University of Nebraska at Omaha
DigitalCommons@UNO

Student Work

11-1-1969

The poetic response to the paradox of mutability and permanence: A study of poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

Catherine M. Griesel

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork
Please take our feedback survey at: https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE

Recommended Citation
Griesel, Catherine M., "The poetic response to the paradox of mutability and permanence: A study of poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" (1969). *Student Work*. 3208.
https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork/3208

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Work by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu.

THE POETIC RESPONSE TO THE PARADOX OF MUTABILITY AND PERMANENCE: A STUDY OF POETS OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of English

and the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Catherine M. Griesel

November, 1969

UMI Number: EP74607

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS
The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript
and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed,
a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI EP74607

Published by ProQuest LLC (2015). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.
All rights reserved. This work is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

Accepted for the faculty of The Graduate College of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts.

Graduate Committee

Name	Department
Ch. Hod Anderberg	Philosophy
Ralph M. Wardle	English

Glen Newkirk, English
Chairman

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thank you Dr. Glen A. Newkirk for your advice and your encouragement during my preparation of this thesis.

C.M.G.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> I have been living through a year, not merely existing in an abstraction called time. The year has meant to me participation in a cycle, the awareness of an ebb and flow, of being part of a vital and complex process . . . . At this moment I am standing on the threshold of a new year waiting to begin a new cycle of months forever familiar and forever new. "Seasons return" . . . though sooner or late each of us must add, "but not for me."[1]

Thus Joseph Wood Krutch, twentieth century American naturalist, ends his book The Twelve Seasons.

As is twentieth century man, so is renaissance man of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries alive to the sense of creation's flux, alive to the change of seasons and changes of nature therein, alive to the fact of mutability and earthly instability, the transitory nature of life. The writers of the renaissance era are infected by this world view of flux and change yet influenced by the world view of universal law and order. The dichotomy of these two views or philosophies is reflected in the poetry of the English poets Sir Walter Ralegh, Sir Philip Sidney, Fulke Greville, Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare, John Donne, and the Cavaliers Ben Jonson, Robert Herrick and Thomas Carew.

What are these two world-views? How did they originate and flourish? What are their characteristics? Philosophers from classical antiquity through the renaissance era are responsible for the growth of these two world views: universal law and order; flux and change.

Philosophers of the ancient world, including Heraclitus, Parmenides,

[1]Joseph Wood Krutch, The Twelve Seasons (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1949), p. 187.

Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Lucretius, and Zeno, expound certain theories of the universe concerning constancy and change. The renaissance era produced its philosophers and scientists influential to renaissance diversity of thought: Copernicus, Kepler, Bruno, Galileo, Montaigne, Bacon, and the political figure Machiavelli.

1

Influential Concepts of the "Ancients"

In the fifth century before Christ two opposed schools of thought, the Eleatic and the Ionic, existed. The Eleatic, represented by Parmenides, contends that there is absolute, self-existing being, which is the subject of true knowledge as distinct from phenomenal nature.[2] The philosophy of flux and flow of the Ionic school, represented by Heraclitus, is in contrast to that of the Eleatic, which contends that there is nothing constant except change.[3]

Heraclitus (500 B.C.) regards fire "as the fundamental substance; everything, like flame in a fire, is born by the death of something else."[4] Heraclitus claims that "'Mortals are immortals, and immortals are mortals, the one living the other's death and dying the other's life.'"[5] Heraclitus further states that the unity in the world is a unity formed by a combination of opposites:

[2]Vergilius Ferm, ed. A History of Philosophical Systems (Paterson, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1961), p. 75.

[3]Bertrand Russell, A History of Western Philosophy (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945), p. 44.

[4]Ibid., p. 41.

[5]Ibid.

> "This world, which is the same for all, no one of god or men has made; but it was ever, is now, and ever shall be an ever-living Fire, with measures kindling and measures going out . . . ."[6]

> "Coupled are things whole and things not whole, what is drawn together and what is drawn asunder, the harmonious and the discordant . . . ."[7]

In such a world as revealed by Heraclitus, perpetual change is to be expected; and his doctrine, that everything is in a state of flux, is the one most emphasized by his disciples as described in the Theaetetus of Plato. His concepts are revealed, and often refuted, in writings of both Plato and Aristotle who agree that Heraclitus taught that "'nothing ever is, everything is becoming' (Plato), and that 'nothing steadfastly is.' (Aristotle)"[8]

Heraclitus propounds that everything changes; Parmenides retorts that nothing changes. Parmenides, inventor of a form of metaphysical argument, flourished in the first half of the fifth century B.C. and was a native of Elea. His doctrine, set forth in the poem "On Nature," contends that the senses are deceptive and that the multitude of sensible things are mere illusion, that the only true being is "the One," infinite and indivisible, the whole of it present everywhere.[9]

Influencing Plato, fourth century B.C., are both Heraclitus and Parmenides. From Parmenides Plato derives the belief that "reality is eternal and timeless, and that, on logical grounds, all change must be

[6]Russell, p. 43.

[7]Ibid., p. 44.

[8]Ibid., p. 45.

[9]Ibid., p. 48.

illusory."[10] Plato derives from Heraclitus the doctrine that "there is nothing permanent in the sensible world."[11] Combined with Parmenides' doctrine, this belief leads to the conclusion that knowledge is to be achieved by the intellect, not to be derived from the senses.[12] Plato's dialogue Theaetetus supports the doctrine of Heraclitus that everything is always changing, but states this as true of objects of sense, not of objects of real knowledge. Plato denies identification of knowledge with perception (by the senses). He states that one cannot know through the senses alone that things exist; that only the mind reaches existence, judging existence of and the contrary nature of that perceived through touch. Knowledge, therefore, according to Plato, consists in reflection; perception is not knowledge because it has no part in apprehending truth since it has none in apprehending existence.[13]

In Plato's Timaeus dialogue, the philosopher, through the character Timaeus, states that intelligence and reason apprehend what is unchanging and opinion apprehends what is changing.[14] He indicates that the world cannot be eternal for it is of the senses. Since God is good, he created the world after the eternal pattern.[15]

[10]Russell, p. 105.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Plato, Theaetetus, trans. Benjamin Jowett (New York: Random House, 1937), pp. 186-191.

[14]Russell, p. 143.

[15]Ibid., p. 144.

> God desired that all things should be good, and nothing bad . . . . finding the whole visible sphere not at rest, but moving in an irregular and disorderly fashion, out of disorder he brought order, . . .[16]

God made the soul first, then the body, the soul compounded in the indivisible-unchangeable and the divisible-changeable.[17] The origin of Time is explored in the Timaeus, in which Plato indicates that God created a copy world designed as the eternal original with the moving image moving according to number; this image is called Time.[18]

Plato's metaphysics differs from that of Parmenides: Parmenides propounds only the One; Plato the many--beauty, truth, goodness, animal, man, etc.. Plato's One is pure Idea--Good, or God--in whom there is no change.[19] Plato's dualism--between reality and appearance, ideas and sensible objects, reason and sense-perception, soul and body--is revealed in the dialogue Phaedo. The character Socrates states, "Now essences are unchanging; absolute beauty, for example is always the same, whereas beautiful things continually change. Thus things seen are temporal, but things unseen are eternal."[20] Because unseen, the soul is eternal:

> . . . the soul . . . is then dragged by the body into the region of the changeable . . . . But when returning into herself she reflects, then she passes into the other world, the region of purity, and eternity, and immortality and unchangeableness . . . .[21]

[16]Plato, Timaeus, trans. Benjamin Jowett (New York: Random House, 1937), p. 14.

[17]Russell, p. 144.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid., p. 129.

[20]Ibid., p. 141.

[21]Plato, Phaedo, trans. Benjamin Jowett (New York: Random House, 1937), p. 463.

Plato's point of view is representative of a God of static perfection who moves the world through the love that finite beings feel for Him. Aristotle's viewpoint is that of a God of form without matter and a world that is continually evolving without completion towards a greater degree of form, becoming progressively more like God with living things aware of God and moved to action by God's love.[22]

Flourishing in the third century before Christ, Aristotle in his Metaphysics fuses Platonism and alternative doctrines. He propounds that the universal cannot exist by itself but only in particular things. The essence is in existence: form in matter; form and matter already exist, but there are eternal things that have no matter: God.[23] He distinguishes between soul and mind, making mind higher than soul: the mind eternal, the soul perishable; the mind timeless, the soul in Time; the mind with higher function of thinking, the soul perceiving sensible objects.[24] Plato declares that soul is essence and eternal as ideas are eternal.

In Aristotle's book On the Heavens are found ingredients of the Chain of Being concept, a world-structure which is reflected in literature through the Middle Ages to the late Eighteenth Century, a concept in which principles of continuity and gradation are fused. Aristotle in Book I Chapters 1-3 propounds rigid classifications in the nature of things:

> Things below the moon are subject to generation and decay; from the moon upwards, everything is ungenerated and indestructible. In

[22]Russell, p. 169.

[23]Ibid., p. 168.

[24]Ibid., p. 170.

> the sublunary sphere, everything is composed of the four elements, earth, water, air, and fire but there is a fifth element, of which the heavenly bodies are composed.[25]

In this same treatise, Aristotle states that the earth, which is spherical, is at the center of the universe, a theory supported by the scientist Ptolemy and rejected by later scientists influential to renaissance thought: Kepler, Bruno, and Galileo.

In the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle views happiness, an activity of the soul, as the good. Happiness lies in virtuous activity: pleasure is distinct from happiness, though happiness must include pleasure.[26]

Epicurus, philosopher of the Hellenistic age, considers pleasure to be the good, "'the beginning and end of the blessed life.'"[27] To Epicurus, pleasure of the mind is the contemplation of pleasures of the body;[28] virtue is "'prudence in the pursuit of pleasure.'"[29]

Not a determinist, Epicurus propounds that man, having free will, is master of his fate, though he cannot escape death. However, death is not to be feared, for the soul, material as is the body, perishes with the body; therefore, there is no source of terror in death, says Epicurus.[30] The soul, according to Epicurus, is composed of atom particles; soul-atoms are distributed throughout the body, and at the death of the body, the soul-atoms

[25]Russell, p. 206.

[26]The Great Books Foundation, ed. Ethics, by Plato (Chicago: The Great Books Foundation, 1955), pp. 44-46.

[27]Russell, p. 243.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid., p. 244.

[30]Ibid., pp. 246-247.

survive but are not capable of sensation.[31] Epicurus observes

> "Death is nothing to us; for that which is dissolved is without sensation, and that which lacks sensation is nothing to us."[32]

It is through the epic poem of the Roman Lucretius (99-55 B.C.) De Rerum Natura (On the Nature of Things) that the philosophy of Epicurus becomes known and influential to the man of the renaissance era. Book I of Lucretius' poem supports the concept that substance is eternal; that is, there exist primordial bodies of things; because nothing is born from nothing; nothing is dissolved into nothing; and the invisible character of these primordial bodies does not disprove their existence:[33]

> Nothing from nothing ever yet was born.
> Fear holds dominion over mortality
> Only because, seeing in land and sky
> So much the cause whereof no wise they know,
> Men think Divinities are working there.
> Meantime, when once we know from nothing still
> Nothing can create, we shall divine
> More clearly what we seek: those elements
> From which alone all things created are,
> And how accomplished by no tool of Gods.
> (161-171)
>
> there are indeed
> Within the earth primordial germs of things,
> Which, as the ploughshare turns the fruitful clods
> And kneads the mould, we quicken into birth.
> (208-214)
>
> Hence too it comes that Nature all dissolves
> Into their primal bodies again, and naught
> Perishes over to annihilation.
> (215-217)

[31]Russell, p. 246.

[32]Ibid., p. 247.

[33]The Great Books Foundation, ed. Of the Nature of Things, by Lucretius (Chicago: The Great Books Foundation, 1955), pp. 9-12.

Lucretius' presentation of Epicurus' concept includes infinite worlds and eternal creation and destruction of worlds, as evidenced in De Rerum Natura:

> . . . . . .Firstly, we find,
> Off to all regions round, on either side,
> Above, beneath, throughout the universe
> End is there none--as I have taught, as too
> The very thing of itself declares aloud,
> And as from nature of the unbottomed deep
> Shines clearly forth. Nor can we once suppose
> In any way 'tis likely, (seeing that space
> To all sides stretches infinite and free, . . .
> . . . . . .
> That only this one earth and sky of ours
> Hath been create and that those bodies of stuff,
> So many, perform no work outside the same;
> (1063-1077)

Zeno (300 B.C.), originator of the Stoic school, proposes as main doctrines that "there is not such thing as chance, and that the course of nature is rigidly determined by natural laws."[34] Zeno advocates that the course of nature "was ordained by a Law-giver who was also a beneficent Providence . . . . God is not separate from the world; He is the soul of the world, and each of us contains a part of the Divine Fire. All things are parts of one system, which is called Nature; the individual life is good when it is in harmony with Nature."[35] The Stoic doctrine states that man is free if he emancipates himself from the passions; virtue is the sole good, an end in itself, not that which does good. "Virtue consists in a will which is in agreement with Nature, in harmony with Nature."[36] This doctrine as to virtue, though not appearing in the fragments of Zeno, seems to be supported by him.

[34]Russell, p. 254.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid., pp. 254-257.

According to Cicero, who represents the Stoic position on the Law of Nature, there is an individual Law of Nature as well as a universal Law of Nature, as he writes in The Offices:

> We are likewise to observe, that nature has, as it were, endowed us with two characters. The first is in common to all mankind, because all of us partake in that excellency of reason, which places us above the brutes; from which is derived all that is virtuous, all that is graceful, and by which we trace our connections with our several duties. The other character is peculiar to individuals . . . .[37]

> Every man, however, ought carefully to follow out his peculiar character, provided it is only peculiar, and not vicious, that he may the more easily attain that gracefulness of which we are inquiring. For we ought to manage so as never to counteract the general system of nature; but having taken care of that, we are to follow our natural bias; insomuch, that though other studies may be of greater weight and excellence, yet we are to regulate our pursuits by the disposition of our nature. It is to no purpose to thwart nature, or to aim at what you cannot attain. We therefore may have a still clearer conception of the graceful I am recommending, from this consideration, that nothing is graceful that goes . . . against the grain, that is, in contradiction and opposition to nature.[38]

Cicero qualifies this law--to follow the bent of our own particular nature--warning that this law is not opposed to the universal law and that "peculiar" character is not "vicious." According to context, the two Laws are in harmony. Later philosophers interpret differently the statement "to follow out his peculiar character." As Cicero states, the Stoic recognizes a universe permeated with thought or "pronoia" (the Stoic world-mind):

> "Nature likewise by the power of reason associates man with man in the common bonds of speech and life
> . . . . . .
> This, then, ought to be the chief end of all men, to make the interest of each individual and of the whole body politic identical. For if the individual appropriates to selfish ends what should be devoted to the

[37]Kevin Guinagh and Alfred P. Dorijohn, Latin Literature in Translation (New York: Longmans Green and Company, 1942), p. 273.

[38]Ibid.

> common good, all human fellowship will be destroyed . . . . we are all subject to one and the same law in nature . . . ."[39]

The Stoic concept is that of man enduring, within himself, overcoming Fate's buffetings, believing in the brotherliness of man and the seeking of fellowship in friendship.

The preceding philosophers and statesman, except for Epicurus and his follower Lucretius, propound philosophies reflected in the world view of the humanist writers of the renaissance: the world view of limit, order, moderation, regulation under a supreme cosmic force of law or love.

2.

Influential Concepts of the "Moderns"

In addition to the Epicurean philosophy, other concepts propounded by scientists, philosophers, and statesmen of the renaissance era are influential to renaissance thought and diversity of thought. The concepts of such men as the "ancient," Epicurus, and the "moderns"--scientists Copernicus, Kepler, Bruno (scientist and philosopher), and Galileo; philosophers Montaigne and Francis Bacon; and political figure Machiavelli--are influential to a philosophy counter to that of the humanist: a world-view of infinite diversity, of flux and change.

