POET AND LOVER:
RHETORICAL STANCE IN THE ELIZABETHAN SONNET SEQUENCE

by

Judith Kearns

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the rhetorical stance of the speaker in eight of the minor Elizabethan sonnet sequences, in Sidney's Astrophil and Stella, and in Spenser's Amoretti. It argues that such a study confirms the superiority of Sidney's and Spenser's works in the genre, allows for a precise definition of that superiority, and yet reveals a more distinctive voice and implied personality than has generally been recognized in the minor sequences selected: Watson's Passionate Centurie of Love, Constable's Diana, Smith's Chloris, Lodge's Phillis, Fletcher's Licia, Barnes' Parthenophil and Parthenophe, Daniel's Delia, and Greville's Caelica.

Rhetorical stance in the sonnet sequence is determined by the speaker's relations to the lady, to the poems' dramatic audiences, to the historical poet, and to the sequence's larger audience of readers. While the thesis considers structural and stylistic features of the sequences treated, it approaches them as a means of reflecting rhetorical stance. In particular, attention is focused on the speaker's proximity to or distance from the figure of his creator, since the dual role of poet-lover offers the sonneteer the opportunity either to invite an identification of the speaker with his own concerns and experiences or to create a fictional character.

The study of the minor sequences reveals that they are composed according to one of these two alternative rhetorical models, and that the fixed stance of the speaker in each imposes restrictions on the

range of expression within the work. Close attention to rhetorical stance nevertheless discloses skill and perception in the composition of these works, and Delia and Caelica demonstrate the extent to which either rhetorical model can be used as a coherent centre for an effective work. Of interest in their own right, these sequences are valuable as well as they allow us to respond more fully to the complexities of the speaker's stance in Astrophil and Stella and the Amoretti.

The minor works define two poles of expression between which the speakers of the major sequences move more provocatively, exploiting the potential for tension in the dual role of poet-lover and playing on the full range of relations between poet and speaker available to the Elizabethan sonneteer. A central feature in the superiority of Astrophil and Stella and the Amoretti is thus their implying simultaneously the poet's presence within his work, as he invites an identification of the speaker with his own preoccupations, and his capacity to shape that work from without, creating a fictional character whose expression gains depth and conviction by means of his dynamic interaction with the figure of the poet-speaker.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Little critical attention has been devoted to the minor sonnet sequences of the English Renaissance. Apart from introductions to new editions to some of these works and a few recent comparisons of Greville's accomplishment to that of Wyatt and Sidney, Lever's advice that "Little is to be gained from a close scrutiny of the minor sequences published after 1590" (144) seems generally to have been accepted. To a great extent, furthermore, introductions which have more closely scrutinized the minor works have tended to follow the line established in Crow's brief evaluations of each in her four-volume edition of 1896-98, and therefore to be somewhat dismissive in their effect. The sonneteer may be granted some ingenuity in his handling of traditional themes and motifs, some skill in the management of rhyme, the achievement of a lyrical sweetness, or the capacity to synthesize a variety of poetic influences, but the tone of such accounts usually manages to be defensive without accounting precisely for the second-rate status of the work concerned, as in Doyno's apologia for Barnes' Parthenophil and Parthenophe:

> All the Elizabethan sonneteers relied upon conventions, and this dependency seems especially heavy for those writers below the first order. Accordingly, proficient use of a tradition by a minor writer should be valued as well as its variation or transformation. A second caveat is that an occasional superb poem may tempt the reader to consider an evaluative comparison with Shakespeare's or Spenser's sonnets, a disappointing comparison which few writers of any age could sustain. (x)

In compensation, he claims further, "the high artistic finish" of a

Shakespearean or Sidneian sonnet may render it relatively "impervious to criticism," while the poems of a minor sonneteer are "frequently imperfect in ways that reveal a good deal about the method of composition or about technical control." (x) Similarly, in his introduction to Smith's Chloris, Sasek notes a progressive decline in that poet's reputation, pointing out that his editors have been divided on the question of Smith's technical skill and have differed mainly in degree on his lack of genuine, original talent; he argues, nonetheless, that it is precisely because Chloris is so typical of minor works in the genre that it merits study. Pearson, in her survey of the Elizabethan sonnet sequences, makes the same point about Watson's Passionate Centurie of Love: not meant to be original or sincere, it is, she claims, useful "as a summary of all the exaggerated conventions of Petrarchanism at this time in England." (76)

A consequence of the vogue in sonneteering which also produced work of more enduring value in their own right, the minor sequences do have an historical significance as a means of approaching the major works. As well as opening for examination certain aspects of composition and technical control, they may provide by their response to common cultural stimuli valuable insights into the context and nature of Astrophil and Stella or the Amoretti. Most significantly, placing the sonnet sequence in such a cultural context focuses attention on the identity and the stance of its speaker, rhetorical issues which have only in the cases of Daniel's Delia and Greville's Caelica, among the minor works, been extensively examined. A study of the minor sequences, however, reveals that several besides these two merit attention because of their serious

and interesting treatment of the speaker, sustained over the course of the sequence to convey a sense of distinctive personality.

These six sequences are the subject of the first three chapters: Watson's Passionate Centurie of Love, Constable's Diana, Smith's Chloris, Lodge's Phillis, Fletcher's Licia, and Barnes' Parthenophil and Parthenophe. All have drawn the attention of recent scholars, whether in reprints of original editions, in collections of the author's complete works, or in single editions with commentary. The selection, moreover, includes those which Lever and others are willing to grant an occasional word of praise, although approval tends to be conferred grudgingly on individual poems felicitous in their phrasing or stylistically effective: "Even Constable achieved some pleasing effects," (147) Lever acknowledges, and "Even Barnes could produce...memorable lines," (148) while in several sonnets of Lodge's Phillis he notes a

> quiet competence in the use of alliteration and internal rhyme, a fresh responsiveness to words, and a fine sensibility in marked contrast to the laboured efforts of most of the sonnets. (149)

Smith credits Watson with pioneer experimenting in the genre, and notes that his publication of The Passionate Centurie "at the request of certaine Gentlemen his very frendes" indicates the approval of "the most lively and promising writers of the time" (135); the work's contemporary reception thus argues for its inclusion, even if its primary interest in "the exploitation of conceits and figures" (Smith, 137) generally fails to satisfy modern tastes.

The central concern of this thesis, however, is not with such

individual stylistic features as the generality or specificity of the speaker's language, his method of handling the classical allusions conventional to the genre, and the types of rhetorical figures common to the work, but with the rhetorical stance from which such features issue. As LaBranche points out, problems related to poetic voice "cannot be reduced to the choice and control of verbal technique, while excluding all considerations of the posture out of which the rhetorical figures emerge"; instead, he claims, our understanding of the mode of expression in a work

> has more to do with the speaker's tone of voice, his presentation of a recollected self to us, and our feeling of closeness to and distance from that voice, than it has to do with our mastery of "accepted" rhetorical procedures. (124)

In the sonnet sequence, the speaker's rhetorical stance is determined by his relations to the historical poet, to the lady whose beauty and virtues combine with the nature of his own response to constitute the sonnets' subject matter, and to the larger audience of the work's readers. An analysis of the minor sequences reveals that they are composed according to one of two alternative rhetorical models: either the speaker is closely identified with the historical poet, in his distance from the experience of love, or he stands, a wholly created character, at a steady distance from his creator. The first model presents a poet-speaker, in other words, who shares with his creator an encompassing perspective on the conventional material and exploits its features for an effective self-presentation, directed to the work's larger audience; the second presents a fictional lover immersed in the experience of love, focused single-mindedly on pursuit of the lady and

on consideration of his own internal state, and often emphatic in his rejection of the public world to which the poet-speaker directs his words.

While the consistency of the speaker's stance in either rhetorical mode restricts the scope of expression in the sequence, and is a significant factor in determining its status as a minor work, close attention to rhetorical stance discloses a degree of skill and perception which the minor sequences have not generally been granted. The effectiveness of Daniel's Delia and Greville's Caelica, the subject of the fourth chapter, demonstrates that either rhetorical model--the stance of the fictional lover or of the poet-speaker, respectively--may provide a coherent centre for thoughtful and insightful treatment not only of the human experience of love but as well of the issues which that experience raises, and which account in part for the popularity of the sonnet sequence in England during the final two decades of the sixteenth century. Daniel's presentation of the isolated lover and Greville's adoption of an instructive role produce the most distinctive speaking voices of those which are heard in the minor sequences.

The alternatives evident in these minor works, moreover, outline a potential range of expression for the sonnet speaker, who is according to the Petrarchan model both lover and poet, but whose mode of speech in these works reveals the predominance of one role over another. The superiority of Sidney's Astrophil and Stella and Spenser's Amoretti lies in their escape from the restrictions imposed by adherence to one of the two rhetorical models, and in their exploitation instead of an ambiguous or shifting stance. The speaker of each work, in other words, is more

flexible than his counterparts in the minor sequences: within certain individual sonnets, his distance from or proximity to the poet who creates the work is ambiguous, while over the course of each sequence the speaker's stance shifts across the range of expression available in such a way as to demand an active response on the part of the reader. The dynamic interplay of poet-speaker and lover in these two works allows the major sonneteers to play provocatively with varying degrees of awareness, to involve the reader fully in such play, and to explore in depth the dual role which is an inherent feature of the sonnet sequence's speaker. Sidney and Spenser alike exploit more fully the rhetorical potentialities of the genre than do their immediate contemporaries, whose works nevertheless amplify our understanding both of the actual context and of the literary tradition in which the two major sonneteers are writing.

This thesis argues, then, that the rhetorical stance of its speaker is a central criterion in our response to the sonnet sequence: it is a feature which helps to determine our judgment of the particular work as major or minor and at the same time provides one avenue of approach to each sequence as a coherent work, rather than simply a collection of individual poems. A study of the sonnet speaker's rhetorical stance, while it serves to distinguish the minor from the major works, also allows us to respond more fully to the genre's potential for shaping a distinctive voice and implied personality than have a number of critical efforts to dismiss the minor sequences. A chronology makes clear that no simple pattern of growth from first stumbling steps or of degeneration into servile imitation can account for the differing

achievements which are evident. Most of the minor works, appearing between 1592 and 1597, follow immediately on the publication of Sidney's Astrophil and Stella and are contemporaneous with Spenser's Amoretti. Various factors, as well, make it difficult to date with absolute certainty the period in which a sequence was composed and thus to identify precisely the influences which may have affected the sonneteer during that period: private circulation, surreptitious publication, pirated editions, and the habit of revision and augmentation complicate the history of several of the works, and the repetition of familiar motifs and stylistic devices makes it clear that each poet is responding to a tradition received as a general cultural heritage.

Accordingly, the thesis arranges the sequences treated not in terms of chronology but instead by means of relations established by the rhetorical stances of individual speakers. The first chapter pairs Watson's The Passionate Centurie of Love, published in 1582, with Constable's Diana, editions of which appeared in 1592 and 1594, because both present poet-speakers. Study of the two works, however, reveals that these figures are distinct in their response to the public context which is so pervasive an element in both sequences: Watson's poet-speaker addresses his poems self-consciously to those who will appreciate their display of wit, learning, and ingenuity, while the expression of Constable's poet-speaker is shaped by his awareness of the social and political hierarchies of the courtier's world.

Their exploitation of the genre's conventional features for the purposes of self-promotion makes both sequences vulnerable to criticism on grounds that they lack originality and sincerity. Such charges have

been levelled at the minor sequences in general, without acknowledgement of differences in their rhetorical modes or clear definition of terms like convention, sincerity, and personality. Pearson claims, for instance, that the great theme of beauty is generally presented in the minor works "without much warmth of human feeling," (83) and she adds that, in the absence of personal experience,

> love became a thing of shadows. Real feeling thinned out to a misty idealism to be expressed in exaggerated fancies or vapid descriptions of beauty. The reader was left to determine as best he could how such word pictures in fourteen lines revealed the spiritual power of the soul. (101)

A lack of personality is also central to Lever's criticism of the minor sequences. He claims that literature in the final decade of the sixteenth century focused on individual experience; paradoxically, the sonnet, which he regards as the medium through which Renaissance poets first came to voice personality, now proved the least amenable to new demands. Drama, he argues, most successfully projected this mode of apprehension, while in the sonnet sequence, "Convention no longer evoked response, and subject-matter sundered itself from form." (143) The minor sonneteers are singled out for criticism of their inability to convey plausible emotional states or to present a coherent story, of their tendency to employ conceits as an end in themselves, and of their desire for an ingenuity which produces incongruous effects. For the most part, Lever judges their work a reflection of transitions in taste, pending the reconstitution of the sonnet on a more vital basis:

> Since the conventions require a mistress, a lover, and some show of romantic ardor, these are provided. But neither the poet nor his public regards such matters as of primary importance. Their attention is

> turned towards derivative aspects of the sonnet--the intellectual versatility and sensuous appeal of its imagery and diction--irrespective of any organic relationship between them and the ostensible theme. (146)

He is particularly affronted by the sonneteers' "pretence of experiencing romance in the high Petrarchan fashion" since the pretence is enacted "within the framework of a medium designed for the expression of personality." (146-47)

Lever's analysis substitutes for the curiously passive reading process Pearson envisions the receptivity of a contemporary audience which shares with the sonneteer a set of distinctive expectations; he sees the sonnet-speaker, too, as more explicitly concerned with self-presentation. The rhetorical considerations which thus emerge in his study, however, do not lead Lever to probe those shifts in expectations and in attitude to the lyric speaker which, his argument tacitly assumes, have made the minor sequences less accessible to the modern reader. Like Pearson, he is biased towards the sequence's amatory material and towards a handling of that material which convinces the reader of the speaker's sincerity and of the vivid immediacy of the experience he relates and responds to.

This bias recurs in Grundy's accusation that the author of Diana has no personality:

> Undoubtedly Constable knows the convention well, and follows it skilfully, but the completeness of his surrender to it, his very representativeness, puts him at a disadvantage with the reader...There is no indication of anything in Constable's experience, real or imaginary, to which we can relate...[the sonnets]...they exist in a vacuum, and are, in a literal sense, pseudo-statements, lacking even emotional validity. (71)

The amatory material of Diana is indeed slighted, as is that of Watson's Passionate Centurie of Love, yet the first chapter of this thesis will argue that, far from existing in a vacuum, both works repeatedly betray their creators' preoccupation with a social context which places a high premium on a particular kind of self-presentation: one which stresses such qualities as an awareness of contemporary political events, sensitivity to the social milieu in which the speaker operates, and learning. Thus while the sonnets may do little to provoke a sense of the lover's personality, they offer insights into the ambitions and central concerns of the poetic character in its response to the expectations of the courtly context in which the sonneteering vogue flourished.

Chapters two and three argue that the speakers of Smith's Chloris (1596) and Lodge's Phillis, (1593) of Fletcher's Licia (1593) and Barnes' Parthenophil and Parthenophe (1593) are by contrast fictional characters limited in the range of their expression by their immersion in the experience of love. Such characters never gain sufficient distance from their experience to achieve the more encompassing perspective which the poet-speaker shares with his creator; their expression remains limited to sonnets of praise or blame which may move the lady and to meditations on their state unenlightened by the ironic or insightful self-consciousness which a more detached perspective might allow them. In thematic terms, expression is defined as a spontaneous overflow of strong feeling, and what achievement such figures may hope to gain by their verse is dependent--as is the resolution of their state of desire and frustration--on the lady's benificence. The arrangement

of these sequences disregards chronology in order to focus on ways in which they illustrate the potentiality of the genre when it is used to present a wholly created character.

Each spoken by a shepherd-lover, Chloris and Phillis demonstrate the interconnection of pastoral features with those of Petrarchan love poetry, a conjunction of the two genres which provokes in either sequence interesting treatment of the theme of humility and aspiration. As was the case with the poet-speakers of The Passionate Centurie of Love and Diana, however, the similarity of the two lovers' rhetorical stances does not prevent the historical poets' evoking distinct voices and personalities. Smith's Corin is characterized as a naive and humble shepherd, whose trust in the natural processes of time justifies his patience in the perpetual postponement of his hopes; a more sophisticated figure, Lodge's Damon is also more assertive in his desire to convert love into a mode of aspiration, and his expression reveals a tendency to self-dramatization as well as some share in his creator's classical learning. In both sequences, however, the lover remains throughout the work at a steady distance from the historical poet, who provides rather than self-revelation about his own experience in love an engaging presentation of that experience from within the consciousness of a created character.

The energies of Fletcher and Barnes, whose sequences are discussed in chapter three, are similarly devoted primarily to the development of a fictional character, yet in several ways each moves beyond the accomplishment of the minor sonneteers considered to this point. Even as we are made aware of the single-minded devotion of Licia's lover,

indicative of what Fletcher calls the truly amorous mind, the sequence provides a searching examination of love's debilitating impact on expression. This examination has implications in turn for the nature of inspiration and the relation of love and poetry, subjects of more provocative treatment in Sidney's Astrophil and Stella and Spenser's Amoretti; nevertheless, Licia merits interest in its own right for its coherent development of character, imagery, and theme over the course of the sequence. While the idealistic strain of its praise of the lady is one of Licia's central features, suggesting Fletcher's treatment of love as an aspiration toward the divine, the characterization of Barnes' Parthenophil is far more earthbound, and the contrast between its mingled strains of adoration, despair, and satiric wit and the simpler desire of Fletcher's lover implies the variety of tones which can be encompassed by the presentation of a fictional character in the sonnet sequence. Parthenophil and Parthenophe anticipates the major sequences, moreover, by a temporary shift in its speaker's stance. The implied presence of the poet in his work suggests the technique by which Sidney's and Spenser's accomplishments in the genre make a more intense and provocative demand on the reader. In Barnes' sequence, however, the identification of poet and speaker serves the more limited purpose of effecting a transition from the lover's abjectness to a more complex state, in which satiric tendencies are balanced against the impulse to retreat from what Parthenophil perceives as the sophisticated and difficult art of courtship. Barnes presents this development as a consequence of the lover's gaining more worldly experience, so that, as Licia's lover illustrates the positive qualities of adoration,

Parthenophil demonstrates the impact of recognizing darker potentialities in the battle of the sexes.

The analysis of minor sequences composed according to either rhetorical model thus suggests that the concepts of personality and convention need to be more carefully defined, as criteria by which to judge works in the genre, if they are not to become the kind of refuge from more precise analysis that the related terms "convention" and "imitation" have occasionally provided. Clearly, there are derivative elements in the works of major as well as minor sonneteers, and the concept of imitation holds in the Renaissance a positive value which the word lacks today. In this respect, McCanles recommends that we substitute for the automatic dichotomizing of "convention" and "originality" the more valid distinction "between a use of convention which engages the psychological contours of the 'experience' it renders and one that does not." (145) Moreover, we need to examine more closely the nature of the experience rendered in the sonnet sequence and the degree to which its rendering is shaped by and so reflects the nature of its speaker; to consider the speaker's relation to the figure of his creator, which affects the rhetorical stance assumed in the course of the sequence and the sense of personality conveyed; and to avoid mistaking "those conventions which best enact the illusion of spontaneity" for freedom from convention. (Kern, 369)

Such an examination offers insight especially into the merits of Daniel's Delia and Greville's Caelica, the sequences considered in Chapter 4. In these works, the consistency of stance which limits the minor works' range of expression is converted into a source of strength,

and consequently, the reader's attention to the emotional dilemmas which Delia presents or to the intellectual content of Caelica is rewarded in a way which is not true of the minor sequences. The fixed stance of the fictional lover becomes in Delia a coherent centre for Daniel's portrayal of a thoughtful and contemplative mind, adjusting to circumstances which demand submission yet provoked to a stimulating appreciation of the lady's power. Greville's poet-speaker, by contrast, adopts an instructive pose, distanced from the immediate experience of love, from which he offers an analysis of its moral implications to Caelica's larger audience of readers. Because of the more detached and self-conscious perspective which its speaker shares with the historical poet, Caelica substitutes an intellectual and moral interest for the vivid rendering of the lover's experience which is Delia's primary strength.

Significantly, both works treat the conventional material which constitutes the inherited tradition within which the Elizabeth sonneteer works. Typically, the lover will love at first sight, as the vision of his lady travels through his eyes directly to its shrine in his heart, imaged in its journey as Cupid's arrow. The lover's state will be characterized both by its extremity of feeling and by the antithesis of hope and despair, while natural analogues will frequently be sought to describe the state: sighs are comparable to winds and tears to showers of rain, while the "flame" of desire paradoxically increases through such an assault and through its futile efforts to melt the icy resistance of the lady. What distinguishes the two sequences is the extent to which Delia probes the emotional realities which shape such

motifs and from which Caelica preserves an ironic distance, for the sake of anatomizing the lover's vulnerabilities and of placing his limited understanding within the broader perspective of fallen human nature and experience.

What distinguishes the major sonnet sequences discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, in turn, is not the introduction of unusual material into the genre or the conviction that the poet offers a transcript of his actual experience, but the flexible rhetorical stance from which the sonnet's conventions are treated. Both Sidney and Spenser exploit the full range of expression available to the sonneteer by using a speaker whose stance shifts from that of the poet-speaker, closely identified with the figure of the historical poet, to that of the fictional lover who stands apart from his creator and immersed in the experience of love. In consequence, Astrophil and Stella and the Amoretti create a provocative tension between varying degrees of awareness, which involves the reader fully in the examination of those issues raised by the experience of love as his relation to the speaker undergoes corresponding shifts. The flexible rhetorical stance exploited in these sequences and its impact on the poets' treatment of conventional material are features central to an evaluation of these sonnet sequences as major works in the genre.

The history of the courtly love tradition, and the development of a set of motifs and attitudes which constitute its literary conventions, point to the weakness of assuming that the self-expression of a poet genuinely in love alone produces an effective poem--of ignoring, in other words, the rhetorical considerations necessarily attending composition in a mode which retains, from the troubadour's song to the

early Tudor court lyric, a strongly oral character. In his attempt to define an aesthetic of the Provencal canso, for instance, Stephen G. Nichols, Jr. discovers that the poem which presents the fiction of direct involvement with the poet's emotional experience is but one category--admittedly the most prevalent--of Provencal lyric; others draw attention to the poem itself as an artefact or turn from the self-knowledge gained from the experience of love to the larger concerns of life. He reminds us too that "the troubadours themselves,...without sacrificing their individuality, were supremely aware of the work of their predecessors and contemporaries," (374) so that his classification of lyrics according to the type of experience they render is informed by a context in which true-life experience and the literary tradition alike influence the creative process.

Recent studies have made it clear that the essential components of the courtly love poem, its speaker's subservience to the adored figure of his mistress and the perpetual deferral of his satisfaction, bear a complex relation to the changing context in which the tradition flourishes. Valency points out, for instance, that the speaker's position mirrors the central element of the feudal system, the relation of service and reciprocal obligations which tie noble and attendant together in the fixed estates of a hierarchical society. At the same time, the nature of the lover's experience and the qualities which he develops and demonstrates as a consequence of the perpetual postponement of his wishes--the mezura or inner restraint which is an essential feature of the gentle heart--pose a subtle challenge to prevailing cultural mores. In the first place, the celebration of love offers an

appealing fantasy in a society which arranged marriages on economic and dynastic grounds, while "the capacity to take the necessary risk was as important to the lover as the wisdom and skill upon which he staked his chance of success...[and]...also in a sense the measure of the lover's worth." (82-83) More importantly, Valency argues, the doctrine of the ennobling power of love which developed within the framework of this erotic fantasy--"The knight was thus led into virtue and nobility by the most carnal of his appetites" (179)--substituted for the aristocracy of birth on which his society relied an aristocracy of feeling to which any man might aspire:

> The troubadours founded their entire system on the social mobility of the individual, the perfectability of man through his own efforts, and they opposed vigorously the idea that each man's fate was determined by his ancestry. (46)

According to Valency, then, the courtly love lyric simultaneously mirrors and undermines the socio-political arrangements which prevail in its world, and his study demonstrates how the development and popularity of the tradition is illuminated by an analysis of its cultural context.

Valency's analysis of the nature of expression in the courtly love lyric, and of its speaker, reflects his considerations of the genre's socio-political context. Acknowledging that even thirteenth-century critics were concerned with the question of poetic sincerity and that the contemporary audience assumed poetic excellence to derive from the power of love, he points out that the troubadours were nevertheless professional composers, anxious to compliment their patrons, a gesture which could be accomplished by praise of that patron's wife, her desirability and obstinacy, which together provide much of the

conventional subject matter. Given this fact, Valency concludes, it would be naive to believe each love song a transcript of a true-life situation, and he proposes instead a distinction between the poet and the mask of the knight, a figure consciously created but still closely tied to the true-life context of his creator:

> The knight who sang in the love song may never have existed as an individual, but as a social being his existence was of great significance to his time. The love-song portrayed the character in a situation which evidently had the utmost reality for the society to which it was addressed. There is no other way to account for the proliferation of the genre. The poet may not have been "sincere," but the knight of the song would have to be, and the worth of the song would depend a great deal on the degree of emotion which it conveyed. (110)

Thus Valency envisions a situation in which the troubadour's song, while emerging from a deep and sincere feeling, is conditioned simultaneously by motives more complex than the spontaneous impulsion of love, including the nature and expectations of his aristocratic audience.

It is "the character-type of the lover who sang out of a pure and disinterested passion," Valency argues further, "whose destiny the Renaissance lyricists most particularly worked out." (114) This argument has important consequences for an analysis of Renaissance sonnet sequences, since it suggests that the creation of a fictional character is one possibility which the tradition in which he is working invites the Elizabethan sonneteer to exploit.

Recent studies of the Renaissance love lyric, like Valency's analysis of the origins and development of the tradition, emphasize its relation to the social, economic, and political realities of its time; only such an approach, argues Marotti, can account for the brief but

emphatic popularity of the sonnet sequence in late Elizabethan England and for the sudden waning of the sonneteering vogue. Looking beyond an opposition of Petrarchan and anti-Petrarchan attitudes, the sonnets' formal qualities as extrapolated from the context which makes them useful, and their place either in an individual author's canon or in literary history, both he and Waswo examine the purposes which the conventional features of the courtly love tradition serve, within the text and within society. In "The Petrarchan Tradition as a Dialectic of Limits," Waswo claims that it is characterized by a dialectical exploration, in which imaginary situations enable the poet to enact or analyze the implications of different versions of reality; his argument rests on an assumption which has become a central premise in many recent studies of Elizabethan literature in general--

> that the employment of literature in a social game does not necessarily trivialize it, that, on the contrary, to consider the changing function of literature in particular social contexts is to perceive the larger continuity of human concerns with which it deals. (2)

Marotti, in turn, studies the sonnet sequence with special reference to the culturally central issues of ambition and social status. He points out, for example, that the love sonnet shares with other amorous verse of the period a vocabulary suited to articulating personal aspirations, not always of an artistic kind:

> Love lyrics could express figuratively the realities of suit, service, and recompense with which ambitious men were insistently concerned as well as the frustrations and disappointments experienced in socially competitive environments. (398)

This vocabulary could translate ambition and envy into the amorous

"hope" and "jealousy," socially more acceptable terms, and thus metaphorize the aspiration about which the Elizabethans had ambivalent feelings. Erotic desire, typically a disruptive force that breaks the decorum of polite relationships, thus provides an analogue to the way presumptuous ambition violated the rules of a courtier's relationship with the Queen.

Similarly exploring the cultural currency of a conventionalized language of love, in "Celebration and Insinuation: Sir Philip Sidney and the Motives of Elizabethan Courtship," Montrose uses Sidney's Lady of May to illustrate how the erotic metaphor could accommodate the expression of desires both for disinterested service and for self-interested gain. At the same time, his analysis presents another side to the "interpenetration of poetic text and biographical-social context" (Marotti, 400) which Marotti believes a necessary presupposition to understanding the sonnet sequences; he argues that conventional forms function not only to permit the indirect articulation of personal aspiration but as well "to impose some order upon the forces of chaos within the court system." (6) Designed to create an illusion of royal power and thereby to support its reality, a collective aesthetic form like the pageant operates as "a socially sanctioned cultural medium for the raising and casting out of discontent and hostility that would otherwise eventuate in overt dissent and civil disorder." (29) The conventional vocabulary which links such forms as the love lyric and the court pageant, then, can be seen as a means of sublimating and controlling the competitive rivalry and aspiration which characterize the Elizabethan courtly milieu.

A final complexity is added to our understanding of the relation of these forms to their real-life context by Marotti's discussion of Sidney's importance to the development and popularity of the sonnet sequence. His posthumous reputation, Marotti argues, endowed the genre with a special prestige for his contemporaries and successors:

> The genre's rhetorical strategies were usually those of the politely deferential suitor, by definition the social inferior of the putative addressee. But Sidney's use of the form in a substantial body of lyrics, especially in the context of his rhetorically forceful assertions of independence and autonomy, established the sonnet sequence in late Elizabethan England as a socially respectable enterprise. (407-08)

He claims further that Sidney's example, in which social status encouraged a recognition of aesthetic merit, invited poets like Spenser to assume that the equation could work the other way, and aesthetic merit confer a kind of social prestige. This assumption Marotti relates to the fantasy-component we have seen in the troubadours' lyrics; it expresses similarly the desire for a social system in which abilities count more than birth and gentlemen are made, not born, a desire reflected in Spenser's letter to Raleigh concerning his intentions in The Faerie Queene. One of the merits of such studies is that they establish the rhetorical efficacy of the sonnet sequence and its conventions without either reducing the poet's motives to an entirely self-serving aspiration or too narrowly classifying different groups of poets (as does Danby's earlier Poets on Fortune's Hill) according to their social status and to the rewards which a system of patronage could thus offer them. A view of the sonnet sequence as a means of mediating

between personal needs and the social order, in Marotti's terms, allows us to incorporate both sincerity and convention as elements in the creative process, to accept on their own terms the different or mingled motivations which are reflected in the works, and to perceive the underlying rhetorical dynamics of each work in relation to the speaker's conventionally humble stance.

Javitch suggests, moreover, that the predominant attitudes and modes of behaviour which characterize the courtly context shape the rhetorical stances and techniques evident in the period's popular literature. His full-length study of the interpenetration of the poet's art with the playful and aesthetic inclinations of the court offers a comprehensive analysis of the way in which such rhetorical devices as indirection, verbal wit, and sprezzatura are encouraged and supported by the courtly context. Instead of arguing, as Hunter does of Lyly, that the humanist-turned-courtier made poetry out of his disappointments and the denial of his aspirations, Javitch looks more positively at the courtier's vocation and behaviour as a factor in justifying the poet's art and in shaping its distinctive features. The rhetorical orientation which the humanists gave the Renaissance educational curriculum, he argues, is re-directed into more playful forms of discourse by the stylistic pressures exerted by the predominant courtly taste, and he outlines the differences in ideological outlook, tone, demeanour, and point of view which distinguish the courtier from the orator. The serious and aggressive aims of the latter, like the importance of gravitas to his self-presentation and of clarity to his style, are contrasted to the wit, elasticity,and refinement central to the

courtier's role, shaped by his audience's responsiveness to indirection and its enjoyment of artifice. Most significantly, Javitch concludes, "as the rhetoric of model court conduct defines itself in contrast with oratory, its affinities with poetic modes grow increasingly apparent." (49) Relying on Puttenham's Art of English Poesy, a treatise which he claims more closely corresponds to poetic practise than other, more cautious handbooks, he identifies a number of rhetorical features which the styles of the poet and the courtier have in common: a use of figurative tactics; playfulness and wit which consist of more than verbal manipulation; a tendency to avoid partisanship while offering instead complementary or even opposing views; a capacity for seriousness and play together; and an ability to make instruction, when it is intended, assume the most recreative forms.

The distinction between oratory and rhetoric is central to several studies of rhetorical elements in Renaissance poetry. Sowton, for instance, argues that Renaissance writers themselves did not distinguish very clearly between rhetoric and poetics, which imply each other in theories of purpose and coincide in practical considerations of the means of eloquence. Sloan's study of the subject as well argues that Elizabethan poets speak of their art as resembling traditional rhetoric, in striking contrast to the Ramists' attempts to compartmentalize the arts, and that contemporary poetic practise reveals "a far richer sense of audience or presence of others, both real and imagined, than the dispassionate opening of boxes that Ramists advised for the process of invention." (235-36) Ferry, like Javitch, claims that the predominantly rhetorical linguistic training of sixteenth-century writers and readers

shapes both contemporary attitudes to poetry and poetic practise:

> Critical writings of the period demonstrate a rhetorical conception of the art of poetry as do the poems themselves, not only in their prominent and self-conscious display of rhetorical devices, but in their many uses of the vocabulary of the handbook. (13)

A striking instance occurs, she points out, in Astrophel's claim that his is "a feeling skill," in the second sonnet of Sidney's sequence--that is, a technique capable of stirring his reader. Thus it is possible, without too narrowly limiting the range of expression in the lyric to that which is designed (like the oration) to convince the audience of the validity of a particular argument, to recognize the importance of persuasive elements within the lyric and of varying degrees of consciousness of his audience on the part of its speaker.

To some extent, this is true of all lyric poetry. Moore argues, for instance, that if the lyric is an instrument of intelligible purpose, it issues claims to value of some kind and thus becomes persuasive and, hence, rhetorical. Only if the reader shares the set of values articulated in the work or can be persuaded, at least temporarily, to entertain them, will the lyric be successful. Its rhetorical goal, however, may be simply to convince the reader that it is worthwhile to consider the attitudes, experiences, or ideas imaginatively presented, or to participate in their evaluation; the lyric will more typically seek to broaden the reader's understanding than to recommend a specific response or issue an overt call to action. The nature and operation of this engagement, however, may escape the notice of the reader of a sonnet sequence, because its conventions

emphasize the overtly persuasive motives and techniques of the speaker: as lover, he pleads with the lady to accept or at least listen sympathetically to his suit for her favour; orator-like, he attempts to convince her of his worth by dramatizing the extent of his love and pain, and by demonstrating the virtues of fidelity, patience, and restraint; using the techniques of the courtly rhetor, he flatters the lady with praise of her beauty and virtue in sonnets which may implicitly celebrate, as well, his powers of perception and appreciation. The poet's intentions, as an examination of the genre's cultural context has suggested, may correspond more or less closely with those of his speaker, and yet a disparity need not imply insincerity on the part of the poet, who may employ the conventionalized language of love for a number of deeply-felt purposes.

This larger sense of the poet's intention, several critics argue, derives from whatever elements of the created work stir the reader's intuitive apprehension of it as a whole; Kern claims that this sense need not collide with the intentional fallacy, since "the idea of purpose as a kind of property of the text...seems essential to the act of reading," (370) and is distinct from assumptions about the concrete intentions of a biographical author. Wright argues similarly that literature depends on the reader's ability thus to interpolate and extrapolate significance where none explicitly appears, and defines this operation in terms of the poet's relation to his lyric speaker:

> Beyond the plot, beyond the characters, even beyond any expressed didactic statements, the writer is telling us something, giving us his view of life or of some part of life...The poet's point of view is always larger than that of his "I," for the "I," like

> the other surface materials of the poem, is only a conventional element in a symbolic context that serves as the formal expression of the poet's view of reality. (19-20)

Hence it seems that we must always assume some distance to exist between the figure of the poet and that of the speaker, and both logic and our experience in reading support this central assumption. Even if elements of the verse encourage us to see its mode as confessional and imply a naked self-presentation, the very act of selecting from and employing his linguistic resources will inevitably limit the degree of revelation which the poet achieves. As Wright points out,

> however accustomed we may be to the more direct lyric in which the thoughts and feelings of the poet...are stated with unambiguous explicitness, art is formal, and there must always be a distance, minimized or emphasized, between the maker of the poem and the persons in the poem. Poetry, dramatic or lyric, does not present fragments of human experience, but formalized versions of it. (7-8)

Any reader is familiar, moreover, with the suspicions which may be awakened by those very claims to plainspoken honesty with which a lyric speaker attempts to claim our trust and to minimize the distance between his own values and those which the work as a whole invites the reader to share. Helgerson addresses this problem of the appearance of self-deception from the opposite angle, as central to Spenser's considerations of his speaker's rhetorical stance: "A man who plays a role that pretends to be no role at all is caught in self-contradiction that he can admit only at the price of abandoning his original self-presentation." (1978; 212)

Critical vocabulary is limited in its capacity to define these distinctions: the term <u>persona</u>, while it acknowledges the existence of

some distance between poet and speaker, is insufficient to reflect the varying degrees of distance which are relevant to our understanding of the work and its effect. Ferry, moreover, argues that even the use of this term as a tool for the analysis of Renaissance sonnets risks imposing modern notions of personality and the aesthetic presentation of character on the works of poets with entirely different presuppositions. Inconsistencies in the uses of names to identify or distinguish between authors and speakers, she claims, demonstrate

> that sixteenth-century English writers did not always equate author and speaker, but also that they had not formulated a distinct conception of the relationships possible between them. That is to say, they seem not to have considered in any terms comparable to those in recent studies of their verse, the issues clustered around the modern critical term persona, for which no parallel word or phrase existed in English. (17)

Nevertheless, while she argues that the poet-lover of the sonnet sequence is traditionally associated with the work's author, even when given a fictional name that hides or pretends to disguise his identity, Ferry acknowledges that the very existence of such inconsistencies as she outlines suggests that the relation between authors and speakers was an issue, though one not clearly formulated.

