

TWO SUGGESTED SOURCES FOR DONNE'S HOLY SONNETS:

A RELIGIOUS SONNET SEQUENCE

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
ENGLISH AND THE GRADUATE COUNCIL OF THE KANSAS STATE
TEACHERS COLLEGE OF EMPORIA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

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August, 1969

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PREFACE

The end of the sixteenth century encounters a growing tide that is stemming the highly popular form of Elizabethan courtly love poetry, creating a poetry with a central theme of divine love. The poetry of Fulke Greville and Robert Southwell exhibits transitional characteristics that suggest possible sources for some of Donne's religious verse. This study investigates some distinctive similarities between their work and Donne's in an effort to make clear the transition that occurs between the courtly tradition and the metaphysical poetry of the seventeenth century.

I would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Charles E. Walton, Chairman, Department of English, Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia, for his assistance, suggestions, and effort in the development and preparation of this study. I would also like to thank Dr. June Morgan, as a second reader, for her friendly assistance and encouragement. Last I wish to acknowledge my wife, Mary, and my four sons for their patience and understanding while this paper was being prepared.

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CHAPTER I

THE COURTLY TRADITION IN ELIZABETHAN SONNETS AND SONNET SEQUENCES PRIOR TO DONNE

John Donne, because of his stature as a poet and man of his time, gives rise to a question worthy of consideration: namely, what are the poetic influences that caused his verse to affect a century of poets who immediately followed him? Within Donne's poetry there are obvious facets that reflect images of the forms and ideas of earlier poets, but the change that is evident in his treatment of the conventions of courtly love is in opposition to that in the writings of the earlier poets; thus his secular poems represent a point of view antithetical to the long-established courtly tradition.

Donne's religious dilemma, situated between Catholic and Anglican principles, permeated much of his divine poetry. Catholicism, his childhood faith, had been under suppression since Mary Tudor had been succeeded by Elizabeth. Consequently, Donne's faith was rather impracticable as well as dangerous. On the other hand the Church of England offered him an outlet, but he was reluctant to change to a religion that seemed as rigid as the one to which he initially belonged. Pushing up from beneath these two giants was the Puritan movement which was, perhaps, the most rigid of all and in which Donne found very little to attract him. Thus, in the anguish of his search for

truth, he seemed at times to be contending with the flaws in all three faiths. In the end, however, he chose the Anglican faith. He was a man caught up in an era of major revolution brought on by the Renaissance in Europe. Not only were old religions being challenged, but the whole concept of the universe was also being changed by men like Copernicus and Tycho Brahe, and in Galileo's scientific proof, irrefutable by theological philosophy, that old beliefs were no longer sacred or true. But Donne obviously did not develop his image without some preparation, some facets of which began before he was born. Petrarch had lived two centuries before; Copernicus and Luther, one century before. Wyatt, who had some influence upon Donne's style, preceded him by three quarters of a century, and Sidney was killed when Donne was a boy of thirteen. Robert Southwell was beheaded when Donne was at the rather impressionable age of twenty-two, and Fulke Greville lived through most of Donne's life. All of these men made some kind of an impression upon his writings, but the latter individuals, Southwell and Greville, formed his work more directly.

Although the sonnet in England has a rich native background, its Italian influence is clearly discernible. The form may be traced back to the early Roman writers, but essentially its beginnings lie with Dante and Petrarch.¹ Dante made

¹Julius Lever, The Elizabethan Love Sonnet, pp. 2-3.

a slight impression when he wrote his lyrics for his lover, Beatrice, and is usually given credit for being the earliest poet to adopt this mode of writing.² The major difference between Dante and Petrarch is that Petrarch conceived of a form of physical beauty that dwelt between a spiritual concept and physical loveliness; whereas Dante emphasized the idealization and spiritualization of physical beauty.³ Thus, Petrarch's sonnets contain little that differs from Dante's, although historically his fame as a sonneteer has been much more broadly acclaimed. As a result, he received much of the credit for initiating the tradition of love poetry that swept Europe for two centuries.⁴ Furthermore, both Dante and Petrarch used the Platonic approach to love that inspired later sonnetters with so much ardor.⁵ Moreover, although the Italians had attempted to become the source for all writers of the early fifteenth century, setting out to inspire and teach forms of literature to those in other countries,⁶ the need for new modes

²Sidney Lee, Elizabethan Sonnets, I, xiii.

³Agnes Foxwell, A Study of Sir Thomas Wyatt's Poems, pp. 79-80.

⁴Lee, op. cit., p. xiv. Lee writes that Petrarch also interspersed his sonnets with odes and songs that later became the pattern pursued by many of the writers who followed him. Cf. Sidney's Astrophel and Stella.

⁵Ibid., p. xv.

⁶Agnes Foxwell (ed.), The Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt, p. 7.

of expression had been recognized by the English writers, as well. The need for an injection of new styles was voiced by several English authors who found some of the elements of this new style in sources other than English.⁷ For example, Skelton in The Boke of Phyllyp Sparrow (1504) indicates that the English language of his time is not adequate for the writing of beautiful poetry and, thus, advocates a return to Chaucer and Petrarch.⁸ Hence, that Petrarch had an overwhelming influence upon early English lyrics is not entirely correct, inasmuch as Chaucer's ideas were rather numerous in Tottel's Miscellany, and his influence was still strongly infecting the writers of this period.⁹ Influences, other than from the masters, were found in the English handbooks and essays on rhetoric and ideas on style.¹⁰ As a result of these native influences, the English lyric began to establish an English tradition.

Although Chaucer introduced Petrarch into English literature, it was a century later before Sir Thomas Wyatt and

⁷Douglas Peterson, The English Lyric from Wyatt to Donne, p. 39.

⁸Ibid., pp. 44-45. This kind of an apology had apparently become almost conventional, however, because one finds it as early as The Canterbury Tales.

⁹Patricia Thompson, "Wyatt's Boethian Ballade," RES, XV (August, 1964), 266.

¹⁰Peterson, op. cit., p. 4.

the Earl of Surrey made popular the Petrarchan sonnet.¹¹ Wyatt's and Surrey's works were not published until 1557, when some appeared in Tottel's Miscellany;¹² but authors of these poems undoubtedly circulated them in manuscript form, as many writers did in the literary circles with which they were associated. When Wyatt took up the sonnet, he selected Petrarch as his mentor but found that he also needed an English poet as a guide, and Chaucer seemed to be an appropriate choice.¹³ Both Surrey and Wyatt gave credit to Petrarch in their poems, and much of their work is a direct translation of some of the Florentine's works.¹⁴ Since most of Wyatt's contemporaries had also become immersed in the Petrarchan tradition, Wyatt's use of the latter's works would not have been unique.¹⁵ There was, moreover, Surrey's craft, since he was a poet who offered a smoother form and was accorded the respect of his contemporaries.¹⁶ But Wyatt is credited with having set the stage for the anti-courtly attitude that eventually becomes associated

¹¹Lee, op. cit., p. xxvii.

¹²Ibid., p. xxix.

¹³Foxwell, A Study of Sir Thomas Wyatt's Poems, p. 37.

¹⁴Lee, op. cit., p. xxx.

¹⁵Donald Friedman, "Wyatt's Amoris Personae," MLQ, XXVII (June, 1966), 139.

¹⁶Kenneth Muir (ed.), Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt, p. xvii. All quotations from Wyatt's works are from this edition.

with the "plain" style that he employed.¹⁷ He was capable of mastering the technique of Petrarch and of surpassing him and his own Tudor contemporaries.¹⁸ Even though Wyatt chose the Italian as his model, he did not retain Petrarch's form completely; rather, he utilized an approach that is a reversal of the master's.¹⁹ The desiring lover and the unconquerable lady were of the Petrarchan mode, but Wyatt lends a wry meaning to the convention by giving the lady unnatural power over the suitor and giving the suitor revengeful motives against her.²⁰ Wyatt also argues that, since it is impossible to persuade the woman in his poems to return his love when she is innately changeable, it is pointless to sob and wail and endure the throes of a courtly poet's anguish over the loss of a lover.²¹ Although Wyatt follows some of the conventions, he seems to have a determination of failure, a doubt of ever succeeding, that causes him to change to "righteous indignation."²² Concerning the poem, "They fle from me," Nathan points out that Wyatt seems to be trying to convey experiences that are

¹⁷Peterson, op. cit., p. 101.

¹⁸Michael McCanles, "Love and Power in the Poetry of Sir Thomas Wyatt," MLQ, XXIX (June, 1968), 160.

¹⁹Peterson, op. cit., p. 101.

²⁰McCanles, op. cit., p. 145.

²¹Peterson, op. cit., p. 105.

²²McCanles, op. cit., p. 146.

not in the traditional vein, that, in fact, he seems to be trying to break the traditional concept of the male lover.²³

Wyatt's poems in the Edgerton MS 2711 offer limitations that make this document a workable selection. It contains one hundred and one poems on various subjects and of various forms. Wyatt's poems may strike one as being rough work, but when read against a knowledge of the age in which they were written, these poems have the definite qualities of good lyrics close to the craft of Donne's verses.²⁴ Of the one hundred and one poems found in the Edgerton MS, twenty-three may be classified as sonnets (if fourteen lines are used as a basis for designation). A few others run to fifteen lines in which one or two of the last lines are refrains or in which the fifteenth line is a short, witty epigram that ends the poem. However, these fifteen-line poems will not be considered, here, because the regular sonnets provide sufficient examples (although the fifteen-line selections could be classified as sonnets in a broader definition of the Elizabethan term). The twenty-three sonnets under consideration are those numbered 3*, 4*, 7*, 9*, 10, 12*, 13, 16, 24*, 25*, 26*, 27, 28*, 29*, 30*, 31*, 32*, 33, 47*, 56*, 79, 92, and 95.²⁵ Twenty are love poems. The

²³Leonard Nathan, "Tradition and Newfangledness in Wyatt's 'They fle from me,'" ELH, XXXII (March, 1965), 13.

²⁴Muir (ed.), op. cit., p. xx.

²⁵Ibid., p. xxx. Those with asterisks Muir indicates as being direct translations or as containing some influence from Petrarch.

remaining three cover subjects ranging from a storm-tossed ship, to introspective analysis of the poet, and to a deer hunt that has two interpretations foreshadowing the technique of the seventeenth-century metaphysical poets. Out of the twenty love poems, six may be identified as Petrarchan, and four reflect Wyatt's personal life and are much more mature in their treatment of love; however, this judgment is rather arbitrary, since it is based upon a matter of degree and may be made about several other poems in the group. Two of the ten sonnets serve to illustrate the usual technique to be found therein. The following poem is a good example of the technique of cataloguing of the different emotions that beset the courtier:

I fynde no peace and all my warr is done;
 I fere and hope, I burne and freise like yse;
 I fley above the wynde yet can I not arrise;
 And noght I have and all the worold I seson;
 That loseth no locketh holdeth me in prison
 And holdeth me not, yet can I scape nowise;
 Nor letteth me lyve nor dye at my devise,
 And yet of deth it gyveth none occasion.
 Withoute Iyen, I se; and withoute tong I plain;
 I desire to perisshe, and yet I aske helthe;
 I love an othre, and thus I hate my self;
 I fede me in sorrows and laughe in all my pain;
 Likewise displeaseth me boeth deth and lyffe;
 And my delite is causer of this stryff.²⁶
 (Sonnet 26)

This poem, when compared with Petrarch's "Love's Inconsistency," appears to be an almost verbatim translation, but the device of the pairing of opposites and the cataloguing of the lover's emotions is to be found in many of the sonnets that follow Wyatt.

²⁶Ibid., p. 21.

