montgomerie.

The discovery by Dilworth of five poems in Latin among the papers of Thomas Duff, a monk of the Scottish Benedictine order in Würzburg has helped to clarify the problem of the poet's death. He expressed the desire to join Duff's order, but was prevented by an untimely death. The Calvinist factions in Scotland refused to allow him a proper burial, but the will of the Catholics, the people and, notably, James himself won the day. The poem goes on to relate that he was given a regal burial, with bells ringing out to mourn his passing. This last detail is somewhat at odds with James's poetic account of the incident:

Though to his burial was refused the bell
The bell of fame, shall aye his praises knell. 1

What remains clear is that James throughout retained a liking for his master poet, although political and religious factors prevented him from showing this fully. He might praise the poet and the man, but he had to condemn the catholic spy and agitator.

ATTITUDE TO LOVE

The three sonneteers considered in this chapter stand apart from their fellows partly on chronological grounds, partly because of their refusal to regard the theme of love as all-dominating. Montgomerie however is at once the most productive and the most

1. Poems of James, II, 108.
interested in love. He composes 73 sonnets of which 29 are romantic in theme. Occasional poems are still the most popular, with 35 falling into that class, while only 9 deal with the moral or religious themes so favoured by Baldynneis. The 'maister poete' then begins to anticipate the overweening interest in love, which characterized the second period of sonneteering in Scotland. On the other hand he still uses the genre primarily for occasional verse and so is closer to James than to William Fowler.

The nature of the king's love poetry had been determined by his unique social position and unusual courtship. Montgomerie too was in a special situation, that of being the court poet, and his love sonnets mirror this fact. As laureate of a poetry-conscious court he was given a lot of commissioned verse and expected to write sonnets in praise of the leading ladies around Anne. As laureate in an age of imitation he was expected to be aware of poetic movements in other countries, especially France. As laureate at a time when the love lyric was growing in popularity he was expected to have a mistress, to whom poetic cries of passion might be addressed. All three requirements he fulfilled. As a result his love sonnets may conveniently be divided into 'mistress' and 'commissioned' groups.

The sonnets to his mistress do not form any set sequence. Rather are they scattered among his political and commissioned verse. The first group consists of S 39-41,\(^1\) two of which are translations

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1. Poems of Alexander Montgomerie, ed. James Cranstoun, Scottish Text Society (Edinburgh and London, 1887), pp. 103-4. The sonnets are numbered as in this volume and preceded by S. Those in Stevenson's are preceded by MP (Miscellaneous Poems) and follow his numbering. MP 23 and MP 25 have not been considered on the grounds that they bear a different signature and are unlikely to be Montgomerie's.
from Ronsard and one from Constable. Being close translations and all dealing with physical description, they transgress two major tenets of the Reulis and Cautelis. But James's laureate was never bound by the critical ideals of his monarch-patron. Deserting the formality and indirect compliments of James, he presents three variations on the theme of a lover's captivity.

S 39 uses an inventory of the lady's qualities, an octet/sestet division of argument and a linking legal metaphor. S 40 isolates one attribute - her eyes, builds up the argument in antithesis form, and uses various metaphors. S 41 has a narrative base, with quatrains development and uses the Ficinian conceit of lady as thief. In these three sonnets therefore Montgomerie at once proclaims his independence of James, his knowledge of French and English sonneteering, and his mastery of various forms of argument. They are clearly the works of a master poet, intent on showing his professionalism.

At the same time, James's awkward formalism disappears, while rhetorical tricks are not allowed to impede passion in Baldynneis fashion. For the first time the true voice of love speaks out in the Scottish sonnet, freed from Platonic theorizing or overuse of literary artifice:

So suete a kis yistrene fra thee I refi,
In bousing doun thy body on the bed,
That evin my lyfe within thy lippis I left;
Sensyne from thee my spirits wald neuer shed.

Petrarchanism is rejected by Montgomerie as by the other two Castalians. While James replaced it with courtesy and marriage;

1. Ibid., p. 109.
Stewart with realism and the conceits of Desportes, Montgomerie found inspiration in the other great leader of the pléiade. Like Ronsard he seems aware of the Petrarchan conventions, but uses them to express a freer, more joyful attitude to love. In § 39 he states that 'Resone never culd command' love, thus reversing the opinion of his two compatriots in the Edinburgh movement. In the third sonnet to his mistress, he introduces the 'stolen kiss' conceit, but the bed and clever alliteration on 's' and 'l' set it in a context of sensuality hitherto unparalleled in Scottish sonneteering. Over three hundred sonnets praise Laura's chastity. Three bring Montgomerie's mistress to bed, restoring his life with a kiss. She thus has much more in common with Marie than Laura.

§ 46 and 47 both deal with attributes of the lady, her name and her dog respectively. There seems little doubt that Montgomerie wrote in praise of a real mistress, and the riddle of § 46 gives us some clues to her identity. Cranstoun, perhaps sensibly offered no solution, but the final couplet does provide a strong hint:

Or ye this find, I feir ye first be fane
For to begin your A, B, C agane.¹

When this is taken in conjunction with 1. 4, it becomes clear that the reader must revise his knowledge of the alphabet and take 'I' to represent a letter, not a person. 'And only I these lovely letters tuins' would therefore mean that the lady's initials are H.J.

§ 47, another translation from Ronsard is one of Montgomerie's most successful sonnets. Above all it underlines the master

¹. Ibid., p. 111.
poet's skilful use of alliteration to mark changes in tone. The sensuality of the first quatrains is expressed by alliteration on 's' and 'l' as in the opening of S 41. The dominant consonants change to 'm' and 'w', when the poet's moaning and wailing are highlighted, only to be replaced by forceful plosives when he indulges in an outburst of frustration:

Why haif I not, O God, als blunt a braine
As he that daylie worbleth in the wyne,
Or to mak faggots for his fuid is fane?
Lyk as I do I suld not die and duyn. 1

All the reasons for Montgomerie's superiority over the other Castalians as a love sonneteer are present in this poem. He is more passionate, moving from sensuality, to misery and then ferocity within the space of twelve lines. He is the most adept handler of Scots, its sounds and word connotations. He uses his rhetorical skill to reinforce ideas, not for exercises in virtuosity. He employs as his model the finest of all European lyricists, yet somehow manages to retain his individuality. For all these reasons we must endorse James's judgment of him as 'maister poete'.

He stops short of composing love sequences in the manner of Fowler and William Alexander, yet by arranging his mistress sonnets in small groups, he heralds this innovation. The 'captivity' and 'attribute' groups so far studied are followed by three sonnets with a narrative link, entitled 'To The for Me'. The intense tone and lack of name in the title suggest that they are also to his mistress. Like the earlier poems they seem to be at once justifying his right to be a lover and a poet laureate. As lover he skilfully traces a

1. Ibid., p. 112.
tale of passion. As laureate, he makes sure it is one which brings echoes of past poetic traditions, although these are this time Scottish rather than French.