Contemporary comments suggest that Renaissance poets play wittily with an assumption of identification between poet and sonnet speaker, rather than that they are unable to define the relation consistently. Fletcher's dedicatory letters to Licia, for instance, entertain the reader with ambiguous signals about his proximity to or distance from the work's amatory material. On the one hand, he says of his motives for composing the sequence, "I onely had leasure to grow passionate"

("To...the Ladie Mollineux," 74-75) and "I did it onely to trie my humour" ("To the Reader," 78); addressing such issues as the amplitude of the English language and the need for a love-poet to be scholarly and virtuous, moreover, Fletcher tacitly acknowledges that the poet may be inspired by motives other than his direct experience of love. On the other hand, he does not exclude the possibility of an identification between his experience and that of Licia's speaker, as one of the effects of the work:

> for the matter of love, it may be I am so devoted to some one, into whose hands these may light by chance, that she may say, which thou now saist (that surelie he is in love) which if she doe, then have I the full recompence of my labour, and the Poems have dealt sufficientlie, for the discharge of their owne duetie. ("To the Reader," 78)

Yet his comments on the figurative significance of Licia herself imply that any correspondence between the sequence's characters and real-life persons has little to do with the intentions for which Licia is designed. Reading the sequence, in fact, we discover that its speaker operates as a fictional character on whose experience the poet invites us to share his more encompassing perspective.

Fletcher's comments on sincerity, furthermore, reinforce the impression of his playful attitude towards such issues. Wittily reversing the traditional assumption that experience in love will prompt the poet to effective verse, Fletcher instead directs our attention to the impact of devices which create the illusion of sincerity: "Now in that I have written Love sonnets, if any man measure my affection by my style, let him say, I am in Love." ("To...the Ladie Mollineux," 75) Verisimilitude, in other words, is a matter of poetic feigning and the

conscious handling of rhetorical devices at the poet's disposal; his "sincerity" may consist of plausible characterization rather than naked self-revelation. It is in this light that Sidney's critique of contemporary love poetry should be read:

> truly many of such writings, as come under the banner of...love, if I were a Mistresse, would never perswade mee they were in love: so coldly they applie firie speeches, as men that had rather redde lovers writings, and so caught up certaine swelling Phrases, ... then that in truth they feele those passions, which easily...may be bewraied by that same forcibleness or Energia, (as the Greeks call it of the writer). (41)

Sidney's hypothetical reading of love poetry as "if I were a Mistresse" implies the imaginative guises which may operate in works which maintain the illusion of a real courtship within a fictional framework.

In such works, the plausibility and intensity of the wholly created figure of the lover (a measure of the work's energia) may simultaneously be "sincere" within the fictional context of the work, and be designed to serve the poet's larger intentions for that work. The poet's manipulation of character and experience for purposes other than self-expression, in other words, will not imply his insincerity, and the reader of such a work is called upon to be as unprejudiced as is Fletcher when he addresses the issue:

> I am so liberall to graunt this much, a man may write of love, and not bee in love, as well as of husbandrie, and not goe to plough: or of witches and be none: or of holinesse and be flat prophane. ("To...the Ladie Mollineux," 76)

Underlying the increasingly striking and humorous contrasts of this declaration is the serious assumption of a distinction between the poet's character and experience, on the one hand, and the nature of the

work he produces, on the other. As Fletcher seems to understand it, then, sincerity has less to do with the poet's having experienced the emotion of which he writes, or having written under its direct impetus, than with a proper understanding of his subject and a capacity for discernment. In fact, he claims, the "fittest to write of Love" are those "whose learning and bringing up together, with their fine natures makes so sweet a harmonie" ("To the Reader," 79) as to best fit them for the task.

Only Sidney's Astrophil and Stella and Spenser's Amoretti, the subjects of chapter five and six, exploit the full range of relations between poet and speaker on which Fletcher plays in his dedicatory letters to Licia: the speaker in each of these sequences, that is, moves between the poles of proximity to and distance from the historical poet, his creator. Astrophil's significant rhetorical engagements occur both with Stella and with the sequence's larger audience of "best wits," so that he emerges as a poet-lover distinct from the poet-speaker of Watson's, Constable's, and Greville's works, and from the fictional character presented in the minor sequences of chapters two and three, and in Daniel's Delia. Both poetry-writing and love-making are central activities in Astrophil and Stella, and the sophisticated treatment of perception and expression which arises from this conjunction is enhanced by a paradigm of three roles--those of poet, reader, and text--which focuses attention on the complex relation of the historical poet's concerns and the fictional courtship which Astrophil conducts. In each of these roles, Astrophil may demonstrate the self-conscious wit, sensitivity to audience response, and detachment from the experience of

love which encourages the reader to identify him with his creator; the identification is reinforced by self-referential sonnets and by the vivid evocation of a social context which Astrophil shares with Sidney. On the other hand, he may fill these roles by complaining of difficulties in expression, regarding his "reading" of Stella's significance as a passive process, and by otherwise demonstrating the vulnerability and limited awareness which results from the fictional lover's immersion in the experience of love. Deeply embedded in the sequence's association of the creative process with a search for self-knowledge, the paradigm offers a means of commenting on the multiple guises of the self and of understanding the sense of autonomy which Astrophil intermittently discovers in his own creation.

Two effects of the speaker's flexible relation to his creator are common to Astrophil and Stella and the Amoretti: in both sequences, shifts in rhetorical stance demand a more active response from the reader than do any of the minor sequences discussed, and in both, the poet's implied presence within the work lends conviction to the lover's expression of strong feeling. Yet the different nature of the self-referential sonnets in each work signals important contrasts in the uses to which Sidney and Spenser put this technique. In Astrophil and Stella, the social milieu and courtly audience which Astrophil and Sidney share focus attention on poetry-writing and self-presentation, emphasizing the ambiguities of scrutinizing and analyzing the self. Alluding to The Faerie Queene specifically, on the other hand, the Amoretti associates the role of the poet with predetermined form and public value; the association is reinforced by the instructive mode of

sonnets which, detached from the immediate experience of love, offer a Neoplatonic interpretation of its significance. Such sonnets establish a dynamic interaction with those in which the lover--his conventional features and susceptibility to the lady occasionally exaggerated to stress the distinct roles--articulates his doubts and hesitations: their interpretation of the lover's experience validates his perceptions, yet emphasizes by contrast the volatility of his relation to the lady and the lively tensions involved in this exploration. In the Amoretti, as a result, an illumination of the conventional situation of the sonnet sequence is discovered from within, and the treatment of artistic expression shaped, neither by the debilitating impact of the lover's dependence on the lady nor by the detachment of the poet-speaker, but by insight into the nature of reciprocal love.

The irresolution of both sequences' conclusions, finally, represents an integral development of a flexible rhetorical stance and of a structure which plays simultaneously on the reader's expectation of narrative development and on subtler methods of arrangement which remind the reader of the poet's skill. While the structure and conclusion of Astrophil and Stella and the Amoretti have received a good deal of critical attention, little has been made of the form of the minor sequences, despite an early argument by Bray that for the Elizabethans, the sequence as a whole and not the individual sonnet was the important artistic unit. The larger question of form in the genre raised by such critics as Warkentin and Neely, nevertheless, is relevant to an analysis of rhetorical stance in the major and minor sequences. Warkentin points out, in the first place, the difficulties of defining a principle of

structure that accounts for the effects both of individual poems and of the work as a whole:

> it is the symphonic quality of a large structure...that despite their many differences links the fourteenth-century masterpieces by Dante and Petrarch with those by Ronsard, Sidney, Spenser and Shakespeare...Yet struggling with the sense of the poema that makes us think of sonnet sequences as "works" rather than anthologies, is the fragmentation consequent upon an apparent absence of the expected linking devices, especially those of plot and narrative, that might give such works coherence...The relation between fragment and whole has always been so difficult to handle critically that one alternative has been simply to abandon the search for form altogether. (15)

Neely, exploring the tension which Warkentin identifies between the independence of the sequence's individual units and those linking devices which appear just often enough to evoke a sense of continuity and development, claims that the works must be placed somewhere between straightforward narratives and "prolonged lyric meditations," (362) alternatives outlined by C. S. Lewis. She adds that the sense of structure and purpose evident in the work of the Renaissance sonneteers seems larger and more flexible than that of their later critics.

Although Warkentin deals primarily with the development of the new genre in Dante's La Vita Nuova and Petrarch's Canzoniere, and Neely with English Renaissance sequences, both link structure to the nature of expression in these works and to their central significance. Warkentin argues, for instance, that in its portrait of a "psychological and moral existence under the shadow of murdering time," Petrarch's work creates "an essentially novel kind of fiction" whose variety "enhanced the notion that the poems constituted an academy of literary style." (20)

Sixteenth-century composers of sonnet sequences are accordingly guided by

> the idea that the poet's adoption of the amatory mode involved him not only in a certain body of material, but the assumption as well of a specific attitude toward his art. The essentials of this attitude were the ambition that led it to attempt a new brilliance of style, and the belief that this would arise from the poet's struggle to speak perfectly of his perfecting in love. In an important sense the amatory material of many canzonieri was merely the vehicle for the true purpose of the poems, which was to demonstrate the poet's artistic achievement. (21)

With Warkentin's argument we thus return to the poet's intention by means of an analysis of structure and style, and in such a manner as to justify by literary precedent the self-conscious display of poetic skill of which Lever is so critical. She claims that the central organizing principle of variatio, which dictates that poems on similar themes, or treated from different points of view, be separated from one another, gives the Canzoniere a plastic quality much valued as a source of pleasure for the reader. Yet its application is neither extrinsic nor decorative, for even as this structural principle allows for the sense of a unified whole, it also represents the speaker's oscillating fortunes and antithetical condition.

Neely's analysis of the structure of English Renaissance sonnet sequences proceeds from a much briefer overview of the two Italian models, in which she points to the elasticity of the canzoniere's structure and identifies its narrative development as a series of progressions in mode of address, degree of eroticism, and use of biographical material. She identifies the most significant narrative, thematic, and formal shift as that which occurs between the static

relationship of the first part and the second part's solitary sublimation and transcendence. The primary structuring device of the English sequences is as well, she claims, a division into two unequal parts, but English sonneteers employ a variety of devices radically different from the death of Petrarch's beloved and his subsequent sublimation, to redirect the movement of their works. Simultaneously, a number of formal strategies intensify the sense of urgency and intimacy as the sequences progress, and contribute a sense of coherence to the otherwise only loosely connected sonnets.

A key point in Neely's discussion is the distinction between Italian and English speakers: for the latter, she argues, the vocation of poet does not prove satisfying or come to supersede the vocation of lover as it does in Dante's sequence, and as a result, a failure of love in the English sequences ultimately means a failure of poetry as well. In this regard, the English sonneteers would seem distinct as well from their French contemporaries who were drawn to the canzoniere, Warkentin comments, by "its function as a discipline for the achievement of eloquence...more than anything else," and whose works, although they centre still on the suffering lover, present "an enclosed world in which fame is the only spur." (21) Neely's analysis thus implies that a sense of progressive development may further convey the plausibility of the lover's experience, and suggests the importance of fictional characterization, rather than poetic self-presentation alone, in the Elizabethan sonnet sequence.

Particularly valuable in the connections they establish between form and expression, these studies together offer an overview of the

sonnet sequence's development from its beginning to the vogue of sonneteering in late sixteenth-century England. Besides emphasizing a different historical period, however, each focuses as well on a different aspect of form in the sequence. Warkentin claims that variatio is more significant to the Canzoniere's presentation of the lover's fortunes than is the occasionally deceptive impression of narrative progression, created by the work's emphasis on chronology; this flexible structural concept which Petrarch bequeaths to later sonneteers also serves to mark his advance on the achievement of La Vita Nuova, whose clear narrative line and symmetrical arrangement of individual sonnets place it closer to the Provencal anthologies of amorous verse which influenced both poets. Neely's work, while it does not deny the diversity to be found in the works of Elizabethan sonneteers, is more concerned to identify certain similarities in the broad contours of the works' narrative development. In its implications, each study raises the possibility of various kinds of structural tension within the sonnet sequence, but ranges too widely over the works available to explore fully the nature of these tensions or to examine closely their role in particular sequences. When Neely argues that formal strategies of development are employed more self-consciously in the major sequences, for instance, this point is no more than a passing observation, and the discussion makes no serious effort to define the distinctions between major and minor works in the genre, although it focuses attention primarily on the former as most such analyses do.

A close examination of the sequences reveals that minor sonneteers

who compose in either mode--presenting a wholly created character or a poet-speaker closely identified with the author--use the extended form of a collection of sonnets to reinforce the rhetorical stance which their speakers assume. The impression of a smooth narrative progression supported by references to time and by devices which link consecutive sonnets conveys the sense of an immersion in his immediate situation which characterizes the figure of the lover. The grouping of sonnets in symmetrical patterns, based on common subject matter and impressing the reader with their stylistic versatility and with their contribution to the work's larger structure, is typical of sequences with a poet-speaker. Only in Sidney's Astrophil and Stella and in Spenser's Amoretti, as these works exploit the full range of expression available to the sonnet-speaker, are the possibilities of formal tension between a sense of narrative progression and the principle of variatio fully explored.

CHAPTER 1

Some minor sequences justify in a number of respects Lever's criticism of those works "published after 1590;" ironically, since it was originally published in 1582, Watson's Passionate Centurie of Love allows us most clearly to examine the justice of Lever's charge. Those minor sequences which present a poet-speaker whose concerns are closely identified with those of his creator, like The Passionate Centurie and Constable's Diana, give relatively short shrift to the genre's amatory material. Emphasis falls in such sequences on the use the sonneteer can make of the conventional situation and motifs. While Greville's Caelica will demonstrate the effectiveness of the poet-speaker's treatment of love when it is informed by a coherent moral intention, a sequence whose poet-speaker is more narrowly devoted to self-presentation for its own sake may reveal, in Lever's words, that

> his real desire is to be the king of infinite space in a nutshell; to set his mind ranging over the provinces of alchemy and astrology, to classical myth and oriental religion; to find brave new worlds and startling juxtapositions. (146)

Yet the second-rate quality of The Passionate Centurie is the result less of evidence in the work of the poet's professional desire to display his learning and technical skill, a practise warranted by Petrarch's Canzoniere, than of the consistency of the speaker's identification with his creator's concerns and preoccupations. The poet-speaker accordingly seizes the opportunities which the conventional situation provides, to play on classical allusions, to reach a proverbial resolution of purported dilemmas, and ultimately to exploit

the didactic function of art. The aspirations of the poet, in other words, dominate the longings of the lover to such an extent that The Passionate Centurie becomes a virtuoso performance whose audience is manifestly the larger realm of readers and fellow-poets, rather than the lady herself.

While the performance, extended over a "centurie" of poems, has perhaps limited appeal for a modern reader, internal and external evidence suggests that Watson's evaluation of his contemporary audience was perceptive, and his self-presentation in the sequence sufficiently effective to enhance his reputation. Grundy comments along similar lines on the impact of Diana: "Constable's sonnets become, it seems, part of the Elizabethan sonneteer's natural inheritance." (63) The self-conscious detachment of Watson's poet-speaker from the experience of love, moreover, produces witty and humorous effects in a number of the sonnets, while comparing the frequent pedantry of his verse to the impression conveyed by Diana's speaker demonstrates that it is possible for such a figure, more poet than lover, to provoke the interest of his audience, instead of its acknowledgement simply of his technical ingenuity. The predominant impression created by this sequence, as in The Passionate Centurie, is of a persona concerned alike with his professional and social life: a public figure, then, rather than a private individual overheard in solitary reflection or in conversation with the lady. Expression in Diana is similarly restricted to one extreme of the range possible for the sonnet-speaker by this consistent identification of speaker and poet and by several other features which it shares with Watson's work: the emphasis placed on a display of

artistic skill, and the obstruction from the poet-speaker's vision of the more intimate meaning of occasions about which he writes from a decidedly public stance. Each of these features confirms the poet-speaker's relation to his larger audience as the work's primary engagement; the poet's relation to his reader always underlies the workings of the sonnet sequence, but in those works spoken by the fictional character of the lover, this engagement is throughout indirect. Another aspect common to works with a poet-speaker is that the impression of narrative progression takes secondary place to other means of arranging the individual sonnets. Plot is not entirely sacrificed, nor do other means of achieving coherence in the sequence disappear; but such works emphasize (instead of a gradual unfolding of the central experience) isolated "turns" in individual sonnets, the grouping of related sonnets according to the various uses the speaker can make of their common theme, and the retrospective, formal arrangement of sonnets in the work as a whole.

Despite these similarities, the two sequences have a different effect on the reader which suggests that other factors too are involved in The Passionate Centurie's failure to move the larger audience of readers for which it, of all the sonnet sequences to be considered, is most transparently designed. A comparison of the two works, moreover, reveals the limitations of modern notions of sincerity as criteria by which to judge the success of the sonnet sequence, since in neither case is much effort devoted to convincing the reader that the voice speaking is that of a genuinely troubled yet hopeful lover. Yet while the subject matter and rhetorical techniques of Diana convey the impression

of a poet-speaker whose eye is turned to the appearance he will present, the social and political context of Constable's work provides an atmosphere to which that speaker responds on a variety of levels, creating a sense of personality more vivid and complex than does the pedantry which serves to characterize the poet-speaker of The Passionate Centurie of Love. Furthermore, there is in Diana no disparity between the claims which the poet-speaker makes for himself and the reader's impression of his character, so that even a failure of taste or of insight, while it may dramatize the limitations of expression in the sequence, is coherent with the personality of the poet-speaker, "sincere" in that he has never pretended to greater understanding.[1]

Such is not the case in Watson's Passionate Centurie of Love, in which the intentions of the poet-speaker, largely responsible for expressing the values implicit in the sequence as a whole, are remote from the values of the modern reader, too narrow to provide a compensatory interest in the character of the poet-speaker, and in Watson's handling poorly integrated with the conventional subject matter of the sequence. Moore argues that the characteristic manner of Renaissance verse presupposes an audience with some degree of intellectual detachment, and that

> The apparent toleration of even irresponsible virtuosity implies no failure to discriminate between poems of greater or lesser magnitude or moral significance but only a large concern for formal excellence. (431)

Yet respect for the formal qualities of the verse is sorely tested by the emphasis on ingenuity, learning, and versatility which divert attention from The Passionate Centurie's ostensible story rather than

enhance it. Instead of an immersion in his experience and a focus on the lady, we discover that the poet-speaker equates familiarity with love with a knowledge of its literary guises. Moreover, while distance from the lady and from the experience of love corresponds to a more direct engagement with the larger audience, the poet-speaker's emphasis on technical virtuosity and learning is a central factor in limiting that audience to those familiar with the literary tradition and hence in the tacit exclusion of those without the opportunity, as Lodge's Demades will put it, "to make their love their living."

The emphasis on ingenuity and exclusiveness may stem from two types of troubadour lyric. Valency sets apart from the main current of the trobar clar, with its relatively simple and concise style, both the trobar ric, characterized by its elevation of difficulty to the rank of an aesthetic principle, and the trobar clus, which by a studied ambiguity implies a reserve of meaning beyond the comprehension of the average reader. To account for the former, he posits a social motive--the sophisticate's horror of being caught in banality of expression--which seems relevant to the preoccupations of Watson's speaker. His conclusions about the consequences of this style echo Lever's criticism of the minor sequences:

> In a great deal of the troubadour poetry, as in most of the lyric poetry of the sixteenth century which derived from it, the intellectual content of the poem--the substance--was really no more than the material vehicle in which the form of the poem was realized. (Valency, 123)

The trobar clus, on the other hand, borders on allegory's desire to shield the poet's truth from those who cannot appreciate it, yet in practise is generally unable to achieve the skilled allegorist's ability

to entertain the many while he teaches the few. Often, Valency points out, the trobar clus is characterized simply by the ingenuity apparent in verbal complexities, double entendres, obscure allusions, strange words, and paradox, rather than on genuine intellectual difficulty. Interesting to the experienced reader, the form had a necessarily limited appeal in which Valency discerns both defensive and esoteric motives: "there was an aggressive element in it; the closed style was militantly exclusive." (127) Both the social motive and the stylistic ingenuity, without the justification which intellectual complexity might provide, seem to linger in Watson's Passionate Centurie of Love.

The reader's attention is first drawn to the sequence's primary characteristics by the prose gloss, traditionally accepted as having been written by a figure like E.K. of The Shepheardes Calendar, which introduces each poem. This format offers the reader, along with the poems themselves, a contemporary comment on their style and content and a series of directives apparently intended to guide response to the work. Typically, the glosses identify the occasion which inspired the poem, summarize its contents, or draw the reader's attention to its technical features, either to encourage appreciation, for instance, of "the copious varietie of...[the poet's]...devises," or to clarify the poem's mode of development: "This Passion is all framed in manner of a dialogue." (gloss, 3) Elsewhere, the prose commentary is used to relate individual poems to the sequence as a whole, by pointing to connections in theme and technique between the different sonnets: "This Passion is of like frame and fashion with that, which was before under the number of XLI, whetherto I referre the Reader." (gloss, 64) In addition to

this kind of directive, comments on the Latin sonnet 45 draw the reader's attention to the processes of composition and arrangement:

> The Author useth in this Passion the like sense to that which he had in the last before it, calling his Mistres a Second Sunne upon earthe, wherewith Heaven it selfe is become in Love: But when he compileth this Sonnet, he thought not to have placed it amongst these his English toyes.

Similarly, the commentator notes, in sonnet 75 the poet "borroweth from certaine Latine verses of his owne," written long ago for inclusion in an unnamed work in praise of women but not yet "perfected to the printe." Such comments serve to counteract any impression that might otherwise be created of the sequence's fictional self-sufficiency or of its operating as a mirror to reflect faithfully events in Watson's own life. Instead, they insist on the collection's immersion in the process of artistic creation which results in a variety of literary works produced by Watson.

Something of the social ambience of this process is as well made apparent in the gloss to sonnet 67, where the scope of the commentary is enlarged to include the response of another reader:

> A man singuler for his learning, and magistrate of no small accoumpt, upon slight survey of this booke of Passions, eyther for the liking he had to the Author, or for his own private pleasure, or for some good he conceyved of the worke, voutchsafed with his own hand to set down certaine posies concerning the same: Amongst which, this was one, Love hath no leaden heeles. Whereat the Author glaunceth throughout al this Sonnet; which he purpsely compyled at the presse, in remembrance of his worshipfull friend, and in honour of his golden posie.

Not only has the magistrate been inspired to write his own verse in response, but this further creation has provoked a kind of poetic dialogue between him and Watson, a dialogue in which imitation thus

become a means of paying a graceful compliment and respectful tribute. The commentary thus suggests something of the work's larger context: not so much a social world of courtly lovers and ladies, although some understanding of the nature of courtly love is implied by its title and contents, as a sophisticated circle in which writing of love, like learning and public activity, provides evidence of a man's varied abilities and accomplishments. The work, that is, has a value beyond itself in establishing contact with a reader like the learned magistrate and in providing proof of the poet's worth.

Similarly, the prose glosses work to establish Watson's place in a more strictly literary context. Acknowledging his debt to such poets as Petrarch and Serafino, they manage simultaneously to demand an audience as learned and energetic as they claim the poet has been in his composing. Even the straightforward advice that "The oftener it is read of him that is no great clarke, the more pleasure he shall have of it" (gloss, 47) carries the tacit message that repeated study of the poem's merits must compensate for gaps in education. At certain points in the sequence, supposed reassurance to the unlearned takes a more intimidating form:

> There needeth no annotation at all before this Passion, it is of it selfe so plaine, and easilye convayed. Yet the unlearned may have this helpe geven them by the way to know what Galaxia is, or Pactolus, which perchaunce they have not read of often in our vulgar Rimes. Galaxia (to omit both the Etimologie and what the Philosophers doe write thereof) is a white way or milky circle in the heavens, which Ovid mentioneth in this manner.
>
> Est via sublimis coelo manifesta sereno,
> Lactia nomen habet, candore notabilits ipso.
>
> And Cicero thus in somnio Scipionis; Erat autem is splenidissimo candore inter flammas circulus elucens, quem vos (ut a Graiis acceptistis) orbem

> lacteum nuncupatis.
> Pactolus is a river in Lidia, which hath golden sandes under it, as Tibullus witnesseth in this verse,
> Nec me regna iuvant, nec Lydius aurifer amnis.
> (gloss, 31)

The off-handed offering of assistance ("by the way", "perchaunce") is here transformed into an opportunity for the commentator to indicate by explicit omission his familiarity with etymological and philosophical considerations and to demonstrate his knowledge of the Latin sources. The glosses thus provide in themselves an instance of a particular rhetorical stance: their author is concerned with the impression of his personality conveyed to the audience, here in an attempt at a pedagogical sprezzatura that falls rather flat. Furthermore, while the commentator is aware of a possible diversity of audience, and makes some attempt to take into account the unlearned as well as the learned, his glosses are primarily designed to direct and control the responses of a particular segment of The Passionate Centurie's potential readership: those most capable, by their education, learning, and experience, of appreciating what he perceives as the singular merits of Watson's work.

It should be noted, too, that these merits are entirely stylistic and learned; they have to do with "familier trueths" (gloss, 40) rather than with personal discovery or with the more idiosyncratic features of an individual's experience. The writer of the glosses is interested in the appropriateness of the sequence's "events" and observations to those generally-acknowledged notions of love which an educated and well-read audience will appreciate, and in the rhetorical effectiveness of the poet's presentation of these notions. He neither expects nor looks for a vivid evocation of personal experience. This bias underlies the

parallel between the work's two sets of audiences: the learned and unlearned, on the one hand; and on the other, "such as Love at any time hath had under his banner," (gloss, 40) to whom the poems will strike a familiar note, and "such as never have acquainted themselves with Love and his Lawes," (gloss, 40) to whom the sonnets' sense will seem strange. In practise, these two sets are identical, for knowledge of love in the course of The Passionate Centurie consistently implies an acquaintance with its treatment in the classical and more recent literary works to which the poet refers and with the aphorisms which dot the text.[2]

We need not, of course, immediately accept the commentator's evaluation of The Passionate Centurie, nor should his pedantic manner alone control our response to the sequence. The glosses are external to the work, and their speaker is a figure distinct from Watson's poet-speaker, indicative perhaps merely of one aspect of contemporary taste. But what we discover in reading the sequence itself is that our attention is repeatedly drawn to those aspects of the poems which have been the focus of the commentator, and that there is a close coherence of his rhetorical stance with that of the sequence's speaker: the author of the prose glosses, in other words, seems to have read The Passionate Centurie as internal evidence suggests Watson meant it to be read, and to have adopted a stance as nearly equivalent to that of the sequence's poet-speaker as his different role makes possible.[3]

Most significantly, it is not the commentator alone who views the speaker's role as that of poet rather than that of lover: by references in certain sonnets to such authors as Homer, Virgil, and Tully, the

speaker reveals a pervasive consciousness of his place in the larger literary context, and he remains as well mindful of his audience throughout The Passionate Centurie. Like the commentator, he thus adopts a public role, which in his case encourages an identification of poet and speaker. Differing relations to the sequence itself produce some obvious distinctions between the commentator's stance and that of the poet-speaker: only the detached observer can so unabashedly point out the merits of individual poems or locate their author in such prestigious literary company. The sequence's creator, by contrast, displays a respectful humility about his achievement, whether addressing a general audience--"I rather take upon me to write better than Choerilus, then once suppose to imitate Homer" ("To the friendly Reader")--or the work's patron:

> But how bold soever I have bene, in turning out this my prettie poore flocke upon the open Common of the wide world, where everie man may behold their nakedness, I humbly make request, that if any storme fall unlooked for (by the fault of high foreheads, or the poyson of evill edged tongues) these my little ones may shroud them selves under the broad leaved Platane of your Honours patronage.
> ("To Lord Edward de Vere")

The apparent modesty is sustained in the voice of the poet-speaker, but his stance reflects, like that of the poet in the dedicatory pieces or that of the commentator in the prose glosses, an awareness of the larger audience which his verses are designed to impress and consideration of their likely response.

Sensitivity to the presumed tastes and interests of that audience is evident in sonnet 38, a poem which also demonstrates how the identification of poet's and speaker's central concerns dominates

attempts to convey the experiences and emotions of the lover, a guise occasionally and transparently assumed. It opens with a series of questions which identify others' curiosity about love's cause or location, the identity of the lady, and the lover's intentions:

> Some aske me, when, and how my love begunne;
> Some, where it lies, and what effectes it hath;
> Some, who she is, by whom I am undone;
> Some, what I mean to treade so lewde a path;
> I answer all alike, by answ'ring nought,
> But, ble'st is he, whome Cupide never caught.

Even as the repetition of "Some" and the syntactical dependence of lines 2 and 4 on the opening "aske me" parallel the speaker's interrogators, the sequence "when-how-where-who-what" stresses the potential range of their concerns. Although he uses the series of questions to emphasize by contrast a simple silence, indicative of the lover's conventionally fixed regard and obsessive secrecy, his single-mindedness is by no means as straightforward as it appears. In fact, his paradoxical reply "by answ'ring nought" suggests in itself a capacity to play wittily with the form of interrogation and to sustain the interest of his audience, a capacity which reflects the speaker's self-conscious awareness of the pose he is adopting and of its implications. The development from the innocuous diction of "my love" and "its effectes" to the self-characterizing "I am undonne" and the condemnatory "so lewde a path" in turn allies the range of his audience's concerns to the variety of responses on the part of the speaker himself, whose language seems to be shaped by engagement with his larger audience. It is clear, in other words, that this speaker is responsive to its diverse interests rather than focused on the lady and his own ostensibly troubled state.

If love is central to the conventional lover, then all questioners

will indeed appear "alike" as those "whom Cupide never caught." Yet although the speaker captures this feature of the lover's state, his temporary adoption of the lover's role is emphasized by a momentary hesitation, betraying his reluctance to turn his focus from the larger audience of curious interrogators and, implicitly, of the work's readers:

> And yet I coulde, if sorrowe woulde permit,
> Tell when and how I fix't my fancie first,
> And for whose sake I lost both will and wit,
> And choase the path, wherein I live accurst. (38)

The speaker pauses briefly, then, to protest his capacity to satisfy the audience's curiosity, and the impression conveyed undercuts the conventional pose from which issues the aphorism following ("love gainesaide grows madder than before"), the declaration of fidelity ("Till Phoebus use to rise from out of the West" which concludes the sonnet), and the motifs of blindness and inexpressibility in the poem immediately following. Reinforcing his declaration of a capacity to define and analyse his situation, the diction of lines 7 through 10 stresses that he has made a conscious decision and assimilated something of his questioners' attitudes: "I fix't my fancie first," "And choase the path," "I live accurst." Thus, as the author of the prose glosses has been unable to submerge concern for the display of personal qualities in the role of commentator--or at least has used that role as a means of self-aggrandizement--so the poet-speaker of The Passionate Centurie turns the expected role of lover into a form of self-promotion, reluctant to accept the restrictions conventionally imposed on a fictional lover's vision and understanding, by his subservience to and single-minded focus on the lady.

Like the commentator, then, the speaker stands at some distance from the dilemmas of love which are his ostensible subject. As a result, he draws nearer his creator and engages in tacit or explicit dialogue with his audience: "All ye that love compare youre paines to mine," he begins sonnet 46, and the invitation, frequent in The Passionate Centurie, suggests that the pains demanded by the genre have become merely a device for communicating with an ideal reader. Sonnet 43, though, has betrayed the speaker's awareness that not only similarity of experience, but as well imaginative involvement in his perspective, may win a sympathetic response, that "Who list of these my paines to take the view,/ Will soon confesse that what I say, is true." Occasionally, his effort to direct audience response presents more of a challenge: sonnet 57, for instance, which the gloss identifies as a rebuke to "all those his frendes, or others whatsoever, which pitie his estate in Love," begins with a frontal attack on their pity, redefined as a lack of vision for which they are instead to be pitied themselves:

> All ye that greeve to thinke my death so neere,
> Take pitie on your selves, whose thought is blinde.

After the mild shock of such an opening, the speaker employs more conventional means of persuasion--by analogy and by reasoned analysis of cause and effect--to bring his audience to a state of altered vision and sympathetic involvement: "you, that see in what estate I stand,/.../ Persuade your selves." Not only is the speaker aware of his audience throughout The Passionate Centurie, then, but he also displays a capacity to choose the rhetorical stance and persuasive devices best suited to win over the particular segment of the audience to which a

sonnet is addressed.

In sonnets of this type, the primacy of the speaker's engagement with the audience creates the impression of his detachment from the lover's experience, the sequence's ostensible subject. His attack on those who "thinke my death so neere" and the declaration that he could tell "for whose sake I lose both will and wit" have a humorous air, as if the speaker shares with his audience a sophisticated awareness of the genre's conventional gestures: the emphasis on the lover's extreme sorrow and the concealment of the lady's identity, in these instances. Even when his attention shifts to the lady, as in the direct appeal of sonnet 59, evidence of the public nature of his rhetorical stance yet lingers. The generality and aphoristic quality of the poem's conclusion, for example, may betray his consciousness of his reading public, a group which he judges less interested in the personal dimensions of his relation to the lady than in a demonstration of wit and learning applied to the analysis of love:

> This flame is Love, whome none may well intreate,
> But only shee, for whome I suffer heate.
> Then peerelesse Dame, the ground of all my griefe,
> Voutsafe to cure the cause of my complainte:
> No favoure els but thine can yeelde reliefe
> But helpe in time, before I further fainte,
> For Daunger growes by lingringe till the last,
> And Phisicke hath no helpe, where life is paste.
> (59)

Even in the quatrain which directly addresses the "peerelesse Dame", the speaker's use of the technical term "ground" suggests what is true throughout The Passionate Centurie. The lady is identified as cause of the speaker's grief, as the conventions demand, but any impression of her coming into dramatic contact with her supposed suitor, which might

provoke a sense of immediacy and of his immersion in the actual experience of love, is subordinated to her role in generating poetic invention and in providing a human face to suit the poet-speaker's general observations.

The primary goal is the display of his learning and technical capacity, not her personality or the interaction of the sequence's two protagonists. The lady's poetic function and effect is the explicit subject of sonnet 17, in which the lady is again defined as the "ground whereon Ile write." Here the speaker picks up as well a term used earlier--"toye" ("To the friendly Reader")--using it nevertheless to justify the worth of the collection in terms of its public reception. Hence it is a toy, as we see earlier, which to "This trifling world...beseemeth best." ("A Quatorzain of the Author to his book of love-passions"). In sonnet 17, the term is used to place the speaker's subject in the larger context of traditional literary practise, and to defend the quality of his invention as Watson has that of the work as a whole:

> Yf Poetes have done well in times long past,
> To glose on trifling toyes of little price:
> Why should not I presume to faine as fast,
> Espying forth a ground of good devise?
> ...
> I dare affirme what some will thinke a toye,
> She Phoenix is, though not of Arabie.