Wyatt's "Ffarewell Love" reaches for a more mature statement of love that surpasses the Petrarchan conventions that it employs. For example, in bidding Cupid farewell, he asks the boy to plague the younger men with his arrows, "brittil dertes," because he intends to study the love philosophers of perfect wealth:

Ffarewell Love and all thy lawes for ever:
 Thy bayted hookes shall tangill me no more;
 Senec and Plato call me from thy lore,
 To perfaict welth my wit for to endever.
 In blynde error when I did perseuer,
 Thy sherpe repulse that pricketh ay so sore
 Hath taught me to sett in tryfels no store
 And scape fourth, syns libertie is lever.
 Therefore farewell: goo trouble yonger hertes
 And in me clayme no more authoritie;
 With idill youth goo vse thy propertie
 And theron spend thy many brittil dertes;
 For hetherto though I have lost all my tyme
 Me lusteth no lenger rotten boughes to clymbe.
 (Sonnet 13)

This poem also contains one of the few references in the entire group to Cupid: "With idill youth goo vse thy propertie / And theron spend thy many brittil dertes," an allusion that later becomes a definite convention in the major love sonnets such as Sidney's Astrophel and Stella and Greville's Caelica. Moreover, Wyatt's personification of love is of minor proportions when compared with Sidney's and Greville's treatments of the love god. Bidding love farewell is a device also employed by Greville, but in a more concrete manner when he states, "Farewell sweet boy." Wyatt is motivated by "Senec" and Plato to use his wit, but Greville forsakes Love because his thoughts,

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although they please less, will not betray him, and because he, like Wyatt, is also no longer young. Thus, the sonnet conventions begin to take root early in English literature. Nevertheless, another element of form deserves to be noted, although the two poems previously cited do not follow as illustrations. For example, both Wyatt and Surrey employ a couplet in the last two lines of their sonnets, a rarely used device in Petrarch. This choice causes a great deal of variation to occur in the preceding twelve lines as the sonnet form develops.²⁷ Wyatt also chose to avoid the subject of the beauty of nature so dominant in Petrarch and to dwell more upon a concept of the human mind and the various states that it occupies in man's character.²⁸ Thus, these sonneteers, as well as their contemporaries, in spite of their early attempts in the art, do not reach great sustained heights in their verse.²⁹ Therefore, when one considers the literary relation of the English with the French and Italians, it is not difficult to realize the degree on which the conventions of English love poetry depend upon foreign conventions.³⁰

The traditions of the past had considerable influence upon Wyatt and Surrey, and they, in turn, exerted much influence

²⁷ Lee, op. cit., p. xlvii.

²⁸ Foxwell, A Study of Sir Thomas Wyatt's Poems, p. 80.

²⁹ Lee, op. cit., p. x.

³⁰ Ibid., p. xii.

upon the poets that followed.³¹ Hence, with the impetus given to the development of English poetry by these two men, the next major step in the sequence of the evolution of the English sonnet is that undertaken by Sir Philip Sidney. Although his rise to fame was through his literary endeavors, what gave his works their added prominence was his tragic death, at the rather early age of thirty-two, in a war in the Netherlands.³² His death and the nationalistic attitude toward Sidney by Englishmen made his works highly influential.³³ Even so, Wyatt's more mature love sonnets in Tottel's Miscellany are probable sources for Sidney's Astrophel and Stella, but Surrey and Petrarch have some influence.³⁴ In fact, Sidney's poetic prowess was due to his ability to adapt and translate the foreign sonneteers, principally Petrarch and Ronsard. Only a small degree of the conventions found in his work are his own inventions.³⁵ Although he relied heavily upon conventions, he exploited to a more expansive degree Wyatt's technical skill with the love sonnet.³⁶ Because of his close familiarity with

³¹Muir (ed.), op. cit., p. xxi.

³²William Gray (ed.), The Miscellaneous Works of Sir Philip Sidney, Knt., p. 45. All quotations from Sidney's works come from this edition.

³³Lee, op. cit., p. xlii.

³⁴Lever, op. cit., p. 90.

³⁵Lee, op. cit., p. xliv.

³⁶Lever, op. cit., p. 91.

the styles and techniques of Petrarch, Wyatt, and others, and the total effect of his love sonnets on those who attempted to emulate him, Sidney became known as the "English Petrarch."³⁷

He begins Astrophel and Stella with an explanatory sonnet, in which he states his reasons for writing, e.g., to catch his love's eyes so that she could see how much he loved her. But he also speaks of his inability to find appropriate words with which to express himself, causing an "oft turning of others' leaves," vainly seeking the answer. Finally, when his muse tells him to write from his heart, the statement, "Looke into thy heart," alludes to the Renaissance tradition of the loved one's image as being pictured in the heart of her lover.³⁸ First, he does turn "others' leaves" as previously stated, but the method of looking "into [his] heart" for inspiration is not altogether correct. Sidney employs the conventions established by Petrarch; and his love, although it may be real, is highly stylized, because, under the circumstances of courtly behavior, he was expected to be writing about his wife.³⁹ But in a death-bed revelation, he confesses

³⁷A. C. Hamilton, "Sidney's Astrophel and Stella as a Sonnet Sequence," ELH, XXXVI (March, 1969), 64.

³⁸David Kalstone, "Sir Philip Sidney and 'Poore Petrarch's Long Deceased Woes,'" JEGP, LXII (January, 1964), 30.

³⁹Roger Howell, Sir Philip Sidney, the Shepherd Knight, p. 182.

that he had a ". . . vanity wherein [he] had taken a delight . . .," alluding perhaps to his affair with Lady Rich, formerly Penelope Devereux.⁴⁰ Although the controversy over Sidney's affair with this woman colors a number of arguments that emphasize that Sidney did have an affair with her, these sonnets are too similar in form to sonnets by previous authors to be considered biographically reliable. Therefore, one must weigh the biographical and the traditional with equal emphasis,⁴¹ because the narrative contained in the sequence is an imaginative, not a factual, account of their love.⁴²

Hamilton discovers that Sidney's sequence, when divided into three parts, takes on unified form.⁴³ An arrangement also given by Petrarch to his sonnets (which he called Rerum vulgarum fragmenta) by which means he ordered his three hundred and sixty-six poems so that a general theme would be evident, e.g., the changing of his love for Laura into a love for God.⁴⁴ However, Sidney follows a different thematic approach, in addition to adhering to Petrarch's form, thereby allowing his sequence to move through three phases of the senses. First,

⁴⁰ Loc. cit.

⁴¹ Howell, op. cit., pp. 187-188.

⁴² Ibid., p. 192.

⁴³ Hamilton, op. cit., p. 67.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 62.

it begins with sight that induces love; secondly, hearing brings about desire; and finally, touch attempts to satisfy the wants of desire.⁴⁵ Thus, by using the senses to a greater degree, Sidney invests his characters and subject matter with an irony that establishes one of the basic differences between his attitude and that of the Petrarchan tradition.

Consequently, he brings his characters into a more mundane setting in which to act out their human drama.⁴⁶

By his use of irony, Sidney makes the love god, Cupid, a god of erotic love representing base desire and romantic concepts, both of which attitudes reflect an influence of the child actors on the Elizabethan stage.⁴⁷ Hence, Sidney treats Cupid in various ways. In his one hundred and eight sonnets, he mentions Cupid twenty-three times in the first half of the sonnet sequence. He also recognizes the unreality of the convention when he states, "It is most true, what we call Cupid's dart, / An image is, which for ourselves we carve." (V, 5-6) Then, he personifies love throughout the rest of the sequence. Moreover, in the first half of the sequence, he treats the Cupid as a rival after he himself has been conquered by Stella:

Fair eyes, sweet lips, dear heart, that foolish I,
Could hope, by Cupid's help, on you to prey,

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 84.

⁴⁶Lever, op. cit., p. 65.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 85.

Since to himself he doth your gifts apply,
As his main force, choice sport, and easeful stay:

For when he will see who dare him gainsay,
Then with those eyes he looks; lo! by and by,
Each soul doth at Love's feet his weapon lay,
Glad if for her he give them leave to die.

When he will play, then in her lips he is,
Where blushing red, that Love's self them doth love,
With either lip he doth the other kiss;
But when he will, for quiet-sake, remove
From all the world, her heart is then his rome,
Where, well he knows, no man to him can come.
(XLIII)

The eyes, lips, and heart of Stella become Cupid's stronghold. Cupid, by tradition, is blind, but, with the aid of Stella's eyes, he conquers his adversaries with ease. Her lips become a place for his play, and Sidney, in describing one lip's kissing the other, emphasizes the envy that Astrophel has for Cupid's delightful position. Cupid eventually finds quietude within Stella's heart, because she will not allow man's love to penetrate it. Hence, Cupid has for himself everything that Astrophel desires, and the two become rivals for Stella's heart. On the other hand, Sidney treats Cupid in the manner of a spoiled child that has offended his mother who, in turn, has broken his bow and arrows:

'Till that his grandame Nature, pitying it,
Of Stella's brows, made him two better bows,
And in her eyes of arrows infinite:
O how for joy he leaps! O how he crows!
And straight therewith, like wags new got to play,
Falls to shrewd turns, and I was in his way.
(XVII, 9-14)

Thus, Cupid discovers that, for a reprimand which he deserves, he is given a new supply of arrows and two bows made of

Stella's eyebrows to supplement the bow that was broken. Like a child with a new toy, Cupid immediately starts to play his childish game again and wings Astrophel. At the same time, Sidney treats Cupid as an adversary when Astrophel is attacked by him:

Fly, fly, my friends, I have my death's wound! fly,
 See there that boy, that murdering boy, I say,
 Who, like a thief, hid in dark bush, doth lie,
 Till bloody bullet get him wrongful prey.
 So, tyrant he, no fitter place could spy,
 Nor so fair level in so secret stay,
 As that sweet black which veils the heavenly eye;
 There himself with his shot he close doth lay.
 (XX, 1-8)

Hiding in Stella's eye ("dark bush"), Cupid has ambushed unwary Astrophel and his friends and, again, hits Astrophel with a fatal arrow. Astrophel considers himself wrongfully wounded and feels that Cupid has used an unfair advantage by hiding in such a dark and lovely place. Thus, as his adversary, Astrophel finds Cupid in alliance with Stella to be an impossible foe. Later, he discovers Love in Stella's camp: "Stella, whence doth this new assault arise, / A conquer'd golden ransack'd heart to win? . . . / And there, long since, Love, thy Lieutenant, lies . . ." (XXXVI, 1-2, 5), and realizes that the boy has finally become a traitor to him in his assault upon Stella. Later, however, Astrophel's attitude softens toward the boy, and he expresses a mellowed tolerance for the boy's mischievous ways:

Love, still a boy, and oft a wanton is,
 School'd only by his mother's tender eye:

What wonder then, if he his lesson miss,
 When for so soft a rod, dear play he try?
 And yet my Star, because a sugar'd kiss
 In sport I suck'd, while she asleep did lie,
 Doth low'r nay chide, nay threat for only this:
 Sweet, it was saucy Love, not humbel I.
 (LXXIII, 1-8)

Astrophel admits that Cupid cannot be blamed for such actions, since he has been tutored by a kind teacher. But Astrophel has another reason for his malleable attitude; i.e., he has kissed Stella and placed the blame on the "saucy" Cupid. Thus, in his treatment of one convention, Sidney has surpassed his predecessors to the degree that his Cupid becomes considerably more human and lacks the stilted quality of the earlier mythological type of love god.

One other convention upon which Sidney exerts his imaginative and poetic powers is that concerning the woman, Stella. Sidney deviates from Petrarch in that he tones down the emphasis upon the shining image of his love.⁴⁸ Laura differs from Stella in that Laura is praised as a revelation, while Stella is flattered as a heroine.⁴⁹ Sidney's attitude toward the woman becomes more evident when, nearly half-way through the sequence, he discovers that the older conventional techniques previously used are no longer satisfactory in expressing his love and turns to the exploitation of a more

⁴⁸Kalstone, op. cit., p. 25.

⁴⁹Lever, op. cit., p. 60.

personal attitude in revealing his feelings.⁵⁰ In the character of Astrophel, Sidney becomes caught up in the convention of the lover and turns a questioning attitude toward the convention as he progresses throughout the remainder of the sequence.⁵¹ Hence, his intent in the sonnets is to present all of the various aspects of love that he could imagine a lover might experience during the courtship of a mistress.⁵²

Sidney's verse does not have the complexity of Donne's; but he uses the same metrical techniques, and there is a metaphysical element in his argument in his use of opposites in addition to an intensity produced through the use of opposition.⁵³ He also employs a rhyme scheme used approximately half of the time by Donne. For example, of the one hundred and eight sonnets, fifty-nine, and possibly one more, follow the pattern, abba abba cded ee.⁵⁴ Donne's only variation in this pattern in Holy Sonnets occurs in the third quatrain wherein he sometimes makes use of the closed form. In eighteen of the sonnets in Astrophel and Stella, the rhyme scheme is

⁵⁰ Howell, op. cit., p. 198.

⁵¹ Kalstone, op. cit., p. 29.

⁵² Hamilton, op. cit., p. 64.

⁵³ John Thompson, "Sir Philip and the Forsaken Iamb," Kenyon Review, XX (Winter, 1958), 108.

⁵⁴ R. Whigam and O. Emerson, "Sonnet Structure in Sidney's 'Astrophel and Stella,'" SP, XVIII (July, 1921), 347.

abab abab cdcd ee, and nine sonnets follow the pattern, abba abba ccd eed.⁵⁵

That there is a narrative sequence in Astrophel and Stella has proved to be a problem to many past scholars, but Hamilton has made inroads in presenting a case for the relation that exists between the sonnets, arguing that the sonnets present the narrative of Astrophel's beginning love for Stella, then the full bloom of love, and finally the separation.⁵⁶ However, one must exercise caution, because, when sonnets are used in a sequence, they tend to develop individual parts of the theme and treat the subject of the poem as though it were an element of itself, and Sidney's sonnets have this nature about them that they end without aiming at another treatise on a related subject found in a subsequent sonnet.⁵⁷

Thus, the case for the development of the English sonnet rests rather heavily upon Sidney, who relies upon much that has gone before but is not averse to increasing the momentum of the sonnet's rise. He justifies his Astrophel and Stella in his prose work (The Defense of Poesy) composed around the same time, defining poetry as ". . . an art of imitation . . . a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth: to speak

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 349.