In the first poem, S 51, he likens his state to that of the nightingale, skilfully emphasising those sounds, 'ch', 'r' and 'l', which are most frequently heard in her song:

Thy chivring chirlis, whilks chainginglie thou chants;  
Make all the roches round about the ring.¹

Both sing of the pain of love, but she does not lose hope. This thought inspires him to Icarian aspiration, carried aloft on "wings of hope", metaphorically provided by the nightingale. He learns the lesson of courage and in S 53 vows to withstand the "dungeon deep" of love and express his situation in verse. While the reader appreciates the forceful, optimistic description of Icarus's flight set against the terrifying conceit of the poet's breast as a sigh-filled dungeon, he is also aware, that these are variations on an old theme. Montgomerie is as usual combining invention with imitation.

While Petrarch was fond of comparing his state to the nightingale's, Montgomerie is more closely influenced by James I's Kingis Quair. James too had been roused out of misery by the song of the nightingale, been given courage and felt compelled to write a poem about his experiences. Although the philosophical note is stronger in the Quair, most well read Scottish courtiers would be aware of the echoes. They might also applaud Montgomerie secretly, for having combined praise of his mistress, an acknowledgement of

¹. Ibid., p. 114.
earlier Scottish literature and imitation of James VI's poetic predecessor within the space of forty two lines of verse. But this was not all. Montgomerie, one of the most professional of poets, had in 1562 introduced an echo of his own Cherrie and the Slae:

I sprang up on Cupidoes wingis,
Quha bow and quauir baith resingis,
To lend me for ane day;
As Icarus with borrowit flicht
I mountit hichar nor I might;
Ouir perrelous and play.1

Few other writers can claim to have pleased king, mistress, literati and self so economically!

S 54-58 is a poorer group than those preceding it. 'Excuse me, Plato, if I suld suppose' and 'Wha wald behold him whom a god so grievis' are two of Montgomerie's less successful translations from Ronsard. Frequently he is forced into unnatural syntax and poor rhymes in an effort to keep close to the original. The master poet was undoubtedly the best Castallan love sonneteer, but he is not without his limitations. The first of these is the occasional choice of an unsuitable sonnet for adaptation. When Ronsard opposes Platonic theory because of amatory experience, the result is lyrical and spontaneous:

Pardonne moy, Platon, si je ne cuide
Que scoubz la vouste et grande arche des dieux,
Soit hors du monde, ou au centre des lieux,
En terre, en l'eau, il n'y ayt quelque vuide.

When Montgomerie does the same he sounds like a prosaic scientist versifying his ideas with great difficulty:

1. Ibid., p. 8, ll. 155-160.
Excuse me, Plato, if I suld suppone
That underneth the heuinly vaunted round,
Without the world, or in pairts profound
By Stix inclosd, that emptie place is none.1

There is an excess of parenthetic statement; the round/profound rhyme is weak and the inversion in l. 4 very clumsy indeed. One must not suppose that his translations are always satisfactory, for this is not the case.

Moreover, when deprived of a model, he tends to retreat to conventional images - the fire of love, Cupid's bow and the law-court of reason - rather too often. When such images are combined with a listing technique as in S 55 and S 58, one feels that the 'master poet' may be guilty of careless composition. At his best he can easily outstrip James and Stewart but lacks their consistency of standard. Confident of his genius, he occasionally retains sonnets, which his compatriots might have torn up.

The best poem in the present group is S 54. On one level it seems to be a formal statement of praise in Jamesean style. The muses and pagan goddesses put in an early appearance:

What subject, sacred Sisters, sall I sing?
Whase praise, Apollo, sal my pen proclame?
What nymph, Minerva, sall thy novice name?

The last four lines ostensibly round off this high spiritual tone:

Yit, if hir grace, for weill, accept gude will,
Then war thou weill reuardit for thy wark:
Bot since to mount thy maistress the commands,
With hope, once hazard for to kis hir hands.2

As 'will' also has the sense of 'lust' however, and as 'mount' could

2. Cranstoun, p. 115.
refer to the mounting of man upon woman rather than the aspirations of the muse, this is another example of obscene wordplay as in Baldynneis's hostess sonnets. Montgomerie thus confirms the sensuality of his love sonnets by using Petrarchan conventions to shadow forth the sexual act. The parallel with Dunbar, many of whose love poems have also to be read on two levels, is valid.

The last group of love sonnets, 'Of the Duleweid' resemble 'To The for Me' in having a narrative link, and relying heavily on earlier literature. The sources this time are not Scottish but classical and Italian. The references to Helen of Troy, the Medusa and Gorgon stem from Latin and Greek literature. The image of the lover throwing himself blindly into the light of love and that of the "bonie bark" sailing on the sea of life inevitably recall Petrarch. Yet, remembering that the poet's mistress has the initials H.J., one feels that she is the second Helen, and true inspirer of the group. This would be consistent both with the tone of the poems and Montgomerie's habit of uniting learning with love in his verse.

They are certainly excellent sonnets. The 'master poet' uses colour imagery skilfully to build up an atmosphere of ferocity and foreboding. The eyes are black, symbolising death, but send out red sparks, suggesting the ferocity and warfare of love. Later the figures of the Medusa and Gorgon are added to increase the grotesqueness of love's battlefield. There the lover is in turn killed by beauty (S 59) and anger (S 60). The theme is without

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1. Compare Petrarch in S 19, 'Son animali al mondo de si altera', and S 189, 'Passa la nave mia colma d'oblio'.
doubt the fatuity of love, and Montgomerie takes the argument a
step further by piercing the veil of death in S 61. The lover,
offered one wish asks only to be born again and suffer onee more
the period of passion:

When hevy hartis it helthsum halts to heir
The mirthful mavis and the lovesome lark.
In end, I wold, my voyage being maid,
(In Helens arms againe be gentlie laid.)

The last line is missing in the MS, but a return to the murderer
seems the only possible solution to the poet's predicament. His
impotence is thus rendered complete and Montgomerie for the first
time takes a pessimistic view of the passion.

This attitude reaches a climax in his last love sonnet,
'Against the God of Love'. This is a flying poem in which he
celebrates his freedom from passion, quizzing himself about love
as Falstaff did about honour:

Art thou a god? No-bot a gok disguysit;
A bluiter buskit lyk a belly blind,
With wings and quaver waving with the wind;
A plane playmear for vanitie devysit.

The passion is rejected as brutal, deceitful and an enemy of reason.
This is the culmination of a development of attitude uniting the
various groups. Montgomerie begins with the conventional
'captivity' and 'attribute' themes, before proclaiming a real and
durable love in 'To The for Me'. By the time that he is writing
S 54-58, the early joy in the relationship has gone and this is
marked by a series of uninspired verse. By S 59-61 his reason
understands all the drawbacks of love, but infatuation draws him

2. Ibid., p. 124.
back to the beloved. The final break is made in S 70 so that
Montgomerie may again write scornfully of love and all its followers:

Thou art a stirk, for all thy staitly stylis;
And these, good geese, whom sik a god begylis.