As elsewhere in The Passionate Centurie, the poet-speaker reveals his awareness of "what some will thinke" and guards himself against their attack, but the poem has a further significance. It is a pivotal sonnet, bringing to conclusion a series of seven poems which demonstrate the poet-speaker's versatility in varied treatment of a consistent theme

(the lady's song), and instigating a pair of sonnets in which conventional assumptions about love are played off against each other to emphasize his more encompassing and often skeptical perspective. The grouping is significant, then, to an understanding of the speaker's rhetorical stance, and his pose in sonnet 17 merits particular attention.

This sonnet's affirmation approximates, as closely as possible given the two speakers' differing relations to the work, the prose commentary's defense of The Passionate Centurie's worth; the poet-speaker's celebration of the lady's worth as motivation for his daring assertion effectively balances poetic ambition with the conventionally humble stance of the sonnet lover. Yet the argumentative structure of the sonnet, complete with qualification ("though not of Arabie") to generate a renewed sense of affirmation ("And yet..."), cooperates with the increasingly explicit public address of the final six lines to signify a speaker in full control of, rather than subordinated to, the subject of which he writes:

> And yet the plumes about her neck are bright,
> And Sol him selfe in her hath chiefe delight.
> You that will know why Sol afoordes her love,
> Seeke but the cause why Peekocks draw the place,
> Where Juno sitts; why Venus likes the Dove;
> Or why the Owle befitts Minervaes grace;
> Then yf you grudge, that she to Sol belonge,
> Marke but her face, and leave her skill in songe.
> (17)

Sonnets 18 and 19 confirm this impression, as distance from the experience of love permits the speaker a playful and often ironic treatment of its nature and effects. In both cases, he retreats in the final couplet to one dimension of the conventional pose--resignation to

the pains of love in the former and, in the latter, wonder at the impossibility of defining the experience--but taken together, the sonnets demonstrate a mastery of the conventions and a consequent skepticism about their validity which undermines the pose eventually assumed, much as the sense of reluctance in sonnet 38 has argued for the speaker's greater capacity even as he adopts, temporarily, the limitations of the lover's stance.

What is particularly striking about the first dozen lines of sonnet 18 is their metrical regularity, the ease with which the speaker manages a series of conventional antitheses, metaphors, and epithets in iambic pentameter, varied for emphasis in the introductory "Love is" of lines 1 and 7, and reinforced internally by the echoing "everlasting life," (line 2) "everdying strife" (line 4) and "ever hits" (line 6) and by the alliterative units of the second six lines:

> Love is a sowr delight; a sugred greefe;
> A living death; an everdying life;
> A breache of Reasons lawe; a secret theefe;
> A sea of teares; an everlasting strife;
> A bayte for fooles; a scourge of noble witts;
> A Deadly wound; a shotte which ever hitts.
> Love is a blinded God; an angry boye;
> A Labyrinth of doubts; an ydle lust;
> A slave to Beawties will; a witles toy;
> A ravening bird; a tyraunt most unjust;
> A burning heate; a Cold; a flattringe foe;
> A private hell; a very world of woe. (18)

As throughout The Passionate Centurie, there is no sense of the reader's overhearing a lover's private monologue; instead, the reader is immediately aware not only of a speaker familiar with, but also of a poet skilled in manipulating, the conventional material. The same facility is evident in sonnet 19's debate over what "Poets faine" about the nature of love: each pair of lines confronts attributes selected

from a traditional personification of Love ("If Cupid were a childe...") with contradictory evidence, derived either from an alternative tale ("how comes it then that Mars doth feare his might?") or from the experience of lovers in general, occasionally limited to that of the speaker himself:

> If blind; how chance so many to their paine,
> Whom he hath hitte, can witnesse of his sight?
> If he have winges to flie where thinkes him best,
> How happes he lurketh still within my breast?

The earthy common sense of this dialectic--"If naked.../ How doth not Sunne or frost offend his skinne?"--operates to comic effect by taking literally the absurd sentimentality of certain conventional associations, and thus discounts the poem's resolution: that love is impossible for the speaker, despite his long experience, to define. The ease and humour with which the poet-speaker treats a broad range of material undercuts his self-presentation:

> Yet mightie Love regard not what I saye,
> Which lye in traunce bereft of all my witts,
> But blame the light that leades me thus astraye,
> And makes my tongue blaspheme by frantike fitts. (18)

The "blasphemy" committed is not the result of emotional turmoil or a reflection of the speaker's awed incapacity to deal with love's strange effects. In fact, tone and technique operate in this sonnet to reveal the poet-speaker's capacity to detach himself from any more personal experience and to play with wit and learning on the central discrepancies in the human understanding of love.

A similar humorous detachment is evident in sonnet 20, in which experience is subordinated to poetic effect by delaying mention of a kiss until the literary context has been established. In comparing

himself to Aesculapius--"My lucke was like to his the other day"--the speaker makes an interesting choice, for Aesculapius is not a helpless lover, but an aid to Venus in her trouble and rewarded for his pains "although his beard were crisping hard." Thus he avoids the more obvious choices from which a submissive lover, locked into the immediacy of his experience, might select his analogies; the speaker is sufficiently liberated from this experience to see it from a variety of angles, even one which yokes him in his self-presentation to a figure of fun. Such poems replace conflict and ambivalent feelings on the part of the lover with a diversity of poses by one who is familiar with a number of love's literary guises, and substitute a poetic consciousness shaped by the literary context for immersion in the actual experience of love. In this respect, the speaker stands on an even ground with his ideal reader, sufficiently learned to recognize his allusions and to appreciate witty handling of the classical tales of love, rather than necessarily familiar with the experience of love itself.

The group of sonnets culminating in the seventeenth produces a similar effect by presenting a model of the speaker's poetic practise and so drawing the reader's attention away from the experience which is supposedly his inspiration. What is most significant about this group of poems is the susceptibility of the original incident--the speaker's overhearing the lady sing--to a variety of approaches which in turn demonstrate the speaker's skill in selection and diversified treatment. While consistently a means of praising the lady's voice, the incident is nevertheless handled in a number of different ways: to provoke description of the lover's traditionally paradoxical state, to suggest

parallels to mythological situations, or to demonstrate that the lady's virtues surpass those of her literary predecessors--"Yf... [poets heretofore] ...with me had hard an Angells voice,/ They would unsay themselves, and praise my choice." (12) To call the lady's voice divine or to elevate her above other mistresses is conventional, but Watson betrays a pervasive consciousness of his own status, rather than simply hers, by concluding with "my choice." The emphasis, that is, falls less on the lady's superior qualities, which other poets might be induced to praise, than on the speaker's superior powers of discrimination, which he does imagine their praising. Watson's use of the term "toy" to define his work, then, is quite justified by its playful quality: the poems do not pretend to be literal transcriptions of actual events but reveal instead, as the commentator's use of the terms "invention," "fiction," and "device" suggest they will, the capacity of wit and imagination, in cooperation with classical learning and an awareness of the literary context, to transform the materials of everyday life. As is true of The Passionate Centurie in general, the episode's significance to the lover eager for contact with the lady is subordinated to its fertility as a ground of invention for the poet. Sonnet 12, moreover, anticipates the alliance of these poetic concerns in sonnets 17 and 19 with a spirit of competition towards the feigning and inventiveness of other poets.

Thus the speaker in Watson's Passionate Centurie of Love is characterized by his self-consciousness, by a pervasive awareness of his audience, and by a corresponding sense of the literary tradition in which his expression takes its place. These features indicate the

sympathy of his attitude with that of the prose commentator. The poems themselves, insofar as they vary from the focus of the glosses, transform a somewhat pedantic statement of sources and techniques into a more fully-rounded vision of action unfolding in a world presented by means of learned analogy and literary allusion. As a result, in this sequence personality, like incident, becomes a device to be manipulated for the purposes of the implied authorial presence in the work; self-presentation is more often used to provoke a series of classical parallels, and thus to impress on the reader the poet-speaker's learning, than to evoke a sense of an individual's idiosyncracies and distinctive features:

> Alas deere Titus mine, my auncient frend,
> What makes thee muse at this my present plight,
> To see my woonted joys enjoy their end
> And how my Muse hath lost her old delight?
> This is the least effect of Cupids dart,
> To change the minde by wounding of the heart.
> Alcides fell in love as I have done,
> And layd aside both club and Lions skinne:
> Achilles too when he faire Bryses wunne,
> To fall from warres to wooing did beginne.
> Nay, if thou list, survey the heav'ns above,
> And see how Gods them selves are chang'd by Love.
> Jove steals from skies to lye by Laedaes side;
> Arcas descendes for fair Aglaurus sake,
> And Sol, so soone as Daphne is espied,
> To followe her his Chariot doth forsake:
> No mervaile then although I change my minde,
> Which am in love with one of heav'nly kinde. (71)

Similarly, a few sonnets later the lady is presented "under the name of a Spring," (74) a depiction which allows the speaker to compare her to a series of mythological streams and fountains and so to develop further her role as a source of inspiration to him. Even the speaker's treatment of problems with expression is handled by means of references to a larger artistic framework, in which his difficulties are compared

to those of Apelles, Praxiteles, and the poets Virgil, Homer, and Tully. The motif of inexpressibility is common to the sonnet sequence as a genre, but whereas it often provides in other works a striking instance of the speaker's restriction to the role of passive and awestruck lover, Watson uses the motif to widen the scope of his poet-speaker's expression, to emphasize his role as poet, and to display his learning.

The division of Watson's "century" into two groups--eighty sonnets on the speaker's sufferings in love and twenty, entitled "My Love is Past," on his farewell to the tyranny of love--itself suggests the supremacy of poet over lover. For, while some degree of narrative shaping of the raw material of experience is to be suggested in any sonnet sequence, The Passionate Centurie is unusual, both in its emphasis on the process by which the artistic consciousness arranges material into formal structures, and the extent to which its poet-speaker shares the consciousness of his creator. The use of an emblem poem to initiate the second series of sonnets, for instance, provides a decisive break with the poems preceding (a break stressed, as the completed work stands, by a full page of commentary on the poem's technical features and by isolation of the lines' opening and closing letters--Amore est insanire--alongside the poem itself).

The break is not entirely unexpected, for the sonnets preceding sound an increasingly valedictory note: "My joyes are donne, my comfort quite dismay'd," (69) "Cupid, where is thy golden quiver nowe?" (70) and

> I rue to thinke upon the dismall day
> When Cupid first proclaimed open warre
> Against my Hearte. (73)

The pervasiveness of images of blindness, physical decay, and paralysis

of the will, common enough to the genre but rarely the focus of the speaker's attention to this point, contributes to the new development in tone. Interestingly, there is no mention of any specific incident which might generate further awareness of the futility of his hopes, and thus the change in tone is clearly intended primarily to effect a transition to the second group of sonnets, rather than to sharpen the reader's sense of occasion and character, as might otherwise be the case. Moreover, while Watson's learned analogies have rarely been fresh or innovative, the impression of poetic exhaustion dominates the final decade prior to the break: analogies seem mechanical, the fertility of the original situation seems to have been fully exploited, and the excessive repetition--the "Not...Nor" patterns of sonnet 75, or sonnet 77's use of "Time" at the beginning of most lines--substitutes for rather than enhances any play of wit on the lover's situation. Finally, the conclusion of sonnet 78--"Reason with much adoe doth teach me this,/ Though yet I cannot mend what is a misse"--anticipates a time when the futility of the lover's hopes can be mended. This expectation, further evidence of the speaker's participation in the poet's more encompassing awareness, is realized in the more philosophical treatment of the theme of love in "My Love is Past," the second section of The Passionate Centurie.

In every respect, then, the transition to the second group of sonnets maintains the sequence's consistent focus on the poet's rather than the lover's consciousness, and it is not surprising to discover that this emphasis grows more pronounced in "My Love is Past," where the role of lover recedes into the narrative past. The strategy of contrast

thus established is exploited most obviously in repetition of the title's statement in sonnets 84 and 85, 93 and 94, but it operates as well to structure the development of the speaker's ultimum vale to love in sonnet 87. As the transitional sonnets offer no plausible account of the speaker's changing attitudes, so "My Love is Past" explains the completed process, for the most part, by proverbial lore--"Muse not therefore although I chaunge my vaine,/ He runnes too farre which never turnes againe" (87)--or by providential intervention: "the heav'ns have better lot assign'd," (88) or "the heav'ns my freedome nowe restore." (94) What is significant in these two decades of poems is not the gradual evolution of personal attitudes, but the sharp contrast of two states of mind, and the use made of that contrast: "those fond dayes are past, and halfe forgotte,/ I practise now the quite cleare contrary." (99)

When the speaker gives some further account of the change in his feelings, it is attributed to "Reason [which] taught my mind/ To slay the beast," (95) or to "heav'nly Grace [which] said unto me at last,/ Leave fond Delights, and say thy love is past." (97) The alliance of teaching and expression is a telling one, for it governs the speaker's overt intention in "My Love is Past"--the use of his experience as a lesson for those yet caught in love's toils. His role as teacher not only accords with the traditional view of art as instructive, but also fulfills earlier signals of a primary concern with audience response. Here, that audience shifts slightly:

> Rest then with mee from your blinde Cupids cark
> Each one of you, that serve and would be free. (81)
>
> Therefore all you, whom Love did ere abuse,
> Come clappe your handes with mee, to see him thrall.

> My selfe by him was lately led awrye,
> Though now at laste I force my love to dye. (83)

Thus the ideal reader of the final twenty sonnets is not simply a lover, as previously, but one who wishes to break free or who has recently escaped from the tyranny of love. In the last twenty as in the first eighty, the poet's adoption of a clearly defined role permits an equally clear delineation of the role into which he casts his audience, purportedly according to certain shared features of their experiences, but more significantly according to certain common assumptions about the uses of artistic expression: overtly, to teach, and tacitly, to present the speaker as one capable of assuming this instructive role, and so to contribute to self-promotion in the sequence.

Similarly, while such motifs as that of the blind Cupid persist in a more or less continuous development from the earlier portion of the work, a shift in focus can be discerned in the movement from a preoccupation with what "Poets faine" to an account of "How painters set to view/ The forme of Love." (86) The broad scope of the artistic perspective, in other words, remains uppermost, but a new emphasis on vision supports the increasingly demonstrative rather than reflective nature of Watson's intentions. Sonnet 84, for instance, includes the speaker's "vow to beare a watchful eye,/ Discov'ring such" as threaten the chaste ideal of Diana and her crew, and the "watchfull eye," which reappears in sonnet 87, is consistently contrasted to love's traditional effects on vision and understanding:

> Harke wanton youthes, whom Beawtie maketh blinde,
> And learne of me, what kinde a thing is Love. (97)

The role of teacher is thus explicitly adopted, and "My Love is Past"

includes more direct commentary on the relation of role and expression than has been apparent in the earlier poems, where the speaker's detachment from the experience of love--though equally clear to the reader--was necessarily evident in more indirect ways.

Sonnet 89, for example, develops according to a pattern common in The Passionate Centurie, with a list of love's traditional attributes, but its conclusion insists on the advisory function of the speaker's act in writing: "All this I write that others may beware,/ Though now my selfe twise free from all such care." Any personal interest is thus disavowed, while in the speaker's backward glance at his former dialogue with the lady, the hope of gain renders all expression in love suspect:

> I curse both leafe, and ynke, and every line
> My hand hath writ, in hope to move her minde:
> I curse her hollowe heart and flattring eyes,
> Whose slie deceyte did cause my mourning cryes:
> I curse the sugred speach and Syrens song,
> Wherewith so oft she hath bewitcht mine eare. (94)

As we have seen, claims in the second decade of sonnets that the lady's siren-like song has "bewitcht" the vulnerable lover have been undercut by emphasis on his capacity to play self-consciously with the subject matter of her song, displaying thereby the fertility of the poet-speaker's invention and the extent of his learning. Thus his distance from the actual experience of lover merely becomes more overt, as is appropriate to the instructive role assumed in "My Love is Past," than it was in earlier poems ostensibly spoken by the figure of the lover.

As well, "My Love is Past" includes a number of assertions on the speaker's reliability and suitability for the role adopted: the claim that neither Venus nor Love "Can drawe my wittes to woes at unawares"

(88) deepens into a statement dependent on traditional notions of the contemplative life--"I live secure, and quiet in estate,/ Fully resolv'd from loving any more." (96) The awareness developed by retirement and detachment is in turn emphasized by the proverbial mode of many of his observations:

> Herewith I learne by hurtes alreadie past,
> That each extreame will change it selfe at last. (88)

> ...I found the proverbe true,
> For ev'ry pleasure that in love is found,
> A thousand woes and more do yet abound. (97)

Most significant, perhaps, is the speaker's argument that his capacity for expression has been liberated, for while the lady's song was formerly a metaphor for underlying concern with the impact of art, "Sweet <u>liberty</u> nowe gives me leave to sing." (85) Immediately following, it "bids me tell," (86) and in sonnet 87, the speaker declares:

> My song shalbe; <u>Fortune</u> hath spitte her spight,
> And <u>Love</u> can hurt no more withall his might.
> Therefore all you, to whome my course is knowne,
> Thinke better comes, and pardon what is past:
> I find that all my wildest Oates are sowne,
> And Joy to see, what now I see at last;
> And since that <u>Love</u> was cause I trode a wry,
> I heere take off his Bels, and let him flie.

No longer love's fool, the speaker turns his experience into a warning "to you that lover be," (95) who are invited to cast aside their fetters, as he has done, "And sing with me, <u>That love is mixt with gall</u>." (91) The sequence's final sonnet unites the recurrent urge to sing with the central contrast of "My Love is Past": "let those lament that lust,/ Ile sing a carroll song for oblequey." (100)

While the speaker's situation is "now the quite cleare contrary" of

the initial, supposed subjection to love, then, the final twenty sonnets of the sequence do not so much alter his stance as emphasize its self-conscious, public nature and merge the wit and skepticism of the first 80 sonnets with a moralizing tendency in the final 20. To reinforce the slight shift in focus, analogies to his situation are now drawn as often from the more homely sphere of pilgrims, soldiers, and sailors as from the realm of classical myth or literary predecessors; nowhere is the cautionary intent of "My Love is Past" better captured than in the admonition that "The childe, whose finger once hath felt the fire,/ To play therewith will have but smale desire." (88) Yet even allusions to classical figures are colored by the speaker's self-satisfaction in having survived the embattled experience and reached the goal of peace and security (aspects of the narrative past embodied in the human figures he here presents as analogues). Vowing to be the "mortall foe" of Venus and Cupid, he declares his determination to battle even "If Juppiter him selfe come loytring by," (84) and the disdainful tone of the participle is realized again in references to "poore Venus" and "her little boy." (96)

The mastery of conventional materials which the speaker has demonstrated throughout The Passionate Centurie of Love is thus an element as well in "My Love is Past," and it produces effects similar to those already noted in the earlier section of poems: it emphasizes the poet-speaker's detachment from the experience of which he writes (although in the later section that detachment is supported by a new narrative role); explicitly encourages the reader to recognize the speaker as poet and teacher, not as lover; and contributes to the

pedantic quality which dominates the sequence. This pedantic quality is the consequence of the speaker's fixed distance from the experience of love and the figure of the lady, his vision of love as a matter of learning and of the lady as an abstract principle, and his use of the conventional subject matter for purposes of self-aggrandizement. It is primarily responsible for the weakness of The Passionate Centurie of Love. The proximity of poet and speaker, consistent throughout the sequence, allows the reader to measure directly the intentions which the work is designed to fulfill, while references within the sonnets cast the reader into a receptive role predicated on his sharing the values thus articulated by the poet-speaker. Yet these values, an emphasis on technical virtuosity and learning intended to link poet-speaker and reader in a limited and privileged circle, are ultimately too narrow to provoke the modern reader's interest in the figure of the poet-speaker or to compensate for the absence in The Passionate Centurie of any interest derived from presentation of the experience of love.

In Constable's Diana, as in Watson's work, the larger social and literary framework of the sequence is reflected faithfully in the consciousness of the speaker, whose narrative role as lover within the sequence is thus subordinated to his awareness of himself as poet. In this sequence, moreover, concern with political issues is allied with an evocation of the contemporary circumstances and of the poet's immersion in a courtly environment which interweaves social, political, and literary interest in a mesh of patronage and ambition. Most of Diana's sonnets, their elaborate titles suggest, are generated by particular occasions either in the course of the supposed love affair or in the

more general political and social context in which the poet writes. The use of such titles immediately raises the artistic question of the relation between experience and literary works even as, in the various sources they identify, they indicate a merging of the personal with the professional. The careful arrangement of the collection, on which the poet comments in "The order of the booke" affixed to the Harleian manuscript, recalls Watson's division of The Passionate Centurie; its effect too is to draw the reader's attention to professional concern with the effect of the finished product, and to shape the reader's response to the speaker as a figure closely identified with his creator. Yet while this identification, again consistent throughout the sequence, limits the scope of expression in Diana, the greater range of the poet-speaker's concerns than the pedantry of Watson's speaker provides more varied sources of interest in the sequence and conveys a more vivid sense of the poet-speaker's personality.

The rhetorical stance assumed in Diana merits closer attention, in short, than it has sometimes been granted. It is towards the predominance of the poet's presence that Joan Grundy, for example, directs her criticism of Constable, in an attempt to define more clearly the distinction between Diana and the work of more accomplished poets:

> That the sonnet-writer should wear a mask--the mask of the sonnet-lover--is indeed part of the convention, but a good poet, a Drayton or a Daniel, makes us realize, by his individual handling of the common material, that there is a face behind it. It is Constable's great weakness in his secular poems that he does not do this....He lacks personality ...[not] as a man, but as an artist. There is a detachment so complete as to appear, not artistic impersonality, but artistic indifference. Execution is all; the thing to be executed--the artistic act itself--nothing. (70-71)

Grundy's evaluation accurately pinpoints certain aspects of our response to the sequence: its careful composition, of which the reader is reminded by headings affixed to each of the sections, emphasizes Constable's skill at arranging individual poems in a clear and logical design, while many of these sonnets impress the reader by the smooth facility of their execution.

One instance of this facility is the consistency of the poems in developing the metaphor or analogy with which they begin:

> Delight in youre bright eyes my death did breede
> As light and glittering weapons babes allure
> To play with fire and sworde and so procure
> Them to be burnt and hurt ere they take hede
>
> Thy beautie so hath made me burne and bleed
> Yet shall my ashes and my bloud assure
> Thy beauties fame for ever to endure
> For thy fames life from my death doth proceed
>
> Because my heart to ashes burned giveth
> Life to thy fame thow right a Phoenix art
> And like a Pellican thy beautie liveth
> By sucking bloud oute of my breast and heart
> Loe why with wonder we may thee compare
> Unto the Pellican and Phoenix rare.

The patterned development of this sonnet makes the appearance of its paired terms predictable, although they originate in a rather striking comparison to the actions of heedless children (a comparison which this poem shares with the instructive mode of The Passionate Centurie 88). The emblems of the Phoenix and Pelican in the final lines, moreover, merely confirm the traditional implications of the "death-dealing delight" with which the sonnet opens. Like many of Diana's sonnets, "Delight in youre bright eyes" seems to move rather easily to a predetermined conclusion, its couplet merely repeating the resolution already achieved in the third quatrain; it offers little to admire

except the contrivance in its execution, and the poem's facility is particularly pronounced in its denial of the emotional state indicated by the title: "Of the suddeyne surprizing of his hearte, and how unawares he was caught." The occasion which provoked his falling in love has lost, in the poet-speaker's retrospective vision, any capacity to surprise, and his artistic goal--the welding of originally discordant elements into an intellectually satisfying pattern--destroys the potential for an ironic tension within the verse. The literary context especially of the final emblems subordinates whatever personal element or immediacy might remain. As in The Passionate Centurie, neither the idiosyncratic features of a particular experience nor the tracing of a personal discovery is the primary interest of the poet-speaker. Instead, the poems work towards rhetorically effective demonstration of truisms about the nature of love, and they depend (though less pedantically than did Watson's) on the reader's familiarity with love as it is traditionally presented.

Grundy's account of this "defect" is, however, somewhat skewed, for it is not the absence of a face behind the mask which weakens Diana, but the nakedness of the face which never bothers to assume a mask, to imply a degree of detachment between poet and speaker. To some extent this is the result of Constable's characteristic treatment of ideas in the sequence's love poems, where his development of logical witticisms suggests that the "occasion" of the verse, so carefully identified in many of the titles, is little more than a pretext for the display of the poet's ability. This is most apparent in those sonnets, like "It may be Love doth not my death pretend," in which the logic becomes somewhat

tortuous: under the strain of fitting a fairly intricate intellectual reversal into the sonnet's structural limitations, the form is subjected to some experimentation, as Constable moves the couplet up to follow the second quatrain and thus focuses attention on the poet's difficult craft. Elsewhere, his ingenuity is to be admired, as in his use of the legend of St. Francis to justify kissing her glove in her absence ("To his Ladies hand upon occasion of her glove which in her absence he kissed"), or in his adaptation of the methods of literary exegesis to the ends of courtly compliment ("To his Mistrisse upon occasion of a Petrarch he gave her, shewing her the reason why the Italian commentators dissent so much in the exposition thereof"). Tension arises in Diana, then, not from the shifting relation of poet and speaker, or from the adjustment of a vividly rendered emotion (real or feigned) to the demands of formal expression, but from the difficulties of executing an artistic act designed to be admired for its ingenuity and complexity. The detachment of which Grundy speaks is more properly defined as the distinction between experience and speaker, the result of artistic preoccupation rather than artistic indifference.

Only the final subsection of the sequence, "The last 7 of the end and death of love," appears to move toward any kind of alternative vision in its revelation of what now appears to the speaker as his folly. Even here, however, the neatness of the resolution is early anticipated in the group's first sonnet, and its terms provide a tidy rationalization capable of coping with any form the expression of despair may take:

> So when this thought my sorrowes shall augment
> That myne own follie did procure my payne

> Then shall I say to give myself content
> Obedience only made me love in vayne
> It was your wille and not my wante of wit
> I have the payne, beare you the blame of it.

The speaker's situation is precisely the opposite of that which will be developed in the sonnet sequences of poets like Smith or Lodge, whose speakers are made obedient to their own willfullness and blinded to their folly. Here we have instead the playful, witty self-consciousness that Constable's speaker displays. For him, as for the speaker in Watson's Passionate Centurie of Love, the potential for any tension is removed not by his complete subservience to the situation, but by his intellectual mastery of it, and he displays a full consciousness of his relation to the lady:

> Alas (most sweet) what need is of a nette
> To catch a byrd which is allreadie tame
> Sith with your hande alone yow may it gette
> For it desires to fly unto the same
> What needs such arte my thought then to intrap
> When of them selves they flye into youre lap.
> ("Of his ladies vayle wherewith she covered her.")

Such wit is rarely asserted so directly in Diana, but subtler evidence of it throughout the sequence reminds the reader repeatedly of the full awareness his speaker shares with his creator, the poet.

Most significant to our response to Diana is the fact that the love sonnets do not stand alone, but are juxtaposed with groups of sonnets in praise of prominent contemporaries. Only the first section of the sequence, which treats the "variable affections of love", deals exclusively with the speaker's love for the mistress; complaints of his misfortunes in love and sonnets recounting "the end and death of his love," in the "tragicall" third section, frame a central group of seven

"funerall sonnets on the death of particulars," while the second section is devoted entirely to the praise of such particulars. There is, then, a thematic balance to the structure of the work, as love of an individual woman and praise of her virtues is matched with a series of courtly compliments, in sections 1 and 2, and as the attempt to deal with sorrow and loss in section 3 is given both a personal and a wider social dimension. Ultimately, the effect of those sonnets which treat the amatory material is subordinated to the impression of careful artistic arrangement thus created, fostering a sense of the speaker as poet rather than lover.

Internal parallels stress the integration of personal with social or political realms, most obviously in the images of conquest and "Soveraigntee" used equally to praise the adored mistress or the secular ruler. The notions are of obvious relevance to the relations of speaker and lady, and indeed martial imagery is a conventional means of praise in the sonnet, but Constable's development of the motif can be, as in "Of the prowesse of his Ladie," both witty and surprising:

> Sweet Soveraigne sith so many mynds remayne
> Obedient subjects at thy beauties call
> So many thoughts bound in thy hayre as thrall
> So many hearts dye with one lookes disdayne
>
> Goe seeke that glorie which doth thee pertayne
> That the fift monarchie may thee befall
> Thow hast such meanes to conquer men withall
> As all the world must yeeld or else be slayne
>
> To fight thou needest no weapons but thyne eyes
> Thy hayre hath gold enough to pay thy men
> And for theyre food thy beautie will suffice
> For men and armoure (Ladie) care have none
> For one will soonest yeeld unto thee then
> When he shall meet thee naked and alone.

The extravagance of the speaker's claims is not in itself unusual, but

the effect of these claims, to place the lady in a social ambiance in which "so many mynds remayne/ Obedient subjects" to her, stands in marked contrast to the strain between public and private spheres more usual in love poetry and reflective of the lover's desire for sole possession. The universal admiration which might inspire an element of competition, in other words, is here entirely coherent with the speaker's praise of the lady, and in its public mode of expression may imply that credit should derive to the admiring poet-speaker for his taste and discernment. At the same time, the bawdy wit of the couplet distinguishes his acceptance of public standards of beauty from servility and signals the independence of his treatment. His rhetorical stance, then, parallels that of Watson's speaker in its focus on the poet's capacity to celebrate the lady's superiority, rather than on her virtue itself, and its establishment of the poet-speaker's independence from more servile models of the lover's behaviour.

From another angle, the couplet's surprising turnabout emphasizes the assertion of the lady's "Soveraigntee" despite the absence of its worldly symbols. It establishes, that is, her appropriateness as person to receive poetic praise in a sequence so fully conscious of public status. In an interesting parallel, although the second section opens with a poem celebrating "How from thy wisdome did those conquests spring," the King who is its subject is praised not only, or even primarily, for the worldly glory he embodies as secular ruler, but also for "his poems dedicated wholie to heavenlie matter," (5) and "upon occasion of a sonet the K: wrote in complaint of a contrarie winde which hindred the arrivall of the Queene out of Denmark." (6) The effect of

both sonnets, like that of the gloss to Watson's sonnet 67, is to suggest a sophisticated social context in which writing on various subjects complements public activity to indicate a man's varied capacities, and in which poetic works establish a kind of dialogue between the authors for the purposes of tribute or competition. One feature which distinguishes Constable's from Watson's work, however, is the absence of an aggressively self-aggrandizing impulse, so that the similarity of the king's role as poet and lover to that of the speaker, stressed in sonnet 6 of this group, is part of a larger strategy to coordinate the various realms with which the poet-speaker is dealing rather than an element in self-promotion. Even the first sonnet of this group, for instance, redirects attention from the king's political acumen to his personal virtues; although his foes think that "The Ilands seate did thee most succoure bring," in fact, the speaker claims, they are:

> Fooles which knowe not the power of thyne eye
>
> Thyne eye hath made a thousand eyes to weepe
> And every eye a thousand seas hath made
> And every sea shall thyne Ile in safetie keepe.

Praise of the king thus turns from the fact of his political power and the integrity of his realm to his impact as a person, described in terms conventionally used for praise of the sonnet lady. The development mirrors celebration of the "prowesse" of his "Sweet Soveraigne," and the graceful adjustment of personal, social, and political values is one of Diana's primary sources of interest.

The only sonnet to integrate the personal with the social on a narrative level also uses martial imagery to do so. The poet-speaker

here appeals to the Countess of Shrewsbury, "chieftayne.../ Of Venus host" and mistress of the household in which "Diana" lives, to intervene on his behalf:

> A warrioure of youre campe by force of eyes
> Mee pris'ner tooke, and will with rigor deale
> Except yow pity in youre hearte will place
> At whose white hands I only seek for grace.
> ("To the Countess of Shrewsbury upon occasion of his deare Mistresse who liv'd under her gover[n]ment.")

In this sonnet, just past the mid-point of the sequence, the respective situations of the poet-speaker and his various audiences coalesce. Celebration of the lady has to some extent placed her on a level similar to that of the prominent public figures he also praises, just as treatment of the king has emphasized his possession of that poetic power to which the speaker also aspires. Yet the relation of the private and public sphere is handled on the principle of subordination as well as on that of coordination. In this poem, the lady is firmly located within a hierarchical society, her place subordinated to the prominence of her mistress, to whom the speaker--mindful here of social decorum--properly appeals. The pattern of relations is thus appropriate to the subordination of the sequence's amatory material to its speaker's consciousness of his public context.

That the speaker is aware of the precariousness of the balance he is attempting seems evident in the disclaimer of the fourth sonnet to the king, which denies that he has been motivated by worldly ambition--"suppose not for all this/ That I thy place and not thy guifts adore"--and asserts that "Thy scepter no thy pen I honoure more/ More deare to men than crowne thy garland is." Both the ambiguity of "thy

guifts" and the correction of "Thy scepter no thy pen," however, suggest a speaker less naively eager to establish his worthy intentions than wittily aware of all the implications of his position, and anxious to play on them all. The king's "guiftes" are the rewards of patronage as well as his talent at versifying, while the correction similarly evokes the speaker's awareness of the king's worldly power as well as his aesthetic skill. The second group of complimentary sonnets, moreover, begins with an address to the Princess of Orange, whose "sacred head.../ Is only fitte a diademe to weare," whose hands are intended "a scepter for to beare," whose lips are "by nature framed/ Ears to commaund," and whose "eye is only fitte/ With his wise lookes kingdomes to oversee"; while the heraldry of Lady Rich, in sonnet 7 of this group, is "A lordlye coat, but worthye of a king." The balance of such praise is repeatedly tipped, then, despite the speaker's disclaimers, in favour of the worldly and powerful.

Thus, despite Grundy's assertion that the speaker of Diana lacks personality as an artist, in fact the sonnets repeatedly reflect the artist's preoccupations in overt and subtle ways, communicating a vivid sense of a personality shaped by the demands and tensions of the poet's role. It is in part this vividness, conveying adjustment of personal feelings (of worldly ambition more than of aspiration in love) to social circumstances, which distinguishes Diana from Watson's Passionate Centurie of Love, although the speakers of both sequences are primarily poets rather than lovers. It may be that the social and political life reflected in Constable's work is inherently more attractive to the reader than the literary past to which Watson can allude but which he

fails to bring to life in his Centurie of poems; it is certain that a greater skill than Watson's is needed to invest this larger context with a sense of immediacy or to provoke the interest of the reader. In Constable's Diana, on the other hand, while detachment from the experience of love still marks the speaking voice, another centre of interest--equally revelatory of the speaker's character--at least partially replaces the traditional focus of the sonnet sequence.

In particular, the poet-speaker's awareness of the competitive environment in which he must struggle for patronage and a secure position is evident not only in the inclusion of prominent persons as objects of the praise more traditionally reserved, in a sonnet sequence, for the mistress, but as well in the pervasiveness of a series of motifs related to the notion of competition. A number of sonnets deal with the good repute which the speaker's friends fear he is losing, thus provoking a defense of his situation conventional to the genre, but two raise more complex issues of reputation and envious report: "Of the envie others beare to his Ladie for the former perfections" and "Of the slander envye gives him for so highlye praysing his Mistresse." To begin with, good reputation may have a beneficial impact, as is evident in the poem addressed to "the K: of Scots whome as yet he had not seene," but whose reputation as a modern David inspires the poet-speaker, and the sonnet addressed to the Countess of Pembroke, whom he similarly knows as yet only "by reporte":

> Thow are his sister whom I honoured so.
>
> Yet million tongues reporte doth further showe
> Of thy perfections, both such worth and store
> As wante of seeing thee paynes me sore
> As sight of others hath procur'd my woe.