⁵⁶Hamilton, op. cit., p. 63.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 60.

metaphorically, a speaking picture; with this end, to teach and delight."⁵⁸ He further states that the poet excels all other men in that he tells the truth, although he sets forth to lie, which intention is more than others who set forth to tell the truth and usually finish with a lie. The poet also uses the ancients as a basis for poetry, since each civilization seems to have a heroic poem as a basis for its origin. But Sidney also treats the satiric and the comic in poetry. These forms teach as well as any other form, because, through their examples, they show what the debased man suffers. Hence, in observing the debased man in a satiric or comic situation, one learns to pity this despised position, and, therefore, sees his own folly or else learns to laugh at himself and, thus, learns to change his own habits of folly. This comic and satiric form appears to be what Sidney was attempting in Astrophel and Stella in which the lover is frustrated beyond human endurance, and the lady beyond the human limitation of approach. As a result, Sidney teaches through the comic and satiric spirit of his poetry, in the course of which he ". . . holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney-corner."⁵⁹ But he feels that one other form of poetry seldom finds its creation through the English poet, e.g., poetry that reflects God-given talents in works about God:

⁵⁸Gray, op. cit., p. 70.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 85.

Other sorts of poetry, almost, have we none, but that lyrical kind of songs and sonnets, which, if the Lord gave us to good mind, how well it might be employed, and with how heavenly fruits, both private and public, in singing the praises of the immortal beauty, the immortal goodness of that God, who giveth us hands to write, and wits to conceive; of which we might well want words, but never matter; of which we could turn our eyes to nothing, but we should ever have new budding occasions.⁶⁰

Therefore, in The Defense of Poesy, Sidney set the standard for English poetry, dictates that will not be followed to any great degree for another ten years. Nevertheless, Southwell, in Saint Peters Complaint (1595), also laments the lack of attention given to religious poetry. Thus, strong influences come to the surface during the latter part of the sixteenth century from 1580 onward, encouraging authors to use a more intellectual approach to the composition of their love poetry and to emphasize a more religious nature in their subjects.⁶¹ Both Gabriel Harvey and Chapman write against love sonnets in 1596, but the man who seems to have had the greatest effect upon slowing the momentum was Sir John Davies, who encompasses many of the sonneteers in his charges, including Shakespeare.⁶²

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 60.

⁶¹ Peterson, op. cit., p. 4.

⁶² Lee, op. cit., pp. cvi-cvii.

CHAPTER II

GREVILLE'S CAELICA: A TRANSITIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE RISE OF ENGLISH RELIGIOUS SONNETS

The disappearance of the English love sonnets failed to materialize for a number of years after an attempt had been made to remove them from the literary scene. Efforts to clear the field caused hesitancy and some deviations to occur in the writings of certain of the more influential authors. Thus, during the last ten years of the sixteenth century, poets began to give an original view of their own to some of the traditional conventions of love poetry, a practice that was ushered in by Sidney.⁶³ However, the man responsible for one of the most obvious changes is Fulke Greville, who occupies a position perhaps half-way between Sidney and Donne on the basis of his sequence called Caelica (c. 1580-1595).⁶⁴ Greville is also worthy of consideration, because, although he does not quite reach the poetic heights of his great contemporaries, he is more interested than they in practical, earthly subjects.⁶⁵

⁶³Peterson, op. cit., p. 167.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 264.

⁶⁵Geoffery Bullough (ed.), Poems and Dramas of Fulke Greville, p. 13. All quotations from Greville's works are taken from this edition.

Greville and Sidney were quite closely acquainted during the time in which each was composing sonnets⁶⁶ and offered criticisms to one another on the subjects and techniques of their works.⁶⁷ Purcell, in comparing the works of these two men, discovers that the first forty sonnets in each man's sequence have a very close relationship in meaning, but he conjectures that the two men had separated after the initial phase of their friendship and had gone separate ways.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, when these two poets are studied concurrently, one discovers several interesting parallels and divergences that are apparent. When such similarities occur, Greville usually adds a wry, humorous effect, a technique that indicates a contention between the two, rather than proving that Greville copied Sidney's style or subject matter.⁶⁹ It is also notable that Greville was more abstract than Sidney in matters of psychology and philosophy.⁷⁰ Sidney continuously moves from the abstract to a very concrete, personal description in Astrophel and Stella, but Greville, although he indicates similar characteristics at times, usually moves in the opposite

⁶⁶Howell, op. cit., p. 156.

⁶⁷James Purcell, "Sidney's Astrophel and Stella and Greville's Caelica," PMLA, L (June, 1935), 422.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 421.

⁶⁹Bullough (ed.), op. cit., p. 45.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 47.

direction in his philosophic observation, or away from the poem's subject matter.⁷¹

One recalls that the Platonic point of view depicted the beauty of the mistress as a revelation of God's heavenly image, and, consequently, stressed that it was necessary for one to love chastely.⁷² Actually, Greville attempted to write in this Platonic mode but was too practical to deal seriously with this unrealistic tradition.⁷³ Instead, he recognized that there was a division between the ideal and the actual (as did most Elizabethan poets); consequently, the aim of most of these writers was to create some idealistic situation, or "easy" Platonism, but in Greville there was no bridging the gap between these two concepts. He simply used both points of view in his highly practical approach.⁷⁴ Moreover, Sidney and Greville were among those who experimented with ancient Christian neo-Platonic thought.⁷⁵ Both incorporate the neo-Platonic form in their love sonnets, but they progressively dismiss the form as an unlikely substitute for the union of

⁷¹Hugh Maclean, "Greville's 'Poetic,'" SP, LIXI (April, 1964), 172.

⁷²Paul Siegel, "The Petrarchan Sonneteers and Neo-Platonic Love," SP, XLII (April, 1945), 177-179.

⁷³Bullough (ed.), op. cit., p. 48.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 1.

⁷⁵Elkin Wilson, England's Eliza, p. 269.

spiritual and temporal love, leaving the problem of union for Donne to solve.⁷⁶

Greville, as did Sidney, treats three forms of love in Caelica; first, idealized love; next, frustrated love; and, finally, a divine love; but, because of the diversity to be found in his sequence, Caelica expresses an attitude of anti-love, rather than love.⁷⁷ In fact, the realistic tone of parts of Caelica reveals that Greville did not follow the courtly love tradition,⁷⁸ and, in his writings, it is obvious that he tends to exhibit an ironic attitude toward love.⁷⁹ His treatment of love, usually in an allegorical manner, thus stands out in its realistic approach to the subject.⁸⁰

Greville's Caelica begins with a traditional lament of the lover, but, as the sequence unfolds, the tendency is to move away from the neo-Platonic concept of love and to turn toward Christian love.⁸¹ In the first sonnet, Greville generally describes the qualities of his mistress, consisting of Delight, Love, Reason, and Virtue, and finds her composed of classical abstractions previously attributed to many women.

⁷⁶Peterson, op. cit., p. 266.

⁷⁷Bullough (ed.), op. cit., p. 45.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 8.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 6.

⁸⁰Lisle John, The Elizabethan Sonnet Sequence, p. 75.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 252.

Hence, this sonnet may be read as being in praise of the Queen or of an ideal woman, rather than of any other particular woman of the time.⁸² A tendency not to identify the mistress in the sequences had already preceded Greville in the earlier sonnets and had exhibited, by this time, evidence of becoming a tradition. For example, Fletcher does not divulge whether his Licia is a real woman or a religious ideal, ushering in a new approach in the neo-Platonic attitude toward love.⁸³ In fact, Fletcher indicates on the title page of Licia that there was no connection between his sonnets and any contemporary lady.⁸⁴

Caelica has many of the characteristics of Astrophel and Stella, but it makes a mockery of the Petrarchan tradition, reflecting Donne's later attitude in Songs and Sonnets; i.e., it is more concerned with the conventions of writing than with a concept of woman and her attributes.⁸⁵ In Sonnet XXII, after having shared favors and the same feeling with his love, Greville laments that he has fallen into poor circumstances with her:

Was it for this that I might Myra see
Washing the water with her beauties, white?

⁸²Wilson, op. cit., p. 251.

⁸³Peterson, op. cit., p. 180.

⁸⁴Lee, op. cit., p. lxxxi.

⁸⁵Peterson, op. cit., p. 265.

Yet would she neuer write her loue to me;
Thinks wit of change while thoughts are in delight?
 Mad Girles must safely loue, as they may leaue,
No man can print a kisse, lines may deceive.⁸⁶
 (25-30)

Thus, the woman has certain characteristics that are not neo-Platonic, and Greville concentrates upon the sensual aspects of love to a large degree. In sonnet XL, he refers, again, to her beautiful characteristics and ends by stating that the sight of her "Turnes all spirits of Man into desire." (14) Moreover, he almost reaches Donne's metaphorical heights when he alludes to birds and fish in nature as imagistic parallels of his relations with Caelica, ending with, "I like the fish bequeath'd to Neptunes bed, / No sooner tast of ayre, but I am dead." (LVII, 13-14)

Greville finds both the neo-Platonic and the Platonic views unrealistic and looks upon the love that men and women share as if it were an Anacreontic sport, not a depraved condition.⁸⁷ In this same vein, two of his sonnets are actual bawdy stories, possibly contemporary ones that were enjoying a popularity at the time. The first, sonnet XXIII, concerning Merlin when he was a young boy, uses an opportunity to allude to the Church of Rome through the clergy. The other, sonnet I, concerns a man named Scoggin, who accepts his wife's

⁸⁶Bullough (ed.), op. cit., p. 85.

⁸⁷Peterson, op. cit., p. 266.

infidelity in a unique way. Each sonnet is expressed in a colloquial style, since Greville believes that the expression should be in harmony with the nature of the subject.⁸⁸

Greville also differs from Sidney in his treatment of Cupid, describing him as not only a blind boy who pesters him with arrows, but also as a pampered wag whose antics cause a good deal of mischief. Thus, Cupid is given a base position and is treated as a rather common Puck.⁸⁹ At one time, he chides Cupid:

Cupid, thou naughtie Boy, when thou wert loathed,
Naked and blind, for vagabunding noted,
Thy nakednesse I in my reason clothed,
Mine eyes I gaue thee, so was I deuoted.

Fye Wanton, fie; who would show children kindnesse?
No sooner he into mine eyes was gotten,
But straight he clouds them with a seeing blindnesse,
Makes reason wish that reason were forgotten.
(XII, 1-8)

Cupid has been clothed in "reason" by the narrator, resulting in the narrator's wish to forget reason. Thus, the narrator is blinded by the beauty of love, and for this catastrophe he blames the "naughtie boy" for taking advantage of him. Later, he warns the ladies of him, "Ladies, this blind Boy that ran from his Mother, / Will euer play the wag with one or other." (XIII, 13-14) Greville pictures the boy as one who will play tricks upon them as the boy has duped him. He also describes

⁸⁸George Williamson, The Proper Wit of Poetry, p. 26.

⁸⁹Bullough (ed.), op. cit., p. 47.

him as "Cupid, my pretty Boy," and later locates him in the same place as does Sidney, e.g., in the Mistress's face:

Ah silly Cupid, doe you make it coy
To keepe your seate in Cala's furrowed face?
Thinke in her beauty what you did enioy,
And doe not seruice done you so disgrace.

She that refused not any shaft you shot,
Lent dewes to Youth, and sparks to Old desire;
If such flat homage be so soone forgot,
Many good fellowes will be out of hire.
(XIX, 1-8)

On this occasion, Greville places the boy in a furrowed face. Cala is old and has little appeal to Cupid or to men. Thus, he derides the boy for not shooting his arrows at older people, as well. Hence, Greville and Sidney give the boy the same setting, but Greville changes the "scenery" from a young beauty to an old dame who no longer inspires Cupid or lovers. Consequently, in Greville's treatment of Cupid, the narrator and the boy share an interplay of personal response, whereas Sidney handles the boy more objectively and portrays him as a character in a play.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, one must consider Greville's whole approach in the light of the poet's humor that verges upon the coarser elements, at times.⁹¹

Thus, in his early sonnets Greville follows many of the Petrarchan traditions but alters the courtly attitude so popular with Sidney. Much of the time, he relegates his mistress

⁹⁰John, op. cit., p. 73.

⁹¹Bullough (ed.), op. cit., p. 23.