Copernicus, Kepler, Bruno, and Galileo, employing the empirical method--the method of observations leading to conclusions--reveal a system contrary to the earth-centered, man-centered Ptolemaic system. Copernicus's heliocentric theory, influenced by Pythagoras, is influential to Kepler's theories of relative motion with the sun put at the center and the earth

[39]Hiram Haydn, The Counter-Renaissance (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1950), p. 408.

set as a mobile and subsidiary planet. The Copernican system was a well-known hypothesis "by the English reading public before the end of the sixteenth century."[40] It is "not until Galileo perfected the telescope that the hypothesis could be proved to be a true description of reality. Only in 1610, with the publication of Galileo's Siderius Nuncius, which announced the discovery of four new planets . . . the irregular surface of the moon, and many new stars, was it clear that the old system was seriously upset."[41] Galileo adopts the heliocentric system, accepting Kepler's discoveries, and further advances the laws of motion. According to these scientists, lifeless matter, set in motion, will continue to move forever unless stopped by external cause. God may have set the system in motion, but everything continues by itself. Thus, a change comes about in the concept of man's place in the universe. No longer is man the center of the universe with the solar system revolving around a motionless earth. It is not by the operation of immutable natural law but by universal relativity that every work of nature moves.[42]

Bruno, renaissance philosopher and scientist, develops the Copernican theory that was introduced in Copernicus' De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium, furthers the concept of relative motion, and derives the relativity of time. Bruno destroys the concept of a sub-lunary world directed by a trans-lunary world and decentralizes the old world order, denying limit and emphasizing diversity and particularization.[43] Bruno,

[40]Theodore Spencer, Shakespeare and the Nature of Man (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942), p. 30.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Haydn, pp. 154-158.

[43]Ibid., p. 154.

along with the political statesman Machiavelli and the philosopher Montaigne, puts emphasis on the particular man and the universe infinite in matter and in diversity. Both Bruno and Montaigne agree that creatures superior to man inhabit other regions in the heavens, for the infinite power of the creator would not exhaust itself with producing so insignificant a being as man. As Bruno states, "'It is certain that the omnipotent Begetter had the knowledge, the power and the will to create better things than we are, . . .'"[44] A. O. Lovejoy observes, "It is Giordano Bruno who must be regarded as the principal representative of the doctrine of the decentralized, infinite, and infinitely populous universe; . . ."[45] Lovejoy suggests that though Bruno may owe his interest in the question of infinity to implications of the Copernican theory, his convictions are primarily "a deduction from the principle of plenitude."[46] Though Bruno seems to champion the modern conception of the universe, yet he continues a certain Platonistic metaphysical strain, says Lovejoy.[47] Bruno's doctrine contains ingredients of the principles of immutability and mutability, for on the one hand his Absolute is "essentially generative, and manifested in the multitudinous abundance of creation," and on the other hand, "transcendent, self-sufficient, indivisible, timeless, ineffable, and incomprehensible, . . ."[48]

[44]Arthur O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being. A Study of the History of an Idea (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936), p. 115.

[45]Ibid., p. 116.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Ibid., p. 120.

The cosmological order is shaken; the old order changeth: the ideal world picture of nature's order shown in the elements, in the stars, the universal scheme, the cosmological pattern of Elizabethan thinking is "being punctured by doubt."[49] New explorations are destroying old concepts. The early explorations of Copernicus and Bruno are disturbing to such writers as Ralegh, Sidney, Greville, Spenser, and Shakespeare. Aware of these explorations as well as the discoveries of Galileo are Donne, Jonson, and the Tribe of Ben.

The natural order of Elizabethan thinking is also questioned by writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Montaigne's publication of his "Apology for Raymond Sebond" upset the old order's explanation of nature, challenging Sabunde's optimism about man's capacity to achieve knowledge and attacking the "arrogance and vanity of man."[50] Montaigne asks, "'Is it possible to imagine anything more ridiculous than that this miserable and puny creature, who is not so much as master of himself, exposed to shocks on all sides, should call himself Master and Emperor of the universe, of which it is not in his power to know the smallest part, much less to command it?'"[51] Humanists, from the Greeks on, pointed out that "Nature looked after animals better than she looked after man."[52] Montaigne in the "Apology" calls man himself another animal, without any

[49]Spencer, p. 29.

[50]Ibid., p. 34.

[51]Ibid., p. 35.

[52]Ibid.

prerogative, and pushes man out of his position "in the natural hierarchy."[53] He insists that man knows nothing of Nature, of Reason, and of the Soul. Man knows nothing of his body nor his desires; he is a being of diverse humors:

> "I am so far from vexing my selfe to see my judgement differ from other mens, or to grow incompatible of society or conversation of men, to be of any other faction of opinion then [sic] mine owne; that contrariwise (as variety is the most generall fashion that nature hath followed, and more in the mindes then [sic] in the bodies: for so much as they are of a more supple and yielding substance, and susceptible or admitting of formes) I finde it more rare to see our humor or designes agree in one. And never were there two opinions in the world alike, no more than two haires or two graines. Diversity is the most universall quality."[54]

With such diversity of man's humors Montaigne sees it as impossible to establish useful rules of conduct around a central rational Law of Nature. Montaigne presents "a human being who is indistinguishable from animals," unable to "comprehend the order of the universe or discover any Laws of Nature in society."[55]

The Elizabethan pattern of political order is punctured, as well. Consistent with Cicero's observations in The Offices, the world picture of order includes order in political rulership: man, placed above the brutes because of that excellency of reason (a position denied by Montaigne), is a responsible ruler and individual being, consistent in his public and private face. His particular bent, his natural bias, says Cicero, is not in contradiction and opposition to nature: that bent is virtuous, tempered, reasonable. Machiavelli's position in The Prince seems to violate the

[53]Spencer, p. 36.

[54]Haydn, p. 143. Author's italics.

[55]Spencer, p. 40.

political world of order and harmony and justice, reflecting the individual with his sense of beauty, loveliness, harmony. Within the Machiavellian concept "man in society could no longer reflect the order of the cosmos or the order of created beings."[56] The particular bent of man is dichotomous with such order and harmony: man, according to Machiavelli, is naturally evil, and the best way to govern him is by force, by fear. Cicero, on the other hand, declares, "'There are two ways of settling a dispute: first, by discussion; second by physical force; and since the former is characteristic of man, the latter of the brute, we must resort to force only in case we may not avail ourselves of discussion.'"[57] In Machiavelli's handbook The Prince, designed for the expediency of unifying Italy, the tooth-and-claw world in which man organized and set up laws for self-preservation, self-interest--man made laws--are propounded. The world is not held together by a "bond of Law and Right deriving from its creator's purpose . . . but with a Law and Right dependent upon arms and Might."[58] This world calls for the exercise of cunning and courage by a ruler who imitates the fox and the lion. In his Discourses, Machiavelli pictures states on "one level of natural growth and decay."[59] Contrary to Cicero's conviction of man's natural brotherliness and subordination of interests to others, Machiavelli in his Discourses observes in man insatiable desire and acquisitiveness.[60] The old order changeth: "the new philosophy calls

[56]Spencer, p. 44.

[57]Ibid., p. 42.

[58]Haydn, p. 153.

[59]Ibid.

[60]Ibid.

all in doubt."

Francis Bacon, recognizing the diversity, complexity, mutability of the universe, insists that man can know. "Throughout his days, Bacon continued to affirm that it is in the pursuit and attainment of knowledge that man achieves his sovereignty, dignity, and 'memory and merit of the times succeeding.'"[61] Bacon sees progressive stages of certainty for man. Man has the power of observing the world of empirical reality and the power of understanding to enrich the material life of mankind. Bacon's emphasis is upon the study of the particular rather than the hurried leap of the universal; however, his method is not simply one of collection of particulars but of eliciting reason from facts by a methodical process.[62] He insists upon the detailed analysis of the specific processes of change. Bacon believes in man's responsibility to set in order, to work for the welfare of man. As Lovejoy observes, Bacon's assumption is that all created beings exist for man's sake, that the world works in the service of man; there is nothing from which he does not derive use and fruit: thus the implication of the principle of plenitude.[63] The diverse, mutable world is not a chaotic world but a practical, useful world. Bacon in his Works, VI states his own working philosophy:

> "Considering myself born for the service of mankind, and interpreting the care of the common weal as one of those things which . . . are of public right accessible to all, I investigated thoroughly what might contribute the most to humanity, and deliberated on what I was myself

[61]F. H. Anderson, The Philosophy of Francis Bacon (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 9.

[62]Haydn, p. 268.

[63]Lovejoy, p. 187.

> best fitted by nature to perform. Now I have discovered that nothing is of such benefit to the human race as the discovery of and devotion to new truths and arts by which the life of men is cultivated . . . . And for myself, I found that I was constructed more for the contemplation of truth . . . as having a mind agile enough to recognize the resemblance of things . . . and sufficiently steadfast and eager to observe the refinements of their diversity . . . ."[64]

3

The Paradox of Mutability and Permanence

The concept of a universe of harmony and order and design, a universe made through the wisdom of God, comes from Platonism, from Aristotelianism, from Stoicism, and from a system devised by the Scholastics. The theologian Thomas Aquinas asserts that God did not make the universe capriciously but according to his intellect and that God governs this creation by His law:[65] "'God . . . the first unmoved mover . . . moves each thing to its end . . . He is the governor of the whole universe by providence . . . .'"[66] This system of natural law is immutable; every order of this universe has a goal, and in its search for the goal the order finds its function: " . . . The orders of nature below man, the subrational orders, strive to attain their ends blindly, through appetite or through the direction and influence of heavenly bodies."[67] The Thomistic universe, then, is rooted in order. Aquinas believes in a "'static divine order in all spheres of life'"[68] and in the possibility of man's establishing a similar order on earth. Man is

[64]Anderson, p. 10.

[65]Haydn, p. 131.

[66]Ibid., p. 132.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Ibid., p. 133.

the microcosm corresponding to the great world macrocosm. Man, the species, in detecting by reason God's plan, is in harmony with universal nature. This system of universal law is founded upon the assumption of norms of conduct for each species, norms universally valid and possessing objective reality.[69]

The renaissance Christian humanists do not substitute a new system for the Thomistic view. They adopt the system of universal law: a system built upon God's authority, disclosed by revelation and reason, and sustained by principles of unity and order.[70] Originating in God, "the laws of the universe are constant and immutable."[71]

The view of the ordered universe exists in the Elizabethan age. The renaissance humanists' image of world order is the chain of being which expresses "the unimaginable plenitude of God's creation, its unflattering order, and its ultimate unity."[72] In the Platonic concept, the chain allows every class to excel in a single particular: plants, beasts, man, each exceeding in certain particulars. This chain of being is arranged in hierarchical order from the lowliest kind of creature to the highest possible kind: an arrangement of limit, of degree, of finiteness, and of harmony.[73] This chain is one of "ascending degrees of perfection" or

[69]Haydn, p. 136.

[70]Ibid., p. 137.

[71]Ibid., p. 138.

[72]E. M. W. Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Picture (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944), p. 23.

[73]Lovejoy, p. 59.

"descending degrees of 'privation.'"[74] This chain of being concept is derived from the thought of Aristotle and Plato, adopted by mediaeval tradition, and absorbed by renaissance Christian humanists. The concept is related to the finite universe of Aristotle and to the earth-centered, man-centered universe of Ptolemy.[75] One crack in the linkage of the chain will impair or destroy the whole; one crack in the fixed and permanent norms of this purposeful world guided by God and revealing unchanging laws will begin the demolition of the old order of immutability.

In the concept of the Christian humanists, natural law is immutable in this universe of reason, unity, design. In this universe, man, a little lower than the angels and gifted intellectually, can strive toward good and toward truth, can participate in the divine plan as a microcosm of order and stability mirroring the macrocosm of order and stability. As God rules the universe with order and harmony in His goodness, so man can rule his microcosm society, state, himself in his fundamental goodness.

Though renaissance humanists assert their belief in world order, they recognize the possibility of disorder and chaos. Writers of the renaissance, in their exposure to scientific and philosophical concepts in juxtaposition to the world view of order, recognize the possibility of chaos in the possibility of man's contradictoriness. Once skepticism of the divine scheme for the universe and skepticism of the nature of man arises, fear of the disintegration of order and harmony results.

Renaissance writers faced with the world view of mutability, of flux

[74]Haydn, p. 295.

[75]Lovejoy, pp. 59-61.

and change, include such men as Ralegh, Sidney, Greville, Spenser, Shakespeare, Donne, Jonson and the Cavaliers Herrick and Carew. They respond, to a degree, to the movements known as naturalistic and romantic in the counter-renaissance revolt from the tradition of Christian classicism. The Christian humanist recognizes in man's nature both the divine and the animal and man's potential of control of passion and appetite by reason. He believes in reason, purpose, law, limit.[76] The renaissance romantic, denying limit, reveals a fascination with the theme of the transience of life, the mortality of beauty and love, the ideal of unlimited freedom.[77] He loves the sensuous values of the mortal world, yet articulates "a metaphysical ache that spurns the ordinary goods of human life and the human soul or extends them to extraordinary and excessive value."[78] The renaissance naturalist denies limit, deals only with the empirically actual,[79] finds truth and fact in matter that is corruptible and changeable.[80] He shifts to a downward estimate of man's nature and finds reality in the appetites and passions of the human animal.[81] The renaissance naturalist rejects the concept of the aspiring man, the man born to virtue and inclined to justice.

Renaissance romanticist and naturalist emphasize mutability, the

[76]Haydn, p. 17.

[77]Ibid., p. 360.

[78]Ibid., p. 366.

[79]Ibid., p. 381.

[80]Ibid.

[81]Ibid., p. 382.

transitory world of sensuous beauty and birth and decay, the diversity of man and his nature. The Christian humanist admits the apparent disorder of nature but insists upon universal law.[82] In the world view of Christian humanism, Reason and Nature are complementary. The Christian humanist is optimistic toward purpose in the world and man's capacity to understand and direct himself toward such purpose, optimistic toward his capability to guide his life in this world by reason. In the world picture of the romantic and naturalist, Nature and Reason are contraries, purpose inscrutable, man incapable to fathom purpose.

"For the renaissance, artistic beauty was exact proportion, clear outline, stable relations,"[83] declares Wylie Sypher. But as the renaissance continues, "a tremor of malaise and distrust"[84] shakes western Europe, and writers reveal their awareness of disintegration filling their verses with "clashes of attitudes and language,"[85] Sypher observes. Renaissance optimism is shaken: "the harmony between microcosm and macrocosm is untuned."[86] As Montaigne declares, "There is no permanent existence, either of our being or of that of the objects."[87]

[82]Haydn, p. 436.

[83]Wylie Sypher, Four Stages of Renaissance Style (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1955), p. 117.

[84]Ibid., p. 100.

[85]Ibid., p. 103.

[86]Ibid., p. 118.

[87]Ibid., p. 121.

A study of poetry of Ralegh, Sidney, Greville, Spenser, Shakespeare, Donne, Jonson, Herrick and Carew reveals their response to the views of permanence and change, timelessness and time, the eternal and the mutable.

CHAPTER II

RENAISSANCE HUMANISTS: POETRY OF PARADOX

1

Sidney, Ralegh, and Greville

Representative of the Christian-humanist tradition is Sir Philip Sidney, whose life seems to coincide with Castiglione's picture of the gentleman in The Book of the Courtier and whose poetic works such as Astrophel and Stella and Arcadia reveal his interest in harmony and order, his reverence for reason and moderation, his recognition of virtuous action. Paradoxically, however, these works reveal a passionate nature defying reason and control, supporting love of the flesh, rejoicing in life of the senses, mocking the ordered world, scourging the bond of love in recognition of the tensions of love.

In Sidney's last sonnet of Astrophel and Stella, the constancy of Nature, permanence, universal law are emphasized:

> Leave me, O Love which reachest but to dust;
> And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things;
> Grow rich in that which never taketh rust,
> Whatever fades but fading pleasure brings.
> . . . . . .
> Then farewell, world; thy uttermost I see;
> Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me.[1]

Goaded, however, by the realities and the tensions, the mutability and the corruptibility of love, Sidney overcomes reason with defiant outburst in his epilogue to Astrophel and Stella, entitled "Desire," and in his poem "A Litany":[2]

[1]E. K. Chambers, ed. The Oxford Book of Sixteenth Century Verse (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1932), p. 187.

[2]"A Litany" was reprinted in England's Helicon 1600 as "Astrophel's Love is dead."