But a world in which reputation is so powerful a notion is also a world stirred by suspicions and intrigue, in which "Falselye doth envie of youre prayses blame/ My tongue my pen my heart of flattery" and slander calls "my tongue the partiall trump of fame." Martial imagery of this kind, in love poetry, usually means that love is "a battle of the sexes," but Diana's speaker seems less troubled by the lady's response than do the lovers of most other sequences; here, the prevalence of martial imagery conveys instead a sense that one must always be on guard against the insidious attack of ill report, ready to defend one's own motives and the reputations of those one admires.

Four sonnets in which this quality is most startling illustrate how the poet-speaker's awareness of his place in the social context regularly overwhelms more private concerns. In the first, "A calculation of the nativitye of the Ladye Riches daughter borne upon friday in the yeare 1588, comonly call'd the yeare of wonder," the military conceit and the notion of conquest it implies--"with one beautyes ray/ So many hostes of hearts thy face shall slay"--is developed in the course of the poem to include the relationship of mother and daughter, which is thus defined as a competitive one:

> But even Alexander, when he knew
> His fathers conquests, wept, least he should leave
> No kingdome unto him for to subdue,
> Thy mother so shall thee of prayse bereave.
> So many hearts she hath alreadie slayne,
> As few behind to conquer, do remayne.

The compliment is a witty one, and, even as tribute is paid to the mother's beauty, the reference to Alexander more subtly suggests the praise which may be due the daughter in years to come. The effect of the poem, however, is to suggest that the speaker's consciousness of a

competitive environment has left him unable to gauge the emotional realities of the personal relations his sonnet treats. When circumstances force him to revise the girl's horoscope ("Of the death of my Ladie Riches daughter shewing the reason of her untimelye death hindred her effecting those things which by the former calculation of her nativitye he foretold"), the alteration is effected in terms of the same larger context in which the original forecasting occurred. First, the speaker's prophecy, accomplished "by skill of stars" and "by reasons laws," has come into conflict with nature and is ultimately upset "by good ill hap"; secondly, the eye of death, aiming at the "mother Phoenix," is so dazzled by the light of her beauty that his arrows slay instead "the yonge one which stood in the way." Hence the mother's beauty, which had begun by threatening to bereave the daughter of praise, is now presented as responsible for the actual bereavement of the daughter's death. The imbalance of the couplet, moreover, reflects the first quatrain's greater concern to justify the speaker's calculations having gone awry than to account for the event in compassionate terms: "Thus did the mother scape and so did I/ By good ill hap fayle of my prophecie."

A similar subordination of personal concerns to poetic effect, again coloured by the poet-speaker's consciousness of a competitive environment, occurs in two funeral sonnets. Both use the revenge motif, in terms evocative of its association with the lover's response to resistance or betrayal, to treat more worldly matters of death in battle and political assassination:

> Sweetest of Ladies if thy pleasure be
> To murther hearts, stay not in England still,

> Revenge on Spaine thy husbandes death, and kill
> His foes, not them that love both him and thee.
> ("To the Countess of Essex upon occasion of the death of her first husband Sir Philip Sidney")

> ...thy fire water makes, for thyne eyes fire hath shed
> Teares from a thousand hearts, melted with loves desire:
> And griefe to see such eyes bathed in teares of woes,
> A fire of revenge inflames against thy foes.
> ("To the Princesse of Orange upon occasion of the murther of her father and husband")

One may admire here an extravagant violence of a kind that anticipates Donne, and the competitive context is perhaps less inappropriate than in the nativity poem, but grief arising from these occasions is, no less than the love between mother and child, trivialized by such treatment. The ingenuity of the speaker's adaptation of Petrarchan imagery (the "murther" of adoring hearts, the fire and water of desire and tears) is undercut by his failure to recognize the significant emotional discrepancies between the situation to which the revenge motif is traditionally applied, in love poetry, and the occasions for which he is here writing.

Conscious at all times of his role as poet and of the effect of his verse on the larger audience to which it is addressed, Diana's speaker is thus restricted in his imaginative treatment of others to their social and political significance; he cannot see beyond their public existence to the more personal dimensions of their lives. If the harmonious adjustment of the different realms with which Diana deals provokes much of the sequence's interest, then, so those points at which such an adjustment fails, as in the sonnets just treated, measure its weakness. The limited consistency of the poet-speaker's stance, in other words, imposes certain restrictions on the scope of his

expression, as has been the case in Watson's Passionate Centurie of Love. Within these restrictions, Diana is the more appealing work, because of the sense it conveys of the poet-speaker's response to a public context more vivid than that which The Passionate Centurie implies. The intellectual ingenuity and technical virtuosity of the poet-speaker are emphasized in both sequences; together with the effective coordination of personal and social realms which Constable produces in the course of Diana, the sequences provide insight into what two sonneteers understand as the central values of their public context, and demonstrate the pressures exerted by that context on the process of poetic creation. Although the consistency of the poet-speaker's stance, his pervasive consciousness of the work's larger audience, and his distance from the experience of love which is his ostensible subject limit the achievement of both sonneteers, the sense evoked in their sequences, of a courtly environment in which poetry-writing is a mode of aspiring self-presentation, is valuable in establishing a context to which Sidney and Spenser will as well refer in their sequences. Finally, the rhetorical stance of the poet-speaker defines one of the two poles of expression between which the speakers of Astrophil and Stella and the Amoretti move, and is thus valuable as an analytical tool for approaching the major sequences.

CHAPTER 2

The impression created by the speaker in William Smith's Chloris and Thomas Lodge's Phillis is in direct contrast to that produced by the speakers of Diana and The Passionate Centurie of Love. Most significantly, the rhetorical strategies of each set of speakers establish different relations to the sequences' subject matter, audiences, and creators. In each of the latter two sequences, as we have seen, a number of factors contribute to make the figure of the speaker indistinguishable from the implied presence within the work of its creator, the historical poet. The speaker's distance from the ostenstible subject--the lady and the experience of love itself--is evident in several ways. Formal arrangement of individual sonnets, for instance, implies a primary concern with aesthetic effect rather than with emotional impact. In turn, groups of poems emphasize the speaker's capacity to play witty variations on a single theme or to discover social, political, or classical parallels to ostensibly personal occasions. Both features reveal a broader perspective than is plausible in the figure of the lover he claims to be. Instead of being immersed in the uncertainties and frustrations of love, as certain sonnets protest, the speaker manipulates the work's fictional circumstances to enhance his self-presentation. Diverting attention from subject matter to the display of such qualities as learning, technical virtuosity, or courtly respect, the speaker stands in close proximity to the figure of the poet, and his rhetorical strategies are determined by the desire to persuade the work's larger audience, rather than the lady, of his worth.

In Chloris and Phillis, on the other hand, the speakers stand at a consistent distance from their creators, the historical poets. The assignment of a name to each may signal the poet's intention to create a fictional character, rather than to exploit the opportunity for something closer to self-presentation; the examples of Sidney's Astrophel and Spenser's unnamed speaker, in the Amoretti, however, will demonstrate that naming is not necessarily indicative of mode of expression. The impression in these sequences of the speaker's fictional autonomy, moreover, derives from more significant elements of each work. In the first place, both are dependent on time as an implied structural principle and as a thematic concern. The sense of a chronological progression which results, in contrast to the retrospective, formal arrangement of sonnets in Diana and The Passionate Centurie, suggests the speaker's immersion in his immediate experience, in the fictional circumstances over which the poet, and not the lover, has control. Secondly, the speaker's attention is more narrowly focused on the lady, a feature which helps to make him more plausible in the character of the lover, but which may also operate as the source of irony within the sequence. While filtering the experience of love through the eyes and single voice of the lover may create some degree of sympathetic identification, in other words, the reader is also invited to share the poet's more encompassing perspective on the lover and his experience.

The consistent detachment of speaker from poet does not mean that the fictional character of the lover cannot share some of his creator's qualities or is incapable of any growth within the framework of the

sequence. In Phillis, for instance, Damon's familiarity with mythological tales implies some indebtedness to Lodge's own classical learning, although the lover's references to mythological figures occasionally reinforce the sense of a gap between his awareness and that of the historical poet. Similarly, Damon develops over the course of the sequence a more perceptive understanding of his situation, but that development is generated entirely within Phillis, by the poet's introduction of a character whose circumstances and attitudes differ sharply from those of Damon, and by his manipulation of the implied "action" at the end of the work to provoke a sudden consciousness of self-deception. For the reader, on the other hand, the implications of certain mythological references have anticipated the shape that Phillis will eventually assume, while the limitations of Damon's perspective have been illuminated by his engagement in debate with Demades.

The nature of the speaker in Chloris and Phillis limits his rhetorical strategies to those which may work to persuade the lady of his worth. The conventions of the genre, and in particular the lady's continued resistance to the lover's suit, mean that the futility of lament or praise, the two most common types of expression in the sonnets, is itself a frequent subject of reflection. Both sequences thus explore the conventions of love and comment, both tacitly and explicitly, on the constraints which his dependence on the lady imposes on the lover. Significantly, while opening and concluding poems articulate the poet's hopes for an appreciative audience for his collected poems, treatment of expression within the body of each sequence is more carefully bounded by the lover's humble stance in

relation to the lady, and attitudes towards aspiration--whether for public fame or for the lady's love--become a central means of characterizing the lover, of shaping the reader's response to him, and of exploring the effects of love. In both sequences, this central thematic concern is developed as well by the adoption of certain features of the pastoral mode, so that the shepherd's humble acceptance of his place in the scheme of things is added to the lover's humility towards the lady, as conditions which work to restrain the scope of his expression.

Their differing responses to the conditions imposed by the pastoral conventions and the conventions of love is one means of distinguishing between Smith's Corin and Lodge's Damon. Altogether more self-assertive a character, the latter works to substitute subservience to the lady, which yet frees him to celebrate the ennobling powers of love, for the reasonable acceptance of his place in the social hierarchy which the older shepherd, Demades, recommends. Yet each character is developed in terms of certain principles inherent in the pastoral genre; the natural environment referred to and addressed in a number of sonnets, for instance, serves to locate the lover in a specific setting, emphasizing the extent to which the poet has imagined him as operating in a particular time and place. Accordingly, features which restrict the scope of the speaker's expression in Chloris and Phillis nevertheless provide their creators with an additional resource for characterization, and it is in part on the interest which such a personality as Corin's or Damon's can provoke in the reader that the sequence's success depends. At the same time, the reader's consciousness of these restrictions

offers him the intellectual pleasure of a more encompassing perspective on the lover's experience than the lover himself possesses.

The subtitle of William Smith's Chloris, (or, The Complaint of the Passionate Despised Shepherd), like its dedicatory sonnets "To the most excellent and learned shepherd Colin Clout" and "To all shepherds in general," identifies the pastoral world within which its action will unfold and which fixes the role of the lover within certain narrow boundaries. The Induction to Thomas Lodge's Phillis similarly invokes the aid of "learned Colin," and both sets of introductory verses use the same natural images to define the protective patronage they seek:

> Though they but newly from the shell are crept,
> ...
> ...underneath the shadow of thy wings
> Give warmth to these young-hatched orphan things.
> (Chloris)

> Shroud with your mighty wings that mount so well,
> These little loves, new crept from out the shell.
> (Phillis)

The use of contrasts in size and maturity and the adoption of a humble posture within a vertical hierarchy are stylistic and rhetorical features which correspond to the assignment of pastoral names to each sequence's central characters: Corin and Chloris; Damon, Demades, and Phillis. Ferry comments on the use of such names that a gesture towards disguise of the author's identify "was expected at least in pastorals, according to the model established in Virgil's eclogues and imitated by Sannazaro and Montemayor" (17). Neither Smith nor Lodge, however, seems to be making a conventional gesture in the direction of coy anonymity; instead, the use of a pastoral name for each first-person speaker serves to establish distance between the poet and his creation and to evoke

certain expectations about the persona's character. Those expectations, moreover, are fulfilled within the course of the sequences, since the pastoral convention drawn upon in Chloris and Phillis functions not as a collection of ornamental devices to be selected and tacked on to the fictional situation, but as a mode of perception and expression, evoking certain traditional attitudes and controlling more fundamental aspects of the works.

The interconnection of the pastoral convention and the conventions of love poetry is not an unusual one. In his analysis of the Elizabethan pastoral, Smith stresses its association with the theme of the Golden Age and with the innocent love of rustic characters; "The element of love in pastoral," he argues, "works in two directions--towards lyric simplicity ... and toward plot complication." (17) Shore also identifies this element as the essential precondition of the pastoral, in terms suitable to the world of the Petrarchan lover:

> Without love the pastoral Arcadia, the world of the shepherd, could hardly exist ... Arcadia is ... defined by the delights of the shepherd who inhabits it: partly his delight in song and nature, but chiefly his delight in love. (177)

According to both, love has an impact on the pastoral lover very similar to its effect on the Petrarchan lover, generating the mingled strains of delight, suffering, and assertions of fidelity characteristic of expression in both genres. In both, too, such expression is designed to impress the lady and to persuade her to accept the suitor: "The shepherd as well as the courtier had to prove his worth, if not by deeds than at least by suffering." (Shore 178-79).

Like the conventions of the sonnet sequence, moreover, those of the

pastoral stand in complex relation to the Elizabethan social context, especially concerning the issues of humility and aspiration. These issues, and the implied question of personal worth, are significant to our understanding of the pastoral convention's effect on the speaker's stance in Chloris and Phillis. Studies of the Petrarchan convention note its opposition, from the beginning, to the feudal hierarchy's rigid codification of personal and social relations. According to Valency, for instance, there emerged from the divergent interests of grand and petty nobility a renewed debate (the nature of nobility had been considered earlier by so eminent an authority as Boethius) between the aristocracy of birth and the aristocracy of merit, in which the troubadours participated by insisting

> on the absolute superiority over all others of those favored few upon whom nature had bestowed the gentle heart...In this view of the matter, nobility was transformed into a dynamic conception of moral and aesthetic nature, totally disassociated from the questions of property and power. It ceased to the thought of as an inherited possession; it became an aptitude and a process, the ultimate aim of which was self-perfection through the love of beauty. (48)

Completely at variance with the external realities of a paternalistic culture, Valency argues, the ethos of the troubadours nevertheless interpreted and expressed a dominant fantasy of that culture, and founded an entire system on the social mobility of the individual, on faith in the ennobling power of love and on the capacity of man, inspired by love, to will his own self-improvement. Waswo similarly highlights the dynamic concept of character embodied in the notion of fin amour: "the courtliest man can becomes a churl,/ And any churl a courtly man."

Smith argues that "the central meaning of the pastoral," on the other hand, "is the rejection of the aspiring mind" (10) and an affirmation instead of "a positive ideal ... of the good life, of the state and mental self-sufficiency which had been known in classical antiquity as otium." (2) The value of aspiration, that is, stands in direct opposition to the genre's celebration of the "golden mean" of contentment with one's proper estate; ambition makes one prey to the blows of Fortune, and those who aspire to disrupt the decorous scheme of human relations threaten the very fabric of the pastoral's hierarchical world.[1] In a discussion of Peele's Arraygnement of Paris, however, Montrose claims that Smith's definition of a central theme fails to exhaust the genre's possibilities, which can best be understood by examining the complex relation of its conventions to the Elizabethan social context. Like a number of recent critics who have approached the sonnet sequence and its speaker from a similar perspective, Montrose concludes of the pastoral speaker's apparently humble stance that "the politic shepherd may be speaking one thing and thinking another," so that in the pastoral as in love poetry, "The ubiquitous persona of the plaintive and suppliant lover may project the aspiring courtier-poet's response to the impediments he faces." (1980; 439).

This difference of opinion establishes a range of possibility within which actual works may operate, much as this thesis argues the rhetorical stances of lover and poet-speaker function as alternative poles of expression for the sonneteer. In fact, Montrose acknowledges this range by defining the pastoral as "a complex of formal features" whose "flexibility and allusiveness ... suit it to a variety of generic

combinations and rhetorical strategies." (437) The interconnection of the two genres in Chloris and Phillis, nevertheless, results in an emphasis on the fixed and humble status of the shepherd-lover, although this emphasis is produced by different means. Smith's Corin expresses his humility directly, and relies on the passage of time to effect whatever improvement to his situation is possible; these characteristics establish a closer alliance to the rustic pastoral figure than to the courtly lover. Lodge's Damon, on the other hand, displays a more turbulent desire and a tendency to self-dramatization; together with his learned allusions, these features imply his association with a more sophisticated figure who is at once shepherd and courtly lover, and who is like the simpler rustic indebted to pastoral tradition. Yet several devices shape the reader's response to Damon as a figure deluded by his aspirations, and invite the reader to recognize in his situation those implications reluctantly acknowledged by the protagonist of Lodge's pastoral romance, Rosalynde:

> I have let mine eye soare with the Eagle against so bright a Sunne, that I am quite blinde ... I have reacht at a star, my desires have mounted above my degree, and my thoughts above my fortune. (28)

By introducing another fictional character--the older shepherd, Demades, whose comments provoke debate over the issue of ambition and love--Lodge suggests the limitations of his speaker's perspective; by concluding the sequence with the discovery not that Phillis is "above Damon's degree" but that she is false and "unstable," Lodge emphasizes the extent to which he has been blinded by desire. Like Corin, Damon is incapable of breaking free of the constraints of his fictional role, and the quality of his expression remains limited by his distance, in the role of lover,

from the figure of his creator.

Further insight into this relation can be gained from the particular context which the sequences' opening sonnets establish: both Smith and Lodge allude, not merely to the pastoral world in general, but specifically to the central figure of Spenser's Shepheardes Calendar, Colin Clout. There are social and moral dimensions to the Calendar's concern with decorum, but the situation of Colin is consistently presented as an aesthetic matter as well. While the rhetorical efficacy of the pastoral mode is never in doubt--"Was never pype of reede did better sounde," (December, 1. 142) proclaims Colin of his instrument--The Shepheardes Calendar tests the potential and limitations of pastoral expression by working to define the boundaries within which it is possible and potent. The January eclogue, for instance, identifies Colin's love for Rosalind with movement out of the self-enclosed pastoral world, prompted by curiosity to see a neighbouring town; Rosalind's scorn for Colin's music, and for "shepherds' devices" in general, implies in turn the discovery of limits to pastoral expression as a model of aspiration. Critical opinion is divided on the resolution of the aesthetic issues posed, which may be as ambiguous as Colin's final gesture in hanging his pipe on a tree. Shore and Walker argue that signs of Colin's capacity to transcend the genre's normal limitations cannot be realized within the work, governed as it is by pastoral conventions. In "The Perfecte Paterne of a Poete", Montrose, however, points to the achievements of prophetic vision, in the November eclogue to Dido, as an indication that Colin does transcend the pastoral mode. All are agreed that the relation of love and expression is

central to The Shepheardes Calendar, and that the multiple roles which Colin plays comment on the diverse capacity of the human identity. To Walker, the work provides evidence, in the character of Colin, of contemporary fascination with "the mythic status of the Shepherd-Poet figure,...a compelling image of the poet as Orphic figure, whether in cheerful abandon or melancholic resignation." (365)[2]

In The Shepheardes Calendar, then, the limitations imposed on the speaker's voice by the conventions of the pastoral genre are themselves a central concern. The reader's interest in the work's central protagonist, moreover, is amplified by the extent to which his words and actions provide a focus for such questions, and thus bear some relation to the historical poet's examination of the implications of his vocation. Both Phillis and Chloris open with a degree of ambiguity about the speaker's stance which seems to signal an awareness, on the part of Smith and Lodge, that his role may likewise be used to raise related questions of love, expression, and aspiration. In neither case, however, is the ambiguity of the speaker's stance sustained beyond the opening sonnets; instead, Corin and Damon stand throughout the sequences at a steady distance from the figures of their creators, their personal and poetic dilemma serving as a means of characterization but never suggesting, as Colin's do, a degree of proximity to the historical poets.

A keynote similar to that of The Shepheardes Calendar's envoi and prose gloss is struck in Chloris' dedicatory verses and first sonnet: the speaker acknowledges that his muse is "lowly" but "audacious", and, since "the budding Springs" of his "untuned song" (1) "forth...wand'ring

are devoid of fear," he begs the indulgence and favour of those who "have tasted of the muses' spring" and rightly won the world's renown:

> You whom the world admires for rarest style,
> You whom have sung the sonnets of true love,
> Upon my maiden verse with favour smile,
> Whose weak-penned muse to fly too soon doth prove;
> Before her feathers have their full perfection,
> She soars aloft, pricked on by blind affection.
> ("To all shepherds in general")

His pose here is the self-conscious stance of the professional, evaluating the completed sequence and seeking to identify its place in a larger literary context; it focuses the reader's attention on the speaker as poet, concerned with aesthetic judgment, with his professional status, and with his future as an artist, rather than as a character limited to his role within the work.

At the same time, there is throughout these early poems a discordance of aspiration and humility which creates the impression of disjunctions between the muse, the speaker himself, and the resulting verse. The speaker's choice of epithet for the sonnets--"these young-hatched orphan things"--emphasizes simultaneously the process of their generation and their lack of "parents." Describing them as "orphans" seems a move designed to avoid the charges of audacity that pastoral concern with decorum might bring against the speaker's desire either to be "shrouded" by a patron's protection or to bring this zeal to that patron's attention.

To the poet, conscious of his place in a larger social context, the figure of the muse establishes a mythic context for the creation of poetry and serves to justify what might otherwise be interpreted as an audacious act. Given the personality attributed to the muse, the poet

can present "these lines both harsh and bad" ("To all shepherds in general") as springing forth into the public eye despite his reluctance: "Longer I cannot them in silence keep." ("To...Colin Clout") What the muse of inspiration compels the poet to produce, in other words, enables him to pay tribute to his patron without assuming responsibility for the poems' quality or making himself vulnerable to that accusation of indecorous personal aspiration. This careful handling of the issue of the poems' circulation or publication confirms the impression of a self-conscious professional; it also anticipates the sequence's treatment of the lover's expression. Within Chloris, the compulsive power of love replaces the figure of the muse as a mode of inspiration. Overwhelmed by desire, the lover cannot prevent his passions from spilling out in utterances that he hopes will provide a mirror-like reflection of his state. Yet as the disjunctions between muse and poet have served to protect the poet from critical responses to his work, so the motif of compulsion operates to subordinate any interest in the poems as aesthetic works. The quality of the lover's expression is a measure of his turmoil and lack of control, a condition produced by the extreme desire he is concerned to convey. While they may pay tribute to the beauty and virtue of the lady, as the poet's verse does to the honoured figure of his patron, the sonnets which constitute the sequence are presented by the lover not as an independent artifice but as accidental by-products of his strong desire.

Within the sequence, then, notions of pastoral decorum join with the lover's conventional humility towards the lady to impose restrictions on the actions and understanding of the speaker. While

Chloris' dedicatory verses, even as they preserve a decorous humility, have drawn the reader's attention to a speaker to some extent detached from his work, for the purposes of professional evaluation, with the assumption of the mask of Corin the sequence's framework is much reduced: "no bright Apollo shineth" (3) where the aid of "Pan, the shepherd's king,/ And you swift-footed Dryades" (1) is alone invoked. The limited scope thus defined recalls Colin Clout's words on the strife of Phoebus and Pan, developed more self-consciously as justification for his restricting the scope of his expression:

> ...sith I heard that Pan with Phoebus strove,
> Which him to much rebuke and daunger drove,
> I never list presume to Parnasse hylle.
> But, pyping lowe in shade of lowly grove,
> I play to please my selfe, all be it ille.
> Nought weigh I, who my song doth prayes or blame,
> Ne strive to win renowne, or passe the reste:
> With shepherd sittes not follow flying fame,
> But feede his flockes in fields where falls him best.
> (June, 11. 68-76)

Moreover, the only judge of Corin's songs is their subject, Chloris, who like Rosalind in The Shepheardes Calendar is "ruthless of my woefull song;/ My oaten reed she not delights to hear." (5) Unlike Rosalind, however, Chloris is herself limited to the pastoral world by her role as "Fair shepherdess" (41) who "brings/ Her flocks to water" (5) or sits under the shade of lofty pines. (6) The plea to Chloris to "renew again/ The mutual love which did posses us twain" (48) further implies that Corin's love, having once been returned, is in keeping with notions of pastoral decorum. Both aspects of the sequence suggest that, unlike Colin's aspiration to the love of Rosalind, Corin's efforts to renew Chloris' love will involve no attempt to transcend the limitations of the shepherd's world.

When another audience is addressed, it is most often composed of natural elements or of human participants in a pastoral milieu: sonnet 20's invitation to "Ye wastefull woods, to bear witness of my woe" is followed by an address to "Ye careless birds" and "Thou pleasant spring," while the next sonnet announces that "you, good shepherd, listening now shall hear" (21) of Corin's woes. Later, the speaker describes the effect of love's cruelty on his "pining flocks," who miss his former "jolly notes," (46) and Corin's analogies consistently evoke the shepherd's environment and customary activities:

> Each beast in field doth wish the morning light;
> The birds to Hesper pleasant lays do sing;
> The wanton kids well-fed rejoice in night,
> Being likewise glad when day begins to spring.
> (37)

Only occasionally is a wider milieu referred to, and then only in such a way as to confirm Corin's willingness to restrict himself to the pastoral world and its limitations. Smith's most recent editor, Lawrence Sasek, considers sonnet 29, in which the first quatrain lists the variety of delights available to the courtly lover, a lapse in the consistency of the sequence; he feels its reference to courtly customs clashes with Smith's portrayal of the rustic pair. Corin's awareness of another pattern of courtship, however, while it does provide a rare opening-up of the sequence's framework onto the larger world, serves primarily to present a contrast to the speaker's own situation and to emphasize his long-suffering, and hence more deserving, nature:

> Some in their hearts their mistress' colours bears;
> Some hath her glove, some other hath her garter,
> Some in a bracelet bears her golden hairs,
> And some with kisses seal their loving charters.
> But I which never favour reaped yet,

> Nor had one pleasant look from her fair brow,
> Content myself in silent shade to sit
> In hope at length my prayers to overplow.

The structural division is heightened by diction: the chivalric world is associated with emblems of possession, implying relationships formalized in "charters" and displayed to the world, while the verbs "reaped" and "overplow" stress the pastoral world's connection, not to social and legal processes, but to the natural and organic. The attractions of the courtly world are thus implicitly denied by the shepherd whose consciousness of inevitable processes unfolding through time enables him to be satisfied with the hope of being rewarded "at length" with "one smile [to] remunerate my toil,/ None other guerdon I of thee desire." (3) Time thus operates in Chloris as an aspect of the theme of humble acceptance: the shepherd, made conscious by his occupation and environment of the steady passage of the seasons, is noticeably less eager to hurry on the goal which he seeks, less frustrated by delay, and less impatient with the lady, than the courtly lover.

The courtly objectification of desire in gloves and garters, however, associates the courtier's love with worldly action, while the shepherd sits alone "in silent shade"; as his ambitions in love are constrained by the pastoral convention, so too are his poetic aspirations. Although Corin protests that "My muse shall never cease that hill to climb,/ To which the learned Muses do repair," (41) the effort is directed not to his achievement of personal renown in such an elevated sphere, but "all to deify thy name in rhyme." (41) Aspiration is the subject of sonnets 41 through 44, but the distinction established

initially between "the learned Muses" and "my muse," a metaphor for the inspiring power of love which compels Corin to expression, controls the development of this motif throughout the series of poems. Corin's climb is thus presented as a natural progression derived from the quality of his lady rather than as a consequence of his own, independent powers. Even as a consequence of recognizing her superior value, moreover, his ascent is dependent on Chloris' "merciful assent":

> So shall you add such courage to my muse
> That she shall climb the steep Parnassus hill,
> That learned poets shall my deeds peruse
> When I from thence obtained have more skill;
> And what I sing shall always be of thee
> As long as life or breath remain in me! (44)

While it is not unusual for the conventional lover thus to signal his dependence on the lady, Corin's expectation that his lady's help may allow him to transcend the limited boundaries of pastoral expression marks his distance from the figure of Colin Clout, for whom an independent motion of transcendence, demonstrating his worth, might win the lady. Secondly, the distinction between poet and muse developed in the dedicatory sonnets may be echoed in these sonnets' emphasis on "my muse" as a force to some extent distinguishable from the lover and personified as gaining "courage" from the lady's encouragement. Finally, the attention of "learned poets" is drawn not to the quality of the lover's expression but to "my deeds" as reflected in his verse. Hence the treatment of aspiration in these sonnets is carefully controlled by the sequence's characterization of a lover immersed in his present experience, even as he contemplates possible developments in the future.

The positive implications of this natural progression, moreover,

are offset by the downward motion of Chloris 42, in which the profundity of Corin's despair is aggravated by his aspiring mind:

> Die, die, my hopes! for you do but augment
> The burning accents of my deep despair;
> Disdain and scorn your downfall do consent.

In accordance with the sequence's focus on what is integral to the relationship, rather than on the external obstacles of the pastoral mode, the critique of aspiration is supplied from within; the emotional rhythms of Corin's experience enact the pastoral lesson that ambition increases vulnerability to the blows of fate. The sonnet ends with Corin's sending his sighs "into empty air,/ Into the air, that none your sound may hear,"(42) in a reaction that confirms the appropriateness for the shepherd of "silent shade" and the distinction between his expression, an internal compulsion, and that which is concerned with the response of a larger audience.

Although sonnet 43 returns to an impulse of aspiration, Corin's indebtedness to the power of his lady is as significant a subject as is the future he anticipates. The poem opens with an allusion to the moon as a means of defining the lover's poetic power, "borrowed" as is the moon's light from his "glorious sun," continues with images of supplication as Corin sues for grace "at thy feet," and concludes with that mingling of humility and aspiration familiar from the dedicatory sonnets:

> Let not thy frowns these labours poor deface
> Although aloft they at the first aspire;
> And time shall come as yet unknown to men,
> When I more large thy praises forth shall pen! (43)

As in the opening sonnets, this poem again draws the reader's attention to the speaker as poet, to some extent detached from the work on which

he comments, and mindful of the place he would like to fill in the literary pantheon. Here it is not the "loves labours" of the muse which need protection, but the speaker's own "labours poor," identified with the lover himself to the extent that their quality reflects his sense of unworthiness. Yet as in the earlier distinction between muse and poet, in sonnet 43 there is a disjunction between the labours' bold aspiration "at the first," suggesting a premature flight, and the lover's more humble reliance on a gradual development through time. As well, in the more restricted world of the sequence, the lover's labours are vulnerable to defacement not by an envious or critical world but by the lady's disapproval, and the prophetic, expansive motion of the couplet is again predicated on her eventual assent to his pleas.

The quality of poetic aspiration, a characteristic which might serve to bring the figure of the lover into closer relation with that of his creator, is thus controlled throughout Chloris by the principles of pastoral decorum, which reinforce the restrictions imposed by the lover's conventionally humble stance. Corin's expression achieves status as an independent artifice, consequently, only as a means of diverting from him any signs of ambition which might impel him beyond the role of shepherd-lover. Furthermore, his hopes for poetic achievement in the future are consistently presented as dependent on the lady and as the result of a steady, natural progression through time. The sequence's recurrent concern with the idea of a harmonious development through time is reflected in this group of sonnets by the use of Chloris 43's final line to begin sonnet 44. Such technical links are common in Chloris as a means of reinforcing thematic connections between individual poems,

and their ultimate effect is to build into the texture of the sequence a sense of gradual development. This sense is a factor in Smith's characterization of Corin as a shepherd, patient in delay, and his reliance on time is further stressed by the three-fold repetition of "Till then" in sonnet 44's second quatrain. Thus style and structure cooperate to reinforce the poem's statement of Corin's satisfaction with the dependent role to which he is restricted.

By the sequence's conclusion, as the shepherd-poet turns in his fiftieth sonnet to address again Colin Clout, the ambition evident in the dedicatory poem has been muted by the sequence's development to an acceptance of the speaker's lowly place in the poetic hierarchy and to hopes that greater poetic powers may grow from these "maiden" efforts through the cycle of time:

> Colin, I know that in thy lofty wit
> Thou wilt but laugh at these my youthful lines.
> Content I am they should in silence sit,
> Obscured from light, to sigh their sad designs;
> But that it pleased thy grave shepherdhood
> The patron of my maiden verse to be,
> ...
> So these being blooms and under thy protection
> In time I hope to ripeness more shall grow. (50)

Whatever tensions may arise between the speaker's two vocations, then, has been reconciled by Chloris' conclusion in a stance of humility becoming both to the shepherd-lover and to the youthful poet. Moreover, poetic energy has been devoted within the sequence itself not to the exploration of these tensions but to sustaining consistency in the pastoral mode as it is reflected in the work's environment and action, in its treatment of expression, and above all in the postures of its two characters, held at a constant distance from the figure of the creator

who brings himself to the reader's attention only in dedicatory and concluding sonnets. Sasek points out, regarding the relation of speaker and poet, that

> The question of whether or not Chloris is an autobiographical poem, apart from the transparent identification of Smith and Corin as poets, need not detain us. (7)

The obvious parallel of which he speaks, however, stirs little interest in the course of the sequence, for the speaker's concerns are almost entirely limited to those which are plausible in the fictional character of the lover. The prospect of poetic renown is significant to Corin primarily as a means of diverting further attention to Chloris. The poet who addresses his model and his peers in introductory and closing poems, and who is directly concerned with his vocation and with poetic fame, is a figure easily distinguished from that of the lover whom he has created.

In Chloris, then, Smith restricts our consciousness of the relation between poet and speaker to those sonnets which frame the sequence proper; only in these poems does the possibility of an identity of the two figures contradict the central impression of their complete detachment and alter, to some extent, our response to the character of Corin. As we have seen, the Induction of Lodge's Phillis produces something of the same effect, and to certain features of this poem Smith is clearly indebted. In particular, the same vertical hierarchy informs the poetic ambitions of both, for those who are asked to shroud Lodge's efforts are "high-spirited Paragons of wit,/ That fly to fame beyond our earthly pitch"; as in Chloris, the speaker's place in this literary pantheon is explicitly identified when, evoking the failure of Icarus,

he locates himself with less aspiring versifiers, "such whose wings are but waxt like mine." A dramatic metaphor is also used to define the poet's role and intention: obscure, he has "fled the scene of fame,/ Intitling my conceits to nought but care," a retreat which would seem to accord well with the characteristic pastoral advice regarding the value and consequences of public fame. Nevertheless, the speaker tells us, he has since decided to "Now mount the theatre of this our age,/ To plead my faith and Cupid's cursed rage." This declaration, self-consciously adopting a rhetorical stance towards a larger audience than merely the lady and suggesting the modes of imploration and satire, seems to be fulfilled as Phillis' early sonnets reveal the speaker striking poses--"In fancy's world an Atlas I have been" (3)--quite beyond the capacity of the mere shepherd. In Corin's world, by contrast, even such an ephemeral note of playfulness has been restricted to the actions of the mistress, who "of my love doth make a jesting game." (Chloris, 12)

Phillis is, moreover, divided into two equal halves by two eclogues and an elegy. Lodge's procedure here reinforces the effect of the sequence's Induction: the very exactness of the division draws the reader's attention to the processes of composition and arrangement, and hence to the concerns of the poet who stands outside the work and in control of its development. Damon's capacity for self-dramatization, evident in several of the early sonnets, is most fully extended in these central poems, yet certain features remind the reader even here of his distance from the poet. In the first place, the display of Damon's self-dramatizing tendency is provoked by the presence of another fictional character, the older shepherd Demades. At the same time as

the first eclogue's debate provokes the sequence's most vivid presentation of the lover, moreover, Demades' advice to the younger shepherd creates within Phillis a means of judging the lover's restricted vision.

The debate is evocative of the pastoral milieu, as both characters seek to ground their arguments on analogies chosen, as were Corin's, from the natural environment. Demades urges Damon, for instance, "to the spring [to] attemper thy thoughts," while Damon's counter-argument is based on a reversal of the natural cycle--"even the spring is winter unto me"--which soon gives place to a more straightforward parallel:

> The root which yieldeth sap unto the tree
> Draws from the earth the means that make it spring;
> And by the sap the scions fostered be;
> . . .
> As root to tree, such is my tender heart,
> Whose sap is thought, whose branches are content.