(or mistresses, since he calls upon Caelica, Cynthia, Cala, and Myra) to a position equal to himself. Moreover, he distorts the convention of immutable love, since he courts more than one mistress, and finds that Cupid is no longer a god carrying out divine mischance. Hence, his transition becomes apparent as the progression of his sonnets takes on this satiric form. In his early sonnets, he treats courtly love in the popular tradition, but he soon produces a subtle shift in emphasis that eventually ridicules this tradition. Thus, in sonnet LXI, he moves to a definite position regarding courtly love and attempts to show its faults:

Love is no true made Looking-glasse,
Which perfect yeelds the shape we bring,
It vgly shoves vs all that was,
And flatters euery future thing.
(25-28)

In the next sonnet, he condemns those who follow the courtly tradition, confessing, "VWho worships Cupid doth adore a boy." (LXII, 1) As a result, his humor falls, now, upon the very modes that he has used in his earlier sonnets.

Greville begins with the courtly conventions and follows through with the wooing of the mistress, only to lose faith with courtly love. This pattern follows that in Sidney's Astrophel and Stella, but the last one-third of Caelica develops a religious text. Hence, the subtle undertones, alluding to dissatisfaction and contempt for the tradition of love, change to the reflective thoughts of man in his relationships

to God. The transition, then, seems to come to an end as Greville makes a full declaration of the intent of his sequence in the last part of Caelica when he declares:

You that seeke what Life is in Death,
 Now find it aire that once was breath.
 New names vnknowne, old names gone:
 Till time and bodies, but soules none.
Reader! then make time, while you be,
 But steppes to your Eternitie.
 (LXXXII)

Henceforth, he begins his new life in his fallen state and expresses the moral dilemmas he has brought upon himself:

If from this heauenly state, which soules with soules
 vnites,
 He be falne downe into the darke despaired warre of
 sprites;
 Let him lament with me, for none doth glorie know,
 That hath not beene aboue himself, and thence falne downe
 to woe:

 And I my selfe am he, that doth with none compare,
 Except in woes and lacke of worth; whose states more
 wretched are.
 Let no man aske my name, nor what else I should be;
 For Greiv-ill, paine, forlorne estate doe best decipher
 me. (LXXXIII, 5-9, 95-98)

Now, he has departed upon the theme that he is to sustain until the end of the sequence.

Greville, in exploring the facets of love and the relationship to man and woman, discovers that the answers to life are not caught up in the tangles of human relationships. As it seems with most philosophers, he concludes that one must eventually seek the ultimate love in order to make judgments upon the imperfect love that abounds in worldly traffic. Hence, he gradually turns to another tradition for the

solutions to his unanswered questions. When he beholds the weakness of women and the frenzy and lack of wisdom in man, he recognizes the two separate natures of man--the spiritual and temporal.⁹² In considering the qualities of the deities of love (Cupid, Mars, and Mercury) he finds them entirely false and, thus, announces:

Mercurie, Cupid, Mars, they be no Gods,
But humane Idols, built vp by desire,
Fruit of our boughs, whence heauen maketh rods,
And babyes too for child-thoughts that aspire:
Who sees their glories, on the earth must pry;
Who seeks true glory must looke to the skye.
 (LXII, 19-24)

As a result, he establishes his division between the false gods and the Divine God. Within this concept, he recognizes his own faults. Although he feels that he has been called to follow a godly life, in answering this call, he thinks that he would be sacrificing too much.⁹³

Because of the sacred views expressed by Petrarch, some English poets turned to the subject of divine love.⁹⁴ Religious poetry preceding the Renaissance was written basically with the intent to teach or to explain doctrines of faith, but the early part of the sixteenth century saw a change in religious poetry to encourage man to search his inner self and to avoid base

⁹²Ibid., p. 12.

⁹³Ibid., p. 11.

⁹⁴Lee, op. cit., p. xvii.

forms of love in order to elevate man's thoughts.⁹⁵ Therefore, the tradition had been established, but perhaps the one influential event that moved Greville to higher ground was the shock of Sidney's death.⁹⁶ The necessity of turning away from subjects of erotic love is voiced by Greville in sonnet LXXXVII, and by Sidney in sonnet CX, when each exhorts his reader to turn to holy love.⁹⁷ At first, the turn from secular to religious poetry was mainly a revolt against love in the courtly tradition, but it eventually became an argument for the searching of the inner self, a method characteristic of Greville and Donne to make man eligible for divine love.⁹⁸

Protestants who were contemplating the inner man had insisted upon some analysis of the essence of being, and this practice, in turn, also motivated religious poets to write with this subject in mind.⁹⁹ As Greville became older and more mature following Sidney's death, he discovered that amorous pastimes no longer inspired his poetry but that religion was for him the progenitor of art. He discerned his faith's becoming stronger as he viewed man in relation to the mystery of

⁹⁵Peterson, op. cit., p. 267.

⁹⁶Bullough (ed.), op. cit., p. 49.

⁹⁷Purcell, op. cit., p. 421.

⁹⁸Peterson, op. cit., p. 176.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 277.

life.¹⁰⁰ He concluded that, although man was a fallen creature, he saw hope at times:

Yet vnto thee, Lord, (mirrour of transgression)
Wee, who for earthly Idols, haue forsaken
Thy heauenly Image (sinlesse pure impression)
And so in nets of vanity lye taken,
All desolate implore that to thine owne,
Lord, thou no longer liue a God vnknowne.

Yet Lord let Israels plagues not be eternall,
Nor sinne for euer cloud thy sacred Mountaines,
Nor with false flames spirituall but infernall,
Dry up thy mercies euer springing fountaines,
Rather, sweet Iesus, fill vp time and come,
To yeeld the sinne her euerlasting doome.
(CIX, 19-30)

On the other hand, he found that faith outside the realm of self would not work. Hence, he wrote that the peace that man seeks is found by looking inward, because, to rely on outward things causes the inner self to become morally decomposed:¹⁰¹

False Antidotes for vitious ignorance,
Whose causes are within, and so their cure,
Errorr corrupting Nature, not Mischance,
For how can that be wise which is not pure?
So that Man being but mere hypocrisie,
What can his arts but beames of follie be?

Let him then first set straight his inward sprite,
That his Affections in the seruing roomes,
May follow Reason, not confound her light,
And make her subiect to inferiour doomes;
For till the inward moulds be truly plac'd,
All is made crooked that in them we cast.
(LXVI, 25-36)

¹⁰⁰ Bullough (ed.), op. cit., p. 50.

¹⁰¹ Peter Ure, "A Note on 'Opinion' in Daniel, Greville, and Chapman," MLR, XLVI (July, 1951), 334.

Greville is acutely aware of the inner workings of the mind and recognized that outward evil encountered by man is the result of the evil and corruption within.¹⁰² He recognizes these problems in himself as well but falls short of reconciling the divine and the sublunary, a failure that results in his becoming philosophically sardonic.¹⁰³ Thus, in Caelica, he has carried through a definite theme that reflects the change that the English sonnet sequence is undergoing at this time. He has discussed his profane love, his discontent with it, his recognition of his fallen nature resulting from inordinate desire, and, finally, his acceptance of divine love as a means to eternal salvation. His study of the inner self appears to have been brought on by his interest in Stoicism, an important philosophy to him, but always secondary to his Calvinistic leanings.¹⁰⁴ Oddly enough, the Calvinist doctrine (that fear was not enough for salvation) had been assumed into the Anglican canon.¹⁰⁵ Greville, nevertheless, applied Stoic beliefs to his own Calvinistic tenets, thus giving his philosophy a more somber color.¹⁰⁶ Consequently, recognizing

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 322.

¹⁰³Williamson, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

¹⁰⁴Bullough (ed.), op. cit., p. 9.

¹⁰⁵Peterson, op. cit., pp. 272-273.

¹⁰⁶Ure, op. cit., p. 334.

corruption within himself, he does not offer man much hope in a fusion of Calvinistic and Stoic philosophies.¹⁰⁷ Although he was a somewhat obscure Calvinist, he was also a scholarly man of the court.¹⁰⁸ Thus, for him poetry had an important, didactic function; e.g., the use of a form to benefit a reader.¹⁰⁹ He believed that poetry was subservient to the state's well being and to politics, a belief strong enough to cause him to destroy one of his plays.¹¹⁰ He writes several poems concerning the state, in one of which he ties it to astronomy and the unrest of the people:

As when men see a Blazing Starre appeare,
Each stirres vp others leuitie to wonder,
In restlesse thoughts holding those visions deare,
Which threaten to rent Gouvernment in sunder;
Yet be but horrors from vaine hearts sent forth,
To prophecie against Annointed worth. . . .
(LXXIX, 1-6)

Thus, he recognizes the discontent that astronomy has caused among the people. He voices the same concern that Donne reflects in The First Anniversary, e.g., that the order of the universe is changed and "calls all in doubt." But the horror that comes of this change reveals that the revolt is against the anointed sovereign---God Himself.

¹⁰⁷Peter Ure, "Fulke Greville's Dramatic Characters," RES, I (July, 1950), 310.

¹⁰⁸Edwin Miller, The Professional Writer in Elizabethan Literature, p. 23.

¹⁰⁹Maclean, op. cit., p. 191.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 183.

Greville's main intent behind the writing of poetry was a loose didactic approach in which poetry should present the delight derived from divine love or moral goodness that would teach man how to order his life.¹¹¹ He held two views of humanity's frailty: first, that man is innately bad; but, secondly, that his mistakes are sometimes beneficial to the state.¹¹² However, he believed in self-control brought into relationship with divine love. Evil for him was Satan; virtue was the giving of oneself completely to God.¹¹³

Greville's poetic style falls somewhere between that of Sidney and Donne, but he is probably closer to Donne, especially in the last half of his sonnets. The first half of Caelica follows Sidney's sonnet form, but, as Greville moves away from Sidney's influence, his structure becomes a six-line stanza at times with a rhyme scheme of ababcc.¹¹⁴ The last two lines, oftentimes, are aphoristic statements. In the process of developing this aphoristic style, Greville forsakes Petrarchan expression.¹¹⁵ In the process of working with the sententious elements of style, he manifests the characteristics

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 188.

¹¹²Bullough (ed.), op. cit., p. 13.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 10.

¹¹⁴Maclean, op. cit., p. 171.

¹¹⁵Williamson, op. cit., p. 28.

of a philosopher¹¹⁶ and makes an attempt to establish his position, as Donne so aptly does, by stating opposites.¹¹⁷ Hence, his style is rather plain because of his Calvinistic influence,¹¹⁸ and, at times, he mistrusts words and rhetoric-- at least, the art involved in them.¹¹⁹

Greville may not be the most outstanding poet of his day, but he makes a serious contribution to English poetry in the important transitional period during the last few years of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, moving away from Sidney and becoming a precursor of Donne. "Understanding the human understanding" is the problem with which Greville contends, but Donne delves into another area, as well, i.e., that of the psychology of the individual.¹²⁰ Hence, Greville represents a small, but important link in the tradition of the English love sonnet.

¹¹⁶Loc. cit.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 30.

¹¹⁸Bullough (ed.), op. cit., p. 20.

¹¹⁹R. L. Colie, "Rhetoric of Transcendence," PQ, XLIII (April, 1964), 166.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 160.

CHAPTER III

DONNE'S REVOLT AGAINST THE COURTLY TRADITION IN SECULAR VERSE

Where does Donne stand in relation to the sonnet tradition of love? There are four theories of love that he has followed: the Ovidian, the Petrarchan, the Platonic, and the neo-Platonic. Regarding these, scholars are equally divided, and the solution lies in Donne's secular verse. Since his religious sonnets have developed out of a progression of earlier lyrics dealing with temporal love, to reach an understanding of his religious sonnets, one must consider his stance taken in the secular poetry so as to grasp the complexity that surrounds his divine poems. But to divide and conquer does little to explain Donne's position.

One scholar suggests that the intellectual Elizabethan found Ovid to have been more moral than he himself was able to be, since Ovid's position, in respect to base love, could explain the moral faults that existed in an erotic approach to love, one that was more acceptable to the Elizabethans than to other generations.¹²¹ But Ovid treats love, not in the innately lustful manner suggested by a superficial reading, but

¹²¹N. J. C. Andreasen, John Donne: Conservative Revolutionary, p. 34.

in one that exposes his irony.¹²² However, the Ovidian approach does not explain all of the problems inherent in Donne by any means. For example, Donne also uses Petrarch as a basis, but differs with him in that he dramatizes Petrarch's ideas.¹²³ Moreover, there seems to have been a relationship between Ovid and Petrarch, and the Renaissance man discovered that Petrarchan love developed from the lower form of sinful love to the highest form in the love of God,¹²⁴ although Ovid never climbs beyond the lower form.

One scholar considers Petrarchan love to be based upon love in relation to two people (a concept that seems to be rather loosely limited) but mentions the qualities of Petrarch that are "traditionally introspective, dialectical and conceited"; therefore, Donne easily falls under the general scope of these loosely bound definitions.¹²⁵ But Donne follows Petrarch's form up to a point and, then, debases his high flown examples in realistic exaggeration of elements contrary to the original idea that was set forth.¹²⁶ He also avoids Petrarch's

¹²²Ibid., p. 31.