"Desire"

Thou blind man's mark, thou fool's self-chosen snare,
  Fond fancy's scum, and dregs of scattered thought;
Band of all evils, cradle of causeless care;
  Thou web of will, whose end is never wrought;
Desire, desire! I have too dearly bought,
  With price of mangled mind, thy worthless ware;[3]

"A Litany"

Ring out your bells, let mourning
      shows be spread;
For love is dead--
  All Love is dead, infected
With plague of deep disdain;
. . . . . .
  Therefore from so vile fancy,
  To call such wit a franzy,
  Who Love can temper thus
  Good Lord, deliver us![4]

Anger, frustration, awareness of the contradictories of life that reason, perhaps, cannot allay or solve, are evident in the poetry of Sir Walter Ralegh, another prominent courtier and court poet of Elizabeth's reign. Such poems as "Nature, that washed her hands" and "The Lie" are products of Ralegh's dark years when he was out of favor with lady and with ruler. Though Nature did "wash her hands in milk" and "instead of earth took snow and silk" to fashion a mistress, Ralegh declares that time is the ravager which nature despises:

Oh, cruel time! which takes in
      trust
  Our youth, our joys, and all
      we have,
And pays us but with age and
      dust;

[3]Chambers, p. 186.

[4]Ibid., p. 183.

Who in the dark and silent
grave
. . . . . .
Shuts up the story of our days.[5]
(31-36)

Ralegh ends his poem "Nature, that washed her hands" with hopeless rage at Time and the grave, rather than with renaissance humanist optimism. There is no hope of eternity, only the realization of the grave and dust to dust.

Ralegh's bitter experiences from 1592, on, are reflected in his pointed references in "The Lie" to principles professed and practiced as juxtaposed to the moral values of his time:

Say to the court, it glows
And shines like rotten wood;
Say to the church, it shows
What's good, and doth no good:
If church and court reply,
Then give them both the lie.
Tell potentates they live
Acting by others' action;
Not loved unless they give,
Not strong but by a faction.
. . . . . .
Tell men of high condition,
That manage the estate,
Their purpose is ambition,
Their practice only hate.
. . . . . .
Tell zeal it wants devotion;
Tell love it is but lust;
Tell time it is but motion;
Tell flesh it is but dust.
. . . . . .
Tell fortune of her blindness;
Tell nature of decay;

[5]J. William Hebel and Hoyt H. Hudson, eds. Poetry of the English Renaissance 1509-1660 (New York: F. S. Crofts & Co., 1938), p. 139.

Tell friendship of unkindness;
Tell justice of delay.
. . . . . .
Tell arts they have no soundness,
But vary by esteeming;
Tell schools they want profoundness,
And stand too much on seeming.
. . . . . .
Tell faith it's fled the city;
Tell how the country erreth;
Tell manhood shakes off pity;
Tell virtue least preferreth.
And if they do reply,
Spare not to give the lie.[6]
(7-72)

The above verses from "The Lie" reflect a far different microcosm and extended macrocosm than that of the traditional humanist outlook. The world of reality and the world of the ideal are not neatly fused by Ralegh, who recognizes the discrepancies between the public face and the private face, the stated purpose and the act. With the same skeptical outlook about society and mankind Ralegh advises his son:

Three things there be that prosper all apace
And flourish, while they are asunder far;
But on a day they meet all in a place,
And when they meet, they one another mar.
And they be these: the wood, the weed, the wag.
. . . . . .
Now mark, dear boy: while these assemble not,
Green springs the tree, hemp grows, the wag is wild;
But when they meet, it makes the timber rot,
It frets the halter, and it chokes the child.[7]

Anger and frustration in the Elizabethan world of harmony and order are revealed in Ralegh's thrust at the court from which he had fallen out of favor and in which he recognized the discrepancies and paradoxes of life:

[6]Hebel, pp. 139-140.

[7]Ibid., p. 138.

Like truthless dreams, so are my joys expired,
And past returned are all my dandled days;
My love misled, and fancy quite retired,
Of all which past, the sorrow only stays.

My lost delights, now clean from sight of land,
Have left me all alone in unknown ways;
. . . . . .
As in a country strange without companion,
I only wail the wrong of death's delays,
When sweet spring spent, whose summer well nigh done,
Of all which past, the sorrow only stays;

Whom care forewarns, ere age and winter cold,
To haste me hence, to find my fortune's fold.[8]

A portion of Ralegh's ambitious poem entitled The Ocean to Cynthia was read by Ralegh to Edmund Spenser in Ireland. This portion known to Spenser is lost; but the portion extant seems to belong to a later period, written during Ralegh's disillusionment with love and with the court.[9] The poet, speaking, perhaps, to his lost mistress, laments the transience of love with time's ravages and recognizes that love has ended, that love is not eternal:

She is gone, she is lost, she is found, she is ever fair;
Sorrow draws weakly where love draws not too;
Woe's cries sound nothing, but only in love's ear.
Do then by dying what life cannot do.

Unfold thy flocks and leave them to the fields,
To feed on hills or dales, where likes them best,
Of what the summer or the springtime yields,
For love and time hath given thee leave to rest.

Thy heart which was their fold, now in decay
By often storms and winter's many blasts,
All torn and rent becomes misfortune's prey;
False hope, my shepherd's staff, now age hath brast.[10]
(20-31)

[8]Chambers, p. 467.

[9]Ibid., p. 941.

[10]Hebel, p. 141.

Fulke Greville, servant to the Queen and later to King James, wrote the following shortly after the death of his great friend, Sir Philip Sidney: "'Well, my lord, divide me not from him, but love his memory and me in it.'"[11] Representative of the renaissance humanist point of view with emphasis upon reason and virtue is Greville's pronouncement in his poem Caelica:

> Love, the delight of all well-thinking minds,
> Delight, the fruit of virtue dearly loved,
> Virtue, the highest good that reason finds,
> Reason, the fire wherein men's thought be proved,
> Are from the world by Nature's power bereft,
> And in one creature for her glory left.
> . . . . . .
> Delight, Love, Reason, Virtue, let it be
> To set all women light but only she.[12]

Paradoxically, however, in the poem Caelica, Greville reveals his concern with a world of flux and change with its corrupting, decaying forces that man cannot banish but only endure. The poet sees a world of diversity in man's nature and nature's laws:

> The earth with thunder torn, with fire blasted,
> With waters drowned, with windy palsy shaken,
> Cannot for this with heaven be distasted,
> Since thunder, rain, and winds from earth are taken;
> Man torn with love, with inward furies blasted,
> Drowned with despair, with fleshly lustings shaken,
> . . . . . .
> Then, man, endure thyself, those clouds will vanish;
> Life is a top which whipping sorrow driveth;
> Wisdom must bear what our flesh cannot banish . . . .[13]
> (61-70)

Ralegh's closing lines reaffirm law of reason.

[11] Chambers, p. 467.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Hebel, p. 129.

Greville, as are other writers of the renaissance, is aware of the ravages, the ruins of Time, as revealed in his debates "Time" and "Eternitie." As other writers defeat time's ravages by immortalizing love and beauty through their verse, so does Greville in "Eternitie" declare time finite, limited, and weak, a servant to Divine Power:

> What meanes this New-borne childe of Planets' motion?
> This finite Elfe of Mans [sic] vaine acts, and errors?
> Whose changing wheeles in all thoughts stirre commotion?
> . . . . . .
> Time is the weakest worke of my Creation,
> And, if not still repayr'd must straight decay;
> . . . . . .
> Time! therefore, know thy limits, and strive not
> To make thy selfe, or thy works Infinite,
> Whose Essence only is to write, and blot:
> Thy Changes prove thou hast no stablish't right.
> Governe thy mortall Sphere, deale not with mine:
> Time but the servant is of Power Divine.[14]

Renaissance man's beautiful and orderly world seems, for Greville, to fade into a fallen world of change, decay, and death; but, for Greville, as for other renaissance writers aware of the paradoxical world views, "man could at least look up to the heavens and see, beyond the sphere of the moon, a universe in which he was assured neither corruption nor change could take place."[15]

2

Edmund Spenser

The writings of Edmund Spenser reflect the renaissance view of the

[14]H.J.C. Grierson and G. Bullough, eds. The Oxford Book of Seventeenth-Century Verse (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1958), pp. 11-13.

[15]Alexander M. Witherspoon and Frank J. Warnke, eds. Seventeenth-Century Prose and Poetry 2nd edition (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1963), p. 11.

goodness of man because of right reason, man's control of his own destiny, the purposiveness of nature and the optimistic belief in man's understanding of purpose, man's freedom of choice--to do good--and his choice of moderation, man's dignity as an individual coupled with his obligation to others. However, Spenser's writings also reveal an awareness of the contradictories: the goodness of man or the evil of man because of bent or instinct; the validity of passions; the diversity, caprice, and mutability of nature and the possibility of the non-existence of universal law; the powerlessness of man; man's self-interest.

Graham Hough observes of The Faerie Queene:

> . . . the variety and multiplicity of incident, the characters drawn from a dozen different realms, the unpredictability of narrative development; suffused at the same time with a feeling of harmony, that belongs in the same world, that with all the solutions of narrative logic, changes of direction and temper there is yet a purpose . . . .[16]

According to Kathleen Williams, "the poem, interpreting the world, sets that world into the context which gives it meaning, and it does so with full recognition of the strains and tensions, as well as the peace, which that meaning involves for man."[17] The Faerie Queene "shapes within itself the multitudinous things that are in the world contayned."[18] In Books I through part of Book V, Spenser looks beyond the mutable to the eternal, though recognizing that life in actuality is fluctuating, changing. Through his Faerie Land, Spenser holds a mirror up to the world of order and disorder, of reason and passion, using figures and landscapes

[16]Graham Hough, A Preface to the Faerie Queene (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1962), p. 95.

[17]Kathleen Williams, Spenser's Faerie Queene. The World of Glass (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 14.

[18]Ibid., p. xvii.

as mirrors. Book I represents this way for working, suggests Roger Sale. "Spenser fills the landscape with the very qualities which the Red Crosse Knight cannot see are within him."[19] The figure of Pride, Orgoglio, as a fountain is an "external object that serves as a mirror for what the Knight has become. Careless, without his armor, the Knight drinks and becomes like the fountain . . . so he meets Orgoglio, the very thing he has allowed himself to become; thus, both Knight and giant are ensnared."[20] The Red Cross Knight loses himself in the underworld depths of Orgoglio's dungeon, in the prison of the House of Pride. There, as Williams observes, through the knowledge of himself, through his loneliness, his losing himself, Red Cross finds himself, recognizing that "his face is weakness and his efforts are pride,"[21] realizing he is wasting "all his better dayes" in a prison of his own making: his own guilt. As Red Cross emphasizes to his Lady, Una

> Faire Lady, then said that victorious knight,
> The things, that grieuous were to do, or beare,
> Them to renew, I wote, breeds no delight;
> . . . . . .
> But th'onely good, that growes of passed feare,
> Is to be wise, and ware of like agein.
> This dayes ensample hath this lesson deare
> Deepe written in my heart . . . . . .[22]
> (viii.44)

In the legend of Book II, the knight Guyon finds the guides of

[19]Roger Sale, Reading Spenser: An Introduction to the Faerie Queene (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 46.

[20]Ibid., p. 45.

[21]Williams, p. 21.

[22]Leo Kirschbaum, ed. Spenser. Selected Poetry (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1961), p. 128.

"balance, control and reconciliation in the climate in which temperance is to be achieved."[23] His way is found through the dangerous but life-giving complexities and diversities, the mutability of human behavior as mirrored by the figures and landscapes of the underworld dungeons of greed: the Cave of Mammon, the Garden of Proserpina with its trees laden with the treacherous golden apples of discord; and the Bower of Bliss, representative of false concord with its unbalanced pair, Acrasia and Verdant.[24] Through the fluctuating and changing world of the empirical actual, the knight Guyon actively finds a sense of proportion, a right balance in himself, and a balanced relationship with others.

Just as Red Crosse Knight and Sir Guyon pierce the surface of disguise and artfulness to see through the looking glass to truth, so does Britomart, the woman and warrior of Books III and IV. These books, identified by Williams as two central books building up "the world of man's personal relations, his harmony with his surroundings, his concord within himself,"[25] are concerned with man as a medium participating in his universe of contraries, of paradoxes. Britomart mirrors the many-faceted, constantly changing universe, the world that "is alive, immensely active, constantly in need of redefinition."[26] As Sale observes of Spenser's portrayal, Britomart is ". . . a laughing knight, a steeple that receives the 'fair blessing' of Artegall's Jove-like blows, a girl, an image of

[23]Williams, pp. 34-35.

[24]Ibid., pp. 56-60.

[25]Ibid., p. 89.

[26]Sale, p. 35.

'The Maker selfe,' . . . ."[27] Another facet of the diverse, complex universe is mirrored in Britomart's through-the-looking glass experiences of Books III and IV. Through her father's magic glass fashioned by Merlin and called Venus' looking glass, Britomart sees the image of Artegall; in her search for love she learns a sense of proportion in love. The mirror's spherical shape emphasizes its nature: "like to the world it selfe."[28]

Spenser represents in the unity-in-variety of his epic the recognition of the viewpoint revealed in writings of Sidney, Ralegh, and Greville: change-within-order rather than change-within-disorder. Books III and IV are an exploration of a way of living through the realities of love and friendship and a representation of concord born of discord,[29] order of disorder, unity of diversity. As Britomart searches for Artegall, Florimell searches for Marinell, and their search points up the mutability, diversity, complexity of the experiences of love and stresses that man, living in Time, finds the eternal in the paradoxes of the universe.[30] Ernst Cassirer declares that permanence is understood through the media of multiplicity and change.[31] Such media in Books III and IV are the sea with the Protean figure and the Garden of Adonis. As Kathleen Williams observes, "The Garden holds the same kind of assurance as the sea, that

[27]Sale, p. 53.

[28]Williams, p. 94.

[29]Ibid., p. 79.

[30]Ibid., p. 146.

[31]Ernst Cassirer, The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy, trans. Mario Domandi (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, MCMLXIII), p. 179.

we can know concord and order and joy if we accept and work with the laws of life."[32] As a prisoner of Proteus, Florimell commits herself to the sea, to her underworld dungeon. Proteus, the image of change--"the flux of changeable passions"[33]--acts as the agent of reconciliation of Marinell and Florimell. Marinell, warned by Proteus that love means death, hears the lament of Florimell because of Marinell's indifference; and his heart is touched. The sorrow and death, "associated with sea," are "a part of life and fecundity and joy."[34] In the paradoxical quality of the sea--dissolution and rebirth--Florimell finds truth, the eternal. Florimell's experience emphasizes the death-life cycle, the destruction-creation principle symbolized in Book III of the Garden of Adonis. In the Garden Adonis and Venus together make "death into life and change into perpetuity."[35] Venus is the goddess of concord and creation. Adonis is the representative of mutability, subject to mortality. Yet Adonis, though "transformed oft, and chaunged diuerslie . . ." must live, "that liuing giues to all." He is "eterne in mutabilitie." Spenser declares that nothing perishes in the whole universe. He observes of the Father of all forms, Adonis,

> . . .for he may not
> For euer die, and euer buried bee
> In balefull night, where all things are forgot;
> All be he subject to mortalitie,
> Yet is eterne in mutabilitie,

[32]Williams, p. 150.

[33]Ibid., p. 117.

[34]Ibid., p. 143.

[35]Ibid., p. 145.

> And by succession made perpetuall,
> Transformed oft, and chaunged diuerslie:[36]
> (vi.47)

Thus Spenser emphasizes change-within-order in Book III as he does in Book VII, the Mutability cantos:

> They are not changed from their first estate;
> But by their change their being doe dilate:
> And turning to themselues at length againe,
> Doe worke their own perfection so by fate.[37]
> (vii.58)

Throughout The Faerie Queene Spenser reveals his awareness of paradoxes and contradictories of life and the world of nature, both human and physical. These contradictories point up the complexity and diversity of the world of which Spenser, Sidney, Ralegh, Greville--and Shakespeare, Donne, Jonson and the Cavaliers Herrick and Carew--recognize themselves as a part of: a world that is not an either this or this but a this and this. For example, Spenser in Book II deals with passions that disfigure humanity spiritually and physically, temptations and appetites that appear attractive. Phaedria, the seductive lady of the Idle Lake, distracts Guyon with her carpe-diem song:

> Behold, O man, that toilesome paines doest take,
> The flowres, the fields, all that pleasant growes,
> How they themselues doe thine ensample make,
> Whiles nothing enuious nature them forth throwes
> Out of her fruitfull lap; how, no man knowes,
> They spring, they bud, they blossome fresh and faire,
> . . . . . .
> Why then dost thou, O man, that of them all
> Art Lord, and eke of nature Soueraine,
> Wilfully make thy selfe a wretched thrall,
> And wast thy jouous houres in needlesse paine,

[36]Kirschbaum, p. 329.