Either mode, of comparison or of contrast, gives evidence initially of the speaker's rhetorical dependence on an understanding of natural processes, although the debate sharpens our awareness of the conflicting purposes to which natural analogies can be put. Demades' techniques are, in this respect, more traditional: his advice to "Let reason school thy will which doth aspire,/ And counsel cool impatience that presumeth" relies on the conventional opposition of reason and will and on the assumption that aspiration is a danger. This is especially so for the shepherd, who by presuming may be tempted to neglect his pastoral responsibilities: "tend thou thy flock; let tyrant love attaint/ Those tender hearts that made their love their living." Demades thus contrasts the shepherd's limited sphere to the wider scope and greater freedom of the courtier, who is able to luxuriate in the effects of

love; the final clause may as well suggest the professional benefits which writing of "tyrant love" may bring to the courtly possessors of "tender hearts."

Damon plays more wittily on these conventional strictures than has Corin, who reveals by his tacit acceptance that he has assimilated traditional views, and who has merged the two motifs of courtly dependence on the lady and of pastoral humility. Damon's claim that "from her eyes, my soul's best life is lent" recalls Corin's borrowed moonlight, reflecting the superior radiance of Chloris' "glorious sun." Yet his description of Phillis as "nymph who hast our spring in keeping" is one factor in a more sophisticated strategy; by assigning to the lady control over natural forces, Damon implicitly supports his own attempt to move beyond the pastoral sphere. The general direction of his argument in the eclogue anticipates Damon's substitution of cosmic for natural spheres. In the process of effecting this substitution, Damon frees himself to speak with a self-assertive wit beyond the capacity of the simpler Corin. As he engages the reader's attention on a more intellectual level, however, the dialectic of his debate with Demades exposes Damon to the judgment of a more encompassing awareness.

To some extent, Damon's strategy is itself provoked by the presence of another figure. Demades speaks for the power of "kind time [which] keeps Phillis from thy sight" in order that fancy may be banished, and he returns to this theme in his anticipation that "nature's riches...by time resolved" will reveal to an older Damon "How Phillis' beauties are to dust dissolved." From his perspective, then, the gradual unfolding of events in time--which has been the basis of the gentle ascent Corin

foresees for himself--is identified with the realities of "frail" sublunary life, with disappointment and decay. (Phillis 17 has suggested something of this contrast to Corin's trust in time: Damon there bemoans the fact that "My path to bliss is tedious, long, and steep," suggesting his unwillingness to strive patiently and, with the allusion to Endymion, his preferring the oblivion of a complete imprisonment--"Captive mine eyes unto eternal sleep." [23]) Similarly, Demades assumes that age brings wisdom, associated with contentment in one's proper estate, so that Damon's ambition is a rebellion of "headlong youth" against sage and sober age. Against this perspective, Damon must subvert the traditional assumptions by a description of "chilly age," its vision distorted by impotence and regret:

> So tread we now within your wonted way;
> We find your fruits of judgment and their seeds;
> We know you loved, and loving learn that lore;
> We scorn kind love, because you can no more.

The ambition for which Demades berates Damon thus appears a natural consequence of youth and beneficent love; "kind love" has replaced "kind time" (at least insofar as Demades understands the operation of time) as the natural force which impels Damon's actions, while his images of organic processes provide a means of contradicting pastoral wisdom.

As his ingenuity in undercutting conventional wisdom suggests that Damon is a more sophisticated lover than Corin, so Damon is more dramatic in asserting the priority of individual experience and of the lover's emotional needs over the ideals of a decorous humility. Instead of accepting his place in the order of things or of anticipating a steady progression through time, in other words, Damon impatiently claims an alternative universe which rivals--though both are

"little"--the integrity of Demades' pastoral world:

> My little world hath vowed no sun shall glad it,
> Except thy little world her light discover,
> Of which heavens would grow proud if so they had it.
> O how I fear lest absent Jove should love her!
> I fear it, Phillis, for he never saw one
> That had more heaven-sent looks to lure and awe one.
> I swear to thee, all-seeing sovereign,
> Rolling heaven's circles round about our centre,
> Except my Phillis safe return again,
> No joy to heart, no meat to mouth shall enter.
> All hope (but future hope to be renowned,
> For weeping Phillis) shall in tears be drowned.

Although the antecedent of "thy" is ambiguous (the lines follow several addressed directly to Phillis), Damon seems here to dramatize both his desire for Phillis' return and a need for others to acknowledge the value of love. It is the "large...scope" of his lament to which Demades immediately objects, advising the young shepherd to "bend thy muse to matters far more fit," presumably the limited scope of the decorous shepherd. Yet Damon's words repeatedly assert the power of his emotions and expression over the natural world. Only Phillis' failure to return will constrain the scope of his aspirations--only then, he declares, "will I captive all my hopes again,/ And shut them up in prisons of despair," significantly self-created. Even in these circumstances, he protests, his tears and sighs "shall destroy his plain" and "shall eclipse the air."

The most interesting feature of Damon's argument for an alternative universe, one whose central light "eclipses" that of the heavens, is the tension which develops as the speaker responds to his own claims. There is conflict, in other words, between the passage's tone of lofty self-assurance and the conventional declarations of fidelity, the oaths and vows which signal the submissive lover's

passivity in his suffering. All depends on the lady's return, and his capacity even to protest her absence extends no further than a series of denials: he will not eat, will not enjoy, and, in a fusion of physical and emotional deprivation, will not allow the sun to gladden his life. Nevertheless, his fears that Jove will fall in love with Phillis take on, when their exaggerated rhetoric is stressed by immediate repetition, a comic touch reinforced by the effect of the passage's double rhymes. The parenthetical qualification of his extreme position, moreover, seems to indicate a speaker well aware of the value of his pose in acquiring public renown.

We discover with the final exchange of the two speakers, however, that the comedy has been at Damon's expense, and serves to undercut his pose of vaulting ambition. While Demades' reaction to Damon's extravagant claims initially returns to notions of pastoral decorum, his final verses tacitly recognize that Damon's enlarged scope has subtly shifted the terms of their argument. Accordingly, he concentrates not on the individual's social responsibility to lead the sober life appropriate to his pastoral role, but on Damon's responsibility to himself, by pointing to the remedial possibilities of a playful, yet self-controlled, indulgence in the delights of courtship:

> Play with the fire, yet die not in the flame;
> Show passions in thy words, but not thy heart;
> Lest when thou think to bring thy thought in frame,
> Thou prove thyself a prisoner of thy art.
> Play with these babes of art, as apes with glasses,
> And put no trust in feathers, winds, or lasses.

The implication is that Damon has been inadvertently captured by his own imaginative vision, that his consequent suffering is largely

self-created, and that having imagined a heaven jealous of Phillis' light, for instance, Damon makes himself vulnerable to fears about Jove's rivalry. The younger shepherd is in danger of falling prey to his own rhetorical strategies, and Demades' words imply the that the lover must remain aware of his verbal extravagance as a persuasive strategy, preserving some distance from his experience in order to argue effectively. Having confused verbal and emotional extravagance, Damon's thoughts are implicitly "out of frame"; in terms of the debate's rapidly shifting perspectives of size, expansion beyond the human scale, which Demades associates with the pastoral world of decorum and humility, can paradoxically restrict and imprison.

This analysis of Damon's state has been implicit in the eclogue's debate from the beginning. Demades has insisted on the young shepherd's responsibility for his condition and, conversely, his capacity to remedy the situation:

> Drive hence vain thoughts which are fond love's abettors,
> For he that seeks his thralldom deserves fetters.
> The vain idea of this deity
> Nursed at the teat of thy imagination,
> Was bred, brought up by thine own vanity,
> Whose being thou mayst curse from the creation;
> And so thou list, thou mayst as soon forget love,
> As thou at first didst fashion and beget love.

What is particularly interesting about Demades' analysis is the repetition of "vain/vanity" in a context which exploits the word's various connotations. To apply the adjective to Damon's desire for Phillis may suggest simply the futility of his hopes, a commonplace in the sonnet sequence and a feature on which the conventional lover himself frequently comments. In its second appearance, however, the word attaches to Damon's fanciful deification of his lady a sense of

emptiness and misrepresentation. Ultimately, Demades argues, the lover's imaginative vision of Phillis as the centre of the universe is nurtured by his own vanity, or proud egocentricity, and constitutes an indirect form of ambitious self-presentation.

Demades' counter-argument to Damon's claims need not convince the reader of the rightness of the older shepherd's views; his adherence to pastoral mores may in fact suggest a fictional character as limited in his perspective as Damon is in his. What is most effective about the eclogue is its dialectical development and the simultaneous presence of conflicting points of view. Such a framework, while it does not lessen the reader's appreciation of Damon's experience as he perceives it, nevertheless illuminates the nature of that perception, emphasizes the possibility of alternative perspectives, and serves to ally the reader with the poet in a more detached response to the figure of the lover. A more objective evaluation of his situation and actions, moreover, is a possibility which Damon emphatically rejects--"Me list not now thy forward skill to scan." The rejection contrasts the reader's capacity to entertain alternative points of view to the lover's persistence in extravagant claims, claims which demonstrate his immersion in a distorted creation: "Spring flowers, seatides, earth, grass, sky, stars shall tarnish,/ Before the thoughts of love or Phillis vanish."

The elegy which follows confirms the impression of Damon's incapacity to detach himself from the situation in which he is immersed, for his apostrophe to the winds and floods accuses them of cruel treachery in their refusal to heed the imperatives of his emotional needs: to them is attributed the blame for carrying Phillis away, "While

I have wept such tears as might restrain/ The rage of tides and winds against their will." Faced with the intractibility of the physical universe, the shepherd-lover concludes that no sense can be made of his situation beyond an acceptance of the principle of change:

> Alas, so wills the wanton queen of change,
> That each man tract this labyrinth of life
> With slippery steps, nor wronged for fortune strange,
> Now drawn by counsell from the maze of strife.

Ironically, the "counsell" which Demades has offered has done little to draw Damon "from the maze of strife," and the rest of the elegy merely repeats the series of denials initiated in the debate ("Ah joy! no joy...Oh life! No life...Oh eyes! no eyes") and provides the soul with instructions in the proper attitude of grief:

> Soul, be thou sad, dissolve thy living powers
> To crystal tears, and by their pores express
> The grief that my distressed soul devours!

Damon's presentation of himself, then, is limited by its emphasis on his vulnerability to the pressure of forces outside his control.

Thus while he demonstrates at certain points in the sequence a capacity for self-dramatization, Damon's failure to wed this capacity to an ironic awareness of such theatricality, and its effects, means that in Phillis as in Chloris the burden of "my ceaselesse care" (3) reduces the speaker's potential for shifting stances to a series of variations on the essentially limited role of the lover. He is free not to change his posture, but merely to intensify its dramatic representation of his sufferings or of the power of love. Nowhere is this more evident than in sonnet 38, in which Damon presents his personal experience as "proof" of the general rule that "Who lives enthralled to Cupid and his flame/ From day to day is changed in sundry sort." The notion of enthrallment

echoes Phillis' recurrent images of imprisonment, as the speaker's admission that he has been "oft transformed by him [Cupid]" again attributes change to forces outside the speaker's control. Moreover, the account of his metamorphoses--from a wounded hart to a swan "With piteous voice," then to a "faint and fading flower" and "a fountain sudden dry"--provides merely a series of conventional natural emblems of suffering for love's sake rather than a shift in stance that enables Damon better to understand the role he plays. What is most interesting, in terms of the characterization of the speaker, is the gradual diminution of power and vitality with each successive image, from the initial wound to the final guise in which Damon speaks:

> Now am I a salamander by his power,
> Living in flames, but hope ere long to be
> A voice, to talk my mistress' majesty.

In his present form, then, the lover can only anticipate the development of an effective voice, and then only in order to celebrate the mistress; as in Corin's case, self-expression has been subordinated to the demands of love and the submissive posture which the two shepherd-lovers have assumed.

Those changes for which Damon wishes are perhaps as telling as those he says have been inflicted on him. In sonnet 34, such imaginative speculation reveals his aspiration to a degree of control over the situation similar to that of Zeus, in tales of his amorous adventures:

> I would in rich and golden-coloured rain,
> With tempting showers in pleasant sort descend
> Into fair Phillis' lap, my comely friend,
> When sleep her sense with slumber doth restrain.
> I would be changed to a milk-white bull,
> When midst the gladsome fields she should appear.

By pleasant fineness to surprise my dear,
Whilst from their stalks, she pleasant flowers did pull.

Damon's development of scenarios in which love has grown active and fruitful may signify some awareness of the sterility of his present enthrallment. Similarly, Phillis herself retains an implied power to offset the fruitfulness of his vision of her; the image of her pulling flowers "from their stalks," with its sense of restrained brutality, echoes Damon's earlier comparison of himself to the "pale and dying infant of the spring":

That selfsame hand that thee from stalk did wring,
Hath wrent my breast and robbed my heart from me. (5)

Thus while imagining himself enacting Zeus' metamorphoses has allowed Damon temporarily to upset the generally frustrating dynamic of his pursuit, certain of sonnet 34's details suggest the impossibility of his escaping a conviction of Phillis' power over him. The final transformation, moreover, represents a lapse into the passivity which has more often characterized him:

I were content to weary out my pain,
To be Narcissus so she were a spring,
To drown in her those woes my heart do wring.
And more; I wish transformed to remain,
That whilst I thus in pleasure's lap did lie,
I might refresh desire, which else would die.

The role of Narcissus suggests the destructiveness of a self-enclosed vision: once again, Damon's impulse to self-dramatization collapses into mere intensification and prolongation of his present, static pose--"content to weary out my pain"--because, like Narcissus, his eyes are focused on himself alone and fail to achieve a more detached perspective on his situation.

At the same time, the sexual implications of Damon's final wish

suggest a degree of wit which has implicitly controlled the development of the sonnet, from the image of "rich and golden-coloured rain" descending "Into fair Phillis' lap" to the final vision of the speaker's refreshing himself in pleasure's lap. For Damon, wit cooperates with classical learning to provide a means at least of presenting his condition, and the sonnets, like the argument of the first eclogue, indicate a speaker more sophisticated than the simple shepherd, Corin. This impression is reinforced by the presence of a sonnet which deals explicitly with matters of style and self-presentation. Yet an examination of these features, although it suggests some growth on Damon's part, reveals that his distance from the figure of his creator, the historical poet, remains consistent throughout Phillis; while there is some evidence that he assimilates part of Demades' more detached perspective, only with a resolution of the work's fictional circumstances at the poet's hands is Damon able fully to apply the resources of wit to the experience in which he is immersed.

The effect of these features can be approached by means of Damon's treatment of the theme of expression. In the early sonnets, his words, whether oral or written, take on Damon's own emotional qualities and serve as personifications of his need. The reader hears, for instance, of "my moan-clad muse," (3) of papers sent "In tract of sable tears," (3) and of "moaning lines." (4) The alternative "volumes of her praise" (23) speak of the lover's appreciation of Phillis' beauty and so image another dimension of his desire. In exploring the futility of his expression, Damon considers its relation to his character explicitly:

> Oh heavens, why climb not happy lines so high,
> To rent that ruthless heart that all hearts rifles!

> None writes with truer faith, or greater love,
> Yet out, alas! I have no power to move. (4)

The act of writing, in other words, constitutes a simple assertion of virtuous character, a reflection of "a faith unfeigned true." (32) As we have seen, such expression is effective in its impact on the natural world (the fountains, echo, and pine trees of Phillis 14, in addition to the shepherd's sheep), but it is not rhetorically effective except with the elements of the natural environment which can be anthropomorphosed into a receptive audience to the lover's complaints. The reader is thus reminded of the limitations of the pastoral lover's power: personification of natural elements grants him some control over the world, but his deification of Phillis, a parallel rhetorical strategy, fails to make her vulnerable to the effects of his expression.

Like other lovers, then, Damon bemoans the futility of his efforts to move the lady in his treatment of expression. The sequence suggests, however, not only the limited scope of his rhetorical effectiveness, but also the extent to which these limitations are self-imposed. The paradoxical play of sonnet 35, for instance, presents the idea that "I loose my bonds and yet myself restrain," which defines the implications of Damon's position in the first eclogue; the situation has been anticipated by the motif of secrecy in earlier poems. In Phillis 10, he asserts that "lovers must keep secret what they feel" as a general rule of decorum in love. Thus the personal "tyranny" of Phillis can be discarded as an imprisoning force--for such an emphasis would undercut the predominantly celebratory presentation of the lady in the sequence--but the effects of love as a "tyrannizing monarch" (19) are felt throughout. Similarly, Phillis 32 balances Damon's claim that he

"show[s] a naked heart" to Phillis herself with his need to "conceal the tale" even when dying of grief. The self-censorship which operates in this poem epitomizes Damon's willing subservience to an experience shaped, not by himself as self-conscious tale-teller, but by the lady in whose hands the story's resolution lies. The generality of this point, however, may suggest the historical poet's shaping power; Damon complains that he must "To others' will...fashion my desire,/ To pine in looks disguised though pensive-pale." (32) Finally, the lover becomes the frustrated audience to his own performance, its action determined by Phillis and his skills constrained by the principles of love: "With heedless eyes mine endless harms to view,/ A will to speak, a fear to tell the thought." (32) Thus evidence of Damon's self-awareness is simultaneous with his abdication of control to Phillis and to the conventions of love.

It is quite common in the sonnet sequence that a superior rhetorical power which the lover is conscious of lacking is assigned to the lady, as an aspect of her power over him. This development is muted in Phillis, in part due to her less active role in the sequence than that of several other sonnet-ladies. Because of her limited involvement, the sequence reduces the competitive element in the relationship of its two protagonists; in a sense, the first eclogue substitutes Demades' advice for the provocative force which the lady can provide. Nevertheless, in comparing Phillis to April, developing her role as a natural principle, Damon draws an aesthetic parallel: "He [April] paints the fields through liquid cyrstal showers,/ Thou paint'st my verse with Pallas, learned flowers." (30) Although the effect is

here ostensibly felt in Damon's own verse, the "learned flowers" of rhetorical ornamentation, which beautify the work as April does the natural world, derive from Phillis rather than from the speaker's own learning and skills. In fact, Phillis 33 argues that Pallas has given to the lady "her science sweet"; it is perhaps significant that, as goddess of craftsmanship, Pallas is associated especially with the arts of women.

Thetis' appearance in the same sonnet, reminding the reader of her marriage to Peleus, and of the revenge exacted by the uninvited Eris, goddess of discord, implies a mythological context of conflict and competition not irrelevant to the sonnet situation. Similarly, the role Thetis later plays with Eos (who appears to mourn the loss of her son, Memnon, in Phillis 9), as each mother begs Zeus to grant victory in battle to her son, adds to this competitive context the significance of rhetorical persuasion and the question of worth. Zeus resolves the conflict--and determines the outcome of the combat--by weighing the souls of Achilles and Memnon. Damon, however, exploits nothing of this context, despite its relevance to his verses "For the Fairest" and his pleas for the lady to accept his worth as a suitor. It may convey to the reader, however, a general sense of those issues on which the resolution of the sequence depends: "She who claims the title of world's wonder, [and who]/ Think all deserts too base to bring her under" (3) is ultimately revealed as having a "Wanton will, with change delighted" ("An Ode") and thus as unworthy of Damon's long devotion. Phillis' less active role in the sequence simultaneously makes more plausible and more surprising the work's resolution: on the one hand, the reader recognizes

in retrospect how the sonnet's praise has depended on Damon's partial vision, and on the other, the reader has throughout Phillis shared Damon's perspective and accepted her virtue, significantly never an issue in the debate with Demades.

Phillis' eloquence, too, is ultimately discovered to be unworthy: Damon describes her, finally, as having a "Tongue untrusty, subtile-sighted." ("An Ode") His susceptibility to deceiving words and subtle strategies may be anticipated in the sonnet which deals most fully with questions of style and expression, Phillis 20:

> Some praise the looks, and others praise the locks
> Of their fair queens, in love with curious words;
> Some laud the breast where love his treasure locks,
> All like the eye that life and love affords.
> But none of these frail beauties and unstable
> Shall make my pen riot in pompous style;
> More greater gifts shall my grave muse enable,
> Whereat severer brows shall never smile.
> I praise her honey-sweeter eloquence,
> Which from the fountain of true wisdom floweth,
> Her modest mien that matcheth excellence,
> Her matchless faith which from her virtue groweth;
> And could my style her happy virtues equal,
> Time had no power her glories to enthral.

One of the most effective of the sequence's sonnets, the poem derives much of its strength from Damon's capacity to evaluate the alternatives of a plain and an eloquent style in writing. Its development, however, discloses a theoretical understanding of the relation between speaker, style, and subject that leaves Damon vulnerable to more sophisticated wiles than hyperbole, wordplay, and allegory. Ironically, it is precisely the greater sophistication here assigned to Phillis--"her honey-sweeter eloquence"--that is praised but later condemned as a tool of deception.

The first quatrain provides an effective analysis of various

rhetorical techniques, Damon's thorough understanding reflected in the lines' orderly arrangement and in his witty play on "looks/locks," picked up in the figurative "locking" of love's treasure in the lady's breast. Damon's criticism of other poets' concentration upon "curious words" and a display of their own skill, rather than on the experience of love, is thus informed by confidence in his own ability to handle words curiously and not by envy of others' superior skill. It is possible, too, that there is a play on "eye/I" in the fourth line, indicating that Damon is aware of the extent to which a flattering self-presentation is involved in hyperbolic praise of the lady. A different kind of ambiguity enters the poem, however, in the second quatrain. Its central contrast between a riotous excess and a controlled gravity is clear, yet Damon's evaluation of "these frail beauties and unstable," seems to confuse the ephemeral effect of a highly ornamental style with the nature of other poets' ostensible subjects. Such treatment of course supports his ensuing praise of "my grave muse," but it also suggests that too close an identification of subject and expression provides a faulty premise on which to build both his praise and his hopes for his own style. This identification is also evident in the assumption that Phillis' eloquence flows "from the fountain of <u>true</u> eloquence," (emphasis added) and a parallel conclusion is drawn in Damon's assertion that her "modest mien" aptly reflects the inner qualities of faith and virtue. His task, accordingly, is to discover a style equivalent to these "greater gifts," a style which will in turn be able to immortalize those glories inevitably in thralldom to time. Yet the couplet's conditional mode, implying the difficulty of

subduing time's power, also reminds the reader of Phillis' implicit association with other "frail beauties and unstable," a reminder confirmed immediately following by Demades' words on the changes age will bring.

Thus in his treatment of expression, although he reveals a more sophisticated understanding of the issues involved than has Smith's Corin and a degree of wit and education shared with the figure of his creator, Damon is also presented at a consistent distance from that figure. Repeatedly, the reader is invited to see more than Damon's perspective, limited by the conventions of love, allows him to see. Damon does show signs of a growth in understanding, nevertheless: provoked by the eclogue's debate with Demades, it seems, he adopts a more instructive role similar to that of the older shepherd in Phillis 26:

> I'll teach thee, lovely Phillis, what love is.
> It is a vision seeming such as though,
> That flies as fast as it assaults mine eyes;
> It is affection that doth reason miss;
> It is a shape of pleasure like to you,
> Which meets the eye, and seen on sudden dies;
> It is a doubted grief, a spark of pleasure
> Begot by vain desire. And this is love,
> Whom in our youth we count our chiefest treasure,
> In age for want of power we reprove.
> Yea, such a power is love, whose want is pain,
> And having got him we repent our gain.

Damon's tone here is ambivalent. His relation to Phillis and comments on the ephemerality of love and pleasure suggest that he has assimilated Demades' advice, recently given. The assertion that love is "Begot by vain desire," furthermore, adds a particularly specific echo and retains the ambiguity of Demades' play on "vanity": it is not clear, that is, whether the young shepherd is here reacting merely to the futility of

his pursuit or recognizes the egocentricity of his perspective. At the same time, his own position in the first eclogue is recalled by the contrast of youth and age. While Damon's mood is regretful rather than self-assertive, the two lines ("Whom in our youth...") retain something of his earlier skepticism about the source of that wisdom which accrues to age and experience; the association of impotence with moral correction as well implies that Damon's "lesson" derives as much from his sense of futility as from greater understanding.

Two points about his stance are particularly significant in understanding how Lodge presents Damon's development in the course of the sequence. In the first place, by assimilating Demades' attitude to the effects of time on love and beauty, Damon has adopted a role generated within the sequence, in the figure of another of the poet's fictional creations. He has not, in other words, so much drawn nearer the figure of his creator, the historical poet, as benefited from a perspective which Lodge embodies in the character of the older shepherd. In the second place, gaps between Damon's and the reader's understanding of his situation confirm the speaker's distance from the poet, who thus invites the reader to share a more encompassing perspective than Damon himself possesses. His identification of Phillis as "a vision seeming" and "a shape of pleasure," for instance, suggests her similarity to "those frail beauties and unstable" which have been the subject of Phillis 20's first quatrain. In part, the similarity is an inevitable consequence of Phillis' human reality, despite the lover's deification of her, and Damon perhaps significantly makes no reference to the immortalizing powers of art in this poem. Indeed as an implied

listener, directly addressed by Damon, Phillis is more emphatically present here than in many of the work's sonnets, and attention thus falls directly on her human role in the fictional events unfolding. This not only contrasts with her inspiring role as Damon's "grave muse" (20) elsewhere; it also introduces to the reader the possibility of doubts about her virtue. In retrospect, the regretful note of Phillis 26 anticipates the development of the sequence's final ode, which effects a transition between sonnet 39 and the re-appearance of the poet, concerned that "these silly small things/ May win this worldly palm," in Phillis 40. Yet Damon betrays no suspicion of falsity in Phillis 26 or in the intervening sonnets, which build instead to the climax of sonnet 39's luxurious vision of delight. The sudden turn-about in fact emphasizes how unprepared Damon is for the discovery that Phillis' "Heart [is] unstable, light as feathers." ("An Ode")

His most emphatic statement on the fleeting nature and false appearances of love is one which frees Damon to explore the resources of intellect rather than emotion: "Wit shall guide me in this durance,/ Since in love is no assurance." ("An Ode") In fact, the ode's final stanza employs these resources, tacitly acknowledging the wisdom of Demades' perception, to anticipate the revenge which time will exact from the unfaithful lady:

> Prime youth lusts not age still follow,
> And make white those tresses yellow;
> Wrinkled face for looks delightful;
> Shall acquaint the dame despightful;
> And when time shall eat thy glory,
> Then too late thou wilt be sorry.
> Siren pleasant, foe to reason,
> Cupid plague thee for thy treason!

His analysis of the folly which led him to this fate balances blame of

Phillis with a recognition of Damon's own limited, Narcissus-like perspective: "Of thine eyes, I made my mirror,/ From thy beauty came my error." Yet Damon's final detachment from the experience in which he has been immersed is the result not of his drawing closer to the figure of his creator, but of the poet's handling of the work's fictional circumstances. Damon is a victim, ultimately, of trust in his own celebratory praise of the lady, and only the discovery that "Others warm them at my fuel" brings home to him the extent of his self-deception.

The final development of Phillis, then, resolves Damon's situation by an implied fictional action. The dramatic turn-about in his response to the lady sustains a sense of the speaker's distance from the figure of his creator, who controls this action as he has Damon's circumstances and capacity for perception throughout the work. The experience of love brought to a neat conclusion, Lodge re-enters in Phillis 40 to address a larger audience of readers and patrons on the subject of his collected verses. The parodic note introduced in the final action is evident here as well:

> Resembling none, and none so poor as I,
> Poor to the world, and poor in each esteem,
> Whose first borne loves, at first obscured did lie,
> And bred no fame but flame of base misdeeme.
> Under the ensign of whose tyred pen,
> Love's legions forth have maskt, by others masked:
> Think how I live wrong by ill-tongued men,
> Not Master of my self, to all wrongs tasked.

The note is, however, pointedly self-parodic, as despite his complaints about publication of his verses, Lodge speculates that "perhaps these silly small things/ May win this worldly palm" (40) and compares himself to Homer in his vow to future creation. By complaining that he has been "wronged", moreover, Lodge self-consciously and humorously adopts the

role of his speaker, and utters the protest which a fictional character like Damon might make at his helplessness in his creator's hands. Phillis 40 thus confirms and exploits the relation between poet and speaker which has been consistent throughout the sequence.

Accordingly, while the more self-assertive and witty character of Damon adds to Phillis an intellectual interest beyond that which Chloris stirs, both shepherd-lovers remain entirely "in character"--a character shaped, set in motion, and controlled by the figure of the poet from whom each speaker thus remains distinct. The nature of this relation may be more obvious in Chloris, since the main features of Smith's work are coherence as much as progressive development and consistency rather than growth in the created character. His focus is reflected in Chloris' careful attention to the shepherd's natural environment and its exclusion of the courtly world in which love assumes a more public form. The speaker is thus provided with an appropriate setting which supports characterization in a number of ways: it builds into the sequence a sense of the shepherd's daily occupations and makes plausible, for instance, his reliance on the natural processes of time; it signifies the limitation of Chloris' scope to the private experience of the speaker; and it reinforces Corin's assimilation of notions of pastoral decorum to the lover's humble dependence on the lady. This assimilation in turn controls the range of expression in the sequence. Filled by turns with hope for the future and regret for his present pain, Corin nevertheless remains immersed in his experience, accepting its confines as he does the shepherd's proper restriction to the pastoral sphere. The effect is to present the experience of love from within, and the

success of Chloris depends largely on the reader's acceptance of the work's premises, sympathetic sharing of the speaker's perspective, and enjoyment of the plausibility and consistency of his characterization.

What remains an implicit element in Chloris, the effect of the speaker's acceptance of the restrictions imposed by his dual role of shepherd-lover, is a more emphatic source of interest in Phillis, whose first eclogue centres the work on questions of decorum and aspiration. Lodge achieves this intensification by adding the fictional voice of an older shepherd, spokesman for traditional wisdom but capable, because of his more detached perspective, of offering insight into Damon's character and situation. Most significantly, Demades' presence suggests the possibility of an alternative understanding without seeming to stand for the poet himself; his analysis, moreover, provides at least a partial goal for Damon's development in the course of the sequence. At the same time, the process by which Damon, in response to Demades' critique of his attitudes, replaces pastoral mores and the operation of "kind time" with a concentration on Phillis and the effects of "kind love" is interesting in itself, and the fictional circumstances of the debate allow a more dynamic presentation of character than is possible with the single speaking voice of Chloris.

The effects of this interaction are several. In the first place, the reader is alerted to Damon's articulation of the general rules of love as a series of constraints imposed on the lover from without: he argues, for instance, that "lovers must keep silent what they feel" (10) and that "Who lives enthralled to Cupid and his flame/ From day to day is changed in sundry sort." (38) The central elegy similarly bemoans

the natural elements' power over events in which Damon is immersed, and its juxtaposition with Demades' analysis of Damon's problems makes possible for the reader an ironic understanding of his complaints. Secondly, some growth is evident in the younger shepherd's adaptation of Demades' perspective in his own understanding of love; the reader is conscious of Damon's benefiting from a more detached vision of his situation, which the poet has incorporated into the action of the sequence by an additional fictional character. Finally, the implied action of Phillis' conclusion confirms that Demades' perspective is itself limited. The discovery of the lady's changeable affections has not been anticipated in the cautious warnings of the first eclogue; nor, it is clear in the contrast between Phillis 39's luxurious vision and the bitter attack of the final ode, has an awareness of human fickleness constituted any part of the more encompassing perspective Damon has achieved. In that final action, then, is exerted the historical poet's distance from and control over the created character of the lover-a relation similar to that which has consistently informed Smith's Chloris.

The decision to create a fictional character, as these two sequences demonstrate, does not limit the poet to one type of speaker or to a single pattern of action. Even in their common application of certain features of the pastoral mode, Chloris and Phillis present varying approaches to the issues of aspiration and expression raised both by the pastoral convention and by the conventions of love. Yet these two sequences have ultimately a similar effect, derived from the poet's consistent distance from the figure of the lover: the reader is

invited to some degree of sympathetic identification with the poet's perspective, so that his attitude towards the lover is to some extent ironic. Lodge's addition of a third fictional character and his inversion of the usual pastoral resolution emphasize Damon's limitations, yet in Phillis the discrepancy between the speaker's and the reader's awareness is partially offset by Damon's growth in understanding over the course of the sequence. No such development is necessary to retain a sympathetic response to Corin, because the potential for an ironic understanding of his situation is never so dramatically enacted in Chloris as it is in the central debate of Phillis. Instead, Smith uses consistent characterization, and especially the humility of his speaker as shepherd and as lover, to present from within the effects of love on one who is immersed in the experience and who accepts his limited capacity to shape that experience. In neither work does the historical poet emerge as a direct voice or implied presence to bridge the gap between himself and his fictional creation, to blur the line which distinguishes the two figures, and to create ambiguity about the nature of the sequences' central character and of his experience.

CHAPTER 3

Like Chloris and Phillis, Fletcher's Licia and Barnes' Parthenophil and Parthenophe are essentially self-contained works in which the poet's energies are devoted, not to exploiting possible tensions between real and imaginative worlds, poet and lover, but to sustaining the illusion of character and action which generates the sequence and limits the range of the speaker's voice. In Licia, for instance, the experience of love is presented as a longing for the ideal integrity and generative power embodied by the lady, yet the figurative significance of the work in which he operates does not enter the lover's consciousness to suggest his proximity to the figure of the poet. Immersed instead in the immediacy of his experience (its temporal dimensions stressed by the sequence's calendrical structure), Licia's speaker operates entirely within a limited framework whose dimensions are carefully established and consistency sustained by natural description and internal reference. Although he shines the light of a more sophisticated awareness on questions of imaginative creation and expression which do not occur to Smith's Corin or to Lodge's Damon, Fletcher's lover is incapable of achieving the more encompassing awareness which the poet invites his reader to share of the experience of love.

The idealistic strain of Licia, whose celebratory development of the lady is one of its predominant, and most effective, features, is in striking contrast to the more mixed tones of Parthenophil and Parthenophe. Indeed, Barnes' work stands apart from the other minor sequences which present the fictional character of the lover in a number

of respects: the sonnets with which this chapter will deal constitute only the first of the three-part work, Parthenophil and Parthenophe, and even in this section the sonnets are mingled with groups of madrigals. As a sequence, then, it lacks the formal coherence of Chloris, Phillis, or Licia, and the uneven quality of individual poems means that the work lacks that consistent, unassuming competence in handling conventional materials which is often a modest virtue of the minor sequences. A greater diversity of tone, however, indicates that Barnes' interests are distinct from those of Smith, Lodge, and Fletcher; poems of adoration or despair are joined in Parthenophil and Parthenophe to several in which the lover expresses misogynist sentiments, exploits an erotic vein of wit, or offers a satiric look at the courtly context which again marks off Parthenophil's world from the pastoral environment presented in Chloris and Phillis and implied in the natural description and imagery of Licia. Finally, at several points in the sequence there is a temporary shift in the stance of the speaker, so that he steps out of the role of lover and instead evokes by his more encompassing consciousness the presence of the poet in his work.

This last feature alone justifies an examination of Parthenophil and Parthenophe, despite its stylistic and metrical weaknesses and its formal anomalies, and indeed the effect of brief shifts in the speaker's stance occasionally anticipates the use major sonneteers will make of this rhetorical strategy. Yet we discover that Barnes employs an identification of speaker and poet for more limited purposes: sonnet 50's self-conscious commentary on the shape and scope of the poem, for instance, effects a transition to the second half of the work instead of

altering its fundamental nature. While Parthenophil's character develops greater sophistication in this second half, and while his improved perception and mastery of courtly techniques are occasionally supported by direct evidence of the poet's more encompassing awareness, interest in the witty effects thus produced is subordinated to a sense of the design evoked by the basic contours of the fictional action: once Parthenophil's feeling of an exhausted futility has been revitalized by the poet's brief entry in sonnets 50 and 51, he develops several tendencies plausibly provoked by the circumstances established early in the sequence and consistent with characterization to this point. In particular, a rhythm which balances wordplay or satiric tendencies, impelled by observation of the courtly game of love, against an impulse to withdraw to a simpler pastoral milieu enacts Parthenophil's susceptibility to the experience in which he is immersed, throughout the course of the sequence.