¹²³Donald Guss, "Donne's Petrarchism," JEGP, LXIV (January, 1965), 18.

¹²⁴Andreasen, op. cit., p. 55.

¹²⁵Guss, op. cit., p. 18.

¹²⁶Donald Guss, "Donne's Conceit and Petrarchan Wit," PMLA, LXXVIII (September, 1963), 313.

prescription that only one woman be loved, (Petrarch had remained true to Laura for over twenty years).¹²⁷ Donne does not sympathize with those who attempt to idealize Petrarch, and he alludes to the idealists in "The Extasie," an indication that he has little sympathy with those of meager experience in love.¹²⁸

The Petrarchans, moreover, could not accept the neo-Platonic tenets, because they believed that the soul by itself could not be loved;¹²⁹ and the soul in its relation to the body is one of the issues prevalent in Donne's works. The Platonists held that man moved to God from earthly things and that the Godly things are, in reality, more important than anything else.¹³⁰ Thus, Platonic love betters man's moral position, since it brings him into the love of God.¹³¹ When the Platonic position is related to the neo-Platonic position, however, there are still problems. Two that neo-Platonism raised were that beauty was something which enticed meditation and that the body and soul were separated in their appetites. Although Donne had difficulty in accepting the first premise,

¹²⁷Andreasen, op. cit., p. 61.

¹²⁸Donald Guss, John Donne, Petrarchist, p. 137.

¹²⁹A. J. Smith, "Metaphysic of Love," RES, IX (November, 1958), 368.

¹³⁰Andreasen, op. cit., p. 70.

¹³¹Ibid., p. 73.

he spent a good deal of his poetic energy proving that body and soul worked together, especially in the area of love.¹³² Furthermore, neo-Platonic advocates argue that a separation of lovers does not destroy spiritual love; and, since man does not know what he loves, his love is high in the echelon of love, because it is unknowable as God is unknowable; therefore, they conclude that physical separation cannot destroy the spiritual oneness.¹³³ The neo-Platonists conceived of love as being relegated to ascendant planes recognized as physical beauty, beauty of the soul, and beauty of God's love; and they maintained that each plane acknowledged the union of love inherent in that particular plane.¹³⁴ Andreasen, in speaking of the Platonic theory of love, presents this same idea as a part of the doctrine of Platonism.¹³⁵ Thus, in attempting to define the basic precepts of Platonism and neo-Platonism, one discovers that the major difference is a vague sophistication that developed over a period of centuries, and he concludes that no real distinction is readily discernible. Thus, he may safely accept neo-Platonic theories as Platonic, some of which as listed by Guss are the following: the lady's image in the

¹³²Peterson, op. cit., p. 184.

¹³³Guss, John Donne, Petrarchist, p. 140.

¹³⁴Smith, op. cit., p. 368.

¹³⁵Andreasen, op. cit., pp. 74-75.

poet's heart; the image more faithfully depicted than the lady; the exalted position of the lover merely by carrying her image; and his love for the lady as a kind of holy madness.¹³⁶ Thus, by preserving and often extending these concepts, Donne elevates the subject of love to great heights surpassing the efforts of many of his contemporaries.¹³⁷

In the interpretations of Donne's attitude toward love, there are many scholarly disagreements, but regarding his poetic mode there is a fair amount of unity. Although the term, metaphysical, was applied to Cowley by Johnson,¹³⁸ its definition and connotation eventually became too general to be applied with specific accuracy to any group of poets. For example, by such standards, one might conclude that metaphysical traits are present even in Petrarch's writings that became models for Elizabethan writing, although the later metaphysical traits were far more technical.¹³⁹ Along with the metaphysical concept, the Renaissance brought about a new individualistic approach, including a skepticism that had not earlier existed, and this change reflects the demise of medieval thought in this

¹³⁶Guss, John Donne, Petrarchist, p. 140.

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 144.

¹³⁸Samuel Johnson, Lives of the English Poets, I, 30.

¹³⁹Lee, op. cit., p. xvii.

new skeptical man.¹⁴⁰ Hence, Donne uses images that are more technical and mechanical than those employed by most poets prior to his time, and his images, which at first appear to be unemotional, become intensely emotional in his unique application of them.¹⁴¹ In his treatment of these images, two figures are unlike except in one characteristic each that Donne brings together causing "a shudder and a glow"; and, thus, his works treat opposites in the tangible and the intangible, in the material and the spiritual levels of thought,¹⁴² bringing about a "bizarre re-association of elements" to create the effect of paradox.¹⁴³ That he used the idea of separate spheres in describing some of his characters in his poems may have caused a "shudder," but his use of the Copernican theory was not all that excited Donne's facile mind. It is not uncommon in his poems to find that the clash comes with the occasion, or the narrator's words, or his attitude.¹⁴⁵ For

¹⁴⁰ Louis Bredvold, "The Religious Thought of Donne in Relation to Medieval and Later Translations," in Studies in Shakespeare, Milton, and Donne, p. 95.

¹⁴¹ Alice Brandenburg, "The Dynamic Image in Metaphysical Poetry," PMLA, LVII (December, 1942), 1045.

¹⁴² John Douds, "Donne's Technique of Dissonance," PMLA, LII (December, 1937), 1054.

¹⁴³ G. K. Hunter, "The Dramatic Technique of Shakespeare's Sonnets," Essays in Criticism, III (July, 1953), 161.

¹⁴⁴ William Empson, "Donne and the Rhetorical Tradition," Kenyon Review, XI (Autumn, 1949), 587.

¹⁴⁵ Douds, op. cit., p. 97.

example, in the poem, "The Indifferent," he makes his position clear in relation to the school of writers following Sidney, who spent a number of sonnets on descriptions of their fair mistresses:

I can love both faire and browne,
 Her whom abundance melts, and her whom want betraies,
 Her who loves lonenesse best, and her who maskes and
 plaies,
 Her whom the country form'd, and whom the town,
 Her who still weepes with spungie eyes,
 And her who is dry corke, and never cries;
 I can love her, and her, and you and you,
 I can love any, so she be not true.¹⁴⁶
 (1-9)

Donne's aim in this poem is to destroy the natural order that had been accepted and established by the Renaissance; hence, his tone of indifference to the tradition makes the poem all the more effective.¹⁴⁷ It is also contrary to the Petrarchan attitude of the previous decade in that Donne does not idealize woman, but treats the whole tradition in a cynical vein.¹⁴⁸ He adopts this mocking attitude as a form of revolt against the courtly style as well in some of his other poems.¹⁴⁹ In l. 9, "So she be not true," he sets another direction that he wishes to take: e.g., he does not wish for constancy and later

¹⁴⁶ Helen Gardner (ed.), John Donne: The Elegies and Songs and Sonnets, p. 41. All further quotations from Donne's Songs and Sonnets will be taken from this edition.

¹⁴⁷ Andreasen, op. cit., p. 97.

¹⁴⁸ Gardner (ed.), op. cit., p. 11.

¹⁴⁹ Peterson, op. cit., p. 7.

refers to his women as heretics if they do not follow the doctrine of Venus. (19-25) Therefore, he destroys the morality of constant love then states that what seems to the Elizabethans to be vice is now the acceptable moral behavior; i.e., inconstancy.¹⁵⁰ In the last two lines, "But I have told them, since you will be true, / You shall be true to them, who are false to you" (26-27), Donne reflects a sense of dejection and indicates that he has been betrayed by woman.¹⁵¹ Thus, in a sweeping gesture, he abandons a concept that is basic to all courtly tradition and reverses earlier concepts of love, stating that not only he, but all lovers should be inconstant.¹⁵² Furthermore, he gives to his argument a religious flavor, pointing out that the goddess, Venus, has promulgated the morality of inconstancy.¹⁵³ One recalls that Greville refers to the same subject in Caelica when he states:¹⁵⁴

No hereticke, thou Cupid dost betray
And with religion wouldst bring Princes vnder;

By merit banish Chance from Beauties sky,
Set other lawes in Womens hearts, than will;
Cut Changes wings, that she no more may flye,
Hoping to make that constant, which is ill;

¹⁵⁰Andreasen, op. cit., p. 95.

¹⁵¹D. W. Harding, "Coherence of Theme in Donne's Poetry," Kenyon Review, XIII (Summer, 1951), 434.

¹⁵²Andreasen, op. cit., p. 95.

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 96.

¹⁵⁴Peterson, op. cit., p. 263.

Therefore the doome is, wherein thou must rest,
Myra that scornes thee, shall loue many best.
 (XLI, 15-22)

Here, Greville also defends inconstancy on religious principles. Later, in "Farewell to love," Donne discovers that the Diet of love is not what he thought it was, stating, "I thought there was some Deitie in love, / So I did reverence and gave / Worship." (2-4) But disillusionment comes when he finds that his desire has created the god, and, now that he has lost some of his desire, the god diminishes also:

But, from late faire
 His highnesse sitting in a golden Chaire,
 Is not lesse cared for after three dayes
 By children, then the thing which lovers so
 Blindly admire, and with such worship wooc;
 Being had, enjoying it decayes:
 And thence,
 What before pleas'd them all, takes but one sense,
 And that so lamely, as it leaves behinde
 A kinde of sorrowing dulnesse to the minde.
 (11-20)

Since he cannot find pleasure, he decides to avoid those things that are injurious to his life. Thus, he demonstrates that there are two problems detrimental to man that come from lust: that if a man exercises his male desires, he is depressed when the act is consummated; and, that if he follows the innate desire to procreate ("desires to raise posterity"), he has no recourse but to follow the cycle.¹⁵⁵ This wish to produce children was the Aristotelian idea that man has a desire to

¹⁵⁵Andreasen, op. cit., p. 127.

further the race and keep his life continuous in mankind after his death.¹⁵⁶ Regardless of the circumstances, the lover is giving up love, meaning lust, because it has not brought the fulfillment that he had anticipated, and it has hurt him without having a lasting benefit.¹⁵⁷ Therefore, he offers a sardonic retraction of the idea of a god of love.¹⁵⁸ He is now concerned that lust is ugly and that it shortens one's life, contrary to Ovid's view that lust is against man's reason.¹⁵⁹

Although Donne works with a concept of lust in view most of the time, he brings the perspective around to more acceptable conventions as he matures. Grierson cites reasonable evidence to show that the marriage of Donne to Anne More had a seasoning effect upon some of the love poems, but cautions that this maturity is not the case for all of the poems.¹⁶⁰ In between some of Donne's more worldly poems and more mature ideas on love, there are certain poems that represent a transitional stage in the development. For example, "Loves Infiniteness" has several indications of being a transitional poem, since

¹⁵⁶Herbert Grierson (ed.), The Poems of John Donne, II, 53.

¹⁵⁷Andreasen, op. cit., p. 124.

¹⁵⁸Gardner (ed.), op. cit., p. liii.

¹⁵⁹Andreasen, op. cit., p. 128.

¹⁶⁰Grierson (ed.), op. cit., I, xlix.

the concept of love expressed therein deals with the total love that woman has to offer. Thus, the narrator feels that, although he may have had all of her love at one time, she owes him any new love that develops:

Or if then thou gav'st me all,
 All was but All, which thou hadst then,
 But if in thy heart, since, there be or shall,
 New love created bee, by other men,
 Which have their stocks intire, and can in teares,
 In sighs, in oathes, and letters outbid mee,
 This new love may beget new feares,
 For, this love was not vowed by thee.
 And yet it was, thy gift being generall,
 The ground, thy heart is mine, what ever shall
 Grow there, deare, I should have it all.
 (12-22)

He pledges all of his new love to her. This exchange of love shows some concern on Donne's part for the woman. One may assume, at this point, that Donne, more than any of his predecessors, is aware of his lady's feelings.¹⁶¹ In addition, the poem offers a clue to an important issue with which Donne deals more fully in other works. For example, in the last three lines, he states, "But wee will have a way more liberall, / Then changing hearts, to joyne them, so wee shall / Be one, and one anothers All." Here, he alludes to the "oneness" that develops when the two exchange hearts. The sharing of the love between them makes the poem rise above the usual Ovidian treatment of the subject to be found in the other poems.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹Guss, "Donne's Petrarchism," p. 18.

¹⁶²Grierson (ed.), *op. cit.*, I, 17-18, makes a comment on the validity of the title, in which he differs with Gardner in relation to the last two lines which he thinks make the

Although "Loves Infiniteness" gives a fairly mature view of love, the selection in Songs and Sonnets that rises above all others is "The Extasie," a poem with a much more realistic approach to love and the most controversial and commonly discussed work in Donne's canon. Gardner dates this poem as being rather late, well after 1600.¹⁶³ It deals with two people, a man and woman, sitting on a bank among some violets, and, although there is a narrator, he indicates that their spiritual union allows them to speak as one. (25-26)¹⁶⁴ Austin states that, although the technique of dramatic monologue is used in many of Donne's Songs and Sonnets with a man speaking to a woman, "The Extasie" is much more narrative and meditative, and the woman is included in the "we" of the narrator.¹⁶⁵ The person being addressed is a supposed lover who is removed some distance from the scene.¹⁶⁶ It is notable that the speaker is not trying to seduce the woman, because he

(continued) title Lovers rather than Loves. His argument seems reasonable, and the idea of lovers making this exchange of love elevates the sentiments of the poem.