[37]Ibid., p. 578.

> Seeking for daunger and aduentures vaine?
> . . . . . .
> Refuse such fruitlesse toile, and present pleasures chuse.[38]
> (vi.15-17)

As Hough observes, Phaedria "represents the temptation to idleness and time-wasting; at first charming she becomes, finally, tiresome, and Guyon rejects her with disgust. But the imagery tends to reveal something else--it reveals at least an imaginative delight in that which is being rejected."[39] According to Hough, contrary tendencies are evidenced in the Bower of Bliss scenes in Book II with their theme that man willingly deceives himself with a pleasure which he knows is not real pleasure but life-destroying rather than life-enhancing.[40] For here in the Bower of Bliss abides the wiley Acrasia, "the faire Witch," who turns her lovers into beasts to the chanting of a carpe diem lay:

> Ah, see who so faire thing doest faine to see,
> In springing flowre the image of thy day;
> Ah see the Virgin Rose, how sweetly shee
> Doth first peepe forth with bashfull modestee,
> . . . . . .
> Loe see soone after, how she fades, and falles away.
>
> So passeth, in the passing of a day,
> Of mortall life and leafe, the bud, the flowre.
> . . . . . .
> Gather therefore, the Rose, whilest yet in prime,
> For soone comes age, that will her pride deflowre:[41]
> (xii.74-75)

In this Bower of Bliss Sir Guyon and the Palmer see Acrasia destroy the "young man sleeping by her"; they deface the Bower and lead Acrasia away.

[38]Kirschbaum, pp. 240-241.

[39]Hough, pp. 160-161.

[40]Ibid., pp. 163-164.

[41]Kirschbaum, p. 293.

Spenser, with an awareness of the mutability of nature, the passions and appetites of man, supports the humanist tradition and presents Guyon as meeting the temptations and appetites of earthly experience, resisting them as a man of temperance, and overcoming them by reason with the aid of his companion and with his own self-control learned through instruction and through purging. But, suggests Hough, the champion knight does not forget Phaedria, Acrasia, and the Bower of Bliss.[42]

Just as love can be life-destroying, paradoxically love can be life-enhancing, as Spenser reveals by means of the contrast between the Garden of Adonis and the Bower of Bliss and by the contrast between the active representative of love, Britomart, and the false Florimell.[43] It is in the Bower of Bliss, a plot of pleasure, where love degenerates to lust and man corrupts himself and disintegrates. It is in the Garden of Adonis where love regenerates all living things that have disintegrated. The garden is a symbol of eternity in mutability, a symbol of the process of birth, decay, death, and rebirth, a process that is Nature itself:[44]

> He letteth in, he letteth out to wend,
> All that to come into the world desire;
> A thousand thousand naked babes attend
> . . . . . .
> After that they againe returned beene,
> They in that Gardin planted be againe;
> And grow afresh, as they had neuer seene
> Fleshly corruption, nor mortall paine.
> Some thousand yeares so doen they there remaine;
> And then of him are clad with other hew,
> Or sent into the chaungefull world againe,
> . . . . . .

[42]Hough, p. 164.

[43]Ibid., pp. 170-171.

[44]Ibid., p. 178.

> Daily they grow, and daily forth are sent
> Into the world, it to replenish more;
> Yet is the stocke not lessened, not spent,
> But still remaines in euerlasting store
> . . . . . .
> Ne when the life decayes, and forme does fade,
> Doth it consume, and into nothing go,
> But chaunged is, and often altred to and fro.
> The substance is not chaunged, nor altered,
> But th'only forme and outward fashion;[45]
> (III.vi.32-38)

Significant in these verses is the principle of plenitude, the beneficence of nature. Spenser emphasizes this principle in verses 41 and 42, Book III:

> For here all plentie, and all pleasure flowes,
> And sweet loue gentle fits emongst them throwes,
> . . . . . .
> There is continuall spring, and haruest there
> Continuall, both meeting at one time:
> For both the boughes doe laughing blossomes beare,
> And with fresh colours decke the wanton Prime,
> And eke attonce the heauy trees they climb,
> Which seeme to labour vnder their fruits lode:[46]

In the Garden of Adonis lies the wanton boy Adonis "in eternal blis,/ Ioying his goddess, and of her enioyd:" (vi.48), uncorrupted, safe in the love of his goddess Venus; whereas in the Bower of Bliss the lovers are destroyed by Acrasia who transforms them from men to beasts:

> . . .These seeming beasts are men indeed,
> Whom this Enchauntresse hath transformed thus,
> Whylome her louers, which her lusts did feed,
> Now turned into figures hideous,[47]
> (II.xii.85)

Pauline Parker notes of Spenser's Faerie land that it is "in itself a symbol . . . for this transitory world with its chances and changes,

[45]Kirschbaum, pp. 324-326.

[46]Ibid., p. 327.

[47]Ibid., p. 296.

subject to the mutability of which the poet had so strong a sense, and contrasted with the eternal heavens of which the Red Cross Knight is vouchsafed a glimpse . . . ."[48]

The remainder of Book V and Book VI reveal a shift in emphasis by Spenser: a shift from optimism to pessimism, a shift that represents the poet Spenser no longer recognizing a world, harmonious and orderly but a world, chaotic and relentless, a universe "flawed, rent, helpless,"[49] unable to be healed or explained. With Spenser's experience as part of the court, "a suitor kept waiting," observes Josephine Waters Bennett, "he came to the full maturity of wisdom--to the knowledge of the mutability of all things, the vanity of all shows, and the sober peace of contentment with a humble life."[50] Spenser's world picture seems to be at a turning point, a point at which mankind realizes fear and despair in his awareness of man's human condition. Spenser's anguish is that of Shakespeare and Donne for a ravaging, senseless, painful world of flux and change. Spenser, along with Greville, Sidney, and Ralegh, is aware of the paradoxical world, the universe of diversity and complexity. But up to this turning point, Spenser, as the poets Sidney, Ralegh, Greville, optimistically propounds a world of order, harmony, balance, proportion. Now Spenser seems to see the universe and shudder. His vision that "restoration and flowering are both possible and real has been usurped by a new vision of skepticism and

[48]Pauline Parker, The Allegory of the Faerie Queene (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 49.

[49]Sale, p. 187.

[50]Josephine Waters Bennett, The Evolution of "The Faerie Queene" (New York: Burt Franklin, 1942), p. 215.

despair."[51] Books V and VI reflect this pessimism. The Garden of Adonis is not the way of escape from "the hardness and terrors of life";[52] its vision of eternity does not change human life.[53] As do Shakespeare and Donne, Spenser declares that the world is out of joint:

> Me seemes the world is runne quite out of square,
> From the first point of his appointed sourse,
> And being once amisse, growes daily wourse and wourse.[54]
> (V.i.1)

As Harry Berger notes the shift in emphasis: "'The fragmented and chaotic appearance of the present challenges the antique vision of order . . . . History does not reveal progress, or reason, or a divine plan; only the relics of decay, fallen civilization, time and elde.'"[55] The wounds of the world, inflicted by the Blatant Beast, cannot be cured:

> No wound, which warlike hand of enemy
> Inflicts with dint of sword, so sore doth light,
> As doth the posynous sting, which infamy
> Infixeth in the name of noble wight;
> For by no art, nor any leaches might,
> It euer can recured be again . . . .[56]
> (VI.vi.1)

The Blatant Beast of Book VI, who sees others as objects to be used, who suppresses the "spontaneous movement of generosity"[57] represents man:

[51]Sale, p. 182.

[52]Ibid., p. 164.

[53]Ibid.

[54]J. C. Smith and E. DeSelincourt, eds. The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 276.

[55]Sale, p. 165.

[56]Smith, p. 360.

[57]Williams, p. 218.

Crudor, using the love of Briana to further his sense of power in degrading his fellow man; Mirabella exploiting her gifts of beauty. In Book VI are the "diversities of conduct between man and his neighbor," says Pauline Parker, "from Calidore, all inward goodness and outward grace, at one extreme, through Blandamour, Blandina, Paridell, and others, outward manners with no virtue within, on through Briana and Crudor, where the selfish rudeness is barefaced, ending in the Brigantes and the salvage nation, superstitious, utterly selfish, eaters of others . . . ."[58]

Is there an answer to the Blatant Beast? Is man the "poor, bare, forked animal"? Is Nature "red in tooth and claw," caring for nothing, "all shall go"? Is the only answer for mankind that of withdrawal to protect itself from the world of wounds? Is it to the Cave of Despair that man must retreat? A key to the answer may be in Book IV when Marinell, who thrives on self love in his own world, reaches out to Florimell: "His stony heart with tender ruth was toucht." A key to the answer may be in Book VI in the appearance of Colin, the shepherd poet with his gift of song and his truth of courtesy,[59] courtesy in the sense of human benevolence, stewardship, the open heart. Courtesy is full humanity, the natural response to Nature's generosity, nature's plenitude, "man's part in the circling movement of benefits . . . ."[60]

The pastoral world is not that of withdrawal, of escape. The experiences of Book VI confirm the real concern of Spenser the poet as

[58]Parker, p. 46.

[59]Williams, p. 212.

[60]Ibid., p. 223.

revealed in The Faerie Queene: the problem of human conduct--society and the individual--and the interrelation of varieties of conduct.[61] The new science is disturbing to Spenser who expresses his doubts in the Proem to Book V:

> So now all range, and doe at random roue
> Out of their proper places farre away,
> And all this world with them amisse doe moue,
> Till they arriue at their last ruinous decay.[62]
> (6)

But through the Mutabilitie Cantos, Book VII, the poet reaffirms faith in the ordered goodness: in the fecundity, the beneficence, the plenitude of nature with its varied, diverse experiences, the essence of life is found. The poet confirms "eterne in mutabilitie":

> I well consider all that ye haue sayd,
> And find that all things stedfastnes doe hate
> And changed be: yet being rightly wayd
> They are not changed from their first estate;
> But by their change their being doe dilate:
> And turning to themselues at length againe,
> Doe worke their owne perfection so by fate:
> Then ouer them Change doth not rule and
> raigne;
> But they raigne ouer change, and doe their
> states maintaine.[63]
> (vii.58)

[61]W.B.C. Watkins, Shakespeare & Spenser (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1950), p. 51.

[62]Smith, p. 277.

[63]Ibid., p. 406.

CHAPTER III

POET OF DUAL VISION: WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

What Melville calls the "flashings forth of the intuitive Truth in him, those short, quick probings at the very axis of reality,"[1] find expression in the Sonnets of William Shakespeare. Shakespeare is aware of the cross-currents of the age: the desire for harmony and order, for peace and permanence; the recognition of disintegration, diversity, and transience. The defiance of time, the larger hope for the eternal is the poetic message of Shakespeare; yet the Sonnets do not forget that, as G. Wilson Knight quotes[2] from Cymbeline: "'Golden lads and girls all must;/ As chimney sweepers, come to dust.'" (V.ii.262)

The variation of theme of the early Sonnets--with their contemplation of love and friendship for the young man, their message of immortality to be gained through the young friend's marriage and propagation--express the renaissance awareness of Time and Timelessness. But as the Sonnets proceed, the concentration on the complexity and diversity of life intensifies, revealing bitterness and defiance. As Patrick Cruttwell summarizes the shift, the poems "widen in scope, till every interest of the writer's life is brought within reach: his dreams of social success and bitterness at social failure, the problems and rivalries of his career as an author, his perception of the evils and injustices in society,

[1]Herman Melville, "Hawthorne and His Mosses," The American Tradition in Literature, ed. Sculley Bradley et al. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1967), I, 913.

[2]G. Wilson Knight, "Time and Eternity," Discussions of Shakespeare's Sonnets, ed. Barbara Herrnstein (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1954), p. 56.

his private anguish at growing old and his private fear of death."[3] Perceptive of himself and others, Shakespeare scrutinizes the outwardly beautiful but inwardly corrupt young man, the body-satisfying, soul-destroying dark lady, and the reactions of attraction yet repulsion of the poet to the diversities and complexities of love and friendship.

The opening sonnets reflect the beauty of the young man; with awareness of mutability Shakespeare shifts his reflection from that of physical beauty to that of moral beauty:[4] honesty, courtesy, the open heart, a beauty that is basic to true friendship. The sonnets' theme shifts, then, observes Edward Hubler, to the threats to mutuality of the friendship. Shakespeare's emphasis is that mutuality is the essence of love and friendship, that friendship is fixed, not fading with time;[5] sonnet CXVI expresses Shakespeare's essence of love and friendship:

> Let me not to the marriage of true minds
> Admit impediments. Love is not love
> Which alters when it alteration finds,
> Or bends with the remover to remove:
> O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
> That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
> It is the star to every wandering bark,
> Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
> Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
> Within his bending sickle's compass come;
> Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
> But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
> If this be error and upon me proved,
> I never writ, nor no man ever loved.[6]

[3]Patrick Cruttwell, "Shakespeare's Sonnets and the 1590's," Discussions of Shakespeare's Sonnets, ed. Barbara Herrnstein, p. 50.

[4]Edward Hubler, The Sense of Shakespeare's Sonnets (New York: Hill and Wang, 1952), p. 81.

[5]Ibid., pp. 92-93.

[6]The Works of Shakespeare Sonnets, ed. C. Knox Pooler, 3d ed. (London: Methuen and Co. LTD., 1943), pp. 111-112--hereafter cited as Works.

The early sonnets note the passing of physical beauty with Time and the seasons of bloom and decay. In early sonnets, such as II, III, IV, V, and VI, Shakespeare urges that the young friend carry his stamp of beauty through Time into a Timelessness by means of the friend's marriage and his "faire childe." In sonnet II the poet observes that the toll of forty winters will dim the "proud livery, so gazed on now," and will answer the question of "where all thy beauty lies" only within "sunken eyes." Shakespeare urges that the beauty of the young friend can continue through his successor, a child:

> When forty winters shall besiege thy brow
> And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
> Thy youth's proud livery, so gaz'd on now,
> Will be a tatter'd weed, of small worth held:
> Then being ask'd where all thy beauty lies,
> Where all the treasure of thy lusty days,
> To say, within thine own deep-sunken eyes,
> . . . . . .
> If thou couldst answer "This fair child of mine
> Shall sum my count and make my old excuse,"
> Proving his beauty by succession thine!
> This were to be new made when thou art old,
> And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.[7]

The mirror image of sonnet III reflects the image of the young man's beauty as shifting and dying in the furrows of age in Time. The poet suggests that a child is a mirror reflecting his parent; just as the former beauty of the friend's mother is reflected in the friend, so can his beauty be reflected in his posterity. If the young man dies single, his image dies also:

> Look in thy glass, and tell the face thou viewest
> Now is the time that face should form another;
> . . . . . .

[7]Works, pp. 4-5.

Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her prime:
So thou through windows of thine age shalt see,
Despite of wrinkles, this thy golden time.
But if thou live, remember'd not to be,
Die single, and thine image dies with thee.[8]

The young man has received, so says Shakespeare in sonnet IV, Nature's bequest of beauty. The poet urges that such a benevolent gift should be perpetuated through progeny. As C. Knox Pooler indicates, the beauty here is regarded as a legacy, a loan "intended for those only who fulfill the condition of transmitting it unimpaired . . . . Rightly used it produces its equivalent in the beauty of a child, i.e., it reproduces itself. The new beauty (the beauty of the child) is the repayment to Nature of the sum lent, viz. the beauty of the father, and so the account is squared."[9]

Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend
Upon thyself thy beauty's legacy?
Nature's bequest gives nothing, but doth lend,
And being frank, she lends to those are free.
Then, beauteous niggard, why dost thou abuse
The bounteous largess given thee to give?
. . . . . .
Then how, when nature calls thee to be gone,
What acceptable audit canst thou leave?[10]

Winter's "ragged hand" defacing summer's prime must be stayed until the essence of the young man's treasure be distilled "Leaving thee in posterity . . . ." echoes Shakespeare in sonnet VI. "Then what could death do, if thou shouldst depart , . . ." As the poet suggests in sonnet V, "flowers distill'd" lose only their appearance; "their substance still

[8]Works, pp. 5-6.