As the Introduction has pointed out, Fletcher's dedicatory letters to Licia's patroness and to the general reader play with the range of relations which may exist between speaker and poet. What is most striking for an analysis of Licia itself, however, are his reflections on the identity and significance of the lady: these comments implicitly prepare the reader for a speaker whose adoration is his salient feature and for the distance sustained over the course of the sequence between the historical poet and the fictional lover. Fletcher provides a compendium of figurative functions which the lady of a sonnet sequence may serve, beginning with the representation of "some Diana, at the least chaste, or some Minerva, no Venus, fairer farre," ("To the

Reader," 80) in which capacity her relation to the speaker may demonstrate the virtuous and educative character of fin amour. Love is not an idle or frivolous subject, claims Fletcher, but

> the perfect resemblance of the greatest happinesse, and rightlie valued at his just price, (in a mynde that is syncerely and truly amorous) an affection of greatest vertue, and able of him selfe to aeternize the meanest vassall.
> ("To...the Ladie Mollineux," 74)

The second letter defines the sincerely amorous mind, moreover, as focused entirely on "the vertues of the beloved, satisfied with woondering, fedde with admiration." ("To the Reader," 79) Other possibilities, more surprising because of their distance from the presumed emotional content of the sequence, sanction the widest range of allegorical readings:

> it may be shee is Learnings image, or some heavenlie woonder, which the precisest may not mislike: perhaps that name I have shadowed Discipline. It may be, I meane that kinde courtesie which I found at the Patronesse of these Poems; it may be some Collidge; it may bee my conceit, and pretend nothing.
> ("To the Reader," 80)

The poet does not commit himself to a specific statement of intention, in other words, but instead allows for an understanding of Licia which recognizes that the poet may employ his amatory material for a variety of purposes besides expressing his own feelings and experiences in love.

Far from demonstrating the far-ranging and flexible response to which Fletcher's lines invite the reader, however, Licia's speaker is single-minded in his focus on the lady and content with admiring wonder. Signs of a truly amorous mind, according to the poet, these features create a character whose worth we respect, but whose limited awareness simultaneously reminds us of the extent to which his role as lover

determines all aspects of his personality and expression, so that he can serve a purpose beyond his capacity to understand.

We should recognize, nevertheless, the skill with which Licia's design is accomplished. A number of its techniques cooperate to create the self-contained world in which the lover is immersed: the relative fullness and consistency of the work's predominantly pastoral scene, Fletcher's use of calendar symbolism to suggest an experience with temporal dimensions parallel to those of actual life, and Licia's internal references are significant elements in the work's fictional self-sufficiency. The speaker's mythological references, a familiar feature of the genre, are shaped to the same end; his habit of identifying mythological figures rather than alluding more evocatively to tales in which they occur prevents the development of a competing fiction and sustains his role as lover, rather than as poet working self-consciously with his material to shape the response of a larger audience. In fact, his treatment of expression, while it demonstrates the lover's concerns with the futility of his pleas, implies that the absence of such self-consciousness is a central cause of his rhetorical ineffectiveness. He lacks, that is, the poet's capacity to distance himself from his experience, to gain thereby a more encompassing perspective on his situation, and to evaluate his procedure more dispassionately. Unable to shape the presentation of his emotions in such a way as to persuade the lady of his sincerity and to exert control over his situation, the lover thus stands at the opposite extreme from the figure of his creator, who silently shapes the design and implications of Licia from behind the scenes.

In the fixity of his stance, and the limitations that fixity imposes on the scope of his expression, the lover illustrates Fletcher's conception of the truly amorous mind. Fletcher seeks to mediate, in the course of Licia, between that desire for possession which produces the genre's conventional modes of plea and lament and the belief that "Love is a Goddesse (pardon me though I speaker like a Poet) not respecting the contentment of him that loves but the vertues of the beloved." ("To the Reader," 79) Only in three early sonnets which take as their subject paintings of Licia and Cupid is the lover freed from an immersion in his experience to speak with more detachment of love and art. As a result, he achieves the more distanced perspective which Fletcher's dedicatory letters suggest is necessary for rhetorical effectiveness, and the action of these sonnets confirms the implications of his prose comments and the sonnets which treat expression: the lover's playful wit allows him to exert a degree of imaginative control over the situation. These three sonnets thus provide a measure of the limitations imposed by a more direct engagement with the experience of love than that posed by others' artful representations of its features.

That the work itself is an artful construct with a complimentary function is clear in the dedicatory material: "if thou likest it, take it and thanke the worthie Ladie Mollineux, for whose sake thou hast it." ("To the Reader," 80) The emphasis which Fletcher places on interpretive freedom, however, effectively diverts any direct identification of Licia with a specific human figure like the sequence's patroness. Within Licia itself, a single interruption to the closely integrated work reminds the reader similarly of Fletcher's desire to

compliment his patroness: his "Sonnet Made Upon the Two Twins, Daughters of the Ladie Mollineux, Both Passing Like and Exceeding Fair," placed between sonnets 40 and 41, cooperates with the dedicatory material to place the sequence in a social context of patronage and poetic aspiration. Apart from the general appropriateness of its celebratory mode, however, the occasional poem bears little immediate relevance to the rest of the sequence. Unlike Constable, whose awareness of Diana's larger context has a pervasive effect on the sequence itself, Fletcher makes no effort to integrate an actual social ambiance into Licia's presentation of the personal realm of lover and lady.[1]

The context in which the reader is invited to understand the individual sonnets of Licia is created entirely by their interrelations and fixed within the boundaries of the work itself. Its close integration and fictional self-sufficiency are achieved by a number of structural devices which convey the sense of a gradual progression through time; Licia gives the impression of a temporal development which parallels, but does not draw explicitly upon, that of real-life experience. Prescott argues that a central principle of organization is Fletcher's use of numerical patterning:

> the fifty-two sonnets in Licia form a calendar in which the lady herself is closely associated with the sun and its passage through the days, weeks, and seasons of the year. (170)

The implication of the year's rotation, she points out, is supported by indications of the seasons' passage in changes of tone and descriptive detail. Thematically, several sonnets focus on the cycle of time to demonstrate Licia's sun-like transcendence over the sublunary world in

which the lover is immersed: while he counts off the "Yeares, months, days, hours" (32) spent in sighing, she surpasses on the one hand the beauties of "those days" (3) in the mythological past and, on the other, the future days which the frequently anthologized Licia 28 claims will destroy all present glories.

To reinforce this effect, Fletcher occasionally uses the device common in Smith's Chloris, of beginning one sonnet with the final line of the preceding poem, but more often he relies on later references to episodes that have been the subject of earlier poems, in order to knit the sequence together into a seamless whole which has created its own context. The kiss which the speaker desires in Licia 4 and 12, for instance, is granted in sonnet 16, and that episode is recalled in the opening lines of sonnet 19: "That time, fair Licia, when I stole a kiss,/ From off those lips...." It is later echoed as a thematic concern, though not specifically recollected as an event, in Licia 35's return to the lover's desire for a kiss. Similarly, the final plea to "Live but fair love, and banish thy disease" prompts the reader to accept the mistress' illness as immediate provocation to the writing of Licia 20, and it is only in a later reference that the outcome is disclosed:

> Whenas my love lay sickly in her bed,
> Pale death did post in hope to have a prey;
> But she so spotless made him that he fled;
> ...
> So now she lives and never more shall fade. (43)

Finally, Licia 14 presents a witty account of the lady's clipping of Cupid's wings--"His feathers still she used for a fan,/ Till by exchange my heart his feathers won"--and she reappears later "masked, and armed

with a fan" (23) which is used again in sonnet 48 against a spider. Such allusions are an important reinforcement of the usual thematic and imagistic connections between individual poems, for they not only establish the nature of the work as one which refers to itself rather than to a world outside its scope, but also by their specificity serve to create the illusion of actual experience unfolding within the verse.

This specificity is reflected elsewhere in Fletcher's technique. A number of poems, especially in the earlier half of the sequence, open with fairly extensive setting of the predominantly pastoral scene: "Licia my love was sitting in a grove,/ Turning her smiles unto the chirping songs," (21) "I live, sweet love, whereas the gentle wind/ Murmurs with sport in midst of thickest bough," (26) and "My love lay sleeping, where birds music made." (16) As these examples suggest, the speaker puts his description of the natural world to fairly conventional uses, either as a harmonious parallel to human delight or as a contrast to his despair. The frequency of adjectives and active verbs, however, indicates his desire to evoke a sensuous reality, as in the search for a metaphor to capture the vivid effect of Licia 17's particular scene: "As twinkling stars, the tinsel of the night,/ Or as the fish that gallop in the seas." The same effect is conveyed when the sonnet seems to result from a meditative rather than a narrative impulse. While "the rocks, the marble and the steel,/ The ancient oak with wind and weather tossed" (8) are traditional items to which to compare the lady's hardheartedness, the additional detail that the oak has long withstood the contention of natural forces reminds the reader of the poem's grounding in a dynamic world and communicates another dimension of the

lady in her resistance to continued suit.

Yet description is never allowed to divert attention from Licia's focus on the lady. In sonnet 26, for instance, the octave's development of a vivid and detailed setting is cut short by the sestet's emphasis on her association with a particular place. Ultimately, any interest the scene provokes in itself is subordinated to the value it derives from that association--"Live then, fair Licia, in this place alone;/ Then shall I joy though all of these were gone." The priorities thus revealed are a factor in plausible characterization of the lover, and Fletcher's concern to evoke the values and single-mindedness appropriate to his fictional character cuts short any display of poetic skill on the part of the lover.

The treatment of allegorical and mythological figures in the course of Licia is comparable. As with the natural world, specific description is used to bring such figures to life in the first sonnets and especially to characterize the personified figure of love: "Love and my love did range the forest wild,/ Mounted alike upon swift coursers both." (47) In fact Cupid and Venus become, to some extent, characters within the action of the sequence, their behaviour bound up with the actions of the lover and Licia but rarely suggesting by allusion the mythological narratives in which they would be familiar to Fletcher's readers. Instead, the conventional associations they have gathered in such tales are generally made explicit, as in the speaker's description of Cupid as a "wanton foolish boy" (2) or of Venus in her pride: "(The matchless queen, commander of the gods,/ When drawn by doves she in her pomp doth ride)." (11) Like the cutting-short of description which

threatens to provoke intrinsic interest, the habit of identification rather than allusion prevents any dilution of Licia's concentration on the lover's tale which might otherwise occur from the development of a competing fiction.

When the speaker does make use of the roles these mythological figures have played in tales outside the limited scope of the sequence, such references are carefully subordinated to the function they serve in the poem itself. Any reverberations which might be set up by Licia 3's allusions to the transformations of Jove, for instance, are subordinated to the lover's role here, merely to report a dialogue concerning Licia between the heavens and Cupid. He stands at a distance from the tale, then, which is not his creation but the retelling of others' words. This effect is reinforced by the generality of the allusion, in which no particular guise or match is specified in the heavens' question:

> "Why dotes not Jove [on Licia], as erst we all have seen,
> And shapes himself like to a seemly man?
> Mean are the matches which he sought before,
> Like bloomless buds, too base to make compare."

Jove's amours are significant only as they reveal one aspect of his character, which in turn provides a new approach to Licia's beauty and the admiration she inspires. Correspondingly, as Cupid attempts to determine why Jove does not pursue her, the spatial and temporal distance evoked in his reply--"I posted with the sun,/ To view the maids that lived in those days"--sustains a general perspective on those to whom Licia might be compared in order to set off her singularity: "none there were that might not well be won,/ But she, most hard, most cold, made of delays." Thus the allusive implications of such references are

regularly restrained to sustain concentration on Licia herself: "she them surpasseth," (11) the lover concludes a comparison to Venus, Juno, and Minerva, and this motif--common enough in praise of the sonnet-lady--provides in Licia for the subordination of elements that might otherwise draw the reader's attention to the speaker's knowledge or poetic skill. The techniques of description and evocation, significant in Watson's or in Constable's work as a means of emphasizing the speaker's role as poet, are placed under more rigid control in Licia, and are employed instead to achieve the lover's goal of praise of the lady.

These contrasting opportunities for the sequence's speaker, and the alternative roles they embody, are drawn to the reader's attention in Licia's opening sonnet. This poem depicts a transfer of allegiance from Phoebus to Venus which has important consequences for the rest of the sequence. Significantly, even as the speaker tells of his ambitious thoughts of the "laurel garland," which "compelled me to aspire...a poet to become," his posture is that of the conventional melancholy lover: "Sad all alone...I musing sat." Phoebus' response to his suit picks up on the suggestion of a dual allegiance, for he "denied, and sware there was no room,/ Such to be poets as fond fancy led." From the beginning of Licia, then, a distinction is established between poetic ambition independent of other motives and that aspiration to poetic expression which is motivated by "fond fancy," or love. This distinction is confirmed by the sestet's exchange, in which Venus enters to offer consolation and a compensatory interest to the rejected speaker:

> With that I mourned, and sat me down to weep.
> Venus she smiled, and smiling to me said,

> "Come drink with me, and sit thee still and sleep."
> This voice I heard; and Venus I obeyed.
> That poison sweet hath done me all this wrong,
> For now of love must needs be all my song.

In the regretful tone of the couplet, the reader may well hear the historical poet's adoption of the conventional guise of humility about the scope of his work, here viewed in retrospect; but the restriction he identifies is indeed a significant aspect of Licia's development--not only in its acknowledged impact on the subject matter to be treated, but as well in the limitations it imposes on the speaker's stance and the range of his expression.

Throughout the sequence, obedience to the commands of Venus is evident most obviously in the lover's conventional subservience to the lady and in assertions of his utter dependence on her: "I live in her, in her I place my life," (7) "And I shall live because my life you hold,/ You that give life to every living thing." (19) Such declarations, reinforcing imagistic development of Licia's sun-like virtues in providing warmth and life, are traditional hyperbolic means of accomplishing the lover's goals: contributing to her praise in the third-person reference of sonnet 7 or to the persuasive mode of Licia 19's direct address. Yet such hyperbole also intensifies the reader's perception of the speaker's submissive stance, as he accepts captivity and the threat of immolation on the condition only that she be jailor or executioner:

> My heart lay guarded by those burning eyes
> The sparks whereof denied him [Cupid] to remove (7)

> Fair, burn...[both my heart and life]..., for that
> they were so bold,
> But let the altar be within thy heart;
> ...

> A flame I took whenas I stole the kiss;
> Take you my life, yet can I live with this. (19)

The punning sense of "live with" in the latter--either simply to bear destruction or to achieve the hope expressed earlier, that being burned "with brightness of your eyes,/...phoenix-like from thence I may arise" (15)--suggests a capacity for witty play on the situation, but that wit is in either case put to the service of accepting dependence on Licia, rather than to the attainment of more detached control over the situation. The pun, then, serves to reinforce meaning rather than to suggest an alternative to or to invite reflection upon the primary meaning. Even the possibility of being reduced to "cinders," (8) suggesting the extinction of the lover's identity, provides early in the sequence an appropriate image for the subservient relation which obtains throughout.

The effect of submission is mirrored in considerations of the lover's capacity for independent and effective expression. Standing "as one enchanted with a frown," (40) he witnesses the power of Licia's eyes and "dumb replies" (40) over all creatures, yet himself aspires only to the most straightforward articulation of his feelings, in the form of a "speaking heart." (40) Even in this very limited sense, aesthetic expression is marred rather than strengthened by the power of the lover's emotions, as his verse is "blurred with tears" (33) and inadequate either to reflect her beauty faithfully or to persuade her to love in return:

> I wrote my signs, and sent them to my love;
> I praised that fair that none enough could praise;
> But plaints nor praises could fair Licia move. (33)

The closest approximation of this goal is the sympathy he occasionally

derives from the natural setting, where "my sighs are echoed of the wind;/...my tears are pitied of the rain." (36) When Licia herself is absent, though, even this inadequate solace fails, and the lover is "left distressed to live alone,/ Where none my tears and mournful tale shall mark." (43) The moon, "to whom my griefs I told," (43) likewise fails to respond appropriately.

The goals of the speaker, then, are limited by the conventional nature of his stance as a lover and by his fixity in this stance: he wants to express his feelings, to praise the lady, and by these means to move her to sympathy, if not to love in return. The limitations of his aspirations and of his persuasive power is particularly marked by contrst to the mute power of Licia's personality to evoke response, to enchant both man and beast. Her immediate presence, moreover, is an essential precondition to his achieving even such a narrow goal as the mirroring of his emotional state for the purpose of gaining sympathy:

> Like Memnon's rock, touched with the rising sun
> Which yields a sound and echoes forth a voice,
> But when it's drowned in western seas is done,
> And drowsy-like leaves off to make a noise;
> So I, my love, enlightened with your shine,
> A poet's skill within my soul I shroud,
> Not rude like that which finer wits decline,
> But such as Muses to the best allowed.
> But when your figure and your shape is gone,
> I speechless am like as I was before;
> Or if I write, my verse is filled with moan,
> And blurred with tears by falling in such store.
> Then muse not, Licia, if my Muse is slack,
> For when I wrote I did thy beauty lack. (47)

The initial allusion suggests that the best the speaker can hope for is, not a distinctive voice, but an echo generated by a more genuinely creative source. The lover's stance is similar to that of Damon, who "hope[s] ere long to be/ A voice." (Phillis 38) The possibilities of

enlightenment and the assertion of his capacity in the second quatrain are, accordingly, undercut both by the context the first quatrain establishes and by the implications of the "shroud" enclosing his "poet's skill." The image of the shroud has appeared in the dedicatory verses of Chloris and Phillis and in the letter "To Lord Edward de Vere" which prefaces Watson's Passionate Centurie. In the use of the image within this sequence, however, the speaker's skill is "shrouded" not by a protective patron but within his own soul, reflecting Licia's substitution of the personal realm for the social context evoked in the dedicatory material of each of the sequences. It suggests as well the metaphoric death of independent poetic aspiration in the transfer of allegiance imaged in Licia's opening sonnet, and these implications, not the more positive possibilities of growth and discovery, are developed in the alternatives of speechlessness or weakened capacity in sonnet 47's final lines.

Certain images and techniques, then, identify Fletcher's speaker as a lover of the kind familiar from Smith's Chloris or Lodge's Phillis; pastoral strains are evident in Licia, as we have seen, not only in the sequence's setting but as well in its lover's expectation of sympathy and consolation from the natural world, which serves as his larger audience just as it has done in Chloris and Phillis. Again, there is remarkably little sense of a public audience; only occasionally in an observation directed outside the scope of Licia's personal realm or its pastoral setting--"I mourn alone, because alone I burn;/ Who doubts of this, then let him learn to love." (34) Here, as with the specificity of earlier poems, the lover grounds his assertions on personal

experience, but concern with mode of expression, which might suggest an identification of speaker and poet, is rare in Licia. Even the location of this observation, in the middle of the sonnet, indicates the subordination of a temporary impulse--to take note of others' response and to instruct them--to the primary concern of the poem, which is to intensify the lover's depiction of his woe and hence to add weight to his appeal for sympathy. As is the case in Chloris 29, the social world enters Licia only to make a point of its exclusion from the sequence's personal sphere, or to present the truths of that sphere as superior to worldly wisdom. Sonnet 23, for instance, offers a scenario in which various observers speculate about Licia's mask, a "wonder" from the lover's perspective as he, more knowledgeable than they, confides the truth:

> But these the reason of this wonder missed,
> ...
> ...she more kind did show she had more care
> Than with her eyes eclipse him [the sun] of his
> bliss. (23)

In the sonnet following, even death, to whom "'All things,.../ Both towns and men, and what the world doth hold'" (24) are subject, acknowledges that he has no dominion over Licia. She is thus consistently set apart from the values of the world and untouched by its conditions , while the lover, like Corin and Damon, claims that the experience of love is a solitary rather than a social one: "I for your love did all the world despise." (44)

The lover's humble stance may yet produce an examination of various modes of aspiration which implicitly remind the reader of alternative roles available to the speaker. As Damon did, so Fletcher's lover

readjusts the humility which is appropriate in his relation to the lady so that it becomes an assertion of the superior value of love to more worldly ambition. Licia 12's renunciation, for instance, subtly echoes the opening sonnet's desire for a laurel garland, or poetic fame, by lingering briefly over wishes now left behind:

> I wish sometimes, although a worthless thing,
> Spurred by ambition, glad to aspire,
> Myself a monarch, or some mighty king,
> And then my thoughts do wish for to be higher.
> But when I view what winds the cedars toss,
> What storms men feels [sic] that covet for renown,
> I blame myself that I have wished my loss,
> And scorn a kingdom, though it bring a crown.

The posture and imagery of the second quatrain, like the qualifying "although a worthless thing," limit the octave's argument to the pastoral's traditional scorn for ambition and recommendation of contenment with a humble lot, unthreatened by the blows of fortune. It is an entirely pragmatic argument, reminiscent in its effect of the similar dynamic operating in Chloris or in Phillis--widening temporarily the scope of the sequence only to restrict its perspective to the proper sphere, activities, and attitudes of the shepherd. Licia's lover begins with the wind-tossed cedars familiar from the speeches of Corin and other pastoral figures. He then links the practical argument against ambition to a celebration of Licia herself and to a revised declaration of aspiration:

> Ah Licia, though the wonder of my thought,
> My heart's content, procurer of my bliss,
> For whom a crown I do esteem as naught,
> As Asia's wealth, too mean to buy a kiss!

The speaker's exclusion from the highest circles of fame, the subject of sorrow in the opening sonnet, is here accepted and even welcomed--first

on the grounds of practical wisdom and then by elevation of the lady into an object of desire more worthy than "crowns and kingdoms." Furthermore, while he sustains the humble posture of one who knows himself "a worthless thing," the repetition of "scorn" in lines 8 and 14, the turning point and conclusion of the poem, emphasize the lover's feeling that he has wisely refocused his aspiration.

Thus celebration of the lady is, at least implicitly, a means of elevating the status of her lover as well: although Fletcher's speaker can no longer hope "To drink with...[the Muses]...and from the heavens be fed," (1) by establishing Licia as a sun-like, nourishing figure--a substitute for Phoebus and the Muses--he may assume a position from which to "scorn" at least more worldly honours. While analogies to the sun are not uncommon to the Petrarchan mode of praise (the parodic opening of Shakespeare's "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun" testifying to the popularity of the comparison), the identification is particularly insistent in Licia, is distinct from other methods used to celebrate her virtues, and is marked especially at the beginning of the sequence by personification of the sun through its mythological counterpart. Hence Licia enters the sequence frowning "like Phoebus in a cloud," (2) and is soon presented as "Fairer than Phoebus, in his brightest pride," (13) an opinion confirmed by the envy of the sun, which "gazing waxed wan/ To see a sun himself that was more bright," (23) and by a series of comparisons in the cosmological Licia 25:

> The rising Sun doth boast him of his pride,
> And yet my love is far more fair than he.
> ...
> Saturn for age with groans doth dim the air,
> Whereas my love with smiles doth give it light.

In Sidney's terms, Fletcher's speaker seems here to posit the centrality of his mistress to a golden world of enlightenment and creative power--an association evident as well in the reference to Memnon's rock--set off by explicit contrast to the gloomy dimness of the Saturnian brazen world, or to the drowsiness and sleep of Licia 1 and 47.

Yet that golden world of the lover's concentration on Licia, while providing a wiser focus than worldly ambition and a better understanding than that of observers who "surmize" about the lady's mask, serves rather to emphasize the positive value of the lover's experience, and his worth in appreciating Licia's virtues, than to suggest his own capacity to create such value. The lover celebrates, moreover, the emotional rather than the aesthetic worth of the experience in which he finds himself, and the context of pride, envy, and rivalry in which the Phoebus-Licia comparison recurs is limited to its effectiveness in establishing her superiority to other poles of value. There is no sense, in other words, of the lover's having poetic aspirations or of his engaging in competition with his contemporaries, and what praise he may draw for appreciation and love of Licia is at most a tacit element in the work, as these features provoke the reader's recognition of his worth. The competitive context is relevant primarily to his development of Licia's virtues. As the sequence develops, the motion of the opening sonnet--in which the speaker is rejected by Phoebus and left to the consolation of a sympathetic, almost maternal Venus--is reversed in the imaginative presentation of Licia's superiority to Venus and her capacity to replace Phoebus as superior poet and patron. A humorous

episode of mistaken identity first draws the three together, as Licia, frowning "like Phoebus in a cloud," (2) rejects the sportive Cupid:

> So love my love was forced to forsake,
> And for more speed, without his arrows flew,
> "Pardon," he said, "For why? You seemed to me
> My mother Venus in her pride to be." (2)

In Licia 5, Venus "in pride began to frown" at her son's enthrallment to Licia, and as he substitutes his own captivity in love for that of Cupid, the lover also replaces the goddess with the figure of the lady: "though I myself be thrall,/ Not her a goddess, but thyself I call." Even this technique is inadequate, though, as a means of evoking Licia's superior virtue, since "I call thee Venus, sweet, but be not wroth;/ Thou art more chaste, yet seas did favour both." (22) As episodes like the armor-stealing of sonnet 9 dramatize her victory over the combined forces of Venus and Cupid, so in his treatment does the lover subordinate the goddess, reducing her to a mere analogue for Licia's power, a merely figurative device in contrast to the living power which the lady shares instead with Phoebus. Significantly, while Fletcher may intend the reader to understand the lady as a symbolic figure, the lover is not privy to this possibility, insisting instead on her living reality which he, unable to envision independently, repeatedly begs her to reveal to him: "Unmask you, sweet," (23) "Disperse those clouds that darkened have my rest,/ And let your heaven a sun-like smile but give." (39)

The dimension of Licia's identification with Phoebus which is most significant to the sequence as a whole, and to our understanding of the speaker's stance, is Licia's consistent association with expressive power, in direct contrast to the lover's fears of inadequately

reflecting his emotions in words. Licia is repeatedly described in a musical context, in the singing of the birds or in the discovery at her home of "the Muses with their notes refined." (48) An emblem of harmonious interaction, music is also associated with Licia's power to move: Apollo has granted her "His skill presaging and his music sweet," (51) while her voice and lute bring delight to the rocks and air in sonnet 31 and she is able to calm a storm at sea: "Love at the stern sat smiling and did sing/ To see how seas had learned for to obey." (30) Her "sweet commands," nevertheless, are obeyed even without the additional attraction of music, and Licia is capable of enchanting with a paradoxically mute response:

> I stood as one enchanted with a frown,
> Yet smiled to see all creatures serve those eyes,
> Where each with signs paid tribute to that crown,
> And thought them graced by your dumb replies. (40)

Like Phoebus, Licia serves not only as a desirable patron of expressive power, and thus as the object of the speaker's pleas, but also as herself a model of the skill to which he aspires.

While Licia's capacity to move others is dramatized by the lover's thoughts and feelings throughout the sequence, and while his laments dramatize a feeling of incompleteness when she is absent, of emptiness when she scorns his plea for reciprocal love, it is clear that the lady needs no relation to another figure to be thus fulfilled as a personality. Instead, "she is much more worthy of herself" (51) in her surpassing of the conventional analogies which the lover chooses, and hence beyond the scope of his poetic treatment and of his pleas for love, in an unhampered independence. The episode of mistaken identity at the beginning of Licia initiates a recurrent concern with the nature

of identity and an insistence on the lady's unique personality which is more pronounced than in other minor sequences. Her characteristics may appear contradictory to those who view and would like to move her--"she hath no heat, although she living seem" (3) judges Cupid--but Licia ultimately inspires wonder "that in so fair should be a heart of steel," (32) for the fixed resistance that surpasses the endurance of hardest steel or living frame. (28) Her very spotlessness has defeated "Pale death," (24) and all descriptive details emphasize the firm fixedness of her character, the cooperation of her features and actions to effect control over others, and her self-confidence in this authority.

In striking contrast, the speaker's pallor is evidence instead of a gradual erosion of his faculties and power:

> Pale are my looks, forsaken of my life,
> Cinders my bones, consumed with the flame,
> ...
> And care's increase my life to nothing wears. (34)

Swearing his fidelity on his heart and eyes, those features which "I hold most dear," (18) the lover is effectively dispossessed by the lady's response--"Thou checked mine oath, and said: these were not mine,/ And that I had no right by them to swear" (18)--and his actions in the sonnets following are accordingly characterized by self-divisiveness and self-alienation: "all my forces in themselves divide,/ And make my senses plainly disagree" (35); "So thus my treason all my thoughts have killed." (38) Most strikingly, perhaps, because it moves beyond an unusual insistence on certain conventional motifs to a more innovative approach, the contrast is developed in a sonnet which considers those perils which were undergone by the fathers of both characters. These considerations leave the speaker conscious merely of

the fortuitousness of his own generation and convinced that her conception is the result instead of a providential design:

> I might have died before my life begun,
> Whenas my father for his country's good
> The Persian's favor and the Sophy won
> And yet with danger to his dearest blood.
> Thy father, sweet, whom danger did beset,
> Escaped all, and for no other end
> But only this, that you he might beget,
> Whom heavens decreed into the world to send.
> Then father, thank thy daughter for thy life. (22)

As with the identification of Licia with Phoebus, the lady is here presented as the informing principle of an accomplished design which as well discovers its fullest expression in her. Licia 22 thus emphasizes the paradox of her dual role as inspiration and most complete articulation of a concept of value that the lover celebrates as most worthy.

Licia's dual role, while it produces an explicit treatment of matters of expression, and hence draws the reader's attention to poetic treatment of Licia, has nevertheless an inhibiting effect on that treatment. That the lady be self-sufficient and the lover both dependent and vulnerable is to some extent a given of the genre, but in the fullest depiction of the lady's character we have yet seen in a minor work, Licia attributes to her a firm unassailability, an absolute concreteness, that restricts poetic activity to an essentially imitative role--one that binds the speaker, in other words, to a reflection of what he sees and to aesthetic judgment based on a representational rather than a rhetorical conception of art. In sonnet 33, for instance, one of the few poems which considers the lover's words as independent creations, the possible role of poet is subordinated to his central

identity as lover whose emotional sincerity is the issue of debate:

> Above my reach she did her virtues raise,
> And thus replied: "False Scrawl, untrue thou art,
> To feign those sighs that nowhere can be found;
> For half those praises came not from his heart
> Whose faith and love as yet was never found.
> Thy master's life, false Scrawl shall be thy doom;
> Because he burns, I judge thee to the flame;
> Both your attempts deserve no better room."
> Thus at her words we ashes both became.
> Believe me, fair, and let my paper live;
> Or be not fair, and so me freedom give.

Licia's response, in raising her virtues "above my reach," has several implications: it epitomizes the playfulness with which she treats the lover's adoration as a game, as when "I sighed for love, and you for sport did smile" (44); it insists on her superiority in their relations; and it as well suggests that the subject matter of the lover's verse is beyond his capacity to treat poetically. Unskilled in the rhetorical techniques of the poet or in his ability to achieve some degree of detachment from his material, the lover is thus vulnerable to attacks on the sincerity of his pleas. The paradox is only apparent, and it is one that Fletcher himself well understands, as we have seen: "Now in that I have written Love sonnets, if any man measure my affection by my style, let him say, I am in Love." ("To ...the Ladie Mollineux," 75) The fictional lover whom he presents in the sequence, however, cannot achieve sufficient distance from his emotional state to produce a persuasive style, and the punishment Licia metes out appropriately identifies the lover with the verse.

Licia 37 further develops the debilitating effect on the lover's style of too-close an identification of experience and poetry: "I speak, fair Licia, what my torments be,/ But then my speech too partial

I do find." His recognition of partiality suggests a capacity for detached and objective appraisal, once the speech is made, but the lines following return to the impossibility of achieving such distance during the process of creation, because emotional turmoil disturbs even the attempt at a sincere reflection of his thoughts: "For hardly words can with those thoughts agree,/ Those thoughts that swarm in such a troubled mind." The sonnet then proceeds to measure the alternative of silence, but discovers in it merely a more explosive form of self-destruction as "cannon-like, I then surcharged do break." The couplet returns to futile hopes that a direct mirroring of the lover's frustration, simply the evidence of the poem itself, will somehow move the lady: "Then you, fair Licia, sovereign of my heart,/ Read to yourself my anguish and my smart."

But the verbal contortions of the sonnet immediately following (Licia 38), reinforcing a tortuous pattern of protestation, response, and violent alteration, suggest the rhetorical weakness of his intention. The poem is, in the first place, framed and interrupted by declarations of sincerity, as if by urgent repetition the lover can invalidate Licia's earlier attack on his vow of fidelity, sworn on his heart and eyes: "Thou checked mine oath, and said: these were not mine,/ And that I had no right by them to swear." (18) In Licia 38 as well, the lover wishes "to work in thee belief," (18) but the inconsistency of his oaths weakens their rhetorical impact: he begins with a protestation of his love "seal[ed]...with an oath," (38) while at the conclusion of the octave his thoughts, making a seemingly contrasting protestation, "swore they wished she flatly would say nay,"

only to end the sonnet by swearing that "as you please...they [his thoughts] are content" with whatever treatment she might accord him.

What is sealed at the beginning, moreover, is as confused a rendering of opinion as it is possible to give:

> I never saw that so my thoughts did please;
> And yet content displeased I see them wroth
> To love so much and cannot have their ease. (38)

When submitted to chronological order in the account which follows, the lover's contentment at his thoughts' displeasure becomes only slightly clearer:

> I told my thoughts, my sovereign made a pause,
> Disposed to grant, but willing to delay;
> They then repined, for that they knew no cause,
> And swore they wished she flatly would say nay.
> Thus hath my love my thoughts with treason filled,
> And 'gainst my sovereign taught them to repine.
> So thus my treason all my thoughts hath killed,
> And made fair Licia say she is not mine.
> But thoughts too rash my heart doth now repent;
> And as you please, they swear, they are content.
> (38)

The subject of the ninth line is particularly difficult to determine: in context, it appears that repining thoughts, ready to surrender the struggle, have infected the love that inspires that struggle, but the subject of the second and parallel clause, in line 10, must be love which "taught <u>them</u> [thoughts] to repine," and line 9 must then be read "Thus hath my love filled my thoughts with treason and taught them to repine." It may be, on the other hand, that "my love" refers not to the speaker's emotion but to the object of his love, Licia herself, yet such a reading conflicts with line 10, for this sentence would then have to be paraphrased: "My love [Licia] filled my thoughts with treason and taught them to repine against my sovereign [Licia]"--an interpretation

logically plausible but syntactically improbable. What emerges from these ambiguities is not only a confusion of direction, but as well the strain involved simply in identifying the sources of the lover's confused feelings and hence, at least implicitly, of understanding them.

Thus Licia 38 embodies the rhetorical weakness of the plan resorted to at the end of sonnet 37, to represent directly the lover's emotional frustration. Limited to a mirroring of overwrought emotions and incapable of the detachment needed to shape these feelings into an effective plea, the lover produces a statement as confused as his internal state before relapsing into the couplet's taut, exhausted admission of reliance on Licia's whims. To the sequence's end, it is the effect of this admission which dominates in treatment of expression, as the lover realizes that his poetic hopes, derived from his love of her, can be accomplished only by the lady's kindness and active assistance:

> If you be kind, my queen, as you are fair,
> And aid my thoughts that still for conquest strive,
> Then will I sing and never more despair,
> And praise your kindness while I am alive.
> ...
> Then grace me, sweet, and with thy favor raise me,
> So shall I live and all the world shall praise
> thee. (49)

The joining of the speaker's eternizing impulse with the reminder that "my thoughts...still for conquest strive" recalls the mixed motives of the opening sonnet, bringing Licia full circle and identifying once again the source of the lover's incapacity to reach any detached perspective or control over the situation. Her virtues having been raised above his reach, the lover can only implore her to raise him

also, for the independent attainment of such heights is beyond him. The penultimate sonnet repeats the plea: only if she will be his can the lover disclose "thy truth to the world," "eternize thy praise,/...increase your worthy fame," and cause "the age to come...[to]...wonder at thy name." (50)

It is the lover's perception of Licia's self-sufficiency and elevation, then, which has constrained the speaker's expression, restricting him either to a mere reflection of her virtues or to a mirroring of his own emotional state--an essentially passive response rather than a cooperative identity in love or an assumption of the lady's expressive power. In his presentation, she assumes a concrete and unassailable objectivity which denies him personal or poetic control; because of this perception of her, he is fixed in the company of those by "fond fancy led" (1) to poetic expression, but unable to achieve the independent creativity of the true poet. Three early sonnets--Licia 6, 10, and 15--treat this thematic concern by means of portraits, works in a visual medium which the lover regards from some distance, as Fletcher has suggested the poet is capable of weighing dispassionately the intentions, style, and effect of his work. A critic of works in another medium, the lover is able to move beyond a view of art as merely reflective which has characterized his treatment of verbal and poetic expression, to recognize its figurative potential, and temporarily to grasp some imaginative control of the situation.