¹⁶³Gardner (ed.), op. cit., p. ix.

¹⁶⁴John Carey, "Notes on Two of Donne's Songs and Sonnets," RES, XVI (February, 1950), 53.

¹⁶⁵Austin Warren, "Donne's 'Extasie,'" SP, LV (July, 1958), 472.

¹⁶⁶Loc. cit.

is speaking to a third person, the listener, and thereby, not talking directly to the woman.¹⁶⁷

The union of the two at the beginning of the poem is manifest only in their souls. They attribute their union to metaphysical reasons, and then rely upon this same kind of rationalization for the union of their bodies on similar grounds.¹⁶⁸ The narrator comes to the understanding of his desires by stating that he does not want to be alone (41-48), and, after making this fact relevant, he turns to the sensual side of love with some meaning. (68-72)¹⁶⁹ Donne presents this physical side of the argument in a balance that is illuminating to the whole person, but it is not a completely spiritual operation,¹⁷⁰ because the lovers must return, at the end, to a sensual consciousness, but not to a consciousness that will exploit the senses.¹⁷¹

One of the more difficult problems in the poem occurs in the line, "Else a great Prince in prison lies." (68) Hughes refers to the Prince as the soul and explains that the

¹⁶⁷Carey, op. cit., p. 53.

¹⁶⁸Rene Graziani, "John Donne's 'The Extasie' and Ecstasy," RES, XIX (May, 1968), 130.

¹⁶⁹Harding, op. cit., p. 435.

¹⁷⁰Horace Eaton, "Songs and Sonnets of John Donne," Sewanee Review, XX (January, 1914), 69.

¹⁷¹Merritt Hughes, "Some of John Donne's 'Extasies,'" PMLA, LXXV (December, 1960), 517.

perfection of this soul can occur only when the senses are brought into the picture.¹⁷² His position is called into question, however, by Graziani, who interprets the Prince as the body; and argues that, since the body needs the soul in order to function, the only means of removing the Prince from prison is for the souls to return to the bodies.¹⁷³ An alternate view is that the Prince is the child who is to be formed in this union. The ability of man to force the hand of God in bringing about life seems to be the essence of the lines, "On man heavens influence workes not so, / But that it first imprints the ayre, / Soe soule into soule may flow." (57-59) Moreover, the idea that the fingers are the objects that tie the soul and body together is emphasized in "As our blood labours to beget / Spirits, as like our soules as it can, / Because such fingers need to knit / That subtile knot, which makes us man." (61-64) The reference to "fingers' knitting" gives a deeper meaning to the earlier statements, "Our hands were firmly cimented / With a fast balme" (5-6), and "So to entergraft our hands as yet / Was all our meanes to make us one." (9-10) Andreassen offers a unique view, contrary to most opinion, arguing that the two lovers are actually following the Ovidian attitude of love by giving an ironic twist to the Petrarchan concept; and he believes that this hypocritical

¹⁷²Loc. cit.

¹⁷³Graziani, op. cit., p. 135.

attitude at last mirthfully destroys the Petrarchan tradition that had been so popular.¹⁷⁴ Although the poem has elements of Platonism, these only underly the basic element of the Ovidian irony.¹⁷⁵ On the other hand, Hughes argues that the poem is Platonic, since it was the Platonic school that had developed the idea of the union of the body and the soul.¹⁷⁶ Warren agrees with Hughes that the poem is Platonic but gives little consideration to Donne for the use of the idea of Platonic love, accusing Donne of lacking the ability to define love satisfactorily.¹⁷⁷ Finally, Smith proposes that the joining of the body and soul made the perfect love, a theory expressed by Aristotle.¹⁷⁸ The center of the controversy lies in an area that does not necessarily express any faith or affinity with neo-Platonism, but with an ideal of love formed by early Christian writers.¹⁷⁹

Although there may be disagreement over the meaning of the poem and differences in the designation of its sources, there is little disagreement over its quality. The dual

¹⁷⁴Andreasen, op. cit., p. 178.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., p. 76.

¹⁷⁶Merritt Hughes, "The Lineage of 'The Extasie,'" MLR, XXVII (January, 1932), 5.

¹⁷⁷Warren, op. cit., p. 473.

¹⁷⁸Smith, op. cit., p. 369.

¹⁷⁹Hughes, "The Lineage of 'The Extasie,'" p. 5.

response that Donne gains from the reader involves not only a concept of the harmony of the body and the soul, but the idea, also, that the body and soul can be assimilated into the love of two people.¹⁸⁰ "The Extasie" is a poem of the age which few writers came close to imitating in its blending of the spirit and the flesh. It demonstrates the ability that Donne finally achieved in reconciling the physical and spiritual, the two forces with which he contended for so many years.¹⁸¹ He constantly moves within the realm of the paradox of human love and, in investigating the many facets of this love, finds his way into the elements of Christian love that gives his secular poetry a religious aura.¹⁸²

It is clear that Donne rejects the conventions used by Sidney and the Elizabethan courtiers during the last few years of the sixteenth century. Perhaps his youth, expressed in his rebellious nature, produced the motivation that inspired his irony and evoked his Ovidian temperament, but, in reversing the tradition of love poetry, he was unable completely to avoid the Petrarchan conventions that had impregnated the preceding age. Platonism and neo-Platonism, however defined, permeate much of his writing as a means to his poetic expression and

¹⁸⁰Graziani, op. cit., p. 136.

¹⁸¹Hugh Fausset, Studies in Idealism, pp. 96-97.

¹⁸²Eaton, op. cit., p. 68.

sardonic humor. His works are distinctive in relation to his age, and he contributes a new definition of love to the tradition of love poetry. Thus, recognizing the physical and spiritual forms of love, Donne aims toward a higher form--the love of God.

CHAPTER IV

TWO SUGGESTED SOURCES FOR DONNE'S HOLY SONNETS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY RELIGIOUS VERSE

So, of the Starres which boast that they doe runne
In Circle still, none ends where he begun.
All their proportion's lame, it sinkes, it swels.
For of Meridians, and Parallels,
Man hath weav'd out a net, and this net throwne
Upon the Heavens, and now they are his owne.
(The First Anniversary, 275-280)

Donne revolted against the courtly style in vogue during his early writing years. In so doing, he displayed a haughty disregard for conventions controlling much of the sophisticated, and not so sophisticated, writers during the twenty years immediately following Sidney's death. But the rebellious position that he occupied was not especially unique among his kind. As a Catholic, he was automatically relegated to a rather meager position in the circles bordering the court.¹⁸³ Circumstances forced him to withdraw from both universities before receiving his diplomas, since he would have been required to take an oath of allegiance to the Crown establishing his loyalty to the Queen as well as to the Anglican Church.¹⁸⁴ At this time, to attend Mass, one had to secrete the priest in

¹⁸³Michael Moloney, John Donne, His Flight from Mediaevalism, p. 31.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., p. 19.

a house where private services were attended by a few of only the closest and trusted fellow Catholics.¹⁸⁵ Consequently, the life of the clergy brought problems to the laity, because, if one were suspected of harboring a priest, a search of his home was usually swift, and a sentence for an unlawful act of this kind resulted in heavy penalties.¹⁸⁶ These circumstances faced Donne during all of his early life. His brother was jailed for hiding a priest and died only a few days after his release.¹⁸⁷ Robert Southwell, a Jesuit priest, was captured and sent to prison, where, while waiting three years for his execution, he was tortured ten times, each time beyond the extremities of the rack.¹⁸⁸ Thus, as a boy and as a young man, Donne faced problems that directly affected his life.

The rebelliousness that seemed to characterize Donne at Lincoln's Inn after the university years, found its outlet in a good deal of his early secular poetry, but, as the young man aged and began to seek preferment, he found that the non-denominational position that he seemed to occupy would not amend his Catholic past.¹⁸⁹ He needed to commit himself to the

¹⁸⁵James McDonald and Nancy Brown (eds.), The Poems of Robert Southwell, pp. xxvii-xxix.

¹⁸⁶Ibid., p. xxx.

¹⁸⁷William Empson, "Donne, the Space Man," Kenyon Review, XIX (Summer, 1957), 342.

¹⁸⁸McDonald and Brown (eds.), op. cit., pp. xxx-xxxiii.

¹⁸⁹Moloney, op. cit., p. 24.

Anglican Church before he would be granted a position comparable to his ability.¹⁹⁰ This position became imminently desirable after Donne had married Anne More and had become almost imperative as his slight finances decreased and his family increased.¹⁹¹ Thus, because of his inopportune marriage and his reluctance to commit himself to the Anglican Church and his dire financial circumstances, Donne found his professional life severely handicapped. Illness and death in his young family tormented him for a number of years. Hence, the rebellious youth became a reflective young man. After 1601, his writings became much more serious and introspective.¹⁹² The pressures upon him to change religion began to influence much of his writings. But his final position became established after nine years of married life when he composed the first of The Anniversaries.¹⁹³ From the Anniversary,¹⁹⁴ the poet reveals that not just the theological problems, but the world itself had been his stumbling block: "The new Philosophy calls

¹⁹⁰ Herbert Grierson, "John Donne and the 'Via Media,'" MLR, XLIII (July, 1948), 308.

¹⁹¹ Moloney, op. cit., p. 32.

¹⁹² Helen Gardner (ed.), John Donne: The Divine Poems, p. xxxvi.

¹⁹³ Richard Hughes, "The Woman in Donne's Anniversaries," ELH, XXXIV (February, 1935), 307.

¹⁹⁴ Grierson, op. cit., I, 237. All further quotations of The First Anniversary will be taken from this source.

all in doubt" (205), and the sun and earth are lost, "and no man's wit / Can well direct him where to looke for it." (207-208) The astronomers have been looking for new planets and new worlds until "'Tis all in peeces, all Coherence gone." (213) This age had seen Tycho Brahe make a discovery that caused a slight tremor to run through the Renaissance, but this tremor took on earthquake proportions when Kepler and Galileo confirmed that there were new stars beyond man's possible dreams.¹⁹⁵ Galileo published his book, Sidereus Nuncus, at the same time that Donne was writing The First Anniversary.¹⁹⁶ Thus, the social and theological divisions that had sundered the Roman religion had now been further demeaned by scientific proof beyond irrefutation. Copernicus had ignited the imaginations of men. Bruno had become one of the first martyrs of the new religion of science that claimed many sophisticated adherents.¹⁹⁷ Donne had grown up and had become a man in this new world, and he found himself unable to choose his position clearly. Thus, when the crucial moment came, he was able, in good faith, to turn to a new religion and to a new church as one of her most distinguished priests. But his rebelliousness had produced in him an insatiable desire to find the truth;

¹⁹⁵Marjorie Nicholson, "The Telescope and Imagination," MP, XXXII (February, 1935), 235-236.

¹⁹⁶Ibid., p. 235.

¹⁹⁷Empson, "Donne the Space Man," p. 342.

and, though this desire proved to be his bane at times, from the content of his sermons, it seemed to follow him to his death bed.

Donne, in his religious poetry, pursues a very ancient tradition, one that had been renewed after the decline in popularity of religious poetry following Sidney's death during the heights reached by poetry and sonnet sequences on profane love. One of the early poems, "Three Lessons to Make Ready for Death," initiates a tradition of meditation and penance which carries through to writers of the latter part of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.¹⁹⁸ Moreover, the early medieval lyric, such as "Death, the Souls Friend," offered to the reader a reflective progression of thoughts on God as the beginning and end of all things, the fall of man and his lowly state, death as the end of sorrow, and the re-birth of the soul.¹⁹⁹ The subject of religion was also permeated with writings from philosophy and other intellectual areas closely connected to religious thought at this time. There were also many collections of love sonnets on metaphysics and astrology, and Barnes and Constable wrote a long series of sonnets dealing with religion that were adopted later as a form by Henry Locke in 1597.²⁰⁰ In his sonnet sequence, Locke

¹⁹⁸Peterson, op. cit., p. 14.

¹⁹⁹Ibid., p. 13.