The progression is from involvement to passion and then into freedom. This embryonic sequence of the 'master poet's' anticipates that fashion for sequences, which was to characterize the immediately post-1603 period in Scottish literature. The main difference is one of sources. While Montgomerie preferred Ronsard and the pléiade, it was to the Italian of Petrarch that Fowler and Alexander turned for inspiration.

The commissioned poetry is of little interest. Montgomerie used it as an opportunity for showing his verbal dexterity and echoing the verse forms of the grands rhétoriqueurs. 'Vers enchayenne' is used in the cryptic sonnet on Mary Queen of Scots, 'I wald se mare' and in S 43, addressed to Issobell Yong. The marriage of John Johnsone and Jane Maxwell is celebrated with a complex internal rhyme scheme, frequently used by Stewart:

sueit soull, perceve hou secreit I conceill,
Rad to reveill that peirtly I propone.
Look ony one before me loved so leill

while S 49 and the address to Euphemia Wemyss merely present the poet with opportunities for indulging in wordplay. The only pleasing sonnets in this part of Montgomerie's output are the Ronsardian translation, 'O happy star, at evening and at morn', presented to Lady Seton and the extended lily conceit used for praise

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., p. 111.
of the Duchess of Lennox. Such poetry however highlights two important facts about the master poet. He was a makar, believing that a poem should be constructed by means of techniques and conventions. Like Dunbar therefore he makes himself a master of verse forms, rhetorical tricks and certain formulae of expression. When there is no serious message behind a poem, these stylistic factors become dominant. Only too often he found himself in this position, for as leading poet at James's court he was asked to praise women whom he may not have found praiseworthy and celebrate events of no personal relevance. As a mannerist of this type he is more than competent, but his best work is to be found where there is a more genuine motivation for writing.

Montgomerie is above all a professional poet, writing love sonnets, which are also intended to impress through the variety of their sources, of their stylistic devices and of their attitudes to the passion. He does however free the love sonnet in Scotland from its formalism and overemphasis on rhetoric, knowing how to be a mannerist without losing emotional sincerity. His grouping of related poems led to the sequences of Fowler and Alexander, but Ronsard was never again to influence the Scottish sonnet so heavily. The day of the professional and of French influence was over. Petrarchanism and dilettanti courtiers were soon to dominate the scene.

OTHER THEMES

Montgomerie's thematic interests are very close to Stewart's. His attitude to the soul is based on the Platonic reason/passion conflict. Only in cosmology and mythology does he echo James, although he lacks the king's consistent intellectual attitude to
the former. He is capable of using Platonic theories in one sonnet (S 2) and contradicting them in another (S 56). This is because he prefers imaginative accounts of the universe, producing good poetic conceits, to sound theories with little poetic appeal. Poetry should deal with the mysteries of life. So long as cosmology is a mystery, then it is poetically viable. Once the astronomers seem to have explained everything Montgomerie loses interest. Thus in MP 24 he dismisses Brahe and Copernicus cursorily:

we neid nocht now be in suspense
Off erthelie thingis, nor yit celestiall. 1

He then turns his attention away from explained macrocosm to unexplained microcosm; from the planets to love. While James searches for truth and an orderly explanation, Montgomerie prefers imagination and mystery.

James's influence is much stronger in mythological matters. In his sonnet to the chancellor Maitland the master poet symbolises each of his main qualities by a pagan god. The technique is very similar to that adopted by the king in his epitaph on Sidney. 2 As Sidney died in 1586 and Maitland did not become chancellor till 1587, it becomes clear that any influence passes from James to Montgomerie rather than vice versa. Moreover the form of the two poems is identical. Sidney had been a mixture of Mars, Minerva, Apollo and the muses. Montgomerie only substitutes Mercury for Apollo. Each is thus credited with bravery, wit and poetic ability, while Sidney's knowledge becomes in Maitland's case, eloquence.

1. Stevenson, p. 220.
2. Poems of James, II, 104.
As the two poems probably appeared within the space of a year, it does seem that Montgomerie is here engaging in the sincerest form of flattery, by imitating the king. It is indeed true that Jamesean influence is strongest in Montgomerie's mythological verse. Possibly the master poet felt that the king with his vast knowledge of classical authors was better qualified in this field. Montgomerie certainly uses mythological references less frequently and those which do occur are mostly in his occasional verse. His love poetry is surprisingly empty of pagan deities or classical heroes.

Like the other imprisoned Castalian, Stewart, his favourite theme is that of fortune. As in the Rapsodies this is usually a malicious force, but he does suggest that it can be overcome. In S 16 for example we learn that like the devil in Faustus or James's Daemonologie it has power only over the body:

She may my corps, but not my curage kill.

When drinking with his cronies Montgomerie can dismiss it casually:

Be mirrie men; feir God, and serve the King;
And cair not by Dame Fortuns fead a flea.¹

Indeed although it is mentioned often enough, one feels that basically he believes in human responsibility. Fortune becomes a superstition, which can be laughed at, when in cheerful mood. Its power over the soul is denied and eventually it can be reduced to the level of a literary expedience. Above all however it becomes an excuse for weakness, a lesson enacted in the six sonnets which form A Ladyis Lamentatione.

Just as 'To The for Me' had been based on James I's Kingis

¹. Cranstoun, p. 97 and p. 123.
Quair, so this group owes a lot to Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*. The lady compares herself to 'Lady Lucrece in a Cressede changed' or to 'Cresside and the ugly oull'. Her fate has been similar, for from heights of nobility she has been transformed into a wretch 'exyld from honour ay', just as Cresseid became 'ane unworthy outwaill'. Both admit and lament frequent sins and seem to have sunk to the level of whores, without any genuine repentance. Cresseid may think she is repenting but until her stay with the lepers she is only lamenting lost pleasures. Likewise the lady is less concerned about her error than its publicity:

Had I my counsell keepit undeclarde,  
I might haif dred, bot deidly not dispairde.¹

At this point both ladies are ready to blame supernatural powers for their sin. Cresseid upbraids Cupid and Venus because she is not serious enough in her repentance to endure the misery of self-condemnation. Similarly the lady does not open by confessing personal guilt but by cursing fortune:

Whom suild I warie bot my wicked weard,  
Wha span my thriftles thrauard fatall threed?²

It is specifically an over-beneficent fortune which caused her error. Like Gawayn she fell when enjoying prosperity. By returning to this stoic belief that luxury could be more dangerous than adversity, Montgomerie again emphasises his reliance on earlier writers. In a Scottish context this deservedly gains for him the title of 'last of the makars'.