In the first of these poems, in fact, the lover takes a more detached view of the painting than does Licia, who is its subject. Sonnet 6 provides a general anticipation of the sequence's celebration

of her beauty, but in contrast to the lover with his later pleas that she reveal all, the unnamed painter possesses a more probing vision:

> My love amazed did blush herself to see,
> Pictured by art, all naked as she was.
> "How could the painter know so much by me,
> Or art effect what he hath brought to pass?
> It is not like he naked me hath seen,
> Or stood so nigh for to observe so much."

As its subject, Licia not surprisingly articulates a more partial understanding of the creative process than does the lover. She assumes, that is, that close observation of the subject is necessary to artistic rendering, and identifies herself entirely with the portrait. For the lover, on the other hand, the situation provides an opportunity to play wittily on this assumption and on the conventional motif of the lady's image shrined in the lover's heart:

> No, sweet; his eyes so near have never been,
> Nor could his hands by art have cunning such;
> I showed my heart, wherein you printed were,
> You, naked you, as here you painted are;
> In that my love your picture I must wear,
> And show't to all, unless you have more care.
> Then take my heart, and place it with your own;
> So shall you naked never more be known.

In so doing, he gains a sense of control over the situation which is embodied in his light-hearted threat to the disconcerted Licia, and reverses the more characteristic plea that she reveal herself to the passive and submissive lover. It is significant that this playful ingenuity, more typical of Licia's words and actions in the sequence, occurs in a poem dealing with another form of art whose potential to reveal what is hidden in the lover's heart, and effectively to move the lady, eludes him.

As observer of Cupid's portrait, the subject of Licia 10, the lover

reveals a capacity to respond to the figurative elements of art. The development follows logically his using the notion of her image in his heart as a figure for "emotion"--the non-visible subject of art--in Licia 6. Here, he raises objections against the type of emotional experience which the symbolic portrait represents:

> A painter drew the image of the boy,
> Swift love, with wings all naked, and yet blind;
> With bow and arrows, bent for to destroy;
> I blamed his skill, and fault I thus did find:
> "A needless task I see thy cunning take;
> Misled by love, thy fancy thee betrayed;
> Love is no boy, nor blind, as men him make,
> Nor weapons wears, whereof to be affrayed;
> But if thou, love, wilt paint with greatest skill
> A love, a maid, a goddess, and a queen;
> Wonder and view at Licia's picture still,
> For other love the world hath never seen;
> For she alone all hope all comfort gives;
> Men's hearts, souls, all, led by her favour loves."

The speaker here makes his closest approach to a self-reflexive poetic consciousness: Licia 10 follows immediately the sonnet in which a weeping Cupid's weapons are stolen by Licia, and so seems to comment on the operation of the lover's own fancy, while the series of epithets the poem includes are those most often used in his celebration of Licia. At the same time, the poem's implicit debate between visions of love suggests a tendency simply to oppose contrasting views rather than to entertain, with the playfulness which distinguishes the poet's tone in the dedicatory letters, the possibility of diverse interpretations. In this respect, as in his account of the painter's error and of the creative process he recommends instead, Licia 10 anticipates the emphasis on the lover's limited awareness which emerges as the sequence develops. The meaning of "fancy," for instance, is ambiguous: is the unnamed artist betrayed by love, as Licia's lover has been turned off

his initially ambitious path because by "fond fancy led," (1) or is he misled by a lesser imaginative faculty and therefore blinded to the hidden truth which art can reveal? In either case, the lover seems more skilled in analyzing the frailties of another's art than in discerning those of his own, an impression confirmed in the third quatrain's focus on visual accuracy; to "paint with greatest skill" is paralleled with "Wonder[ing] and view[ing] at Licia's picture still" in an equation which suggests a distance merely respectful rather than artistically liberating, and a process more passive than creative.

Finally, Licia 15 more nearly merges portrait and reality in a work of art, accomplished by "a hand divine," that "was a picture.../ Yet made with art so as it seemed to live." The confused wonder which the portrait inspires in the lover is skilfully managed to elicit something of the same ambivalent response from the reader. While the first quatrain seems to recount his sight of Licia herself, as a work of art created by "a hand divine", the absence of "a soul to guide" the painted image signals the shift, in the second quatrain, to considerations of the artful effect that a superior artist has been able to produce:

> I stood amazed, and saw my Licia shine,
> Fairer than Phoebus, in his brightest pride,
> Set forth in colors by a hand divine,
> Where naught was wanting but a soul to guide.
> It was a picture, that I could descry,
> Yet made with art so as it seemed to live,
> Surpassing fair, and yet it had no eye,
> Whereof my senses could no reason give.
> With that the painter bid me not to muse;
> "Her eyes are shut, but I deserve no blame;
> For if she saw, in faith, it could not choose
> But that the work had wholly been a flame,"--
> Then burn me, sweet, with brightness of your eyes,
> That phoenix-like from thence I may arise.

From art's revelation of a hidden truth, in Licia 6, through its figurative capacity in sonnet 10, we have moved to what seems to be the epitome of a representational conception of art. Yet, while it pays tribute to the life-like accomplishment of the painter, Licia 15 wittily probes the limitations of a conception which elevates verisimilitude above other qualities. Such a work invites judgment by comparison to the subject it represents, and so draws attention equally to what is missing as to what has been adequately reflected: "naught was missing but a soul to guide," "and yet it had no eye." Its creator, moreover, cannot depict the effect which is ultimately inseparable from the living vision which he wishes to re-create.

The development of this sonnet provides a variation on Licia's criticism of the lover's writing in Licia 33, a thematic connection reinforced by the use both poems make of the image of the flame. She measures his work by its evidence of sincerity, and concludes that both poem and poet-lover are "false," implying as does Licia 15 that a representational conception of art limits the painter's or speaker's ability effectively to present his subject, by narrowing the criteria of judgment. At the same time, the sonnet's play on "blame" of the artist links it to Licia 6, and in the playfulness of the final couplet, the lover again transcends the limitations of his rhetorical stance to exert imaginative control over the situation. His procedure is similar; wittily manipulating the painter's too-literal identification of artwork and subject, the lover in the couplet invites a response from the lady which will not, as elsewhere in the sequence, reduce him to "cinders...consumed with the flame," (34) but will revitalize his desire

in the new life imaged by the phoenix. As in treatment of the earlier portrait of Licia, however, the more distanced perspective which permits a more playful consideration of his situation is provoked by another's work of art; the fictional circumstances, in other words, introduce a consciousness of Licia as subject matter and cast the lover into the role of observer, so that he considers the issues of aesthetic procedure and audience effect with an imaginative wit not evident in treatment of his own expression.

These three sonnets thus provide, early in Licia, a measure of those restrictions which operate on the lover's awareness, and hence on his capacity for effective expression, throughout the course of the sequence. Their common mode, by placing the lover in a specific situation in which he is assigned the role of observer and critic, emphasizes the extent to which he is unable to take such a detached perspective on his pleas to the lady--to shape them artfully, in other words, to achieve the desired rhetorical effect. Yet tone and technique in sonnets 6, 10, and 15 also cooperate to impress the reader with the lover's wit, liberated by a temporary distance from the subject matter he shares with Licia's unnamed painters. In a sense, these sonnets suggest a series of parallels: as Licia's lover stands to the works of art which he evaluates more dispassionately than he is able to do his own experience, so does Fletcher stand to Licia and to the experience of the fictional lover which it presents. The poet's guidance of the reader's response is less direct than is the lover's commentary on the portraits, since he does not enter directly into the work; yet such features of Licia as these three sonnets or the carefully sustained and

limited framework in which the lover responds implies throughout his function as a fictional character in a figurative design. In consequence, the reader responds sympathetically to the lover's worth and desire, at the same time as he shares with the poet a more encompassing perspective on the morally educative experience in which the lover is immersed.

Barnes similarly creates in Parthenophil and Parthenophe a fictional character, although the two lovers and sequences are in several other respects strikingly dissimilar. The most obvious difference lies in the contrast between Licia's idealistic strain and Parthenophil's linking the established forms of courtship to a more cynical view of love, at the same time as he voices the praises and laments which are conventional to the genre. As with Lodge's Phillis, it is possible to trace in the general contours of the sequence an evolution in the lover's character, generated by unusual fictional circumstances and a direct engagement with the work's other characters. Unlike the other minor sonneteers so far considered, however, Barnes does enter his work directly at several points, and this feature of Parthenophil and Parthenophe justifies a closer examination of it despite the uneven quality of its expression and the fact that its series of sonnets constitute but the first section of a three-part work.

Some of these allusions to the historical poet and his circumstances seem simply mechanical; Doyno points out, for instance, that "the person to whom the book was dedicated, William Percy, would be pleased by the witty antanaclasis on 'pearse'" (154) in sonnet 44 and others, but the compliment is an incidental to the sequence's overall

effects as is Fletcher's occasional sonnet on Lady Mollineux's twin daughters. At other points, Barnes uses a temporary shift in his speaker's stance, which suggests a brief identification of poet and lover, for two purposes: to effect a transition from the first to the second half of the sequence, in the course of which Parthenophil moves from single-minded and ineffectual persistence to a more complex response; and to produce witty or ironic effects not possible given the constraints which generally operate on his lover's awareness and expression. Barnes seems, in other words, to sense the potential of an ambiguous or shifting stance, but the design of Parthenophil and Parthenophe is not integrally informed, as is that of Astrophel and Stella or the Amoretti, by his occasional exploitation of this potential. Instead, the temporary presence of the poet serves a brief structural and an intermittently witty function in the sequence, but the work relies predominantly on a distinction between the two figures of poet and lover, and like Licia invites the reader to share with the work's creator a more encompassing perspective on its speaker's character and experience.

The sonnet sequence itself is only the first of three parts in the work, Parthenophil and Parthenophe, and even in this section Barnes alternates his sonnets with groups of madrigals. The facts that only one sonnet appears in the second and third sections, that Parthenophil is there infrequently named, and that the first action is self-sufficient justify a study of the first group of poems in isolation. The shift in focus which Barnes achieves over the course of the entire work, however, is not irrelevant to an examination of the

sonnets, as it suggests something of his intentions in this sustained treatment of love. The second section, consisting of 21 elegies, a canzon, and an eidollon "of moschus describing Love," and heavily freighted with classical lore, seems particularly distant in mode of expression from the world of the first section's sonnets, while the "Odes Pastorall" of the third section introduce yet another angle of vision. Such a shift suggests that Barnes is interested rather in exploring the range of expression made available by a variety of poetic forms than in exploiting the potential for a shift in stance within the single form of the sonnet.

This interest is apparent as well in variations of form within the sonnet sequence itself. Interspersed among the sonnets in groups of 2, 4, and 6 are 26 madrigals, just one-quarter the number of sonnets but almost half of them placed towards the end of the work; as a result, by the time the "celestial" story begun in sonnet 103 is developed in Madrigals 21 through 26, these alternative forms have come to predominate in Parthenophil and Parthenophe, which ends with a sestina and a final sonnet. This development may presage the change in verse form fully accomplished in the second and third sections of the work, and it carries the same potential for adding a conflicting voice to or offering a more encompassing perspective on the experience of the sonnet-speaker, yet only at the end of the first section does he achieve in the madrigals a more playful control over his plight. Thus the madrigals, employed in Parthenophil and Parthenophe as a fairly flexible form, aid Barnes in his dramatic development of a character who grows to a more detached perspective by the end, but fail to establish any

tension between the figures of poet and speaker in the course of the sequence; they allow Parthenophil often a fuller scope to express his delight in the lady or grief over her resistance, but complement rather than compete with the restricted mode of expression characteristic of the sonnets.

As Fletcher's dedicatory letters have argued for a distinction between the poet's character and experience and those of his work's speaker, so Barnes' introductory lines of verse, addressed to the work itself, exaggerate the conventional appeal of an "orphaned" work in need of protective patronage to set a wittily emphatic distance between himself and the "bastard Orphan" he has produced:

> Now ginnes thy basenesse to be knowne,
> Nor dare I take thee for mine owne:
> Thy levity shall be descried.
> But if that any have espied,
> And question with thee of thy Sire,
> Or Mistrisse of his vaine desire,
> Or aske the place from whence thous came,
> Deny thy Sire, Love, Place, and Name.
> And if I chance unwares to meete thee,
> Neither acknowledge mee, nor greete mee.

On the one hand, the metaphor of the personified work dressed "in beggars weedes" establishes the social context of Parthenophil and Parthenophe: it emphasizes the need for "Some goodman that shall thinke thee witty/...to be thy patrone, and take pitty," and the introductory verse ends by placing the poems on love in the traditional hierarchy of the genres, with its promise that "Hereafter when I better may,/ I'le send reliefe some other day." On the other hand, the quick pace and humorous tone support the poet's granting to his work a life of its own, an impression reinforced by the nature of the work itself.

The tone of the first and final sonnets, moreover, is strikingly

unlike the effects produced by the mingled strains of complaint, praise, and occasionally erotic or satiric wit within the sequence they frame. Their whole-hearted celebration of the lady's "match-lesse beauty" (1) and "world of graces" (104) contrasts with the lover's more skeptical appraisal of Parthenophe and his more urgent desire for possession instead of distanced admiration. The contrast in tone, the following analysis will argue, implies a distance between the figure of patroness and sonnet-lady corresponding to that which exists between the two figures of poet and lover. The patroness is praised as a "matchless myrrour of all womankind" (104) and the work itself, the subject of sonnet 1's self-conscious commentary, is presented as "this true-speaking Glasse" of her beauty, while the sequence's closing lines dissolve this relationship, which implies the speaker's capacity adequately to present her beauty, in a graceful compliment:

> Thine endlesse graces are so amiable,
> Passing the sprite of myne humble muse,
> ...that the more I write more graces rise
> Which myne astonish't muse cannot comprise. (104)

The humble stance from which the poet voices her virtues' superiority to the capacity of his art is a conventional one; what is more striking is the discrepancy between this poem's management of humility for complimentary purposes and the various forms which Parthenophil's struggle against his subservience and incapacity take.[2]

The evolution of these various modes is set in motion by an unusual set of fictional circumstances which provide the context for plausible character presentation and development. Instead of the transfer of allegiance from Phoebus to Venus which opens Licia, Barnes uses a variation of the action which Lodge has employed to bring Phillis to a

tidy resolution, so that Parthenophil transfers his affection from the unfaithful Laya, discovered behaving "with fresh desier,/ Hoping t'atchievement of some richer prise," (5) to Parthenophe. The alternatives for Barnes' speaker, in other words, are at the beginning of the sequence more limited than those which are considered in Licia: Parthenophil can choose to be the lover of one woman or another, not between the poet's and the lover's roles, and significantly this choice is presented throughout the opening sonnets as a matter simply of exchanging "slavish bondes," (4) with a brief interval of "softe service" (4) to himself alone. Yet the efforts which Parthenophil takes to keep his thoughts "in bondage jealously enthralled" (2) may yet signify a more urgent desire for independence than has occurred to Licia's lover, and it is in this direction that he develops over the course of Parthenophil and Parthenophe. The development is shaped, nevertheless, by those fictional events which begin the sequence: in the first place, Parthenophil's greater complexity than the lovers of Chloris, Phillis, or Licia takes the form of an underlying skepticism about the virtues of women in general, which occasionally breaks through the surface of celebratory sonnets in the form of misogynist sentiments; another characteristic is the restlessness which seems similarly to grow from the circumstances of deception and change in the early sonnets. Together, these features provoke Parthenophil to attain a more detached perspective on his subject.

There is in Parthenophil and Parthenophe a different, and more difficult, relation between stylistic features of the verse and the reader's impression of the speaker's character and situation. The

smooth polish of Fletcher's style in Licia is not a feature which draws attention to itself, and there is as a result little sense of discrepancy between what the lover says and the way in which he says it; it is to some extent a given of the genre that the work's creator should allow the lover, even as he protests the inexpressibility of his emotions, to express them. At the same time, Fletcher occasionally uses syntactical confusion, as in Licia 38, to enact the confusion of thought which is part of the traditional physiology of love and to dramatize his weakness in a persuasive mode. With Parthenophil and Parthenophe, on the other hand, if we accept the awkwardness and stylistic roughness which is not uncommon in the verse as reflective of Parthenophil's lack of skill or confused understanding, we risk excusing a number of weak sonnets and instances of banal or obscure expression on grounds of artistic intention which may not apply. The sequence is uneven in quality, its figures often forced, and its metrical rhythm sometimes strained, and for these stylistic weaknesses Barnes himself must be held responsible.[3] Yet several points about the relation of style and character, beyond this distinction, should be made.

In the first place, the diversity of verse forms in Parthenophil and Parthenophe is appropriate to the restless urgency of the lover, and when these forms are drawn explicitly to the attention of the reader, the self-consciousness of the speaker is handled in such a way as to articulate his dependence on the lady even in the process of poetic creation. As a result, his role as lover is not obscured by attention to poetic expression. Though melancholy mists his brain and darkens the source of his humour, Parthenophil claims, yet he persists

In framing tunefull Elegies, and Hymnes
For her whose name my Sonnets note so trimmes,
That nought but her chast name so could assist:
And my muse in first tricking out her lymmes,
Found in her livelesse shadow such delight:
That yet she shadowes her, when as I write. (17)

While the forms he creates are capable of delighting, moreover, these lines imply that the rhetorical context in which they achieve this effect is a self-enclosed one; the process of writing and the works themselves satisfy the lover by "tricking out" a sense of the lady's presence, but the phrase itself suggests the deceptiveness of this self-perpetuating creativity, which brings the lover no closer to the goal of his desire.

Secondly, at some points in Parthenophil and Parthenophe a certain stylistic roughness does seem to be intended by the poet to assist in his presentation of the lover. This is so especially when awkwardness or obscurity is set off against what impresses the reader as a chance coherence of the verse around the inspiring figure of the lady, as in Madrigal 3:

Once in an arbour was my mistresse sleeping
With rose and woodbind woven
Whose person thousand graces had in keeping
Where for myne hart her harts hard flint was cloven
To keepe him safe: behind stood pertly peepinge
Poore Cupid softly creepinge
And drave small birdes out of the myrtle bushes
Scar'd with his arrowes who sate cheeping
On every sprigge whom Cupid calles and hushes
From branch to branch whiles I poore soule sate weeping
To see her breathe not knowing
Incense into the cloudes and blesse with breath
The wyndes and ayre whiles Cupid underneath
With birdes with songes nor any posies throwing
Could her awake.
Each noyse sweet, lullaby was for her sake.

As Doyno points out, the opening lines of the poem are rather

incoherent, due to Barnes' habit of separating modifying clauses from their subjects, while the difficult syntax of line 4 further confuses the increasingly metaphorical picture. Yet the verbal smoothness of the final lines, particularly striking in this context, is a vital element in communicating the harmonious appeal of the lady, and so implies the operation of an inspiration as natural and fluid as her unconscious breathing. The poem thus enacts, on the level of diction and rhythm, the dependence which is articulated in sonnet 17.

Without attributing to Barnes what Booth calls an "un-earned irony," then, we can discern certain points in Parthenophil and Parthenophe at which the poet seems concerned to support his lover's statement with a style that conveys his confused condition, the urgency of his desire, and so on. Other aspects of the work, however, may be more reliable indications of its presentation of the lover: a fictional character who is confined by his experience, compelled by an emotional rather than an aesthetic imperative to express his desire, gradually developing over the course of the sequence a more detached perspective on the nature of love, and plausibly provoked by frustration and by the nature of his experience. These aspects include certain patterns of imagery and diction, the speaker's relation to the lady and to his larger audience, and treatment of such thematic concerns as expression or the relation between appearance and reality.

The early sonnets of Parthenophil and Parthenophe serve to establish Parthenophil's susceptibility to the force of his fictional circumstances. The most reluctant of lovers, he presents the transfer of allegiance with which the sequence opens as a succession of

imprisonments, varying only in degree of harshness: the heart moves from his master's "softe service" to Laya's "slavish bondes," (4) and then, on his "escape" from Laya, (5) to "those bondes" (5) of devotion to Parthenophe. Significantly, the second move is accomplished despite Parthenophil's fervent efforts to imprison his heart within himself, to maintain an emotional integrity with "chains," "fetters," "lockes of reason," and "keyes of continence." (6) He perceives the choice as a rigid one between alternatives imaged in identical forms--either utter subservience to the experience of love (captivity) or complete resistance, to be achieved by imprisoning the heart in a cell of reasoned abstinence with "continuall vigill" and "careful guarde" (3):

> Keeping in bondage jealously enthralled,
> In prisons of neglect, his natures mildnesse,
> Him I with sollitary studies walled,
> By thraldome choaking his out-rageous widenesse.
> (2)

The revelation of this fatal consistency, a lack of resources to imagine genuine alternatives and hence to "liberate" himself from the imposition of conventional roles, stresses again the distinction between poet and speaker. The pattern of imagery implies that Parthenophil's thoughts are indeed captive in a prison of limited awareness.

The persistent legal terminology of the early sonnets reinforces and makes more dynamic this implication. The use of legal terms and procedures conveys several attitudes to the subject of the poems: love is envisioned as a contract with penalties for forfeiture; the metaphor plays on the notion of love as a type of possession, as Parthenophil speaks of "love's tenancie" (Madrigal 2); and as an ideal, love becomes a judge of the characters' worth and fidelity:

> ...(through thy default) I thee did summon
> Into the court of stedfast love, then cryed
> As it was promist, here standes his harts bale. (11)

For the extensive, and to the modern reader fatiguing, application of legal terms Barnes himself must be held responsible; he indulges here in an Elizabethan taste which it is difficult for us to appreciate. Yet within this framework, the sonnets and madrigals at this early stage in Parthenophil and Parthenophe convey the impression that Parthenophil is demonstrating the limitations of his understanding by attempting to impose the bonds of a cold legality on relations presented here and throughout the sequence as shifting, ambiguous, and paradoxical. The false appearance which Parthenophe presents, for instance, is the cause of sonnet 11's summons, and the poem's opening lines suggest the lover's difficulty in defining even her nature:

> Why didst thou then in such disfigur'd guize
> Figure the pourtraict of myne overthro?
> Why manlike didst thou meane to tyrannize,
> No man but woman would have sinned so;
> Why then inhumaine and my secret foe
> Didst thou betray me, yet would be a woman? (11)

The engagement of the two characters implies that Parthenophe is, in her words and actions, too agile to be pinned down by the narrow definitions of obligation and debt which Parthenophil attempts to impose on their relations. Having failed to imprison his heart and thus to guard it from the temptations of love, in other words, Parthenophil is revealed as equally ineffectual in attempts to capture the lady.

A significant factor in shaping our response to Parthenophil is the ingenuity which Parthenophe demonstrates in resisting the lover's appeals. On the moral level, recurrent evidence of her more light-hearted approach to love suggests a changeable nature like that of

"light Laya," Parthenophil's former "false mistrisse," (5) and leaves her open to his charges of a deceptive appearance and false vows. Intellectually, though, Parthenophe's witty management of the situation provides a source of interest for the reader even as Parthenophil's pursuit of the legal metaphor begins to pall:

> Then to Parthenophe (with all post hast)
> As full assured of the pawne fore pledged
> I made, and with these wordes disordred plac'd
> Smooth, tho with furies sharp out-rages edged:
> Quoth I (fayre mistres) did I set mine hart
> At libertie, and for that made him free,
> That you should arme him for another start,
> Whose certaine bale you promised to bee?
> Tush (quoth Parthenophe) before he goe
> I'le be his bale at last, and doubt it not.
> Why then (said I) that morgage must I shoe
> Of your true-love which at your hands I got?
> Ay me, she was, and is his bale I wot,
> But, when the morgage should have cur'd the soare:
> She past it of, by deede of gift before. (8)

Parthenophil will return to the idea of Parthenophe's earlier vow in Madrigal 2's comments on "such bargaines as were precontractit" but what dominates the moral implications of sonnet 8 is a retrospective appreciation of Parthenophe's ironic reassurance, in lines 9 and 10. As Doyno comments:

> The use of dialogue, in addition to creating a definite scene, helps to define the characters. Parthenophe seems to be playful, while Parthenophil is, like many other unappreciated lovers, absurdly serious. (141)

The contrast develops from their differing styles, as the lover's slightly pompous and more complexly structured question is set off by the vigorous, colloquial brevity of the lady's response, and is confirmed as his pun on the different meanings of "bale" (legally, "bail," and emotionally, "woe") depends on her intentionally ambiguous use of the

word. It is, in other words, her wit and not his which is the source of the wordplay on which sonnet 8 relies for its effect, a point emphasized when Parthenophil repeats the pun to begin the poem immediately following:

> So did Parthenophe release myne hart,
> So did she robbe me of myne harts rich threasure,
> Thus shall she be his bale before they part,
> Thus in her love she made me such hard measure.

Structure and phrasing again produce a ponderous effect; the repetition emphasizes that Parthenophil copies the lady's wit, and the lines evoke a sense of the lover's limitation to the role of a passive responder rather than that of a creative wit. While the reader may well prefer Parthenophil's moral values to those which he assigns to Parthenophe, then, the role which she plays in such poems provides much of their interest and serves as a measure of his restrictions. Demonstrating the more playful approach and witty ingenuity which the lover lacks, the fictional character of the lady helps to define the purposes for which Barnes has designed the sequence, and to suggest the direction in which Parthenophil will develop.

Until about the fiftieth sonnet, the sense of the lover's character which has been established by means of his fictional circumstances and direct engagement with Parthenophe is expanded within a consistent framework. He gains, by the Zodiac sonnets (32 to 43), a more concrete past than is given to the lover in any other minor sequence, and the narration of his life to this point has several effects: it implies an ongoing existence in a way which is only implied, for instance, in Corin's memory of Chloris' having once loved him, and emphasizes his immersion in his experience, with a more encompassing perspective

available only on the events of his past life.[4] The contrast is particularly emphatic in sonnet 41; instead of his present fixed stance, with change imposed on him from without, Parthenophil plays on the traditional association of Capricorn and the goat, symbol of lust, to recall the fickleness of his former self:

> Then to mine eyes each mayde was made a moate.
> My fickle thoughts with diverse fancies slyding,
> With wanton rage of luste so me did tickle:
> Mine hart each bewties captivated vassall
> Nor vanquish't then, but with love's prickle
> Not deeply mov'd.

The paradox that the "captivated vassal" is neither "vanquish't" nor "deeply mov'd" is central to Parthenophil's depiction of a more playful approach to love, one which echoes Parthenophe's capacity to play on the forms of the legal metaphor with which her lover tries to vanquish her. In his presentation of more recent experience, Parthenophil lacks the ability to adapt the conventional rules of the pursuit of love which is conveyed in his earlier, metaphoric appearance as Cupid: "At shrew'd gyrles, and at boyes in other places/ I shot when I was vexed with disgraces." (54) Now, the tables turned, it is the shrewd Parthenophe whose self-conscious awareness allows her to pose and produce the desired effect, as she "devised, how she might make her bewtie tyrannous." (38) Parthenophil's too-earnest attempts to persuade, meanwhile, leave him the butt of others' jokes: "I with teares make those [signs of passion and sorrow],/ But for my teares with tauntes and frumpes am bobbed." (51)

The lover's subservience to the lady is thus enacted in the contrasts between the way each manages the forms of courtship. Occasionally these forms are explicitly verbal, as in sonnet 8, but the

praise of the lady's eloquence which resonates throughout Fletcher's Licia is rare in Parthenophil and Parthenophe. The sequence does include compliments of a similar kind, that "if the muses had their voyce forgone,/.../ the muses voyce, should by thy voice be knowne," (64) but the emphasis falls more consistently in Barnes' sequence on the lover's inability to to respond effectively to her personal force:

> Oh dart and thunder whose fierce violence
> Surmounting Rhetorickes dart and thunderboultes
> Can never be set out in eloquence. (44)

At the same time, Parthenophil claims, her inspiring power tempts a wondering viewer to a task as endless as Penelope's:

> Her bewtie thee revives, thy muse upheaves
> To draw coelestiall spirite from the skyes
> To prayse the worke and worker whence it came.
> (45)

The consequence is a sense of frustration recurrently associated with the instruments, process, and products of poetic creation, so that Parthenophil's commentary on his own actions in writing presents expression as an exercise in dogged persistence, abject and resigned to ineffectuality, rather than as a potentially liberating activity. His are "these vayne lines" (17) composed of "Vayne wordes which vanish with the cloudes...and bootlesse options builded with voyde ayer" (62); they are produced with "endless labours pennes and papers tyre" (18) and "my labours endless in their turnes." (28) The sense of difficulty and futility is particularly marked by its contrast to the relaxed playfulness which Parthenophe, "Spending in sport for which I wrought so toughlie," (20) continues to demonstrate in her response to his appeal.

Parthenophil's single-minded persistence is reflected in the frequency of epizeuxis: "Write write, helpe helpe, sweet muse" (18) or

"Ah pitie pitie me." (25) The reader is likely to find moving the very simplicity of his use of repetition for emphasis in these cases, but to recognize as well its inadequacy as a rhetorical device to persuade his sophisticated listener, the lady. Like Licia's speaker, Parthenophil attempts to use a verbal equivalent to his feelings--"these fagottes figure of my state" (12)--as a means "to find the gate,/ Which through loves laberinth shall guide me right." (12) An early failed attempt to manipulate his feelings, moreover, indicates the lover's inability to sustain that distance from the experience of love which permits a more effective shaping of his words:

> When none of these my sorrowes would aledge,
> I sought to finde the meanes, how I might hate thee.
> Then hatefull curiousness I did in wedge
> Within my thoughtes, which ever did awaite thee.
> I fram'd myne eyes for an unjust controllment, [audit]
> And myne unbridled thoughtes (because I dare not
> Seeke to compell) did pray them take enroulment
> Of natures faultes in her, and equall spare not.
> They search't and found her eyes were sharpe, and fierie:
> A moule upon her forhead, colour'd pale,
> Her hair disordred, browne and crisped wyerye,
> Her cheekes thin speckled with a sommers male. [with summer freckles]
> This tolde, men ween'd it was a pleasing tale,
> Her to disgrace, and make my follies fade
> And please it did, but her more gracious made.
> (13)

The manoeuver does achieve its goal of discovering flaws in Parthenophe's appearance, but not in its ultimate aim to make the speaker "hate thee," and the failure is anticipated by his concern with degrees of control over his thought and actions. His distrust of a more playful and skeptical role, for instance, is revealed in the moral connotations of the lover's diction: the octave's active verbs stress the effort needed to perform the exercise, while the repetition of

"hate" in the oddly coupled "hateful curiousnesse" conveys a sense of Parthenophil's reluctance to undertake what he recognizes as an "unjust" evaluation of her flaws. With the terms "controllment" (audit) and "enrollment" (recording in archives), another series of metaphors related to official procedures replaces the legal terms common to poems just preceding, yet Parthenophil's parenthetical comment tacitly acknowledges the problems which have derived from his efforts to exert a formally structured control: as he "dare[s] not/ Seek to compell," the paradoxical effort must be not to try too hard. The stance to be adopted is the guise of the humourist who light-heartedly devalues the lady's appearance, yet Parthenophil's anxiety surfaces in the adjective "unjust" and in the connotations of "follies," just as the emphasis which falls on "equall spare not" indicates the insistent temperament which he cannot quite control. Such features anticipate the ambiguities of the sonnet's three-line resolution, which present Parthenophil's ultimate failure to detach himself from the situation and to gain some control over it, to use the story-teller's role to relieve the lover's subservience. The fundamental discrepancy signalled by "but" in the final line indicates that the speaker's skill at tale-telling, his ability to please a general audience, is undercut by a fatal consistency in his vision of Parthenophe, who simply is made "more gracious" by this ploy.

The restrictions on Parthenophil's vision and understanding are also stressed here, as they were in Fletcher's work, by the lover's explicit consideration of aesthetic expression; Parthenophil too is conscious of alternative roles available and, in his rejection of them

or articulation of a sense that they are beyond his capacity, reminds himself repeatedly of his fixity in the role of lover. The pattern is particularly evident in a pair of sonnets which allude to the literary tradition. In each case, the suspicion that Parthenophil is opening the sequence up to a larger artistic perspective--one which may produce a more detached and critical evaluation of his stance--is almost immediately contradicted by the uses to which he puts the literary allusions. In sonnet 44, for instance, an implicit comparison of the literary tradition and the lover's own efforts is allowed to develop at some length as he asks himself:

> Where be they famous Prophets of ould Greece?
> Those aunchiant Romain Poetes of acompt,
> Musaeus which went for the Golden Fleece
> With Jason, and did Heroes love recompt,
> And thou sweet Naso with thy golden verse
> Whose lovely spirite ravish't Caesars daughter,
> And that sweete Tuskane Petrarke which did pearse
> His Laura with love Sonnets when he saught her:
> Where be these all?

The transitions from prophecy and fame to heroic adventure, and then to success in love, arouse expectations that the lover will next introduce his own desire to "pearse" the affections of the indifferent Parthenophe. To some extent, so he does, but with a striking omission that stresses the contrast between himself and a figure like Naso or Petrarch in the earlier poet's capacities to cope with similar situations. While their expression in verse has been efficacious, Parthenophil does not even consider the possibility of adapting their techniques to his own purposes, but instead simply wishes

> ...that all these might have taught her
> That sainctes devine are knowne sainctes by their mercy,
> And Sainctlike bewtie should not rage with pearse

eye.

Despite our expectations, then, the patterns provided by the poetic tradition provide no model for the lover. The words of Naso and Petrarch are seen to have a didactic value for the lady, but their methods, at least insofar as he understands them here, have nothing to teach Parthenophil.

The second of these poems, sonnet 60, follows what seems to be a consistent change in the direction of the sequence, and in its presentation of character, in the second half. The sonnets which occupy a central place, 50 and 51, effect a transition in the development of Parthenophil's character: his abjectness disappears, to be replaced by a satiric tendency which is balanced by an impulse simply to retreat from the situation. Having pursued his fictional lover's single-minded persistence to its furthest extreme, Barnes enters the sequence, if indirectly, with a series of witty plays on Parthenophil's condition in order to effect the shift. Sonnet 50, for instance, recapitulates earlier comment on the futility of his "tragique notes of sorrow," returning them to their source in the "Hot fier" of Parthenophil's passion:

> So that my fortune where it first made forrow
> Shall there remaine, and ever shall it plowe
> The bowels of mine hart, mine harts hot bowells:
> And in their forrowes sow the seedes of love,
> Which thou didst sow, and newly spring up now
> And make me write vayne wordes, no wordes but vowells,
> For nought to me good consonant would prove.

In the summary comment on futility of expression, Parthenophil's play on the materials with which he works--"consonant" implying both type of letter and harmonious agreement--signals a self-conscious artistry which

distances him from the experience in which he has been immersed and draws him nearer to the figure of his creator, the historical poet. Sonnet 51 continues in this stance, questioning the lover's association of word and feeling by means of direct address to "Lame consonants" and "member-vowells":

> Can you frame mamed wordes as you had throbbed?
> Can you with sighes make signes of passions sobbed?
> Or can your characters make sorrowes showes?