[9]Ibid., p. 7.

[10]Ibid., pp. 6-7.

lives sweet"; thus a child, an off-spring gives his father living substance though the father's material body goes with time:

> Those hours that with gentle work did frame
> The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell,
> Will play the tyrants to the very same
> . . . . . .
> For never-resting time leads summer on
> To hideous winter and confounds him there;
> Sap check'd with frost and lusty leaves quite gone,
> Beauty o'ersnow'd and bareness every where:
> Then, were not summer's distillation left,
> A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass
> Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,[11]
> (V.1-11)

In sonnet XI the poet emphasizes the theme of nature's benevolence--a pattern of plenitude,[12] physical and moral, that should be cherished and imprinted: the cycle of birth, death, rebirth is reflected. The gifts of nature should increase by the bestowal of that gift "In one of thine":

> Which bounteous gift thou shouldst in bounty cherish:
> She carv'd thee for her seal, and meant thereby
> Thou shouldst print more, not let that copy die.[13]
> (XI.12-14)

Nature's lending of beauty in Time and the imprint of the image of beauty are noted in sonnet XIII as well:

> And your sweet semblance to some other give.
> So should that beauty which you hold in lease
> Find no determination; then you were

[11]Works, p. 8.

[12]The tradition of plenitude originated in Plato's Timaeus and Symposium. In the Symposium (trans. Benjamin Jowett) Diotima says to Socrates, "'There is a certain age at which human nature is desirous of procreation . . . for conception and generation are an immortal principle in the mortal creature, . . .'" She further explains, "'For love, Socrates is not, as you imagine, the love of the beautiful only . . . [but] love of generation and of birth in beauty . . . to the mortal creature, generation is a sort of eternity and immortality . . . ,'" p. 331.

[13]Works, p. 15.

> Yourself again, after yourself's decease,
> When your sweet issue your sweet form should bear.
> Who lets so fair a house fall to decay,
> Which husbandry in honour might uphold . . .[14]
> (XIII.4-10)

Sonnet XV continues Shakespeare's theme of mutability, the increase and decline of beauty and youth in man; but the poet injects a ring of defiance at Time's ravages, an assertion of warring with Time by renewing through verse that which Time wastes. This sonnet suggests a new medium of conferring immortality. Rather than by the imprint of the young man on offspring, it is by the stamp of the poet's verse:

> Where wasteful Time debateth with Decay,
> To change your day of youth to sullied night;
> And all in war with Time for love of you,
> As he takes from you, I engraft you new.[15]
> (XV.11-14)

Continuing the theme of attaining immortality through verse, the poet in sonnet XVIII refers now to more than the physical beauty of the friend; here beauty of temperament, faded by "rough winds" that "shake the darling buds of May" shall not fade "When in eternal lines of time thou growst." In sonnet XIX, the poet defies "swift-footed Time," "Devouring Time" that blunts "the lion's paws," plucks "teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws." Forbidding Time's heinous crime, Shakespeare thrashes out: "Yet do thy worst, old Time: despite thy wrong,/ My love shall in my verse ever live young"(XIX.13-14).

Sonnet XVIII reflects "the quality which the early sonnets admire in the young man"[16]: sweetness of temperament, his unspoiled nature. From

[14]Works, p. 16.

[15]Ibid., p. 19.

[16]Hubler, p. 79.

this sonnet, on, the poet indicates a growing emphasis on moral beauty,[17] says Edward Hubler. Just as is Spenser, so is Shakespeare aware of the dichotomies of friendship in time's scheme: though certain of his own regard for the friend, the poet is not certain of a return of such friendship, for the youth will mature whatever the loss of interest in the poet. Though wishing for an eternal moral beauty in the young man, the poet recognizes the risk of infection and decay of such beauty. As Nature creates, so it dissolves. Yet, as does Spenser, Shakespeare sees "eterne in mutabilitie" through the distillation of friendship:

> Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
> Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
> Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
> And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
> Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
> And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
> And every fair from fair sometimes declines,
> By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
> But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
> . . . . . .
> When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:[18]
> (XVIII.1-12)

Shakespeare realizes the possibility of fall from favor.[19] He finds reassurance in the security of his friend's love. Sonnet XXV recognizes the loss of other friends in the universe of flux and change; the poet thinks of his friend, and the hurt and the bitterness is allayed:

> Let those who are in favour with their stars
> Of public honour and proud titles boast,
> . . . . . .

[17]Hubler, p. 81.

[18]Works, pp. 21-22.

[19]In sonnet XXV Shakespeare recognizes the tradition of the fall of princes and seems to be referring particularly to the fall of the court favorite, Sir Walter Ralegh, in 1592.

> Great princes' favourites their fair leaves spread
> But as the marigold at the sun's eye,
> And in themselves their pride lies buried,
> For at a frown they in their glory die.
> The painful warrior famoused for fight,
> After a thousand victories once foil'd,
> Is from the book of honour razed quite,
> . . . . . .
> Then happy I, that love and am beloved
> Where I may not remove nor be removed.[20]
> (XXV)

These are the years of anxiety for Shakespeare: years of disintegration of his world, times of disorder and chaos. As M. C. Bradbrook states, "the impression of the times is stamped and bodied on poesie."[21] Shakespeare's Sonnets reflect the chaotic times: his concern for his own art and his recognition of man's limitations, the threat of the rival poet, the separation between himself and his friend, his concern for the infections within society. Almost despairing, the poet realizes that the friend's love renews him. When the remembrance of things past--"old woes," "time's waste," the death of "precious friends"--is evoked by the absence of the poet's friend, the thought of the young friend ends sorrows (XXX), restores losses: Sonnet XXIX recognizes the shift in fortune:

> When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
> I all alone beweep my outcast state,
> And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
> And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
> Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
> Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
> Desiring this man's art and that man's scope
> . . . . . .
> Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
> Haply I think on thee, . . .

[20] Works, pp. 29-30.

[21] M. C. Bradbrook, Shakespeare and Elizabethan Poetry (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 48.

. . . . . .
For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.[22]
(XXIX)

Yet, a cloud of suspicion is blanketing the friendship: the mutuality of the friendship--Shakespeare's key to friendship and love--is waning as revealed in sonnets XXXIII and XXXIV:

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
. . . . . .
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly rack on his celestial face,
. . . . . .
Even so my sun one early morn did shine
With all-triumphant splendour on my brow:
But out, alack! he was but one hour mine,[23]
(XXXIII.1-11)

Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,
And make me travel forth without my cloak,
To let base clouds o'ertake me in my way,
Hiding thy bravery in their rotten smoke?
'Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break,
To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,
For no man well of such a salve can speak
That heals the wound and cures not the disgrace:[24]
(XXXIV.1-8)

As Pooler notes, Shakespeare's friend is the sun; the faithfulness of the friendship is the beauteous day; but the mutuality is undermined by "rotten smoke." The wound is not healed by the "salve" of the friend.[25] The infecting of the mutual friendship is signified by the imagery of sonnet XXXV:

[22]Works, p. 84.

[23]Ibid., pp. 37-38.

[24]Ibid., p. 39.

[25]Ibid., p. 39.

> Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud;
> Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun,
> And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud.
> (XXXV.2-4)

But the friendship has brought to the poet such a store of unbought treasure in the worth and integrity that the friend has possessed, that the poet accepts this "sad interim"(LVI.9) and urges "Tomorrow see again, and do not kill/ The spirit of love . . . ."(LVI.6)

The poet defies the ravager Time that "will take my love away"(LXIV.12). As J. B. Leishman notes, Shakespeare is "not employing the carpe diem theme by recommending cooperation with Time, submission to the conditions it imposes . . . ."[26] Shakespeare speaks of Time as "an enemy to be defied, never as a power whose laws are to be accepted and submitted to."[27] The Time that devours youth and beauty is that "Time that destroys the mightiest monuments of stone or bronze . . . ."[28] Shakespeare's concern with the brevity of all things because of Time's ravages is expressed in sonnet LXIV:

> When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced
> The rich-proud cost of outworn buried age;
> When sometime lofty towers I see down-razed,
> And brass eternal slave to mortal rage;
> . . . . . .
> Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate,
> That Time will come and take my love away.
> This thought is as a death, which cannot choose
> But weep to have that which it fears to lose.[29]

The defiance of Time is echoed in sonnet LXIII: The Time that crushes

[26] J. B. Leishman, Themes and Variations in Shakespeare's Sonnets (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963), p. 100.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Works, pp. 66-67.

and wears, the hours that drain man's blood and fill his brow with "lines and wrinkles"(4) is that destroyer of brass, stone, gates of steel, earth, sea, rock. The defense against this ravager, declares the poet, is preservation through enduring verse: "His beauty shall in these black lines be seen,/ And they shall live, and he in them still green"(LXIII. 13-14). Shakespeare asks, since "sad mortality o'er-sways" the power of brass, stone, earth, how can beauty "hold a plea/ Whose action is no stronger than a flower?"(LXV.1-4) Again the poet affirms immortality through verse: "O, none, unless this miracle have might,/ That in black ink my love may still shine bright"(LXV.13-14).

A world-weariness with the infections, the chaos, the corruptions of the mutable world, a desire for restful death are the themes of sonnets LXVI, LXXI, and LXXIII:

> Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry,
> As, to behold desert a beggar born,
> And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
> And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
> And gilded honour shamefully misplac'd,
> And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
> . . . . . .
> And art, made tongue-tied by authority,
> . . . . . .
> Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,
> Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.[30]
> (LXVI)

> No longer mourn for me when I am dead
> Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
> Give warning to the world that I am fled
> From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell:[31]
> (LXXI.1-4)

The following poem is "of the shortness of life, and the flight of its

[30] Works, p. 68.

[31] Ibid., p. 72-73.

singing birds and the palsy of old age that is yet alive."[32]

> That time of year thou mayst in me behold
> When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
> Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
> Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
> In me though see'st the twilight of such day
> As after sunset fadeth in the west;
> Which by and by black night doth take away,
> Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.[33]
> (LXXIII.1-8)

The poet accepts the ruin of the body by Time but urges that the spirit of the poet remains through his verse. Yet there are other despairs in the mutable world of Time: the poet's concern for his own art. He asks, "Why is my verse so barren of new pride,/ So far from variation or quick change?"(LXXVI.1-2) The answer is that the poet writes "still all one, ever the same"(LXXVI.5), because he writes always of his friend. But these anxieties relax and pass. The poet reaffirms the friendship as the pivot point of his life:

> But do thy worst to steal thyself away,
> For term of life thou art assured mine;
> And life no longer than thy love will stay,
> For it depends upon that love of thine.
> . . . . . .
> Thou canst not vex me with inconstant mind,
> Since that my life on thy revolt doth lie.[34]
> (XCII.1-10)

The poet reminds himself and the generations unborn that beauty's summer necessarily passes as part of the cycle of life in the world of Time and the seasons. Even though the beauty of the young man seems unchanged, as the hands of the dial seem stationary, the beauty is in

[32] Works, p. 72.

[33] Ibid., pp. 73-74.

[34] Ibid., p. 90.

actuality waning as the dial hands are moving:

> Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turn'd
> In process of the seasons have I seen,
> Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burn'd,
> Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green,
> Ah, yet doth beauty, like a dial-hand
> Steal from his figure, and no pace perceiv'd;
> So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
> Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceiv'd:
> For fear of which, hear this, thou age unbred;
> Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.[35]
> (CIV.5-14)

Though in the mutability of Time, disparities in friendship occur and youth and beauty alter, yet true friendship is an ever-constant thing as the poet urges in sonnet CXVI:

> Let me not to the marriage of true minds
> Admit impediments. Love is not love
> Which alters when it alteration finds
> . . . . . .
> Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
> But bears it out even to the edge of doom.[36]
> (CXVI.1-12)

Though youth, beauty, and even the friendship fade in Time, true to his promise, Shakespeare immortalizes all in his Sonnets. His vision "links both aspects of the natural situation: the continuance of things and things in themselves,"[37] observes Geoffrey Bush. Of Shakespeare's Sonnets, Leishman reflects, "Shakespeare is affirming the existence of something unchangeable in a world of change and eternal in transient mortality."[38]

As does Spenser, so Shakespeare confirms "eterne in mutabilitie."

[35]Works, p. 100.

[36]Ibid., pp. 111-112.

[37]Geoffrey Bush, Shakespeare and the Natural Condition (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 6.

[38]Leishman, p. 107.

And as is Spenser, so is Shakespeare preoccupied "with the gentler virtues"[39]: love of mercy, charity; hatred of intolerance, cruelty, says W.B.C. Watkins. Both Spenser and Shakespeare express through their poetry different attitudes toward love: shades of love from excess of faithful passion to incontinence.[40] In their recognition of human limitations, Spenser and Shakespeare write of the entanglements within love and friendship. During the times of turbulence in his concern about his art, about the death of friends, about the disappointments involving his friend and the "dark lady," Shakespeare, in his relationship with the "dark lady," is aware of passion that "dominates and tortures,"[41] that brings unhappiness and loathing, Hubler believes. "The poet of the Sonnets comes to think of his love as a thing without health, a fever always longing for 'that which longer nurseth the disease.'"[42] He comes to loathe his passion, and his loathing "swells until it includes both himself and the dark lady."[43]

> My love is as a fever, longing still
> For that which longer nurseth the disease:
> Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill,
> The uncertain sickly appetite to please.
> My reason, the physician to my love,
> . . . . . .
> Hath left me, and I desperate now approve
> Desire is death, which physic did except.[44]
> (CXLVII.1-8)

[39]W.B.C. Watkins, Shakespeare and Spenser (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), p. 40.

[40]Ibid., p. 46.

[41]Hubler, p. 55.

[42]Ibid., p. 58.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Works, p. 130.

His affair with the dark lady is not a romance made in heaven but an earthly, earthy experience. Shakespeare recognizes the sexual nature of the bondage and the absence of mutual trust.[45]

> Two loves I have of comfort and despair,
> Which like two spirits do suggest me still:
> The better angel is a man right fair,
> The worser spirit a woman colour'd ill.[46]
> (CXLIV.1-4)

> The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
> Is lust in action; and till action, lust
> Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
> Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;
> Enjoyed no sooner but despised straight
> . . . . . .
> All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
> To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.[47]
> (CXXIX)

Shakespeare's self-questioning is revealed in sonnet CXXIX; the poet is in the process of knowing himself through the experiences of the mutable world, through the dark side of his nature; knowing the relationship, he recognizes the lack of real mutuality. Sonnet CXXXI emphasizes the bondage and the lack of mutuality:

> Thou art as tyrannous, so as thou art,
> As those whose beauties make them cruel;
> . . . . . .
> In nothing art thou black save in thy deeds,
> And thence this slander, as I think, proceeds.[48]

The only bond in this affair, as sonnet CXXXVIII affirms, is the mutuality of hypocrisy:

[45]Hubler, p. 48.

[46]Works, p. 136.

[47]Ibid., p. 126.

[48]Ibid., p. 127.

When my love swears that she is made of truth
I do believe her, though I know she lies,
That she might think me some untutor'd youth,
. . . . . .
Unlearned in the world's false subtleties.
Although she knows my days are past the best,
Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue:
On both sides thus is simple truth suppress'd.[49]
(CXXXVIII.1-8)

The plenitude of these experiences finally adds up to "weariness and rejection."[50] There is no pledge of the dark lady's immortality through verse. But the experience in its mutability and its disintegration does remind the reader of Shakespeare's awareness of the cross-currents of the age and of his exploration of the various colors of the world, of the complexity of the universe, of the "continuance of things and things in themselves."[51] Shakespeare represents a new attitude of the way of feeling the world, a view urged by Bruno: "Man finds his true self-consciousness . . . by drawing the infinite universe into himself and conversely by extending himself to it."[52] Like Bacon, Shakespeare's view is of the experiences of the world; both believe that man has the power of observing the world of empirical reality and the power of understanding to benefit mankind. Man is the steward of his excellence, believes Shakespeare,[53] as he states in the opening of Measure for Measure:

Thyself and thy belongings
Are not thy own so proper as to waste
Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.