By showing the lady falling from one extreme of the social

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hierarchy to another Montgomerie is dramatising the situation against which James warned his son in the *Basilicon Doron* and Stewart prepared 'His familiar friend at Court'. But the lady's descent from 'Countes' to whore is self-imposed, as she admits in the third sonnet of the group:

    Lord, for my missis micht I mak a mends,
    By putting me to penance as thou pleas'd!  

Her condemnation of fortune then is as unreal as Cresseid's against Cupid. It arises directly from a period of extensive self-pity set out in the second sonnet and again paralleled in the *Testament*. It leads in Sonnets four and five to confusion and despair, similar to that suffered by Cresseid among the lepers, while only in the last poem does she accept responsibility for her own fate:

    I wyt myne ee for visuing of my wo;
    I wyt myn earis for heiring my mishap.  

There can be little doubt that the progression of the *Testament* lies behind Montgomerie's minor sequence. Even the tradition of Cresseid as a leper is carried over from the original:

    More hevynes within my hairt I heep,
    Nor cative Cresside, whair she lipper lay.  

The clear advancing of themes, which gives this series so much of its charm thus owes a great deal to the schoolmaster from Dunfermline. These six sonnets are among the most intriguing and successful of Montgomerie's shorter poems, although the listing technique of the love sonnets tends to predominate here also. In the context of fortune, they underline Montgomerie's sceptical attitude. The

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lady gradually realises that she has used the idea of fortune as a means of escaping her personal guilt. It is thus no coincidence that the first sonnet begins:

Whom suld I warie bot my wicked weard

and the sixth provides twelve answers to that question in terms of personal responsibility. The master poet may use fortune as a literary artifice or as an excuse offered by the weak for their weakness, but he believes in psychological rather than supernatural causes for alterations in personal circumstance.

Beside these themes, common in European sonneteering generally, there are some which further emphasise the Scottish tendency to use the genre for more mundane matters. In 1583, James had granted Montgomerie a pension of 500 marks, payable out of the rents of the bishopric of Glasgow. So long as the catholic Bishop Betoun was unchallenged Bishop of Glasgow, the poet received his money regularly, but later he was opposed by one William Erskine, who gained the see and challenged Montgomerie's right to the pension. A long case ensued, traced in all its complexities by Stevenson, with the poet finally unsuccessful.¹ The important thing from our point of view is that Montgomerie kept the equivalent of a sonneteering diary on the subject. The habit of poetically pleading for money has of course a long history in Scottish verse, stretching back to the time of Dunbar, but Montgomerie with his 17 sonnets on the topic is a more than usually persistent exponent. Abroad, such pleas were couched in some lyrical form other than the sonnet, which was thought too idealistic a genre for materialistic subjects. The Scot however

¹. See Stevenson, Appendix D, v-x, pp. 305-34.
with his use of it for a wider range of subjects saw no such discrepancy.

The pension sonnets can profitably be divided in two ways, either through the different addresses or the varying degrees of satire displayed. The three to the king for example begin with a tentative, polite comment, suggesting that fortune, not James, is primarily responsible for Montgomerie's misery. Among other things, the poet protests his innocence of any crimes, this being a cunning reference to the king's condonation of piracy. This note of clever irony is constant and the 'master poet' ends with a plea to justice. In the second, the tone is much more bitter. He presents the king with a catalogue of injustices ranging from imprisonment to "labour lost in vane". These eight lines are most outspoken and remind one of some of Ronsard's more violent attacks on the French monarchy. As if conscious of his excessive frankness, Montgomerie retreats in the sestet to a comparison of his situation with the miserable lot of Virgil, Ovid and Homer, concluding:

Thoght I am not lyk one of thame in arte,
I pingle thame all perfytlie in that parte.¹

In the third sonnet, even this refinement disappears and we have what must be the most vicious poem written against 'Maecenas' by one of his poetic group. It begins with a dignified statement of independence:

If I must begge, it sall be far fra name;
If I must want, it is aganis my will,

and ends with a direct reference to the king's failure in friendship:

¹ Cranstoun, p. 96.
Is this the frute, Sir, of your first affectione,
My pensioun perish under your protectione?¹

Only one who had been on the closest terms with James could thus address him, without being punished. These three sonnets therefore form a partial diary of the poet's fortunes in the law courts. The first was probably written at the beginning of his suit, the last near the end. His disappointments and growing disillusionment with Scottish justice are expressed by the growth of the vituperative element in each.²

The four sonnets to the Lords of the Session can be treated similarly. At the outset, they are "brave and pregnant sprits" and the appeal as in the first Jamesean sonnet is to justice. Besides the poet feels confident both in the king's friendship and the ability of his lawyer. The second sonnet betrays a growing sense of disillusionment, however. They are now "sophists" and justice has been converted into "feddies flyting". The satire deepend yet again in the third poem, when he makes a direct accusation of bribery, by reminding them that:

thair is a Lord above,
Quha seis the smallest secret of your hairts.³

This is indeed one of the cleverest arguments advanced by Montgomerie, for he holds out hell as the only reward for cheating him of his pension. If they side with him on the other hand, they

1. Ibid., p. 97.

2. D. B. Wyndham Lewis remarked in his Ronsard (London, 1944), "There is nothing of the time-server about Pierre de Ronsard, the least docile poet in history." By comparison with Montgomerie he is timid and indirect.

3. Cranstoun, p. 98.
gain a double immortality. Divine immortality will result from their honesty on earth and worldly immortality stem from the poet's grateful pen:

Deserv not de (before your Lordships) fames;
For I may able eternize your names.1

This division of the pension poems ends with a complete loss of temper on the poet's part. He reaches heights of indignation which the king's social position protected him from. The flying imagination is allowed full reign and the court of session are "compeld at Plotcock to appeir", condemned for bribery and accused of possessing coalblack consciences. This is most unfair, for although Montgomerie's case rouses one's sympathy, it was by no means as strong as Erskine's. While the court of session at that time was not renowned for high virtue, their failure to grant Montgomerie his pension did not constitute an example of corruption. The poet not unnaturally is allowing his indignation to run away with him.

The three sonnets to those lawyers involved in his case show exactly the same development from hope to despair, via the intermediary stage of frustration. When the court sits at first, he feels confident enough to jibe at the prosecution:

Presume not, Prestone, Stirling is no strenth;
Suppose ye come to cleik auay my King,
Beleiv me baith, ye sail be lost at lenth;
Assure your selfis, and think none other thing.2

Ironically enough he also chooses to praise in high terms his own lawyer Matthew Sharp, who later mishandled the case. As the months wore on, this became obvious to Montgomerie himself, and the man who

1. Ibid., p. 99.
2. Ibid.
was going to blast his opponent's case with one accurate cannon-shot of eloquence, becomes a self-opinionated fool:

If he be all, wha thinks hisichtours none,
Then surely I shuld shau you who wer all;
If he be Caesar, who doth so suppone;
Then I conjecture whom I Caesar call.