²⁰⁰Lee, op. cit., p. cviii.

divided his two hundred and four sonnets into two groups:

"Meditation, Humillities, and Prailers" and "Comfort, Joy, and Thanksgiving."²⁰¹ Perhaps, the popularity that the sonnets received came mostly from Du Bartus, who was translated rather extensively by the English writers since his patronage under King James of Scotland gave him notoriety enough to have some of his works translated by Sidney and printed in 1588.²⁰²

Behind the satirical comments made by certain authors about the abundance of courtly love poetry, there seemed to be a stronger movement underground. The carefree mirth of the Ovidian and Petrarchan writers in Shakespeare's day had begun to give in to a dread of the morality that had been growing in the rise of puritanical thought that eventually brought poetry to a standstill because of its involvement with the developing religious doctrines.²⁰³ But the movement received its first impetus from abroad where religious sonnets may be traced to Paris, where in 1577 Abbé Jacques de Billy published two sets of such poems.²⁰⁴ Thus, the tradition had long been established, but it remained for Donne to add to its continuing fashion.

²⁰¹Lily Campbell, Divine Poetry and Drama in Sixteenth-Century England, p. 131.

²⁰²Ibid., p. 98.

²⁰³Fausset, op. cit., pp. 84-85.

²⁰⁴Lee, op. cit., p. cix.

Since Fulke Greville had established a friendship with Sidney prior to beginning work on Caelica, it is possible that he would have been acquainted with Du Bartus' works, inasmuch as Sidney had translated some of the latter's religious poems. But Greville follows the tradition that had preceded him for over a hundred years, and his handling of the religious style is basically the same as that adopted by many of the metaphysical poets, although he does not manifest the technique of meditation or the "metaphysical conceits."²⁰⁵ Nevertheless, when speaking of his dramas, Ure states that Greville is writing about the inner man, attempting to give this inner-self some sort of relationship to the outer world.²⁰⁶ This theme of the inner man parallels some of the elements also to be found in his poetry, and since his poetry has characteristics evident in Donne, the two men may be considered jointly in light of the traditional influences upon them.

Greville and Donne have several similarities: they were both satirists in their approach to love poetry (and satire has always been a method of removing traditions that have become worn from too much usage).²⁰⁷ Greville was also blessed

²⁰⁵Peterson, op. cit., p. 283.

²⁰⁶Peter Ure, "Fulke Greville's Dramatic Characters," RES, I (July, 1950), 308.

²⁰⁷Arnold Stein, "Donne and the Satiric Spirit," ELH, XI (December, 1944), 266.

with a high intellect, and he, like Donne, was plagued by ill health,²⁰⁸ and both men had a strong sexual drive. Therefore, Stein, in identifying these physical and mental traits, concludes that melancholy was a product of these traits.²⁰⁹

Hence, the melancholy of these men produced the conditions that developed the strongly satiric force in their poetry.²¹⁰

However, lacking the deep inner turmoil arising from the uncertainty of religious truth that afflicted Donne's life, Greville's works seem to be less satirical and introspective.

In comparing Greville's sonnets to Donne's Holy Sonnets, one becomes aware of differences in their religious attitudes and beliefs, although they utilize the same kind of imagery and ideas for their developing Christian views. Donne sees in Christ's death a salvation through immediate grace. There are such instances in Christian history, such as Paul's immediate reversal of faith. Greville, however, does not accept this easy gift, believing, instead, that one must work and prepare for grace. Moreover, Donne offers a different view of grace, declaring,

Oh make thy selfe with holy mourning blacke,
And red with blushing, as thou art with sinne;
Or wash thee in Christs blood, which hath this might

²⁰⁸Bullough (ed.), op. cit., p. 9.

²⁰⁹Stein, op. cit., pp. 72-77.

²¹⁰Ibid., p. 271.

That being red, it dyes red soules to white.²¹¹
(IV, 11-14)

Again, he states:

'Tis late to aske abundance of thy grace,
When wee are there; here on this lowly ground,
Teach mee how to repent; for that's as good
As if thou'hadst seal'd my pardon, with thy blood.
(VII, 11-14)

On the other hand, Greville finds that immediate grace will not make up for the errors that have lasted for a lifetime, or "sixe dayes labour." He feels that

We seeme more inwardly to know the Sonne,
And see our owne saluation in his blood;
When this is said, we thinke the worke is done,
And with the Father hold our portion good:
As if true life within these words were laid,
For him that in life, neuer words obey'd.

If this be safe, it is a pleasant way
The Crosse of Christ is very easily borne:
But sixe dayes labour makes the sabboth day. . . .
(LXXXIX, 7-15)

Then, he gives the conditions that reflect puritanical Calvinism, stating, "The flesh is dead before grace can be borne. / The heart must first beare witnesse with the books, / The earth must burne, ere we for Christ can looke." (LXXXIX, 16-18) Thus, he advocates that the Puritan must turn to the Bible to find salvation. Greville was plagued with doubts about his faith, and much of his work reflects a very insecure tone concerning the means of salvation. Similarly, Donne, who

²¹¹ Charles Coffin (ed.), John Donne: Complete Poetry and Selected Prose, p. 137. All further quotations of the Holy Sonnets will be taken from this source.

at this time was never sure about his faith, continually wavers between an assurance of salvation and self-doubts that his preparation for salvation was insufficient. Greville follows a hesitancy with a questioning of whether God will condescend to man since man is so wicked. Thus, he pleads to God:

If from this depth of sinne, this hellish graue,
And fatall absence from my Sauours glory,
I could implore his mercy, who can saue,
And for my sinnes, not paines of sinne, be sorry:
Lord, from this horror of iniquity,
And hellish graue, thou wouldst deliuer me.
(XCVIII, 13-18)

Here, he is pursuing the Anglican or Calvinist doctrine that fear alone is not sufficient for man to gain eternal reward; rather, man must be truly sorry for his sins.²¹² Donne does not become entangled in this theological problem, although he wonders if he can repent his sins, since his flesh is so weak and corrupt:

O might those sighes and teares returne againe
Into my breast and eyes, which I have spent,
That I might in this holy discontent
Mourne with some fruit, as I have mourn'd in vaine. . . .
(III, 1-4)

Later, he questions how to begin: ". . . yet grace, if thou repent, thou canst not lacke; / But who shall give thee that grace to beginne?" (IV, 9-10) Each man, however, offers himself hope. For example, Greville finds that, although his

²¹²Douglas Peterson, "John Donne's Holy Sonnets and the Anglican Doctrine of Contrition," SP, LVI (July, 1959), 506.

soul is in a morass of sin, God's image remains within him until he is able to hate sin:

In power and truth, Almighty and eternall,
Which on the sinne reflects strange desolation,
With glory scourging all the Sprites infernall,
And vncreated hell with vnprivation;
Depriu'd of humane graces, not diuine,
Euen there appeares this sauing God of mine.

For on this sp'rituall Crosse condemned lying,
To paines infernall by eternall doome,
I see my Sauour for the same sinnes dying,
And from that hell I fear'd, to free me, come;
Depriu'd of humane graces, not diuine,
Thus hath his death rais'd up this soule of mine.
(XCIX, 13-24)

Thus, at the last moment, he receives repentance and finds that divine, not human grace, saves him from hell because of Christ's death on the cross. Donne relies upon the image of Christ, also, but his salvation seems to come too easily:

But my'ever-waking part shall see that face,
Whose feare already shakes my every joynt:
Then, as my soule, to'heaven her first seate, takes flight,
And earth-borne body, in the earth shall dwell,
So, fall my sinnes, that all may have their right,
To where they are bred, and would presse me, to hell.
Impute me righteous, thus purg'd of evill,
For thus I leave the world, the flesh, the devill.
(VI, 7-14)

Next, Donne offers a meditation upon salvation in which he indicates how much God guards His "adopted" sons:

And as a robb'd man, which by search doth finde
His stolne stufte sold, must lose or buy't againe:
The Sonne of glory came downe, and was slaine,
Us whom he'had made, and Satan stolne, to unbinde.
'Twas much, that man was made like God before,
But, that God should be made like man, much more.
(XV, 9-14)

Hence, although both find salvation almost impossible for debased man, each finds an answer to the means of salvation. Thus, God, in light of His Incarnation, has taken the nature of man, and Donne instills in Him characteristics of a "robb'd" man, and Greville allows his God to give man grace when both man and God are ready. Consequently, man is saved, because God has retaken what man had lost through his sins--his soul.

Although Donne and Greville have common religious beliefs, but their agreement may be attributed to the fact that the source is preserved in Christian writings that are rather similar. They also have similar images that suggest a common source or, perhaps, an influence of Greville upon Donne. For example, some strong similarities between the two may be observed in Greville's "Sonnet XCVII":

Eternall Truth, almighty, infinite,
Onely exiled from mans fleshly heart,
Where ignorance and disobedience fight,
In hell and sinne, which shall haue greatest part:

When thy sweet mercy opens forth the light,
Of Grace which giueth eyes vnto the blind,
And with the Law euen plowest vp our sprite
To faith, wherein flesh may saluation finde;

Thou bidst vs play, and wee doe pray to thee,
But as to power and God without vs plac'd,
Thinking a wish may weare out vanity,
Or habits be by miracles defac'd.

One thought to God wee giue, the rest to sinne,
Quickely vnben't is all desire of good,

True words passe out, but haue no being within,
Wee pray to Christ, yet helpe to shed his blood;

For while wee say Believe, and feelee it not,
Promise amends, and yet despaire in it,
Heare Sodom iudg'd, and goe not out with Lot,
Make Law and Gospell riddles of the wit:

We with the Jewes euen Christ still crucifie,
As not yet come to our impiety.

Donne refutes his own original argument (VII, 1-4), that, since the body is the portion that has sinned, the soul will be voided of evil; but he rejects this argument in the next sonnet by presenting the whole man, rather than the soul, as having been judged.²¹³ The day of judgment is at hand, and Donne's narrator commands the angels:

At the round earths imagin'd corners, blow
Your trumpets, Angels, and arise
From death, you numberlesse infinites
Of soules, and to your scattred bodies goe.
(VII, 1-4)

These lines compare somewhat with Greville's (7-8), although Greville refers, here, to divine grace rather than to the end of the world. Nevertheless, Greville finds no problem with the body's becoming sanctified. Donne learns that his faith varies from day to day, thus making his salvation tenuous, and he laments: ". . . when I would not / I change in vowe, and in devotione. / As humorous is my contritione / As my prophane Love, and as soon forgott." (XIX, 3-6) He admits that he has little chance of saving himself if he must keep his body in continual check. Consequently, he would prefer to leave his body behind and allow only his intellect to enjoy the beatific vision, but his knowledge of theology brings him back to solid ground, and he accepts his body as part of the total being. Greville, also, finds that man falters in his good

²¹³Peterson, "John Donne's Holy Sonnets and the Anglican Doctrine of Contrition," p. 509.

intentions. (13-16) For him, man has the intent to be good, but falters as much as Donne; and he concludes that man's prayers are mere recitations of learned prayers, not acts of real communion with God.

Both Greville and Donne equate Christian man with the Jews in imagery of a close correlation. For example, Greville (21-22) joins the Christian with the Jews as a kind of universal fratricide. Donne does not join them, but he asks them to do the same to him as they did to Christ, because he is worse than they are:

Spit in my face you Jewes, and pierce my side,
 Buffet, and scoffe, scourge, and crucifie mee,
 For I have sinn'd, and sinn'd, and onely hee,
 Who could do no iniquitie, hath dyed:
 But by my death can not be satisfied
 My sinnes, which passe, the Jewes impiety:
 They kill'd once an inglorious man, but I
 Crucifie him daily, being now glorified.
 (XI, 1-8)

Although Donne expands this image much more than Greville, both men voice similar opinions. Even though he directs his thoughts to God's love, Donne finds that he still crucifies Him daily; whereas Greville, treating "Eternall Truth," carries through with only one execution. In this poem, he refers twice to laws (7, 20), but in the second reference he alludes to the problems that beset man's interpretation of the doctrine of religion. Although interpretation is implied, what is really indicated, here, is man's folly of making rules become the religion, much as the Jews had done at the time of Christ.

Donne expands this same reference, again; but, because of his problems with determining his rightful religious position, he finds the problem delving deeper into his personality than Greville does. Hence, the law is love to Donne:

Yet such are thy laws, that men argue yet
 Whether a man those statutes can fulfill;
 None doth; but all-healing grace and spirit
 Revive againe what law and letter kill.
 Thy lawes abridgement, and thy last command
 Is all but love; Oh let this last Will stand!
 (XVI, 9-14)

Since the Church Fathers, expecting the imperfect Christian to follow the letter of their laws perfectly, cause for man a loss of the real essence of faith, Donne argues for a revival of the old Christianity that existed shortly after the time of Christ before laws were determined and interpreted through the monolithic structure created by man.²¹⁴

In sonnet XI, moreover, Donne's treatment of sin closely parallels Greville in both words and image: "For I have sinn'd, and sinn'd, and only hee, / Who could do no iniquitie, hath died. . . ." (3-4) Greville forms his sestet with two lines as a refrain at the end as follows, "Lord, I haue sinn'd, and mine iniquity, / Deserues this hell; yet Lord deliuer me." (XCVIII, 5-6) Both use the expression, "I have sinn'd," and both use the word, iniquity, in a rhyming position, but Donne places his rhyme within the line. Neither, however, recognizes the other's doctrine of faith.