[49]Works, p. 132.

[50]Hubler, p. 38.

[51]Geoffrey Bush, p. 6.

[52]Cassirer, p. 187.

[53]Hubler, p. 95.

Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for ourselves; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely
touched
But to fine issues, nor Nature never lends
The smallest scruple of her excellence
But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines
Herself the glory of a creditor,
Both thanks and use. . . .[54]
(I.i.30-40)

[54]Shakespeare The Complete Works, ed. G. B. Harrison, 3d ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1952), p. 1103.

CHAPTER IV

RENAISSANCE REACTIONARIES: POETRY OF RECONCILIATION

1

John Donne

Spenser, although optimistic of "eterne in mutabilitie," reveals, in part of Book V and in Book VI of The Faerie Queene, an attitude of skepticism, the "melancholy of mutability,"[1] provoked by the world view of flux and change, of diversity and corruption. Shakespeare, as a transitional figure in the late sixteenth century, expresses in the Sonnets and drama the dichotomy of the world views of constancy and change and a spirit of both optimism and pessimism. However, it is John Donne who emphasizes in his poetry the prevailing spirit of the early seventeenth century: "the melancholy of mutability."[2]

As are other writers of the renaissance era, John Donne is well aware of the transience of nature as reflected in his personal reverses and disillusionments. His loss of position, his humiliation from a peer, the difficulties of his marriage, the disappointments of his life at court are

[1]George Williamson, Seventeenth Century Contexts (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), p. 32. Williamson (pp. 15-20) observes that the discovery of constancy in mutability as urged by Nature in Spenser's Mutability Cantos is the argument of Dr. George Hakewill in his Apologie or Declaration of the Power and Providence of God in the Government of the World, Consisting in an Examination and Censure of the Common Errour Touching Nature's Perpetual and Universal Decay (1627). Hakewill's view is in opposition to Dr. Godfrey Goodman's statement in The Fall of Man, or the Corruption of Nature Proved by Natural Reason (1616), relating to the eternity of the universe. It is Hakewill's answer, as well as Francis Bacon's conception of progress, that represents a surge of optimism in the seventeenth century (a surge represented by Ben Jonson and the Cavaliers). Hakewill's argument of eternity in mutability is found in the Pythagorean Discourse in Ovid's Metamorphoses, in Plato's Timaeus, and in Du Bartas' borrowings from the First Book of Lucretius.

[2]Ibid., p. 32.

concrete evidence of the disintegrating and changing forces of a man's life.[3] In Elegie X "The Dreame," Donne reflects, "Alas, true joyes at best are dreams enough;/ Though you stay here you passe too fast away;/ For even at first lifes Taper is a snuffe." (22-24) Donne's poetry is that of pessimism and skepticism in his awareness of the physical and moral disorder; yet with that pessimism there is hope and aspiration, "the opportunity for a new freedom"[4] that turns to the empirical, to the reality of the particular, to things as they are. Traditional morality, from the ancients down, had been concerned with what men ought to do.[5] Yet the philosopher Montaigne points out that man cannot know what he ought to do in the world of flux and change, that it is impossible to establish rules of conduct around a central rational Law of nature, that there is infinite diversity in judgment; he asserts a new natural law for man: follow one's own nature, own bent. Donne's poetry considers the infinite diversity of the physical world, the "plurality of new worlds" and of man with the consequent recognition of the destruction of unity in the universe and in personal relations.[6] Yet his poetry has "the flavor of Bruno's theme of heroic and infinite striving never to be satisfied in man's experience," a search extending "beyond God," a "metaphysical ache that spurns the ordinary goods of human life and the human soul or extends

[3]Charles Monroe Coffin, John Donne and the New Philosophy (Morningside Heights, New York: Columbia University Press, 1937), p. 59.

[4]Haydn, pp. 165-166.

[5]Ibid., p. 84.

[6]Ibid., p. 164.

them to extraordinary and excessive value."[7] Bruno, as does Montaigne, sees sense images as varied, recognizes the infinite capacity for change in imagination and thought, and establishes universal relativity. Though Bruno topples the traditional principle of a centralized order,[8] he propounds the concept of "a single unifying force pervading and prevailing throughout an infinite universe."[9]

John Donne, observes Douglas Bush, wanders "between two worlds, that of cosmic unity and that of meaningless disorder and decay, . . ."[10] In his poems The Anniversaries, Donne, says Frank Manley, "has taken . . . a particular example of mortality and in meditating on it universalized it and found in it the source of all mortality, not only the sum total of all things that ever were or ever will be in this world, but the whole frame and fabric of the universe itself."[11] In the untimely death of the young woman, Elizabeth Drury, of "The First Anniversarie" and "The Second Anniversarie," the "frailty and decay" of the world is represented.[12] She may symbolize that "pattern of virtue," the "order and harmony of the outer world," the "inner beauty of virtue," lost,[13] asserts Manley. As Charles

[7]Haydn, p. 366.

[8]Ibid., pp. 154-155.

[9]Ibid., p. 158.

[10]Douglas Bush, Prefaces to Renaissance Literature (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 132.

[11]John Donne, The Anniversaries, ed. Frank Manley (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1963), p. 13.

[12]Ibid., p. 14.

[13]Ibid.

Coffin suggests, for Donne "the world of sense must be sustained by an animating soul of goodness and beauty, and with Elizabeth Drury's death this soul has gone from the earth and her body 'turn'd to dust' . . . ."[14] In his poem "The First Anniversarie" Donne reveals the dissolution of the old world view in the argument of "The Anatomie of the World"; in "The Second Anniversarie" in the argument "Of the Progres of the Soule" Donne attempts a "reconciliation of the soul with the nature of things as newly described"[15] by the new world scheme, Coffin indicates. The departure of Elizabeth's soul is not only proof of the corruptibility of the elementary spheres but also of the celestial world, as Donne asserts in "The First Anniversarie":

> But though it be too late to succour thee,
> Sicke world, yea dead, yea putrified, since shee
> Thy 'ntrinsique Balme, and thy preseruatiue,
> Can never be renew'd, thou neuer liue,
> I (since no man can make thee liue) will trie,
> What we may gain by thy Anatomy.
> Her death hath taught vs dearly, that thou art
> Corrupt and mortall in thy purest part.[16]
> ("An Anatomy of The World," 55-62)

The disorder of the universe, the frailty of man are revealed in the death of "shee":

> There is no health; Physitians say that we
> At best, enioy, but a neutralitee . . . .
> We are borne ruinous: poor mothers crie,
> That children come not right, nor orderly,
> Except they headlong come, and fall vpon
> An ominous precipitation.[17]
> ("An Anatomy," 91-98)

[14]Coffin, p. 126.

[15]Ibid., p. 101.

[16]Donne, The Anniversaries, p. 69.

[17]Ibid., p. 70.

As did Shakespeare's Prince Hamlet cry, so does Donne that the world is out of joint, that man and universe are disintegrated, corrupted; "'Tis all in pieces, all cohaerence gone" (213):

> Then, as mankinde, so is the worlds whole frame
> Quite out of ioynt, almost created lame;
> For, before God had made vp all the rest,
> Corruption entred, and deprau'd the best:
> It seis'd the Angels, and then first of all
> The world did in her Cradle take a fall
> And turn'd her braines, and tooke a generall maime
> Wronging each ioynt of th' vniversall frame.
> The nobelest part, man, felt it first; and than [sic]
> Both beasts and plants, curst in the curse of man.[18]
> ("An Anatomy," 196-200)

It is as though "shee" as the macrocosm mirrors in her death the death of the world itself:

> She to whom this world must itselfe refer,
> As Suburbs, or the Microsme of her,
> Shee, Shee is dead; shee's dead: when thou knowst this,
> Thou knowst how lame a cripple this world is.[19]
> ("An Anatomy," 235-238)

The "worlds beauty is decayd, or gone,/ Beauty, that's color, and proportion" (249-250) with the death of Elizabeth Drury, declares Donne. The world is out of harmony for "That Harmony was shee" (313), out of proportion for it was "shee, in whom all white, and redde, and blue/ (Beauties ingredients) voluntary grew,/ As in vnuext Paradise; . . ." (361-363) Frayed, too, is the celestial world: "Nor in ought more this worlds decay appeares/ Then [sic] that her influence the heau'n forbeares," (377-378).

Donne thinks of harmony and color as beauty's elements: harmony comprehended by intellect denoting the "formal beauty of the universe, the

[18]Donne, The Anniversaries, p. 73.

[19]Ibid., p. 74.

structure and arrangement of its materials," color denoting all beauty "discernible by sense."[20] The idea of corruption is coupled with the lack of harmony. Donne recognizes the manifestation of corruption in "the new astronomical phenomena,"[21] observes Coffin. Donne is aware of the new astronomical phenomena. In 1610 Galileo issued his Sidereus Nuncias, bringing four new facts before the eyes of man, four facts that, states Coffin, mean four singular experiences for Donne: "that the moon's surface is irregular, . . . that the fixed stars are countless, that the Milky Way may be resolved into a 'congeries' of innumerable fixed stars; and that there exist four new planets, the satellites of Jupiter."[22] These, says Coffin, add to Donne's store of learning, giving for him a concreteness to the new order and confirming his recognition of the complexity of the universe:[23]

> For Donne mortal life is kaleidoscopic . . . it produces daily from the manifold appearance of the world a various and changing pattern of things. The figures formed by man's ways of regarding friends, love, enemies, books, and the daily bread--the common facts of life--and also by his ways of regarding the greater world and God are resolved continually into new shapes.[24]

In "The Second Anniversarie" Donne reveals his awareness of and his reconciliation with this new world, as the soul, purged, "rightly values this and the next world" and is ready for God's grace,[25] resting "secure

[20]Coffin, p. 270.

[21]Ibid., p. 272.

[22]Ibid., p. 122.

[23]Ibid., 123.

[24]Ibid., p. 294.

[25]Donne, The Anniversaries, p. 45.

in the love of God."[26]

> Ioy if a soules arriuall neere decaies;
> For that soule euer ioyes, and euer staies.
> Approches in the resurrection . . .[27]
> ("Of the Progres of the Soule," 489-492)

Donne, as does Montaigne, recognizes that faith operates in the realm of the divine. Donne states in his Essays in Divinity, "'For all acquired knowledg is by degrees, and successive; but God is impartible, and only faith which can receive it all at once, can comprehend him.'"[28] In "The Second Anniversarie" Donne reaffirms Montaigne's point of view of the mutability, the flux and change of the senses: Montaigne questions in his "Apologie of Raymond Sebond," "Que scay je?" What do I know? Montaigne elaborates on this theme:

> Now, since our condition accommodates things to itself and transforms them according to itself, we no longer know what things are in reality; for nothing comes to us except falsified and altered by our senses. When the compass, the square and the ruler are off, all the proportions drawn from them, all the buildings erected by their measure, are also necessarily imperfect and defective. The uncertainty of our senses makes everything they produce uncertain . . . .[29]

Both Donne and Montaigne know that the senses are "full of uncertainty of any truth."[30] There is an insecurity "in living in a world without a known order,"[31] says Sypher. For Donne, the body is the vesture of decay. In the death of Elizabeth Drury, in the decay of the body, Donne sees

[26]Donne, The Anniversaries, p. 49.

[27]Ibid., p. 107.

[28]Haydn, p. 113.

[29]Selections from the Essays of Montaigne, trans. & ed. Donald M. Frame (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1948), pp. 60-61.

[30]Sypher, p. 121.

[31]Ibid.

the disintegration, the corruption of the world itself, as he notes in "The First Anniversarie." For Donne, the body is the house of the soul, the soul that is the source of love. In the flight and purging of the soul, the renunciation of life, Donne hopes that life itself, through God's grace and love, is found, as he expresses in "The Second Anniversarie." Donne's hope represents Bruno's theme of "infinite striving," the "metaphysical ache" that extends ordinary goods of the human soul to "extraordinary and excessive value":

> Onely in Heauen ioies strength is neuer spent;
> And accidentall things are permanent.
> Ioy of a soules arriuall neere decaies;
> For that soule euer ioyes, and euer staies.
> Ioy that their last great Consummation
> Approches in the resurrection; . . .[32]
> ("The Progres," 487-492)

Evidence of Donne's sensitivity to the tensions, the disturbances, the contradictions of life is in Donne's preoccupation with death as revealed not only in The Anniversaries but also in "The Funerall," the Sixth "Holy Sonnet," "The Relique," "The Anniversarie," "A Hymn to God the Father," and "Goodfriday, 1613, Riding Westward." As does "The Second Anniversarie," a number of these poems also suggest reconciliation with death. As Wylie Sypher indicates, in the "Holy Sonnet vi," "purportedly the verses claim that Donne does not fear death; yet the argument only conceals Donne's horror of the grave":[33]

> THIS is my playes last scene, here heavens appoint
> My pilgrimages last mile; and my race
> Idly, yet quickly runne, hath this last pace,
> My spans last inch, my minutes latest point,

[32]Donne, The Anniversaries, pp. 106-107.

[33]Sypher, p. 130.

> And gluttonous death, will instantly unjoynt
> My body, and soule, and I shall sleepe a space,
> But my ever-waking part shall see that face
> Whose feare already shakes my every joynt:[34]
> (1-8)

According to Sypher, the thought of the grave adds a jarring note to the assurance of fidelity in Donne's "The Anniversarie":

> Two graves must hide thine and my corse,
> If one might, death were no divorce.
> Alas, as well as other Princes, wee,
> . . . . . .
> Must leave at last in death, these eyes, and eares,
> Oft fed with true oathes, and with sweet salt teares;[35]
> (11-16)

But love can transcend the grave:

> But soules where nothing dwells but love
> (All other thoughts being inmates) then shall prove
> This, or a love increased there above,
> When bodies to their graves, soules from their graves
> remove.[36]
> (17-20)

Preoccupation with death is evident in these lines from "The Funerall":

> WHO ever comes to shroud me, do not harme
> Nor question much
> That subtile wreath of haire, which crowns my arme;[37]
> (1-3)

The poem "The Relique" opens with these lines of death:

> WHEN my grave is broke up againe
> Some second ghest to entertaine,[38]

Reconciliation with the fears of death is the keynote of "Goodfriday, 1613.

[34]Grierson, p. 138.

[35]Ibid., p. 97.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Ibid., p. 108.

[38]Ibid., p. 111.

Riding Westward":

> Who sees Gods face, that is selfe life, must dye;
> What a death were it then to see God dye?
> . . . . . .
> O Saviour, as thou hang'st upon the tree;
> I turne my backe to thee, but to receive
> Corrections, till thy mercies bid thee leave.
> . . . . . .
> Restore thine Image, so much, by thy grace,
> That thou may'st know mee, and I'll turne my face.[39]
> (17-42)

Reconciliation is also stressed in "A Hymn to God the Father":

> I have a sin of feare that when I have spun
> My last thred, I shall perish on the shore;
> Sweare by thy self that at my Death, thy Son
> Shall shine as he shines nowe, and heretofore;
> And having done that, thou hast done,
> I have noe more.[40]
> (13-18)

Donne, in "The Extasie" reconciles himself to the warring claims of flesh and spirit by believing that in the intellect's recognition of the revelations of the senses, meaning of life's complexity may be realized:

> For th'Atomies of which we grow,
> Are soules, whom no change can invade.
> But O alas, so long, so farre
> Our bodies why doe wee forbeare?
> They are ours, thou they are not wee, Wee are
> The intelligences, they the spheare.[41]
> (47-52)

In "Aire and Angels" Donne expresses the awareness that though love cannot endure in just flesh, love is understood through the body, the experience:

> But since my soule, whose child love is,
> Takes limmes of flesh, and else could nothing doe,
> More subtile than the parent is,

[39]Grierson, p. 145.

[40]Ibid., p. 148.

[41]Ibid., p. 107.

Love must not be, but take a body too,
And therefore what thou wert, and who,
I bid Love aske, and now
That it assume thy body, I allow,
And fixe it selfe in thy lip, eye, and brow.[42]
(7-10)

John Donne recognizes the mutability of the burning physical fevers of love, the sustenance of spiritual love; yet he stresses in his poem "A Fever" that the erotic, mutable, at times hateful, experiences give the soul's meaning of love:

These burning fits but meteors be,
Whose matter in thee is soon spent.
Thy beauty, and all parts, which are thee,
Are unchangeable firmament.