The balanced logic of this sonnet finally gives way to an even more vicious flying than that directed against the Lords of Session, who presumably were protected by their officialdom. Sharp is:

A Baxter's bird, a bluiter beggar borne,
Ae ill heud huirson, lyk a barkit hyde,
A saulles suinger, seuintie tyms mensorne,
A peltrie pultron poysond up with pryde.

Thus, while each group of sonnets shares the rising in satirical energy before noted, the Sharp sonnets are the most vilifying.

Five are directed at an outsider, in the person of Robert Hudson, the English poet who now enjoyed Montgomerie's reputation as laureate at James's court. He too is at first greeted in friendly terms as:

My best belouit brother of the band.

Regretfully Montgomerie looks back to days of past favour; recalling sentimentally that period when the youthful monarch had laughed at

1. Ibid., p. 100.
2. Ibid.
3. Both Robert Hudson and his brother Thomas were musicians at the court of James. Their period of favour lasted from 1585 ca. till 1595 ca. Despite the fact that Thomas translated the History of Judith from Du Bartas' original, it seems that Robert was generally regarded as the better poet. All his writings are polished but innocuous and in the comparison between pampered poodle and adventurous ass advanced in S 28, Montgomerie may be indulging in mild satire. One who in his verse, dares to become troublesome, may well be cast aside for a tame, domestic writer of Hudson's type.
the friendly flying between the master poet and Polwart. There is however no gradual growth of bitterness in these sonnets, which indeed may have been composed all at once. Certainly they have the air of a continued argument. Montgomerie first of all appeals to Hudson as a poet, in times when good poets are few. He then sets out his own talents modestly, with a view to minimising any possible bitterness. This leads inevitably to the recollection of that happy group centred round the king, and regret that he is now estranged from their company. Most particularly however he treasured his friendship with James, likening himself to the well-intentioned ass in Aesop's fable, who tried to imitate a pet dog by leaping into his master's lap. Finally he praises Hudson's own verse and humbly asks him to show this complaint to the king.

The plea had no effect for Cranstoun prints a sonnet written by Christen Lindsay, in which that poet condemns Hudson for ingratitude:

Montgomerie, that such hope did once conceive
Of thy guid will, nou finds all is forgotten. 2

1. James often used Montgomerie as a model in his Reulis and Cautelis. This is a point raised by Oscar Hoffmann in Studien zu Alexander Montgomerie (Altenburg, 1894), p. 7. "James VI hat in seiner metrischen abhandlung hauptsächlich die schriften Montgomeries in auge gehabt und ist durch dieselben bei der bildung seiner regeln beeinflusst worden."

2. Cranstoun, p. 104. Cranstoun believes that the real author was Montgomerie, using Lindsay's name as a shield. Yet in his first sonnet to Hudson, Montgomerie mentions Christen Lyndesay as a practising poet, grouping him with Scott and Robert Semple, yet suggesting that he is of a younger generation. As one poet could not adopt another's name without incurring professional wrath; as it would be natural for a young poet to spring to the defence of one who had praised him in verse, and as both Cranstoun and Stevenson are guilty of attributing unlikely poems to their chosen scribe in a mood of excessive enthusiasm, I do not believe it to be Montgomerie's.
It seems probable that jealousy prevented the new laureate from advancing the cause of his predecessor, a much superior poet. Consequently he composes a sonnet of farewell, both to past friends and to his belief in true values. Cranstoun places this as the fourth sonnet to the king, but it is clearly a summation of the whole series:

Adeu, my King, court, cuntrey, and my kin; 
Adeu, suet Duke, whose father held me deir; 
Adeu, companions, Constable and Keir; 
Thrie treuer hairts, I trou, sall neuer tuin.¹

The raging bitterness of earlier sonnets is gone. It is in a spirit of disillumined regret and resignation that Montgomerie notes the conclusion of the case. Although he vows to seek out his father's sword, one feels that this a merely a poetic affirmation of personal dignity; of the impotent desire to avenge oneself on the stronger forces in society.

There is still one sonnet, which in a Scottish context must not be ignored. Montgomerie, the convivial, reprimanded by James for his excessive love of alcohol, produces in S 69 a work which deserves to be compared with Burns's 'The Jolly Beggars' or Fergusson's 'Daft Days'. It is set in a public house, that environment which forms the background for so much of later Scottish poetry. Outside there is poverty, injustice and oppression, but momentarily these are driven away by the power of Bacchus. Such a poem would have been out of place in a king's verse; out of character for a serious, introverted poet like Baldynneis. Only 'belouit Sanders' with his broader humanity and love of popularity is at home in such an

1. Ibid., p. 97.
atmosphere. Like Burns he is adept at transferring to his readers that sense of careless bonhomie, of expansive goodwill, which characterizes the latter stages of a night spent around the bottle:

I, Richie, Jane, and George are lyk to (dee);
Four crabit crippilis crackand in our crouch,
Sen I am trensh-man for the other thrie,
Let drunken Panorage drink to me in Dutch,
Scol frie, al out, albeit that I suld brist
Th wachts, hale beir, fan hairts and nych (sum) drist. 1

It is hardly surprising that Cranstoun cannot understand the last line, for it represents the incoherent babblings of a drunken man. The general sense seems to be 'Plenty of drink; good beer; fond hearts and a colossal thirst'. It is also possible that Montgomerie is trying to make this drunken toast sound like Dutch with its frequent plosives and gutturals. Whether this be the case or not, the sonnet gives us a memorable insight into the poet's social habits. If, as James suggests, the master poet's life was cut short by an addiction to alcohol, this weakness did produce some poetic compensations.

INFLUENCES

The Castalian reliance on French and Scottish sources continues in Montgomerie. There are admittedly a number of minor Petrarchan echoes like those noted in 'Of the Duleweid' but they are of a general kind. S 49 for example with its anagrammatic division of the lady's name ultimately derives from Petrarch S 5, 'Quand' io movo i sospiri a chiamar voi'. The word Laureta is split into the components Lau/Re/Ta which are then separated and capitalized as with Dou/Glas. Similarly the two nightingale sonnets, S 48 and

S 51 grow out of Petrarchan originals, 'Quel rossignol che si soave piange', and 'Vago augelletto de cantando vai', but Montgomerie became acquainted with them through an intermediary, in this case James I. He is aware of the Petrarchan traditions but almost certainly had not read Petrarch in the original.

The influence of English sonneteers is also surprisingly slight in view of the presence of Hudson and Constable at the Edinburgh court. The latter does contribute the source to S 40:

Thyne eye the glasse where I behold my hearte  
Myne eye the windowe through the which thyne eye  
May see my hearte and there thy selfe espie  
In bloudie colours how thow paynted art  
Thyne eye the pyle is of a murdering darte  
Myne eye the sight thow takst thy levell by  
To hitt my hearte and neuer shut'st awrye  
Myne eye thus helpes thyne eye to worke my smarte

(Constable)

Thyne ee the glasse where I beheld my hairt,  
Myn ee the windo throu the whilk thyn ee  
May see my hairt, and thair thy self espy  
In blody colours hou thou painted art.  
Thyne ee the pyle is of a murthe (ring dairt;)  
Myn ee the sicht thou taks thy levell by,  
To shute my hairt, and nevir shute aury:  
Myn ee thus helpis thyn ee to worke my smarte.