²¹⁴Grierson, "John Donne and the 'Via Media,'" p. 314.

Since Donne has experienced the throes of searching for a religion that satisfied his needs, his poetry reflects much of his early doubt about the established religions. These doubts that plagued him concerned not the main tenets of Christianity but the problem of determining the true Church.²¹⁵ Hence, he pleads for guidance in finding the true Church or for at least some hint of the mystery that surrounds the real Church:

Show me deare Christ, thy Spouse, so bright and clear.
 What! is it She, which on the other shore
 Goes richly painted? or which rob'd and tore
 Laments and mournes in Germany and here?
 Sleepes she a thousand, then peepes up one yeare?
 Is she selfe truth and errs? now new, not outwore?
 Doth she, and did she, and shall she evermore
 On one, on seaven, or on no hill appeare?
 Dwells she with us, or like adventuring knights
 First travaile we to seeke and then make Love/
 Betray kind husband thy spouse to our sights,
 And let myne amorous soule court thy mild Dove,
 Who is most trew, and pleasing to thee, then
 When she's embrac'd and open to most men.

(XVIII)

The most noticeable image employed, here, is the courtship conceit. The church becomes the spouse of God, portrayed as a richly painted woman, or robbed and torn, sought in courtship by Donne's soul. But the ending has developed from a sequence within the conceit that finally portrays the church as holy whoredom.²¹⁶ Although this image appears to be unique,

²¹⁵"Divine Paradox," TLS, 3182 (February 22, 1963), 130.

²¹⁶Empson states in "Donne the Space Man," that it is not surprising to find this sonnet was suppressed by editors until Gosse's edition because they were so shocked that Donne still had doubts about Rome, p. 378.

Greville also makes a similar statement as he laments the destruction of the world through man's sin. He makes serious accusations against the structured Church of Rome by stating:

Man superstition hath thy truths entomb'd,
 His Atheisme againe her pomps defaceth,
 That snesuall vnsatiabable vaste wombe
 Of thy seene Church, thy vnseene Church disgraceth;
 There liues no truth with them that seem thine own,
 Which makes thee liuing Lord, a God vnknowne.
 (CIX, 13-18)

Thus, Greville's image follows Donne's very closely. Greville does not experience the same inner struggle as Donne, however, because, to him, the church has two facets, the seen and the unseen. Hence, Greville recognizes the human element that exists imperfectly, but Donne cannot accept this disorder within the church and implies that man loses sight of God. Nevertheless, Donne's faith retains its ardor even though man has obscured the image of truth.

Although Greville and Donne share familiar imagery in their exploration of faith, there are other areas in which they do not have parallel likenesses. For example, Donne is obviously more dramatic than Greville, consciously, voicing harsh, emotional questions or commands: "And shall thy work decay," "Oh my blacke Soule," "Blow your trumpets, angels," or "What if this present were the world's last night." On the other hand, Greville moves rather calmly through his anatomizing of fallen man. He does not offer any of the emotional outbursts typical of Donne, who is much more dramatic than

Greville, expanding metaphors to a greater degree. Furthermore, Donne keeps his sonnets related to the meditative pattern, a technique that develops a more personal inward analysis of his own life;²¹⁷ whereas, Greville offers advice and explanation for the state of man. Greville is also introspective, yet he looks out from his soul after observing its condition and is more interested in the whole of mankind. Donne, however, is more wrapped up in his contemplation of the soul, and all of his remarks are the result of a personal duel with God.

Since the similarities that exist in the poems of these two men are notable, one is inclined, at first, to identify some of Greville's works as Donne's sources. Donne had every opportunity to come into contact with Greville and his circle of friends, since Greville's position at court would have made him the logical individual to know for preferment, Donne's ambition before his church appointment. But proof is lacking, and the only logical suggestion that one might tender is that these two men probably worked at times from the same sources. Just how far removed the two men might have been from these original sources makes this position rather tenuous.

Robert Southwell died in 1595, charged with returning to England as an ordained priest,²¹⁸ but for the nine years

²¹⁷N. J. C. Andreasen, "Donne's Devotions and the Psychology of Assent," MP, LXII (February, 1965), 207.

²¹⁸McDonald and Brown (eds.), op. cit., p. xxxiii.

that he was in England, his literary influence had dramatic effects upon his fellow men.²¹⁹ He discovered English gentlemen writing courtly poetry and wasting their God-given talents; hence, he sounded one of the pleas for religious verse voiced at this time:²²⁰

This makes my mourning muse resolve in teares,
This Theames my heavy penne to plaine in prose.
Christes Thorne is sharpe, no head his Garland Weares:
Still finest wits are stilling Venus Rose.
In Paynim toyes of the sweetest vaines are spent:
To Christian workes, few have their tallents lent.
(Saint Peter's Complaint, 13-18)²²¹

Thus, in his poetry he chastizes his countrymen and helps set into motion the movement toward the writing of religious verse. He had a chance to influence many churchmen, since his works went through twenty or more editions between 1591 and 1636.²²² Introspection on the part of the readers of Saint Peter's Complaint must have caused many turncoat Catholics to wonder if their move were the correct one, especially since the work described the sufferings of many people as well as Southwell.²²³ But how much influence he directly exerted upon Donne's poetry or upon his career is a rather hazardous speculation.

²¹⁹ Louis Martz, The Poetry of Meditation, p. 13.

²²⁰ Ibid., p. 103.

²²¹ McDonald and Brown (eds.), op. cit., p. 75. All further quotations of Southwell's works will come from this source.

²²² Martz, op. cit., p. 13.

²²³ Campbell, op. cit., p. 117.

Circumstances, however, indicate that there is some validity to an argument that he could well have had a direct influence upon the young Donne. For example, Donne was approximately fourteen when Southwell arrived in England in 1586.²²⁴ All of Donne's ancestors had been Catholics, including Sir Thomas More;²²⁵ and Donne was already, by this time, under Jesuit influence, since his uncle was an important Jesuit missionary in England.²²⁶ Thus, in examining some of Southwell's poems, it would be unusual for one not to find some areas of similar theological beliefs shared by Southwell and Donne, perhaps even images and poetic devices.

Southwell wrote two versions on the complaint of Saint Peter. The first is a shortened form that includes a nucleus of some of the complaints expressed in the longer poem. It is called "Saint Peters Complaynte" and has only seventy-two lines; the second is called Saint Peters Complaint and consists of seven hundred and ninety-three lines. The latter poem treats a number of theological and Biblical topics beyond the scope of the former one, and the larger one expands the conceits to a greater degree. Since it is in the larger of the two works that Southwell chastizes the writers, it is this one that must be examined for the aforementioned comparisons.

²²⁴Martz, op. cit., p. xxiii.

²²⁵Grierson, "John Donne and the 'Via Media,'" p. 306.

²²⁶Martz, op. cit., p. 38.

In this poem, Peter is complaining of his ineptitude and unworthiness, since he has denied Christ three times when a maid asked him if he were Christ's follower. He also has fallen asleep while Christ prayed in the garden. Thus, sad and remorseful over his sinful condition, he laments:

That eyes with errours may just measure keepe:
 Most teares I wish that have most cause to weepe.
 All weeping eies resigne your teares to me:
 A sea will scantly rince my ordurde soule:
 Huge horrors in high tides must drowned bee:
 Of every teare my crime exacteth tole.
 These staines are deepe: few drops, take out no such:
 Even salve with sore: and most, is not too much.
(41-48)

Using the figure of the sea, Southwell moves into the image of the tide and then brings into the conceit the idea of drowning. The conceit is meant to show how great his sins are and the amount of washing necessary in order to purify his soul. Donne uses a similar water image in the Holy Sonnets to show his own need for cleansing, but not to the extent that Southwell uses it:

O might those sighes and teares returne againe
 Into my breast and eyes, which I have spent,
 That I might in this holy discontent
 Mourne with some fruit, as I have mourn'd in vaine;
 In mine Idolatry what showres of raine
 Mine eyes did waste? what griefs my heart did rent?
(III, 1-6)

However, two sonnets later, Donne introduces the full conceit that he develops so well in his other poems, again dealing with repentance for sin, but this time going beyond limits of the earth and mingling with the new worlds:

You which beyond that heaven which was most high
 Have found new sphears, and of new lands can write,
 Powre new seas in mine eyes, that so I might
 Drowne my world with my weeping earnestly,
 Or wash it if it must be drown'd no more. . . .
 (V, 5-9)

Thus, he asks for the power of new seas, and instead of requesting that the soul be washed, he asks that he be allowed to weep other's tears. From these new worlds in the celestial cosmos, he asks that new people drown his old world; or, in reference to the flood, to wash it if it cannot be drowned, again. Hence, Donne's conceit overshadows the rather mundane one adopted by Southwell, although both authors employ similar imagery in arriving at the same concept of human sorrow.

Another image that each finds useful in explaining the soul's state of restlessness is that of the pilgrim. For example, Southwell has Saint Peter wander from place to place seeking refuge for his sinful actions:

I outcast from these worlds exiled rome,
 Poore saint, from heaven, from fire, cold Salamander:
 Lost fish, from those sweet waters kindly home,
 From lande of life, strayed pilgrim still I wander. . . .
 (421-424)

Southwell explains that this exiled state is necessary, because there is no place on earth hellish enough for Saint Peter to deserve. On the other hand, Donne uses this pilgrim image in another sense, comparing it to his soul when death approaches; and he tells his soul, "Thou art like a pilgrim, which abroad hath done / Treason, and durst not turne to whence hee is fled." (IV, 3-4) In the following sonnet, Donne again equates

the pilgrim with a concept of death: "This is my playes last scene, here heavens appoint / My pilgrimages last mile." (VI, 1-2) In Donne, the pilgrim soul is not exiled from the earth, but from heaven or God's love, and now must return to the place from whence it came. Thus, although the two men employ the image of the pilgrim, they do not develop it into a conceit as with their other images; rather, they equate it with the exiled soul that is wandering far from home, i.e., Christ's love.

The image of the Jews' crucifying Christ is also an important point of reference for Southwell, who mentions the Jews in both of his complaints and once in "The Virgin Mary to Christ on the Crosse." Each of his images deals with a different idea. For example, in "Complaynte," Peter asks himself:

Was life so deare and Christ become so base,
I of so greate, god of so small accounte:
That Peter nedes must followe Judas race,
And all the Jewes in Crueltye Surmounte?
(31-34)

This concern over man's sins, because the sins are still crucifying Christ as the Jews crucified him, is similar in both Donne's and Greville's treatments of the subject. All men seem to be following a common attitude among Christians also exemplified in the drama of this time as seen, for example, in The Jew of Malta and The Merchant of Venice. Here, the Virgin Mary makes a different approach to the subject of the Jews. As she is watching Christ as He is being crucified, she

asks that the Jews turn on her, "You cruel Jewes come work your ire, / Upon this worthlesse flesh of mine." ("The virgin Mary to Christ on the Crosse," 9-10) As a mother, she has more compassion than men, whom she accuses of starting an eternal fire by hurting Christ. In the Complaint, this image is somewhat similar to that in the "Complaynte," but the conceit in the former is connected to Peter's refusal to acknowledge his relation to Christ. Hence, he calls his tongue an aid to his sin:

Were all the Jewish tyrannies too few,
To glut thy hungry lookes with his disgrace:
That thou more hatefull tyrannies must shew:
And spit thy poyson in thy makers face?
(127-130)

Thus, the tongue has also spit into Christ's face, an act that makes the sin more unholy since the tongue should have been brave enough to give testament to its faith.

Hence, in bringing together for comparison some of the corresponding themes adopted by two authors, one notes similarities in their imagery. And, like Greville, Southwell remains as a possible source for Donne's imagery. Southwell also uses poetic techniques that suggest the styles of both Donne and Greville, such as his aphoristic statements in some of his poetry (much as Greville does); but, because of the presence of italicized words, Greville stands more in the light of a didactic writer than the Jesuit. Southwell is more dramatic than Greville, but he does not exceed Donne's use of the

dramatic form. While both Donne and Southwell follow an introspective, self-analytical technique in some of their poetry,²²⁷ Donne far surpasses Southwell in the application of this device. In the Holy Sonnets, Donne keeps his topics on a highly personal plane, but Southwell assigns parts to other characters from the Bible or Church history, a method which, although he analyzes others, does not give to his poetry much of his own personal insight. Southwell also occasionally follows a form that stresses parallel structure with an antithesis within the line.²²⁸ Thus, there are notable differences and similarities between Donne and Southwell; but the major difference between Donne and Southwell (as well as Greville) is expressed in Donne's use of the personal, meditative form.

²²⁷Ibid., p. 203.

²²⁸Martz, op. cit., p. 193.

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