Yet 'twas of my mind, seizing thee,
Though it in thee cannot persever;
For I had rather owner be
Of thee one hour, than all else ever.[43]
(25-28)

In the decay of the body, in the corruption of the vesture of the soul, in the burning fits and fever of body experience, in the pluralities and complexities of love experiences, in things as they are, the meaning of love is found, declares Donne.

John Donne, as an individual, seems to live with the new world view of disorder, caught up in its tensions, its disillusionments, its complexities and variations. He attempts within himself, not within a social order, reconciliation with this chaotic, mutable universe that poses for him the question, What do I know?

[42]Grierson, p. 96.

[43]Witherspoon, p. 742.

2

Jonson, Herrick, and Carew

Ben Jonson and the Cavalier poets are poets of disordered existence. Disorder and disharmony is their world of reality, and they attempt to find their way through discussing together and drinking together. The contact is Ben Jonson. "The unsettled existence of this great poet and dramatist drove him into the taverns or into other men's homes . . . There the coteries gathered around him . . . ,"[44] including the poets Robert Herrick and Thomas Carew. With the reign of Charles I, retention of social order is urged as a responsibility. Ben Jonson's concern is with proportion and order (therein lies beauty)--order to be found in return to nature. Behind Jonson's sense of beauty in nature is proportion and measure--a "perception of beauty based upon a scheme of moral values and social order."[45] Keynoting his resignation to the new world picture of mutability, of flux and change is his poem "On His First Sonne":

> FAREWELL, thou child of my right hand, and joy;
> My sinne was too much hope of thee, lov'd boy,
> Seven yeeres thou'wert lent to me, and I thee pay,
> Exacted by thy fate, on the just day.
> O, could I lose all father, now. For why
> Will man lament the state he should envie?
> To have so soone scap'd worlds, and fleshes rage,
> And, if no other miserie, yet age?
> Rest in soft peace, and, ask'd, say here doth lye
> BEN JONSON his best piece of <u>poetrie</u>.
> For whose sake, hence-forth, all his vowes be such,
> As what he loves may never like too much.[46]

[44]Maurice Hussey, ed. <u>Jonson and the Cavaliers</u> (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1966), p. 2.

[45]Ibid., p. 136.

[46]Grierson, p. 150.

In this poem Jonson demonstrates his awareness of the mutability of life and the mutability of fame. He releases himself to this understanding without pessimism, disillusion, tension, without mourning "on too intense a scale."[47]

Contrasted to John Donne, who seems to represent the man isolated, out of harmony, attempting within himself a reconciliation with the realities of his particular, mutable world, Ben Jonson represents the man of public vision, working within the social order, recognizing the possibility of looking to nature as the source of order, optimistically accepting and adjusting to the world of flux and change. As reflected in his poem "To Penshurst," Jonson urges the "settled mode of existence"[48] that rustic society offers. Penshurst, owned by a responsible landowner Lord Sidney, provides "the good and satisfying life on a country estate," and presents a "microcosm of the order of nature,"[49] says Maurice Hussey. Penshurst is "a refuge for the writer and a social organism in which all classes are free to mingle on terms of friendship."[50] For Jonson, beauty lies in natural order: "In small proportions, we just beauties see;/ And in short measures, life may perfect be," (72-73) observes Jonson in "To the Immortal Memorie, and Friendship of that Noble Paire, Sir Lucius Cary and Sir H. Morison." The perfection of Penshurst lies in "the fullness and richness that subserved the good life for man":[51]

[47]Hussey, p. 134.

[48]Ibid., p. 5.

[49]Ibid., p. 6.

[50]Ibid., p. 131.

[51]Ibid., p. 15.

THOU art not, Penshurst, built to envious show,
  Of touch, or marble; nor canst boast a row
Of polish'd pillars, or a roofe of gold:
  Thou hast no lantherne, whereof tales are told;
Or staire, or courts; but stand'st an ancient pile,
  And these grudg'd at, art reverenc'd the while.
Thou joy'st in better markes, of soyle, of ayre,
  Of wood, of water: therein thou art faire.[52]
(1-9)

Jonson stresses in the above lines the beauty of natural order, not the beauty fashioned through artifice. Although Jonson's poem "Still to be Neat" seems to be an anacronism to his accent on order, the poet stresses the worth of the natural state of disorder--order in disorder--over an artificial, deceitful state of order:

STILL to be neat, still to be drest,
  As you were going to a feast;
Still to bee powdred, still perfum'd:
Lady, it is to be presum'd,
Though Arts hid causes are not found,
All is not sweet, all is not sound.

Give me a look, give me a face,
That makes simplicity a grace;
Robes loosely flowing, hayre as free:
Such sweet neglect more taketh me,
Than all th' adulteries of Art;
They strike mine eyes, but not my heart.[53]

Jonson, as a humanist, assigns to man the potential, the dignity, the goodness to recognize and to learn from natural order. For his Cavalier followers his goal is to direct toward responsibility and integrity these courtly ones[54] who were popularly seen as careless of honor. As did the Latin poet Horace write of his contented, happy life on his Sabine farm,

[52]Grierson, p. 159.

[53]Ibid., p. 167.

[54]Hussey, p. 18.

so do Jonson and the Cavaliers reveal in verse their recognition of the ordered, settled life of the country.[55] In Jonson's translation of Horace's Epode II, "The Praises of a Countrie Life," the natural order of country living is urged:

> Happie is he, that from all Businesse cleere,
> As the old race of Mankind were,
> With his owne Oxen tills his Sires left lands,
> And is not in the Usurers bands:
> . . . . . .
> But flees the Barre and Courts, with the proud bords,
> And waiting Chambers of great Lords.
> The Poplar tall, he then doth marrying twine
> With the growne issue of the Vine;
> And with his hooke lops off the fruitlesse race,
> And sets more happy in the place:
> Or in the bending Vale beholds a-farre
> The lowing herds there grazing are:
> Or the prest honey in pure pots doth keepe
> Of Earth, and sheares the tender Sheepe:[56]
> (1-16)

Jonson observes in his poem "To Sir Robert Wroth"[57] the tensions and disorder of city living, the tranquility and order of country existence and repeats the theme of "To Penshurst": "the social integration of the country life."[58]

> How blest art thou, canst love the countrey, Wroth,
> Whether by choyce, or fate, or both!
> And, though so neere the Citie, and the Court,
> Art tane with neithers vice, nor sport:

[55]Kathryn Anderson McEuen, The Classical Influence upon the Tribe of Ben (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: The Torch Press, 1939), p. 102.

[56]Hussey, pp. 26-27.

[57]Kathryn McEuen (p. 82) notes that Jonson borrowed from the famous second epode of Horace for the references in this poem: "with unbought provision blest," and the satisfaction of being "Free from proud porches . . . ."

[58]Hussey, p. 18.

That at great times, art no ambitious guest
  Of Sheriffes dinner, or Majors feast.
Nor com'st to view the better cloth of State;
  The richer hangings, or crown-plate;
Nor throng'st (when masquing is) to have a sight
  Of the short braverie of the night;
To view the jewels, stuffes, the paines, the wit
  There wasted, some not paid for yet!
But canst, at home, in thy securer rest,
  Live with un-bought provision blest;
. . . . . .
Or with thy friends; the heart of all the yeare,
  Divid'st, upon the lesser Deere;
In Autumne, at the Partrich mak'st a flight,
  And giv'st thy gladder guests the sight;
And in the Winter, hunt'st the flying Hare,
  More for thy exercise, than fare:
. . . . . .
Let this man sweat, and wrangle at the barre,
  For every price in every jarre,
And change possessions, ofner with his breath,
  Than either money, war, or death:[59]
(1-30, 73-76)

Man's peace of mind, reminds Jonson, lies not in the wrangling and climbing and changing fortune at Court, the striving for and purchase of material wealth and position by rapine, bought so dearly, then lost--evidences of corruption, decay, disintegration of man in his society. Man's values, urges Jonson, lie in the un-bought provisions of nature:

Thy peace is made; and, when mans state is well,
  'Tis better, if he there can dwell.
God wisheth, none should wracke on a strange shelfe:
  To him man's dearer, than t'himselfe,
And, howsoever we may thinke things sweet,
  He always gives what he knowes meet;
Which who can use is happy: Such be thou.[60]
(93-99)

Within his own lifetime the poet Jonson realizes the ravages of Time, the fleeting joys of life, for he is dashed from his height by the death

[59]Hussey, pp. 23-24.

[60]Ibid., p. 26.

of James I, by the interest of Charles I in Inigo Jones, by his replacement by younger court poets, by his illness and failures.

As Jonson implies in his poem "On His First Sonne," the thought of the grave, of the brevity of life span, of the ravage of Time is not repulsive; so he reminds Sir Robert of the value of life lent to man:

> Be thankes to him, and earnest prayer, to finde
> A body sound, with sounder mind;
> To do thy Countrey service, thy self right;
> That neither Want doe thee affright,
> Nor Death; but when thy latest sand is spent
> Thou maist thinke life, a thing but lent.[61]
> (100-106)

For life, the "seven yeares" span of Jonson's first "sonne" or the total years' span of any man, is lent to mankind, to make his life perfect in short measures and in small proportions. In his poem "To the Immortal Memorie, and Friendship of that Noble Paire, Sir Lucius Cary and Sir H. Morison," Jonson reinforces his recognition that the quality of life, not the quantity, is important to man and accents the needs for moral fibre:

> Repeat of things a throng,
> To shew thou hast beene long,
> Not liv'd; for life doth her great actions spell,
> By what was done and wrought
> In season, and so brought
> To light: her measures are, how well
> Each syllable answer'd, and was form'd, how faire;
> These make the lines of life, and that's her aire.
>
> It is not growing like a tree
> In bulke, doth make man better bee;
> Or standing long an Oake, three hundred yeare,
> To fall a logge, at last, dry, bald, and seare:
> A Lillie of a Day,
> Is fairer farre, in May,
> Although it fall, and die that night;
> It was the Plant, and flowre of light.

[61]Hussey, p. 26.

In small proportions, we just beauties see:
And in short measures, life may perfect bee.[62]
(56-73)

The sense of providence--nature's plan--is evident in "To Penshurst" in which Jonson describes the yielding of animals to man,[63] the self-sacrifice, the un-bought provisions:

Each banke doth yeeld thee conies; and the tops
Fertile of wood, ASHORE, and SYDNEY's copse,
To crowne thy open table, doth provide
The purpled pheasant, with the speckled side:
The painted partrich lyes in every field,
And, for thy messe, is willing to be kill'd.
. . . . . .
Fat, aged carps, that runne into thy net.
And pikes, now weary their owne kinde to eat,
. . . . . .
The blushing apricot, and woolly peach
Hang on thy walls, that every child may reach.
. . . . . .
But all come in, the farmer, and the clowne:
And no one empty-handed, to salute
Thy lord, and lady, though they have no sute.
. . . . . .
But what can this (more than expresse their love)
Adde to thy free provisions, farre above
The neede of such? whose liberall boord doth flow,
With all that hospitalitie doth know![64]
(25-60)

It is nature's ordering that offers in abundance unbought provisions to man, provisions far beyond man's use in moderation. A "son of Ben," the Cavalier poet Thomas Carew propounds the theme of nature's abundance and self-sacrifice in his poem "To Saxham":

Yet (Saxham) thou within thy gate,
Art of Thy selfe so delicate,
So full of native sweets, that bless
Thy roof with inward happiness

[62]Grierson, p. 173.

[63]Hussey, p. 154.

[64]Grierson, pp. 159-160.

As neither from, nor to thy store,
Winter takes ought, or Spring adds more.
. . . . . .
Yet thou hadst dainties, as the sky
Had only been thy Volarie;
Or else the birds, fearing the snow
Might to another deluge grow
. . . . . .
The willing Oxe, of himselfe came
Home to the slaughter, with the Lamb
And every beast did thither bring
Himselfe, to be an offering.[65]
(5-26)

Carew repeats this theme in his poem "To my friend G. N. from Wrest":

But fit for service. Amalthea's Horne
Of plentie is not in Effigie worne
Without the gate, but she within the dore
Empties her free and unexhausted store.[66]
(57-60)

Nature's providence coupled with man's moderation and control, nature's (physical and human) fruition and decay are themes of Carew's "To A. L. Perswaisions to Love"; in this poem Carew recognizes and accepts the ravages of Time and emphasizes the value of sincere friendship and its endurance:

Thinke not cause men flatt'ring say,
Y' are fresh as Aprill, sweet as May,
Bright as is the morning starre,
That you are so, or though you are
Be not therefore proud, and deeme
All men unworthy your esteeme
For being so, you loose the pleasure
Of being faire, since that such treasure
Of rare beauty, and sweet feature
Was bestow'd on you by nature
To be enjoy'd, and 'twere a sinne,
There to be scarce, where shee hath bin
So prodigall of her best graces;
. . . . . .

[65]Hussey, p. 76.

[66]Ibid., p. 79.

Nor let brittle beautie make
You your wiser thoughts forsake:
For that lovely face will faile,
Beautie's sweet, but beautie's fraile;
. . . . . .
Then wisely chuse one to your friend,
Whose love may when your beauties end,
Remaine still firme . . .
. . . . . .
For when the stormes of time have mov'd
Waves on that cheeke which was belov'd,
. . . . . .
When beauty, youth, and all sweets leave her,
Love may return, but lover never:[67]
(1-66)

Robert Herrick, too, is of the "tribe of Ben" and a Cavalier poet. His young people in "Corinna's Going a Maying" are identified with natural forces: forces of fertility and decay, forces of natural, not artful beauty:

And sweet as Flora. Take no care
For Jewels for your Gowne, or Haire:
Feare not; the leaves will strew
Gemms in abundance upon you.
. . . . . .
Come, let us goe, while we are in our prime,
And take the harmlesse follie of the time
We shall grow old apace, and die
Before we know our liberty.
Our life is short; and our days-run
As fast away as do's the Sunne
And as a vapour, or a drop of raine
Once lost, can ne'r be found againe:
So when or you or I are made
A fable, song, or fleeting shade;
All love, all liking, all delight
Lies drown'd with us in endlesse night.
Then while time serves, and we are but decaying;
Come, my Corinna, come, let's goe a Maying.[68]
(17-20, 57-70)

[67]Hussey, pp. 85-86.

[68]Ibid., pp. 55-57.

This is not poetry of pessimism, horror, and fear of death but of optimism, acceptance of, and adjustment to the life cycle. Tension, disillusionment are lacking in Herrick's "Corinna" poem as in his poem "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time," in which again the accent is on the recognition of, the adjustment to the life cycle of fruition and decay. Herrick, as Jonson and Carew, says: man must use the life span lent to him:

> GATHER ye Rose-buds while ye may,
> Old Time is still a flying:
> And this same flower that smiles to day [sic],
> To morrow [sic] will be dying.
> . . . . . .
> That Age is best, which is the first,
> When Youth and Blood are warmer;
> But being spent, the worse, and worst
> Times, still succeed the former.
>
> Then be not coy, but use your time;
> And while ye may, goe marry:
> For having lost but once your prime,
> You may for ever tarry.[69]

In Herrick's "Ode Upon Ben Johnson," the abundance-of-unbought-provisions and moderation-in-use themes are evident:

> AH Ben!
> Say how, or when
> Shall we thy Guests
> Meet at those Lyrick Feasts
> Made at the Sun,
> The Dog, the triple Tunne?
> Where we such clusters had,
> As made us nobly wild, not mad;
> And yet each Verse of thine
> Out-did the meate, out-did the frolick wine.
>
> My Ben
> Or come agen:
> Or send to us,
> Thy wits great over-plus;

[69]Hussey, pp. 57-58.