(Montgomerie)  

The two poems could hardly be closer, and although there is a slightly greater divergence in the sestets, the relationship is almost one of direct translation.

The legal imagery of S 55 is also reminiscent of Daniel's in Delia 8:

And you my verse, the Aduocates of loue,  
Haue followed hard the processe of my case,  

but the similarity may be coincidental. Pindar, who is used as a symbol for aspiration in S 44 is similarly employed in Sidney's Astrophil and Stella 3. Likewise the image of the bird in a cage, which occurs in S 49 might be compared with similar images in Spenser's Amoretti 65 and 72. In all these cases the possibility of direct influence is present but slight. More convincing is the comparison between S 46 and Amoretti 74. While Montgomerie calls the letters forming his lady's name 'lovely' and devotes his whole sonnet to them, Spenser begins,

Most happy letters fram'd by skilfull trade, 1
With which that happy name was first desynd.

Although Petrarch is probably the original source, there may be a link between the two British sonnets. As Montgomerie and Spenser were composing almost contemporaneously, the difficulty is to establish the direction of this influence.

Wyatt is the only English poet to have a marked effect on Montgomerie's sonnets. 'Farewell Love and all thy lawes for ever' almost certainly stands behind 'Against the God of Love'. 'The lyvely sperkes that issue from those Iyes' influences Montgomerie's 'The burning sparkis of Helens angells ee', both verbally and in argument. There are clear echoes of 'My pen, take payn a lytyll space' in 'Go, Pen and Paper! publish my complaintis', while there is a really close relationship between 'They fle from me that sometyme did me seke' and 'Ane Dreame'. One quatrain in particular proves Montgomerie's indebtedness to Wyatt.

When her lose gowne from her shoulders did fall,
And she me caught in her armes long and small;
Therewithall sweetely did me kysse,
And softly saide, 'dere hert, howe like you this?'

(Wyatt)

With that me thocht hir nicht-gowne of sche cuist,
Liftit the claiss and lichtit in my armis;
Hir Rosie lippis me thocht on me sche thirst,
And said, 'may this nocht stanche yow of your harmes!'

(Montgomerie)

The Scottish poet uses the same succession of events, similar phraseology and even echoes the change to direct speech. Although the theme is a common one, such an exact following cannot be accidental.

Despite this influence from Wyatt, English poetry does not have an extensive influence on the works of the early Scottish sonneteers. The most plausible reason for this phenomenon is the hostile relationship between the two countries at this time. One would expect English influence to become stronger after the Union of the Crowns. Also, there is more satisfaction in translating a sonnet from French into Scots than from English as the relationship in the second case is only dialectal. Moreover, the English sonnet, despite the early flowering under Surrey and Wyatt was still in its embryonic stages of development, while Ronsard and Desportes had become mature masters of the genre across the channel. When these factors are allied to the close political alliance between Scotland and France, the primacy of French influence may be more easily understandable.

Montgomerie, being older than James turned to the French hero of his day, Ronsard, instead of Desportes. From the works of that

poet he translated no fewer than seven sonnets. These were first pointed out by Oscar Hoffmann in *Studien zu Alexander Montgomerie* in 1894. They are close translations of the type opposed by the king in his *Reulis*. S 47 for example is a Scottish version of 'Petit barbet, que tu es bienheureux'; S 39 derives from 'Oeil, qui des miens à ton vouloir disposes' and S 56 proves to be a translation of 'Pardonne moy, Platon, si je ne cuide' although in this case only the octets are really closely related. As might have been expected Montgomerie's dream of the lady yielding, 'So suete a kis yestrene fra thee I reft' is also Ronsardian in origin, coming from 'Hier soir, Marie, en prenant maugré toy'. The Scottish poet does not omit a version of the opening sonnet to the *Amours* either. The famous 'Qui voudra voyr comme un Dieu me surmonte' is rendered, although more freely than usual in S 57, 'Wha wald behold him whom a god so grievis', while the 45th sonnet in the *Continuations*, 'Si j'avois un hayneus qui me voulust la mort' reappears as Montgomerie's 60th sonnet, 'Had I a foe that hated me to dead'. The proportional difference between Montgomerie and the other early Castalians as love sonneteers is greatly reduced when these seven translations are subtracted from his contribution.

Hoffmann, having discussed these borrowings in some detail, the most profitable course to follow in this context is a full comparison of the seventh pair, Ronsard's 'Heureuse fut l'estoile

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1. Hoffmann, *Studien zu Alexander Montgomerie*, pp. 19-24. He also notes the comparative unpopularity of love as a theme in Montgomerie. "Während das sonett sonst das liebesgedicht par excellence ist, behandeln bei Montgomerie nur ungefähr ein drittel der, als von ihm überlieferten, 70 derartigen dichtungen einen solchen stoff." This judgment could be extended to Stewart and James.
fortunée' and Montgomerie's 'O happy star, at evening and at morn'.

This will adequately demonstrate the Scottish poet's close
discipleship of his master, along with any minor differences in
technique. The two versions are:

Ronsard, *Amours* No. cvii

Heureuse fut l'estoille fortunée,
Qui d'un bon œil ma maistresse apperceut:
Heureux le bers, et la main qui la sceu
Emmailloter alors qu'elle fut née.
Heureuse fut la mammelle emmannée,
De qui le laict premier elle receut,
Et bienheureux le ventre, qui conceut
Si grand beauté de si grands dons ornée.
Heureux les champs qui eurent cest honneur
De la voir naistre, et de qui le bon heur
L'Inde et l'Egypte heureusement excelle.
Heureux le fils don grosse elle sera,
Mais plus heurieux celuy qui la fera
Et femme et mere, en lieu d'une pucelle.

Montgomerie, 'Of My Lady Seton'

O happy star, at evening and at morn,
Whais bright aspect my maistres first outfand;
O happy credle; and O happy hand
Which rockit hir the hour that sho was borne!
O happy pape, ye rather nectar horne,
First gaii hir suck, in siluer suedling band;
O happy wombe consavit had beforne
So brave a beutie, honour of our land!
O happy bounds, wher dayly yit scho duells,
Which Inde and Egypts happynes excells!
O happy bed wharin sho sail be laid!
O happy babe in belly sho sail breid!
Bot happier he that hes that hap indeid,
To mak both wyfe and mother of that maid.

The only addition made by Montgomerie is the mention of a bed in
1. 11 and this was necessitated by his having compressed 11. 9 and
10 of the original into one. All the other differences are those
rendered inevitable by the task of translating from one language
into another. Extra phrases like "at evening and at morn" or "Ye

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rather nectar horne" have to be added for the sake of the metre. He emphasises too the device of initial repetition, so popular in the Scottish pulpit, thus giving his sonnet a more logical, regular form than Ronsard's, while remaining true to the original ideas. Indeed it is true to say that a typist would discover the main divergences between the poems rather than the casual reader, for they are related to punctuation and rhetorical devices. The frequent use of exclamation in the Scottish poem gives it a staccato effect lacking in the French. This difference is to some extent accentuated by the frequency of plosives in the Scottish language and its capacity for aiding alliteration.

Heureux le fils dont grosse elle sera
may mean roughly the same as,

O happy babe in belly sho sall breid!
but they do not sound the same, nor are the associations aroused wholly similar.

Thus although on the surface, Montgomerie has done Lady Seton the doubtful honour of praising her in another man's words, in fact he has produced a very different poem. His version is full of rhetorical devices like alliteration, initial repetition and word-play, either lacking or not so noticeable in the original. Ironically enough he does all this while trying to keep his work as close to its model as possible. The lesson he learns is that taught to all translators. Perfection is never possible in this branch of literature. The main features such as ideas and tone may be faithfully represented, but in minor elements of language and style, the germanic language will always refuse to mimic its romance counterpart; the linguistic unit remain true to associations
hallowed by centuries of verbal intercourse. In this sense the poetic 'invention' may work independent of the poet himself.

Apart from one or two echoes from Du Bellay, Ronsard is the sole French influence on Montgomerie. It is however interesting that he should choose the more romantic side of the pléiade for imitation, while his fellow Castalians turned to the spiritual side in the persons of Du Bartas and Desportes. It becomes increasingly evident that he is foreshadowing a different sort of sonnet, one which was to sweep Scotland and replace the type represented by James. The 'master poet' with his greater attention paid to love and the tendency to group his poems thematically is the link between these groups. On the other hand he is a 'retrospicien' as well, looking back to the days of the makars as well as forward to the later periods of Scottish sonneteering. As in the poetry of James or Baldynnes, early Scottish poetry vies with French as Montgomerie's main influence.

The makars indeed have a stronger influence on Montgomerie than any other single Scottish sonneteer. In every realm of his work, the voice of one or other of them is audible. The love sonnets and pension sequence in particular recall Dunbar. 'To The for Me' is based on James I's Kingis Quair. Henryson's Testament of Cresseid lies behind 'A Lady's Lamentatione', while his fable approach occurs in S 28. The title 'last of the makars' was not lightly given or undeservedly borne.

Dunbar is the closest in spirit to Montgomerie. Already there has been cause to comment on the device of using an idealistic opening for a very realistic poem. Dunbar adopts the technique in 'The Tua Marriit Women' and some of his love lyrics,
while Montgomerie was seen to open S 54 with high-sounding Petrarchan sentiments as a herald to obscenity. Both poets too oppose courtly love. Dunbar's 'Inconstancy of Love' and 'Tua Marriit Wemen' depict the weaknesses of that code in theory and practice, while Montgomerie in 'Against the God of Love' attacks it in the person of Cupid. 'The Marriage of the Thrissill and the Rois' too adapts courtly imagery to the purposes of marriage just as Montgomerie did in S 43, with its courtly opening and later praise of Hymen.

Many further parallels in their love poetry can be adduced. The assaults on reason contained in Le Roman de la Rose return, not only in Dunbar's 'Golden Targe' but in Montgomerie's verse as well. In the earlier Scottish poem, reason had been the poet's unsuccessful shield against the various attacks of love. In S 38 Montgomerie's lady of lost nobility expresses her defeat by passion in similar imagery:

I wyt my wisdome suld halv bene my sheild,
and in the very next poem in the collection, Montgomerie sums up the moral of the 'Targe':

Love, whom Resone never culd command.1

In many ways of course, this similarity of love poetry might have been expected. Dunbar had been the laureate at James's IV's court, just as Montgomerie was in James VI's. Both had to compose a number of short romantic poems in celebration of marriages and celebrities, in whom they had little interest. As a result, lack of involvement and a growing cynicism characterizes much of their

love poetry. The decadence of the courtly love tradition too became clear to them, moving as they did in the rarified atmosphere of the court group. The carelessness of composition, traceable in both, especially in their use of mythology is largely attributable to their positions as court poets, often fated to compose verse on topics far removed from the bias of their genius.

It is in his pension poems that Montgomerie comes closest to the spirit of Dunbar. They share the ability to move from insinuating flattery to near scurrility. The praise of James VI contained in S 14 reminds one of that mixture of humility and indignation to be found in Dunbar's 'Schir ye have mony servitouris'. Yet the makar and his disciple are equally capable of swinging to the other extreme. The bitter cynicism of 'Schir, for your Grace bayth nicht and day' is more than matched by Montgomerie in S 16. All devices, foul and fair are employed by the poets in an effort to gain the money necessary to make art a secure profession. Especially popular is the sentimental appeal to happier times of service now gone by. Dunbar refers to his past popularity under the metaphor of 'The Gray Horse, auld Dunbar':

Quhen I was young and into ply,  
And wald cast gammaldis to the sky,  
I had beine bocht in realmes by,  
Had I consentit to be sauld.1

Montgomerie too recalls the happier days of the flyting and wonders if ingratitude is the sole reward for service:

Is this the frute, Sir, of your first affectione,  
My pensioun perish under your protectione?2

1. Dunbar, op.cit., p. 46.
2. Cranstoun, p. 97.
Nor is the king the only shared object of satire. Montgomerie in attacking the lords of the session, must have remembered the makar's 'Tydingis fra the Session'. His flyting with Polwart must have been begun in full consciousness of the success of Dunbar's earlier flyting with Kennedy, while minor flytings like that against Sharp are in the tradition of 'The Fenyjeit Freir of Tungland'.

Later too, in his religious poetry Dunbar provided a precedent which Montgomerie was to follow. 'Of the Nativitie of Christ' and 'Of the Worldis Vanitie' present respectively a glorification and condemnation of the world in a Christian context. With them may be compared Montgomerie's 'Wonders of God's World' and 'Of the Iniquitie of Man', which form a similar contrast. It is in the realms of love and satire however that Montgomerie is most obviously under Dunbar's influence.

As 'master poet' he would be expected to profit from the writings of his predecessors. With Dunbar's variety of satirical levels and mastery of rhetoric; with Henryson's humanity, simplicity, clear logical development and interest in the fable, it is scarcely surprising that Montgomerie was the finest poet at the Edinburgh court. What is astonishing is the failure of critics to recognise his merit.