But teach us yet
Wisely to husband it;
Lest we that Talent spend:
And having once brought to an end
That precious stock; the store
Of such a wit the world should have no more.[70]

Moderation is the command in the finale of Herrick's "A Country Life":

Wealth cannot make a life, but Love.
Nor art thou so close-handed, but can'st spend
(Counsell concurring with the end)
As well as spare: still conning o'r this Theame,
To shun the first, and last extreame
Ordaining that thy small stock find no breach,
Or to exceed thy Tether's reach:
But to live round, and close, and wisely true
To thine owne self; and knowne to few.
. . . . . .
Till when, in such assurance live, yet may
Nor feare, or wish your dying day.[71]
(128-146)

The preceding poems by Jonson, Carew, and Herrick express the interchangeability of the natural world and man, the coordination of the universe, the fertility of all nature, the fruition of human relations and natural resources in the world of flux and change, that world in which the poets live their life cycle. Their message is an optimistic one: the recognition and acceptance of and adjustment to their world of mutability lent to them.

Jonson and the Cavaliers Herrick and Carew reflect Francis Bacon's philosophy of man's power for progress: man has the power of observation of the empirical world and the power of understanding to enrich the life of mankind, to work for the welfare of man. The poetry of Jonson, Herrick,

[70]Grierson, pp. 323-324.

[71]Hussey, p. 66.

and Carew emphasizes Bacon's contention that created beings exist for the sake of man, that the world works in the service of man: the principle of plenitude. The principle of plenitude has its source in Plato and is influential in Bruno's doctrine of the decentralized, infinite universe.[72] In the light of the principle of plenitude--nature's beneficence in a universe of infinite diversity--two conflicting attitudes can arise, observes Lovejoy. One is the possibility of "universal parasitism," the other the "fecundity and thrift of Nature."[73] The first leads to defiance, the second to acceptance.[74] Jonson and the Cavaliers recognize the principle of plenitude as supporting the belief in orderliness; such recognition continues to prevail in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Later in the eighteenth century and on into the nineteenth century, the poets reveal their conflicts as to nature's beneficence.[75]

The renaissance humanists Sidney, Greville, Ralegh, and Spenser are challenged by the world view of flux and change, infinite diversity and complexity yet retain their vision of order and harmony, emphasizing order-within-disorder, unity-within-diversity. Shakespeare meets the challenge of mutability and infinite diversity, the turbulence of the new world ever changing, "alive, immensely active, constantly in need of redefinition," with efforts of reconciliation and hope for "eterne in mutability" through his art: a faith in the victory of poetry over time.

[72]Lovejoy, p. 117.

[73]Ibid., p. 238.

[74]Ibid.

[75]Ibid.

Donne reflects pessimism and skepticism in his awareness of the mutable, chaotic, diversified universe and attempts to live, with a sense of privateness, with the new world vision of flux and change. Jonson and the Cavaliers answer the challenge of the new world view with acceptance and adjustment, working in the social order and urging moderation in the use of the unbought provisions of the world of mutability.

CONCLUSION

From the ancients, on, philosophers and poets have been aware of the transience of nature--human and physical--and doubtful or hopeful of the eternal. Poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were selected for this study because their poetic art rings with man's observation of and reaction to the climate in which he lives, man's interest in the physical and human nature of his universe, man's apprehensions of the changing nature of his world. These poets are part of the cosmic setting, and they search the experience of their time and place for answers. In each era the aim of poetic, as well as philosophical, expression is the knowledge and response of man in his new moment in history. The special circumstances of the mutable world may differ from era to era, but the conditions of turbulence or calm must be faced by each era and responded to. As T. S. Eliot indicates in "East Coker," section II, life is a "focusing of the whole of past experience on the present," and in "Dry Salvages," section II, " . . . the past experience reviv'd in meaning/ Is not the experience of one life only/ But of many generations . . . ." The opening lines of Eliot's "Burnt Norton" read:

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future,
> And time future contained in time past.[1]

The experiences unfolded in the poetic art of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries revive in meaning in future centuries. There is no end to poetic expression of man's dilemma regarding his cosmic setting--his temporal,

[1]Geoffrey Bullough, Mirror of Minds: Changing Psychological Beliefs in English Poetry (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), p. 224.

mutable world--and his hope for permanence.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the climate of man in his universe shifts from that of order and harmony to that of turbulence and disharmony, then to possibilities of order again. The poetic thought of these centuries reflects the responses. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, too, the climate shifts from order to disorder with the poetic art reflecting the conditions of the changing world and responding.

With memories of the chaotic elements of a not-so-remote past, the eighteenth century poetic response is that of ordering the world of diversity and mutability. Ben Jonson of the seventeenth century paves the way with his classical precepts and examples of order, decorum, benevolence. The eighteenth century poet Alexander Pope recognizes the multiplicity and diversity of the temporal world and emphasizes the ordering of his world for the common interest of mankind. His optimistic philosophy is revealed in An Essay on Man in which he insists upon a unifying life in the cosmos. Though man is a creature of paradox--"All confus'd," in the "Chaos of Thought and Passion," "Sole judge of Truth, in endless Error hurl'd . . . ." (II.ii.16-17), by tempering and ordering of man's complex nature, Self Love and Social Love can be the same, Pope urges. He declares that the world's great harmony springs from order and union, that the plenitude of physical and human nature is available to benefit all.

But toward the end of the eighteenth century the climate is shifting, and in the nineteenth century the writer's mutable world is chaotic and revolutionary; in the "warring elements" of his mutable universe, the poet soars to promises of the infinite through his own feelings and intuitions. Through his poetic art the mutable world is eternalized. The Mariner, in

Samuel Coleridge's Rime of the Ancient Mariner, finds the essence of love and beauty in his reconciliation of opposites of hate and love toward the mutable, multiple sea forms. In Kubla Khan Coleridge expresses the reconciliation of opposites of "the world of time, light and shade, heat and cold"[2] in the discovery of the eternal beauty and unity of the pleasure dome.[3]

William Wordsworth discovers the pattern of nature and its beneficence through the mutable objects of nature: "These plots of cottage ground," "hedgerows," "pastoral farms," "wreaths of smoke." Here, as revealed in Lines Tintern Abbey, Wordsworth finds an "image in miniature of that larger harmony which he believed--or wished to believe--the world to be."[4] The living, ever-changing landscape is fused with the eternal sky. In the section of The Prelude celebrating the crossing of the Alps, Wordsworth realizes that the ascent, seeming never to be attained, is attained; this vision shows him the invisible world, the infinitude which is "our destiny, our being's heart and home"(VI.604).

> when the light of sense
> Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed
> The invisible world, doth greatness make abode,
> There harbors; whether we be young or old,
> Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
> Is with infinitude, . . .[5]
> (VI.590-605)

[2]James Benziger, Images of Eternity: Studies in the Poetry of Religious Vision from Wordsworth to T. S. Eliot (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1962), p. 27.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., p. 39.

[5]M. H. Abrams, et al., eds., The Norton Anthology of English Literature rev. ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1968), p. 1354.

The landscape is a "symbol of some eternity beyond itself,"[6] says James Benziger. "In this eternity the contradictions in the world of time, such as decay and permanence, motion and stillness, terror and pleasure, chaos and order, are reconciled."[7]

> the immeasurable height
> Of Woods decaying, never to be decay'd,
> The stationary blasts of water-falls,
> And everywhere along the hollow rent
> Winds thwarting winds, bewilder'd and forlorn,
> The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky
> . . . . . .
> Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light
> Were all like workings of one mind, the features
> . . . . . .
> The types and symbols of Eternity, . . .[8]
> (VI.624-640)

In his poem "To Autumn" John Keats finds the essence, the eternal Season in the mutable world:

> the small gnats mourn
> Among the river sallows, borne aloft
> Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
> And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
> Hedge crickets sing; and now with treble soft
> The redbeat whistles from a garden croft;
> And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.[9]
> (27-34)

Just as the renaissance poets are disturbed by the scientific and philosophical concepts, so are nineteenth century poets by concepts of determinism. Alfred Lord Tennyson's elegy In Memorian A. H. H. represents the progress from fear of a heedless universe to hope of a universe of

[6]Benziger, p. 55.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Abrams, p. 1354.

[9]Ibid., p. 1735.

love. Concerned with the natural world "red in tooth and claw"--the mutable, physical world that dooms man to extinction, blows him about in the "desert dust," or seals him "within the iron hills"--Tennyson finds intimations of immortality. Such intimations are in symbols of physical nature: the wild bird triumphing over the winter, the ambrosial air sweet after a shower; in symbols of human nature: the love for his friend. The power of love and friendship may be the final assurance of immortality.[10]

> My love involves the love before;
> My love is vaster passion now;
> Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou
> I seem to love thee more and more.
>
> Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
> I have thee still, and I rejoice;
> I prosper, circled with thy voice;
> I shall not lose thee tho I die.[11]
> (CXXX.9-16)

Robert Browning's optimism about the universe is supported by Pippa's innocent lyric "All's right with the World," the song awakening and transforming four lives. In "Rabbi Ben Ezra" the poet expresses confidence of immortality, urging that the temporal world of youth, age, death is vital to the creator's greater plan. The Ring and the Book is Browning's observation of the mutable world and its disorder expressed in the behavior of society's institutions and Browning's message of the individual's responsibility to repudiate selfishness. The artist in Fra Lippo Lippi insists: paint bodies of men, with all of their imperfections; the beauty, the wonder, the power is in the shapes of things:

[10]Benziger, p. 145.

[11]Walter E. Houghton and G. Robert Stange, Victorian Poetry and Poetics (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959), p. 83.

Take the prettiest face,
. . . . . .
You can't discover if it means hope, fear,
Sorrow or joy? Won't beauty go with these?
Suppose I've made her eyes all right and blue,
Can't I take breath and try to add life's flash,
Or say there's beauty with no soul at all--
. . . . . .
If you get simple beauty and naught else,
You get about the best thing God invents;
That's somewhat: and you'll find the soul you have missed,
Within yourself, when you return him thanks.[12]
(208-220)

Aware of himself in his time and place, Matthew Arnold is despairing of the mechanical, indifferent universe and is hopeful of finding meaning or essence through service to mankind. A key is the mutuality of love. His "Marguerite" poems reveal the lack of mutuality in the conflicting personalities. In "Dover Beach" the poet urges mutuality in love:

for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;[13]
(30-34)

In "The Buried Life" a hint of some ultimate existence is offered in the perfection of love the lovers know in their private world:

A man becomes aware of his life's flow
And hears its winding murmur; and he sees
The meadows where it glides, the sun, the breeze.
. . . . . .
And an unwonted calm pervades his breast
And then he thinks he knows
The hills where his life rose,
And the sea where it goes.[14]
(88-98)

[12]Houghton, p. 198.

[13]Ibid., p. 470.

[14]Ibid., p. 432.

The unbought provisions of nature are to be used. Edmund Spenser's emphasis in the experience of Guyon in Mammon's Cave is on disuse: "the gold is secreted away, never touched or seen, withheld from the proper use to which gold is put,"[15] Harry Berger notes. T. S. Eliot's conclusion in The Waste Land is the faint gleam of hope--within the infertility and sterility of life--through the admonition of the thunder: give, sympathize, control. A poet makes use of the unbought provisions lent to him--human and physical nature things--and his artistic talent. Keats in his "Ode on a Grecian Urn" reflects that in the mutability of the love experience--the mad pursuit, the escape struggle, the ecstasy--the essence of love is caught and held by the Attic shape, the sylvan historian, the silent form of Art. The artist, the poet catches and preserves the eternal message--the unchanging significance of the mutable--through his protean, figurative language, "seizing and fixing those experiences already of the past but not yet unworn, at the moment when the meaning he imposed upon them would preserve them forever, and they it."[16] The poetic art is the "ETERNE IN MUTABILITIE."

[15]Harry Berger, Jr., The Allegorical Temper (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 20.

[16]Parker, p. 308.

List of Works Consulted

Abrams, M. H., et al., eds. The Norton Anthology of English Literature, rev. ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1968.

Anderson, F. H. The Philosophy of Francis Bacon. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948.

Bennett, Josephine Waters. The Evolution of "The Faerie Queene." New York: Burt Franklin, 1942.

Benziger, James. Images of Eternity: Studies in the Poetry of Religious Vision from Wordsworth to T. S. Eliot. Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1962.

Berger, Harry Jr. The Allegorical Temper. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.

Bradbrook, M. C. Shakespeare and Elizabethan Poetry. New York: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Bullough, Geoffrey. Mirrors of Minds: Changing Psychological Beliefs in English Poetry. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962.

Bush, Douglas. Preface to Renaissance Literature. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965.

Bush, Geoffrey. Shakespeare and the Natural Condition. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956.

Cassirer, Ernst. The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy. trans. Mario Domandi. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, MCMLXIII.

Chambers, E. K., ed. The Oxford Book of Sixteenth Century Verse. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1932.

Coffin, Charles Monroe. John Donne and the New Philosophy. Morningside Heights, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1937.

Cruttwell, Patrick. "Shakespeare's Sonnets and the 1590's," Discussions of Shakespeare's Sonnets. ed. Barbara Herrnstein. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1964, pp. 46-55.

Donne, John. The Anniversaries. ed. Frank Manley. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1963.

Ferm, Vergilius. A History of Philosophical Systems. Paterson, N.J.: Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1961.

Frame, Donald M., trans. & ed. Selections from the Essays of Montaigne. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1948.

The Great Books Foundation, ed. Ethics, by Plato. Chicago: The Great Books Foundation, 1955.

----------. Of the Nature of Things, by Lucretius. Chicago: The Great Books Foundation, 1955.

Grierson, H. J. C., and G. Bullough, eds. The Oxford Book of Seventeenth Century Verse. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1958.

Guinagh, Kevin, and Alfred P. Dorijohn. Latin Literature in Translation. New York: Longmans Green and Company, 1942.

Harrison, G. B., ed. Shakespeare: The Complete Works. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1952.

Haydn, Hiram. The Counter-Renaissance. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1950.

Hebel, J. William, and Hoyt H. Hudson, eds. Poetry of the English Renaissance 1509-1660. New York: F. S. Crofts & Co., 1938.

Hough, Graham. A Preface to the Faerie Queene. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1962.

Houghton, Walter E., and G. Robert Stange. Victorian Poetry and Poetics. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959.

Hubler, Edward. The Sense of Shakespeare's Sonnets. New York: Hill and Wang, 1952.

Hussey, Maurice, ed. Jonson and the Cavaliers. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1966.

Kirschbaum, Leo, ed. Spenser: Selected Poetry. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1961.

Knight, G. Wilson, "Time and Eternity," Discussions of Shakespeare's Sonnets. ed. Barbara Herrnstein. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1964, pp. 56-72.

Krutch, Joseph Wood. The Twelve Seasons. New York: William Sloane Associates, 1949.

Leishman, J. B. Themes and Variations in Shakespeare's Sonnets. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963.

Lovejoy, Arthur O. The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936.

McEuen, Kathryn Anderson. The Classical Influence Upon the Tribe of Ben. Cedar Rapids, Iowa: The Torch Press, 1939.

Melville, Herman. "Hawthorne and His Mosses," The American Tradition in Literature. Sculley Bradley, et al., eds. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1967, pp. 911-920.

Parker, M. Pauline. The Allegory of the Faerie Queene. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1960.

Plato. Phaedo. trans. Benjamin Jowett. New York: Random House, 1937.

----------. Symposium. trans. Benjamin Jowett. New York: Random House, 1937.

----------. Theaetetus. trans. Benjamin Jowett. New York: Random House, 1937.

----------. Timaeus. trans. Benjamin Jowett. New York: Random House, 1937.

Pooler, C. Knox, ed. The Works of Shakespeare: Sonnets. 3d ed. London: Methuen and Co. LTD, 1943.

Russell, Bertrand. A History of Western Philosophy. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945.

Sale, Roger. Reading Spenser: An Introduction to the Faerie Queene. New York: Random House, 1968.

Smith, J. C., and E. De Selincourt, eds. The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser. London: Oxford University Press, 1937.

Spencer, Theodore. Shakespeare and the Nature of Man. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942.

Sypher, Wylie. Four Stages of Renaissance Style. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1955.

Tillyard, E. M. W. The Elizabethan World Picture. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944.

Watkins, W. B. C. Shakespeare and Spenser. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950.

Williams, Kathleen. Spenser's Faerie Queene: The World of Glass. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966.

Williamson, George. Seventeenth Century Contexts. London: Faber and Faber, 1960.

Witherspoon, Alexander M., and Frank J. Warnke, eds. Seventeenth-Century Prose and Poetry 2d ed. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1963.