**STYLE**

All the verse forms employed by Baldynneis are also present in Montgomerie's output. He too appreciates the effectiveness of complex internal rhyme patterns. Especially popular is the echoing of an end rhyme midway through the next line. It occurs in S 4:

As curious Dido Aenee did demand,
To understand wha wrakt his town and boy.
Him self got throu and come to Lybia land;
To whom fra hand his body he did bly.¹

This is the same technique as that employed by Stewart in 'To his Maiestie', but with one internal rhyme instead of two. Of the two poets Montgomerie is always less ambitious in the devices he uses. At times Stewart’s rhetorical tricks become so complex that his verse has the appearance of a stylistic exercise. The master poet always uses rhetoric to present his theme in the most effective way possible, not to conceal it behind a display of verbal fireworks.

Nevertheless he does approve of the rather limiting 'vers enchayenne' which Baldynneis used so often. It is used in both S 37 and 42. Montgomerie makes sure that it holds back thematic development as little as possible. S 43 for example uses 'vers enchayenne' throughout:

I trou your love by loving so unsene;
Unsene siklyk I languish for your love:
Your love is comely, constant, chaste and clene;
And clene is myne, experience sail prove.²

The echoing device is here used unobtrusively, in no way preventing the theme advancing logically at each quatrain. The reader is conscious of a gentle echoing effect and that is all, whereas in the poetry of Baldynneis, the echo becomes so dominant that no coherent argument is possible. In the poem under discussion, we progress from a comment on courtly love to a praising of the joys of marriage, a veiled proposal and finally the suggestion that we ought to rejoice in God. This development is achieved despite the fact that echoing is only one of the rhetorical techniques employed. Alli-

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1. Ibid., p. 90.

2. Ibid., p. 110.
teration is present throughout; there is a word list in l. 3, complex wordplay and assonance in ll. 9/10, yet all these devices remain subservient to theme throughout. This is perhaps the greatest quality of Montgomerie's rhetoric. It never overshadows the message of his poetry as Stewart's stylistic tricks frequently do. Instead thought and expression reinforce one another, giving his poetry a quality denied to the other Castalians.

The repetitions used by Baldynneis in moral sonnets like 'Of Trewth' and 'Of Fidelitie' reappear in MP 28 (Supp. Vol), where the word 'mercy' or compounds occurs 14 times. As Montgomerie was the more experienced poet and had been using these and similar techniques in earlier poetry, Stewart may have used him as a model as much as the rhétoriqueurs or early sixteenth century Scottish lyricists. One or two techniques however are not present in the Rapsodies. Among these omissions is the antithetical verse form used to express the paradoxicality of the Trinity in S l.1 This poem is one of Montgomerie's great rhetorical successes. The two aspects of the Trinity, which impress him are its triple nature and the paradox of three in one. Neither of these is in any way novel, but the fashion in which they are stylistically underlined is. The trinal nature of the Trinity is suggested through a plentiful use of triads. In l. 3 we have, "Foreknowledge, Wysdome and All-seeing Ee". In l. 4 it becomes "Iehovah, Alpha and Omega". Then in ll. 9 and 10 as well as in the final couplet there are two examples of Underwriting, both using three verbs and three attributes. The Trinity "is, was and sall be, sempiternall, mercifull and just",

1. Ibid., p. 89.
but it also can console the sinner by setting out to "increas, confirme, and strenthen" his "faith, hope and love". Triads therefore on a stylistic level embody the complex fusion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The antithetical form before mentioned is used to express the various paradoxes implied by the concept of the Trinity. This paradoxicality is stated in 1. 2:

Ay Trinal Ane, ane undevydit Three,¹

and then verbally underlined by means of antithesis. Thus in 1. 8 there is "unmovit quha movis". In 1. 9 God is a "contener unconteind" and finally in 1. 11, a "creator uncreatit". Montgomerie is not content to view his theme in terms of paradoxicality and three¬ness on an ideological level alone, but must reinforce this conviction stylistically by means of triads and antitheses. The poetry so produced has the professional smoothness, the metrical ingenuity of Dunbar. The poet like the builder constructs his verse on a framework set out in the drawing office and guarantees a polished finish when the work is completed. The plan is however that of the rhetorician, not the architect. The finish is guaranteed by flashes of wordplay or internal rhyme, not plaster and polish. Although such an approach is far from twentieth century methods, it has an undeniable appeal and would be more logical for an age which worships technology, than free verse or stream of consciousness poetry.

This theory of poetry is implicit in the title of 'makar' applied alike to Dunbar and Montgomerie. They especially deserve

¹ Ibid.
it because of their wide variety of techniques and capacity for adapting technique to fit the demands of a particular theme. In S 2, 'Of the Works of God' for example, Montgomerie is initially concerned with arousing an impression of awe in his readers. This he achieves by the favourite Miltonic device of holding back the principle verb till the last possible moment. The poem opens with a list of God's wondrous works, but no specific attitude is advanced until 'admire' appears in l. 12. The effect is a building up of tension, only released with the final introduction of the verb, which gives meaning to all that has gone before. The joy of praise is therefore linked with the joy of released repression; the awesomeness of God is underlined by the list-approach, piling up one miracle of creation upon another.

Montgomerie however was faced with a subsidiary problem in this poem. Describing divine works he was conscious of the inadequacy of language to do these marvels justice. Language as it were had to expand in order more fittingly to embody the wonders with which he was dealing. This difficulty he met and mastered by employing the device of compounding recently introduced into English by Spenser and advocated in the Reulis and Cautelis. The compound adjective in a way becomes a metaphor for the wondrous nature of God's works. Heaven is composed of "wondrous-vautit-rounds" and "restless-rolling sphers"; its music consists of "concordant-discords", and even Phoebus becomes "circle-belting". Compound

1. Ibid., p. 90.

2. James VI, Essayes, p. 77. He advocates "making, a corruptit worde, composit of twa dyuers simple wordis, as - Apollo gyde-Sonne".
epithets have thus enabled the poet to suggest phenomena outwith the scope of ordinary human comprehension, while suspension of the principle verb gives the work an orgastic pattern, rising to a climax in the final three lines.

In a manneristic era of Scottish literature, when at times the way of saying a thing seems more important than what is said, Montgomerie proves himself the finest rhetorical practitioner at James's court. He has a wider variety of stylistic tricks than James, for whom a logical form and clear presentation of ideas are the primary requisites of poetry. He may have been capable of vying with the master poet in the building up of indignation through repetition or questioning, but hardly ever needs such effects in his poetry. Stewart on the other hand allows stylistic virtuosity to overrun content. He permits the echoing technique to hold up and practically conceal his message and so produces verse like the 'Literall Sonnet', which is only meant to be a stylistic curiosity. Montgomerie alone has a variety of technical devices which are altered to fit the tenor of his ideas. Moral points are hammered home by repetition; the Trinity is explained through triad and antithesis; compounding expresses those ideas outwith the usual vocabulary range and righteous indignation uses a series of outraged questions to transmit its emotional force. Montgomerie who is probably both master poet and sonneteer, is certainly master rhetorician among the Castalians.