Again the lover's dilemma is resolved by playful treatment of this equation, as in its literal "characters" the self-conscious sonneteer completes his poetic structure with the ephemerality of a sigh: "If with no letter but one vowell should bee,/ An A. with H. my Sonnet would fulfill." The lines, even as they express the lover's frustration, step back from the experience to view it as the material of poetic creation, self-consciously managed to serve other purposes than the lover's goal of expressing directly his emotions.

The impression conveyed is that, having exhausted the potentialities of his character's passive response, Barnes here intrudes to re-direct Parthenophil's development and to infuse the sequence with the vitality of a more skeptical perspective on the lover's experience. Although his temperament does not change entirely from the first half of the sequence, the broad contours of the rest of Parthenophil and Parthenophe emphasize two complementary aspects of Parthenophil's character--a tendency to wit and satire and an impulse to withdraw from the engagement--which seem plausibly impelled by the work's fictional circumstances. His early description of Laya as she "Drew to the Courtier, who with tender kisse,/ (As are their guilefull fashions which

dissemble)/ First him saluted," (5) suggests a context in which the value of each "new pray" (5) is cynically rated as a motive for conquest, and in which the forms of courtship have little to do with genuine emotion. The "sophistrie" with which Parthenophe also behaves, "blanck[ing] my hart by sorrow,/ And in such Riddels act[ing] my tragoedie," again associates artful behaviour with changes in affection, "Making this day for him, for me to-morrow." (Madrigal 1) This presentation of the lady, with Parthenophil's reminders of "that accursed deede before insealed" (16) which binds her to a prior love, implies a "craftie minde" (35) of whose "cunning perillous" (38) the lover is intermittently aware:

> ...she answere gave
> That she was all vow'd to virginitie,
> Yet said bove all men she would most affect me:
> ...
> She learn'd with honest colour to neglect me,
> And underneath chast vayles of single life
> She shrowdes her craftie clawes, and Lyons hart.
> (38)

In the second half of the sequence, Parthenophil's adaptation to this context is evident in misogynist sentiments, in his handling of the motif of change to anticipate time's revenge on the lady, and in the recurrent desire to retreat to a context of pastoral serenity from a more courtly world whose deceptive appearances he has probed.

This emphasis depends on a more detached awareness of the forms of courtship and of their relation to feeling, yet the second of those sonnets which allude extensively to the literary tradition provides a reminder to the reader of Parthenophil's status as a fictional character, even as he attains a clearer understanding of, and thereby more control over, the situation. The allusions which open the poem are

more general than those of sonnet 44, specific poets having become merely "some," and they signal from the beginning a focus rather on the historical subject matter than on the poetic works created from these events:

> Whilst some the Troiane warres in verse recount,
> And all the Grecian Conquerours in fight,
> Some valiant Romaine warres bove starres do mount,
> With all their warlike leaders, men of might:
> Whilst some of Bryttish Arthures valure sing,
> And register the prayse of Charlemayne:
> And some of doughtie Godfrey tydinges bring,
> And some of the Germaine broyles, and warres of Spayne. (60)

These accounts of warfare and valour, moreover, indicate a vision of love and courtship as a "battle of the sexes," and may thus signify Parthenophil's assumption of an attitude closer to that of "light Laya" and the playful Parthenophe. By seeking not to establish connection between the speaker and those who have recounted heroic adventures, an identification suggested by the octave, but to contrast Parthenophil's role as lover to the parts played by characters in these tales, the sestet reminds the reader of limits to his self-awareness:

> In none of those, my selfe I wounded finde
> Neither with horseman, nor with man on foote:
> But from a cleare bright eye, one captaine blinde
> (Whose puisance to resist did nothing boote)
> With men in golden arms, and dartes of golde,
> Wounded my hart, and all which did beholde.

The degree of detachment from his experience which is evident in the second half of the sequence here emerges in Parthenophil's vision of himself as character in an action comparable to, but distinct from, the fictions with which he is familiar. This sonnet, then, balances detachment with limited self-awareness. The self-conscious detachment produces wittier effects in the lover's strategy, but with a couple of

exceptions the second half of Parthenophil and Parthenophe sustains the sequence's predominant separation of lover and poet, character and creator. In short, the complementary impulses there developed invite the reader to draw conclusions about the lover's experience beyond those which he is capable of articulating.

One of these exceptions follows sonnet 60, in a poem which suggests the complex effect an ambivalent or shifting stance can produce. As in 50 and 51, the shift occurs at the end of sonnet 61, following the development of a comparison of Prometheus, and suddenly widening the poem's framework to include self-reflexive commentary on the nature of its own structure and operation. In this expanded framework, the final half-line has a startling impact, and brings to life the figure of a lover who seems to record an immediate moment of illumination:

> The vulture which is by my goddesse doome
> Assign'd to feede upon mine endlesse lyver,
> Dispaire by the procur'd, which leaves no roome
> For Joculus to jest with Cupides quyver:
> This swallowes worldes of livers, spending few,
> [eating little]
> But not content: O god can this be true?

The poet's consciousness of the scope allowed by the sonnet's structure provides a humorous comment on the lover's extravagant despair, which expands to "leave no roome" for the development of other strands of thought, yet his witty awareness of the self-consuming nature of such extravagance is most effective in the sudden outburst which ends the poem. With this cry, the poet's more encompassing awareness and the lover's feelings coalesce to imply a dramatic moment of realization.

Yet such moments are rare in Parthenophil and Parthenophe, and for the most part the sequence's second half develops by varying the tone of

the lover's expression from the single-minded persistence which has predominated earlier and shaped the reader's response to his character. The increased diversity dramatizes Parthenophil's insistence from the beginning on "my rest-lesse muses," (7) provoked by the unsettling experience of love: "I restlesse on thy favors meditate," (12) "Braynes with my reason never rest in peace," (18) and "My sences never shall in quiet rest." (18) Hence consistent with characterization in the first half of the sequence, the development of the second is also plausibly provoked by Parthenophil's fictional circumstances, which imply a specifically courtly setting distinct from the pastoral environment of Chloris, Phillis, and Licia. As we have seen, attitudes to love are more complex in Parthenophil and Parthenophe than the idealistic strain particularly of Licia, and the cynical element introduced by Laya's change of affection and Parthenophe's earlier vow is filled out by the recurrent presentation of courtly rivals, like the "youthful squier,/...[who] could the crafty guise" and who becomes Laya's "new pray" in sonnet 5 or sonnet 102's "Vayne gallantes" with their "much-maistered eyes where fancies sitte." The encounters between the sequence's two ladies and its additional male characters are typified by indirection and artifice, a matter of "riddle" and "lovers art" (79); as Laya in 5 "sweete wordes by pause did tremble" in a coy and assumed hesitance, so in 79 the courtier "with secret signes, was sweetly told/ Her thoughtes with winkes, which all men might beguile." Witnessing such encounters and experiencing in his relation with Parthenophe the advantages which a more sportive and skeptical approach grants a player in the game of courtship, Barnes' lover adopts a more versatile series

of responses himself. While we cannot observe his capacity "To bandie with bel-gardes in interchange," (79) as Parthenophil observes the artful glances of those "touch't...with an amorous fitte" but whom "affections dart did never prickle," (102) the diversity of tone and attitude in the sonnets signifies a greater mastery of the forms of courtship. At the same time, the implications conveyed by the relation between these diverse strains reinforces the argument that Parthenophil serves as a fictional character to illustrate a larger design he neither perceives nor controls.

In the first place, Barnes uses a number of devices to link consecutive poems and thus to suggest a continuity of thought despite the diverse tones of Parthenophil's expression. The phrase "thy bewtie lost returnes no more," for instance, ends sonnet 58 and begins, with a slight variation, sonnet 59, yet the lover's mood ranges within this space between the elegaic and the revengeful: "These (as thy selfe) once withred, men detest," (58) "Yet thinke when in thy forhead wrinckles bee,/ Men will disdaine thee then, as thou doest mee." (59) Similarly, the "wrinckles, sighes, and teares" which end sonnet 69 recur to initiate the development of the poem following--"What can these wrinckles, and vayne teares portende/.../ What shew these signes...?" (70)--while the comparison to Prometheus which begins 61 is echoed at the end of 62: "How oft [have I been] in passion, mounted, and pluck't downe?" Such consecutive links create, as they have in other minor sequences of this type, a sense of progressive development over the course of the work, and thus imply the lover's immersion in time even as he gains some control over his situation by a witty management of the

materials it provides.

Secondly, there is a kind of rhythm at certain points in the second half of the sequence which conveys a sense of the lover's vulnerability to his experience, despite his more sophisticated response. Sonnets 72 and 73, for instance, linked by the speaker's plays on the meaning of "grace" and by the latter's reference to events narrated in the former, are two of the work's more effective poems, and Doyno notes as a factor in the latter's success changes in the lover's attitude from anger to supplication and then to resignation. The falling rhythm of these changes is then reversed in the development of sonnet 74 and its colloquial, increasingly energetic tone, ending with the articulation of misogynist sentiments emphasized by word repetition:

> Hath pride or nature bred this fault in thee,
> Nature, and pride have wrought in thee these evils,
> For women are by nature proude as divels.

Shortly following, however, occur a pair of the second half's several sonnets which express a desire for incapacity and sense of despair: the first addresses a series of imperatives to the lover's own body--"Be blind mine eyes" (76)--while the second concludes of the physiological effects of love that "It followes, then, I can not long be quicke." (77) These changes of pace and attitude, as they recur, build up a sense of the strain involved in maintaining sufficient distance from the experience to produce the more effective and witty complimentary poems or to give expression to a satiric tendency.

This sense is conveyed vividly by a number of poems which present the lover's desire to retreat to a world of pastoral simplicity from the more sophisticated forms of his courtly milieu, and by the location of

these poems. The first of them occurs early in the sequence; provoked by Parthenophe's "sophistrie," the lover poses a series of rapid questions which embody his confused response and sense of urgency by varying line length, broken rhythm, and inverted structure:

> Where shall I Sonnets borrow
> Where shall I finde brests, sides, and tong,
> Which my great wrongs might to the world dispence?
> Where my defence?
> My Phisicke where? for how can I live long
> That have forgone myne heart? (Madrigal 1)

In the lines following, the motif of escape to an environment which more naturally reflects his emotional state smoothes out the rhythm of the poem in balanced lines, unified by the long "e" sound which steadies the imaginative search for satisfaction:

> ...I'le steale from hence,
> From restlesse soules myne Hymnes, from seas my teares,
> From windes my sighes, from concave rockes and steele
> My sides and voyces Echo: reedes which feele
> Calme blastes still-moving, which the shepherd beares
> For waylefull plaints, my tong shall be:
> The land unknowne to rest and comfort me. (Madrigal 1)

Immediately following the last of those sonnets in which Parthenophil plays on legal terminology, having summoned Parthenophe "Into the court of stedfast love," (11) the madrigal provides a release from the lover's strained efforts to impose formal bonds on the relationship, and Parthenophil makes at the poem's conclusion a surprisingly effective declaration of his despair.

The same impulse recurs in the second half of the sequence, in a pattern which yokes the desire for incapacity to a vision of pastoral retreat as joint responses to a situation whose complexities

Parthenophil has come increasingly to recognize. Sonnet 64, for instance, plays on shifts of meaning as Parthenophe's surpassing of the gods' virtues is replaced by the lover's vulnerability to Cupid, the qualities of the two characters being equated by the motif of theft; while he tells the lady that "I will accuse thee to the gods of theft," Parthenophil ends by describing his own situation in the same terms:

> Complaine of me to Cupid, let him seeke
> In vayne for me each where, and in all partes,
> For gainst my will, I stoule one of his dartes.

The self-conscious tension of the final line balances the lover's emotional susceptibility against his intellectual capacity to manipulate elements of the situation, but the sonnets following dissipate this tension by their content and by the relative simplicity of their enumerative structures. In the first, a repetition of the lover's desire for incapacity structures a steady retreat from a vivid and turbulent emotional response to the simpler alternatives of non-existence or contentment with the shepherd's untroubled lot; the lover wishes

> ...that I never had been borne at all,
> Or beeing, had been borne of shepheardes broode,
> Then should I not in such mischaunces fall,
> Quyet my water and content my foode. (65)

This wish in turn contains the seeds of the next poem's development; frequently anthologized, sonnet 66's address to "sweet content" is structured as a series of questions about its source, and gradually applies a moral orientation to the simple opening description of the lives of "shepheardes and light-hearted swaynes." His conclusion returns the exploration of the lover's own situation, and the couplet's weary tone, simpler than his expressions of futility in the first half

of Parthenophil and Parthenophe, has a greater impact: "Whether thou doest in heaven, or earth appeare,/ Be where thou wilt, thou will not harbour here." (66)

A similar impulse to withdraw occurs in sonnet 80, in which Parthenophil expresses alternative desires for death or for retreat to a natural environment which, even if threatening, will more aptly mirror his emotional state; he consigns

> My sighes to ayer, to Christall springes my teares,
> My sad complaintes (which thee could never move)
> To mountaines desolate, and deafe, my feares
> To Lambes beset with Lyons.

Placed between sonnet 79's discovery of the mistress with a courtly rival and 81's personification of jealousy as "thine owne destruction mov[ing],/ With eagles eye, which secret watch doth rage," the poem in its context has several implications for our understanding of the lover's character. Observation of the courtly methods of artifice and indirection seems to provoke the desire for a model of interaction that is simpler, if just as harsh, in its embodiment of the lover's feelings, while his awareness of the self-destructive potentiality of jealousy returns to the idea of a more detached perspective, or raging "secret watch," as productive simultaneously of pain and of illumination. Despite evidence of his better understanding in the second half of the work, then, Parthenophil's capacity for achieving and sustaining some distance from his experience is limited, and the emotional rhythms of such passages as these indicate his susceptibility still to the lady's power.

Sonnets 100 to 104 present a final recapitulation of this rhythm.

The first reverses the pattern of sonnet 8, as Parthenophil, again presented in direct engagement with Parthenophe, demonstrates the extent to which he has mastered her skill at wordplay:

> Pleading for pitie to my mistresse eyes
> Urging on dutie favours as desartes,
> Complaining mine hid flames, and secret smartes,
> She with disdaynefull grace, in jest replyes:
> Her eyes were never made mans enemies:
> Then me with my conceipt she overthwartes,
> Urging my fancie, which vayne thoughtes impartes
> To be the causer of mine injuries,
> Saying I am not vext as I complained,
> How melancholye bred this light conceipt:
> Hard-harted mistresse, canst thou thinke I fayned?
> That I with fancies vayne vayne woes repeate?
> Ah no! for though thine eyes none else offend,
> Yet by thine eyes, and noes, my woes want end.
> (100)

As playful here as she has been throughout the sequence, Parthenophil responds actively to the lady's "overthwarting" of his conceit, and both reveal a self-conscious awareness of the conventional techniques and images of love-poetry. Parthenophil is here attacked, as Licia's lover has been, on the grounds of insincerity, but Parthenophe's charge is more sophisticated than that of Licia, in that it offers some analysis of the self-deceptive operations of fancy. The greater sophistication of his mistress and the experience of a courtly milieu which has shaped his development in the sequence provoke Parthenophil, in turn, to a strategy more witty than Licia's lover has been capable of attaining. Instead of accepting an identification of himself with his "fancies vayne," in other words, he protests his innocence in lines whose tone suggests conscious self-presentation, and then overturns her ploy with a witty play on "eyes/ayes."

Yet the poem following, with its series of alternative exiles,

imprisonments, and deaths that "had not been so sore a death as this," (101) sets the stage for sonnet 102's returns to a treatment of eyes and fancies, a treatment which stresses the extent to which an emotional susceptibility underlies Parthenophil's adoption of courtly strategies, as his use of one of those strategies in sonnet 100 has been succeeded by sonnet 101's statement of extravagent despair. In 102, he addresses an audience of "Vayne gallantes," and Parthenophil's diction in this epithet and throughout the sonnet echoes the vocabulary of sonnet 100. As we have seen, these courtiers are characterized by their light-hearted approach to love, an enjoyment of the forms of courtship detached by emotional commitment; they are those

> ...whose much longing spirites tickle,
> Whose braynes swell with abundane of much witte,
> And would be touch't fayne with an amourous fitte,
> ...
> ...whom affections dart did never prickle,
> ...which hold lovers fooles, and argue it. (102)

Their "much-maistered eyes where fancies sitte," moreover, contrast Parthenophil's, which he has earlier had difficulty "fram[ing]...for an unjust controllment" (13) of the lady's features, and the alternatives he outlines for them in the sonnet's final lines imply his continuing vulnerability to the sight of Parthenophe:

> Gase on my sunne, and if teares do not trickle
> ...
> Then, eagles will I terme you for your eyes,
> But Beares, or Tygres for your salvage hartes:
> But if it chance such fountaines should arise,
> And you made like partakers of my smartes,
> Her for her percing eyes, an eagle name:
> But for her hart, a Tygre never tame. (102)

The alternatives are as rigidly dichotomized and indicate as restricted a vision as the types of imprisonment with which the sequence began, and

which have been echoed in the "loth-some dungeons" of sonnet 101. While the lady's impact is comparable to that of beasts of prey, those who can resist her effect are described in the same "salvage" terms. The impression, then, is that love remains for Parthenophil a matter of conquest, and that although he can perceive the ferocious appetite which underlies the elegant forms of courtship, he cannot change the nature of the game.

Finally, this impression is reinforced by sonnets which exploit an erotic vein of wit. Sonnet 41's rhyme of "prickle/tickle," for instance, is picked up in sonnet 102 to contribute a sexual tension to Parthenophil's depiction of the courtier. In a similar vein, sonnets 62 and 72 play on arousal and tumescence, the latter converting the lover's cry for a rapid debilitation, if he cannot achieve his desire, into a frank depiction of sexual frustration:

> ...upright parts of pleasure, fall you downe:
> Wast wanton tender thighes consume for this,
> To her thighes elmes, that you were not made
> vines.

His imagination is also exerted to anticipate the satisfaction of Parthenophil's desire, as the description of the lady's face as "My passions Calendar" in sonnet 84 leads to a change in tone:

> My leape years is (oh when is that leape yeare)
> When all my cares I overleape, and feast
> With her fruition whom I hold most deare.
> And if some Calenders the truth tell mee,
> Once in fewe yeares, that happie leape shall bee.

The effect is produced here not merely through wordplay; by bringing the lover's desire down from an idealized realm to the realities of the body, the erotic imagination provides a somewhat skeptical view of the characteristic pattern of courtly love, in which the lover must seek the

most remote signs of a mutual regard to sustain his devotion. It emphasizes as well, however, the extent to which desire underlies this elegant pattern in the conduct which Parthenophil has observed.

Doyno argues convincingly that its sensual component is one of the distinguishing features of Parthenophil and Parthenophe, although he also acknowledges contemporary criticism of such sonnets as 63:

> Jove for Europaes love tooke shape of Bull,
> And for Calisto playde Dianaes parte
> And in a golden shower, he filled full
> The lappe of Danae with coelestiall arte,
> Would I were chang'd but to my mistresse gloves,
> That those white lovely fingers I might hide,
> That I might kisse those hands, which mine hart loves
> Or else that cheane of pearle, her neckes vaine pride,
> Made proude with her neckes vaines, that I might folde
> About that lovely necke, and her pappes tickle,
> Or her to compasse like a belt of golde,
> Or that sweet wine, which downe her throate doth trickle,
> To kisse her lippes, and lye next at her hart,
> Runne through her vaynes, and passe by pleasure part.

To a modern reader, the poem is one of the sequence's most successful. Even as the imagination is inspired by a series of mythological transformations to take flight into the realm of speculation, the notion of liquid gold retains an imagistic coherence within the poem, and the play on "vaine/vaines" reinforces a sense of the control which a more detached perspective permits the lover. Interestingly, while he begins with a submissive gesture which encapsulates both the lover's conventional distance from the lady and his reliance on the most fleeting signs of favour, in kissing her fingertips, the final vision of a successful piercing to the mistress' heart precisely reverses the

earlier effects of her "pearsing" gaze. The poem's imaginative action, then, is similar to that of sonnet 84: in both cases, Parthenophil has succeeded in redressing the lover's traditional subservience to the lady by freeing the erotic impulse which underlies the elaborate forms of courtship and the adoring posture of the lover.

In so doing, Parthenophil reveals his participation in a context which equates love with sexual conquest, and the revelation is consistent with his expression of misogynist sentiments and the threat of time's revenge: the lady is less important than is Parthenophil's desire for satisfaction (and, as noted earlier, the three-part work ends with the physical consummation of his desire). Unable to change the nature of the game, Parthenophil enters into it with a sophisticated and artificial evocation of his desire. While the vein of erotic wit liberates him from the earlier state of abject captivity to the lady, that is, Barnes presents this development as the consequence of Parthenophil's gaining worldly experience, so that to some extent, he comes full circle to the more light-hearted approach which the opening sonnets have criticized in both Laya and Parthenophe. At the same time, sonnets which express a desire for withdrawal imply the strain that is involved in sustaining a more detached perspective on the game of love, and suggest Parthenophil's continuing susceptibility to the nature of his experience. In understanding and capacity for verbal wit, he gains certain characteristics which may be identified with those of his creator, yet in this larger pattern the reader is invited to take a more encompassing perspective on the experience which <u>Parthenophil and Parthenophe</u> presents. Barnes' manipulation of his speaker's fictional

circumstances and his presentation of the lover in implied or direct dialogue with others emphasize that Parthenophil's development is a consequence of a context created for him by the poet, who stands for most of the sequence apart from the figure of the lover.

Nothing could be further from our understanding of Licia's lover than the development of Parthenophil's attitudes to love. In Licia, the lover does not so much develop as demonstrate, by reconciling himself to the endless postponement of his satisfaction, the educative nature of love: figuratively, a longing for that which one perceives as ideal but which remains unattainable. In Parthenophil and Parthenophe, on the other hand, the lover's desire for satisfaction increases over the course of the sequence, as expressions of praise and despair yield to a more dynamic series of reactions to frustrated longing. Yet Licia's lover is similar to Parthenophil in that both are restricted in their understanding of the larger design created by the sequence's author, the historical poet. Both Licia and Parthenophil and Parthenophe, then, seem to have been conceived according to a model of fictional characterization which stresses consistency and plausibility. Although several of the latter's sonnets provide an exception to the general rule, in both sequences the created figure of the lover stands apart from the poet who is responsible for his circumstances and who manipulates his response to illustrate, in Fletcher's case, the positive qualities of true love, and in Barnes', reaction to a milieu in which love is an often-deceptive battle of the sexes.

CHAPTER 4

Of the minor sequences, only Samuel Daniel's Delia and Fulke Greville's Caelica have received sustained critical attention of a kind which suggests these works' superiority to those already considered in this thesis. Waswo, for instance, bases his argument that "Greville's achievement in Caelica is broader and richer than has usually been recognized" on the poet's complex examination of the convention within which he is working:

> With the best Elizabethans, he exploits the modes of perception latent in the courtly tradition and the eloquent style; he also uses that style ironically to analyze the inadequacies of the tradition. 1972; 72)

While Delia has not excited quite this degree of re-evaluation from earlier critical opinion, LaBranche's study of the rhetorical voice which Daniel employs in his work implies throughout a degree of skill neglected in past assessments of "well-languaged Daniel." Both poets have suffered from the tendency to judge their achievements by the standard of the major sonneteers. However, both Delia and Caelica in fact offer a number of sonnets which will bear such comparison in terms of technical merit and artistic polish, so that while Daniel may be criticized for the banality into which his smooth style of versification at times descends, or Greville for an occasional obscurity, in neither case is the work's status dependent on those stylistic shortcomings which have led to dismissive treatment of sequences like Chloris, Diana, and Parthenophil and Parthenophe. Moreover, Delia and Caelica reward attention to the emotional dilemmas they present or to their

intellectual content in a way which is not true of the minor sequences treated in the first three chapters. They do so primarily by employing the fixed stance of the speaker--a feature which each shares with the minor sequences and which prevents either work's being placed with Astrophel and Stella or the Amoretti--as a coherent centre for the sequence's development and meaning.

Allied in these respects, the two sequences nevertheless demonstrate fundamentally different means of dealing with their common subject matter. That is, the meditative tone, their moral concerns, and the intellectual demands which they place on the reader derive from contrasting rhetorical stances. In Delia, Daniel presents the thoughts and responses of a fictional lover to illuminate the effects of love on a mind sober, contemplative, and increasingly focused on the figure of the lady--a mind which may participate in certain features of its creator's temperament, but which lacks the more encompassing perspective which the poet invites the reader to take on the lover's experience. As several critics remind us, the lady's name "is an anagram for the word 'ideal'; and the ideal as beauty is Delia's subject," (Goldman, 62) yet in this sequence, as in Fletcher's Licia, what the lady may represent to the reader's understanding is distinct from the lover's attempt to comprehend her personal reality. Limited to the scope of his action as lover, the speaker's reflections on such issues as the nature and aims of self-expression do not encourage the reader to identify him with Delia's creator, but instead to recognize such reflections as a feature in plausible characterization and as a means of revealing, to a greater extent than has been true of other sequences of this type, the "inner

life" of the lover. As LaBranche argues of Daniel's technique in general, so we discover that Delia

> operates on us through the example of a speaker intent on pursuing a course within himself rather than upon swaying our opinion...This portrait of a mind discoursing, reconsidering, reacting is Daniel's sober representation of the eternal struggle between truth of subject matter and the arts of persuasion by which the poet must present that matter. (128-29).

Illustrating his creator's concern with "the conflicting demands of well-speaking and truth-saying," (LaBranche, 123) the lover's consciousness of these poetic issues is nevertheless more strictly limited by his fictional role. According to him, his verse results simply from the desire to move Delia and to ease his mind, an alternative to the explosive potential of silence which as in Licia makes speech a compulsive reaction to the frustrations of love:

> ...my degraded hopes, with such disgrace
> Did force me grone out griefes, and utter this.
> For being full, should I not then have spoken
> My sence oppress'd, had faild, and heart had broken.
> (9)

Thus while the declaration that "had she not been faire and thus unkinde,/ My muse had slept, and none had knowne my minde" (6) may imply some degree of self-revelation on the part of the poet, conscious of his larger audience, this sense is emphatically subordinated in Delia to the lover's more limited goals: his lines, unlike those which "Forg[e] a griefe to winne a fames reward," serve only "t'unburthen mine owne hart," and his love, not "limnd for outward hew," "affects no fame, nor steemes of Art." (4) Again as in Licia, sincerity of emotion and expression is overtly an issue in characterization, as Daniel's speaker chooses the most direct means of reflecting his emotional state, in the

hope of swaying Delia.

Caelica, on the other hand, is spoken by a figure who shares his creator's concern with the moral and intellectual guidance of the work's general audience of readers. To its larger design, the sequence sacrifices the vivid rendering of love's impact on an individual mind which is a central feature of Delia's success. Those sonnets which treat the speaker's ostensible experience of love have a clearly didactic purpose; as Waswo points out,

> Achieving...a vivid impact in the presentation of emotional conflict seems...to have interested Greville less than working his way through such a presentation to some general judgment upon the conflict. He thus tends to use even his dramatic structures as vehicles for the logical analysis of an experience. (101)

The series of directives which his poet-speaker addresses to a hypothetical reader--"Let him see," "Looking on me, let him know" (5)--serve as early indications of the use to which he will put accounts of his own experience and suggest that he shares with the figure of his creator what Waswo argues is a "conception of the lyric as oration." (108) Increasingly, the visual metaphor in Caelica 5 stresses the illustrative function of the speaker's experience as it does in the overtly didactic "My Love is Past," the final group of twenty sonnets in Watson's Passionate Centurie of Love. Although Caelica is also spoken by a poet-speaker, however, his emphasis falls on the sonnets' intellectual and moral content rather than on the ingenuity or versatility he can display in their modes of presentation. Indeed, as MacLean points out, the pressure of a particular social context is evident in the occasional presence of a watchful courtly audience, but

there is little sense that the process of creation in such a context concerns the poet-speaker, and Caelica is almost barren of sonnets about purpose and style. Moreover, placing the experience of love in a consistently broad perspective--imagistically, by evoking spatial and temporal dimensions, and thematically, by increasing reference to a larger religious, philosophical, and political context--Greville's poet-speaker does not discount that experience, as Watson's tends to do; instead, he subsumes the lover's dilemmas in the more encompassing awareness he shares with the work's creator, the historical poet.

One feature shared by Daniel's and Greville's speakers is an essential humility: in neither work does an impulse to self-display divert attention from the treatment of issues which contribute to Delia and Caelica a depth and subtlety lacking in the minor sequences discussed in the first three chapters. Yet the nature of that humility again distinguishes their rhetorical stances. A central feature in characterizing Daniel's fictional lover is his humble subservience to the figure of the lady; distant and aloof, she offers him a vision of beauty and virtue which preoccupies his personal and poetic attention. The humility of Caelica's poet-speaker, however, is defined in relation to the hierarchical universe which governs his analysis of human frailty, most obvious in the experience of love. The moral terms of this analysis insist on the speaker's participation in the common weaknesses of mankind, accordingly illustrated by his ostensible susceptibility of love. Instead of the conventional lover's conviction of his lowly status in relation to the adored lady, it is his encompassing moral perspective and conviction of original sin which

determine the humility of Greville's poet-speaker.

I. Daniel's Delia

It is a tribute to Daniel's skill at plausible characterization that the declarations of sincerity made by Delia's speaker, and the inwardness which is characteristic of the work, have prompted some to read the sequence as an expression of the poet's own thoughts and feelings. Crow seems to assume such an identity of the two figures in her assessment of the work; preferring the less ambitious sonnets, she claims that in these "we come more near to hearing a human heart beating than in any of the others. It is not a mighty heart, but it is gentle, tender, and pure." (8)[1] The quality of his emotions is the standard of judgment which the lover emphasizes within the sequence, but the work's capacity to convey a sympathetic personality does not alone imply that the heart beating, gentle or mighty, is that of Daniel himself. The autobiographical validity of Delia's sonnets has been a central issue in critical treatments of the work, and Daniel's revisions to the original sequence, while they provide ample opportunity to study his methods of composition and arrangement, have complicated the issue. There is general agreement not only that these revisions reveal a development "towards sober, restrained, and meditated utterance and away from the impulsive and extravagent," (Rees, 21) but also that such moderation is either the logical outcome of middle-aged temperance or the development of a prudential caution about self-revelation; Miller speculates that

> Older now, Daniel presumably became self-conscious when confronted with his youthful hyperbole and bravado. He therefore made his sonnets reflect his attitude at the time of revision. We can perhaps

> admire his sincerity, if such it is, but we can only regret that, instead of attempting the recapture of the original emotion, whether directed toward a real or a fictitious heroine, he permitted the caution of middle age to throttle the injudiciousness of youth. (61)

Rees in turn argues on the basis of revisions to Delia and of references elsewhere in Daniel's work "to a saddening and chastening experience," (19) that there had occurred "some passionate and searing experience of his youth[,] of which the traces are to be found in Delia" (19-20) but "which it became prudent to allow to drop from sight." (19)

Nevertheless, both Miller and Rees hesitate to commit themselves fully to a biographical reading of the text. Addressing Brady's argument that consistent moderation in revisions implies the toning-down of an actual rather than an imaginary passion, (25) Miller claims instead that

> if the anguished love affair depicted in Delia were genuine, it hardly seems likely that Daniel could have tamed the intensity of his emotions so effectively, and easily, as he did in the revisions. (61n.)

He adds that "the sonnet-fad of the 1590's, rather than personal experience, had probably been his chief source of 'inspiration,'" (58) a view similar to that of Pearson, who claims that Daniel typifies "the men who wrote sonnets to be in fashion, without conviction and probably without a real mistress to sing." (153) Rees, distinguishing as is so often done between the "personal" and the "conventional," reminds us of the importance to any sonneteer of the inherited tradition within which Daniel is working, and devotes much of her study to the identification of his debt to various sources:

> these apparently biographical sonnets deserve to have attention drawn to them, but it would be folly to overstress the impact of urgent personal experience on the sequence as a whole. (22)

Both her analysis and that of Miller thus lean toward a vision of Delia's speaker as a fictional lover, yet their attention to personal experience emphasizes biographical as well as aesthetic considerations in the composition and revision of the work. Moreover, their association of Daniel's experience and temperament with the type of revisions he effected predisposes both critics to disappointment with what Rees defines as a "retreat from what is most striking to the more conventional and trite" (21); Miller, whose study is more persistent in the belief that "because...[Daniel]...was not able to recapture the youthful romanticism reflected in his sonnets, the passion became tepid with the passage of years," (58) concludes that "One prefers the naive grief and excesses--even the verbal infelicities--of the earliest version" which contains "the vitality of life." (68).

Ferry, on the other hand, turns to the autobiographical inferences of Daniel's dedicatory epistle to the Countess of Pembroke, which she regards as simply a gesture towards the conventional association of sonnet-speaker with poet, and not as implying an identification of the two figures within Delia itself. For this implication she finds litle evidence; there seems little pressure, in other words, "to make the autobiographical inferences more literally believable than the polite reluctance to publish." (21) Marotti's analysis yokes the two approaches together: while he echoes Rees in speculating that Daniel's sonnets may originally have belonged to a fruitless courtship, he perceives in the revised sequence a work intended to compliment a

patroness, and thus implicitly informed by a detachment of poet and lover. Delia, he argues, is an anthology in the process of being converted into a unified work, according to three criteria: "a plausible thematic development, a high degree of literary polish, and a consistent portrayal of the sonnet-mistress." (409) Although Marotti's attention is then directed to the social currency of such a work--Daniel, he claims, "clearly wrote a deferential poetry of patronage for which his plaintive style was expecially [sic] suited" (410)--his conclusions are significant in stressing the positive value of Delia's internal coherence and smooth versification, and in setting the sequence within a context in which its complimentary mode may be an indirect one. That is, Delia may serve as Chapter 3 has argued Fletcher's Licia does: the sequence, self-sufficient as a work designed to illustrate the effects of love, is offered as completed artefact to compliment the patroness, but no internal references to its larger context suggest an identification of patroness with sonnet-mistress, or of poet with sonnet-lover.

LaBranche's study of Daniel's poetic voice pays the closest attention to rhetorical stance and the nature of the speaker. He points out the need, in the first place, to consider the posture out of which rhetorical figures emerge and not just verbal technique itself. Distinguishing carefully between moments of sincere self-revelation on the part of the poet and his speaker's sensitivity to questions of sincerity in expression, he claims that the overall presence of Delia's successful sonnets

> is truly a tone of voice, not just the intrusion of a haphazard honesty into the argument of the poem--even

> when the speaker appears to be uttering the poet's own feelings. I mean that this speaking presence is a deliberate device no matter how closely the poet stands behind it. (128)

While LaBranche's study covers Daniel's methodical undertaking of various genres from Delia to Musophilis, his analysis of the poet's style--its characteristic use of syntagmatic rather than paradigmatic figures of speech, the frequency of smooth thus...and, which, and that clauses in a generally additive manner, the combination of a lofty moral attitude and a lack of rhetorical aggressiveness--is relevant to our understanding of its speaker. Most significantly for our purposes, LaBranche argues that such features "reflect...the rhetoric of a mind in associative action rather than a voice delivering polished arguments or striking exaggerated poses," (128) and that Daniel has sought out a style appropriate for the speaker each work represents:

> In this deeper sense of imitation all of Daniel's maneuvers to present a sympathetic and persuasive speaker can be viewed as a fictionalization...Much of the rhetoric is directed to specific representations of the speaker's stance, balance, and manner of discourse, rather than to isolated vivid turns and "effective" argument. (138-39)

In the case of Delia, such a rhetoric sets the figure of Daniel's lover in contrast either to the poet-speaker's display of virtuosity, in the "isolated turns" of Watson's Passionate Centurie of Love, or to his concern with persuasive moral instruction in Greville's Caelica.

This approach provides a healthy corrective for evaluations like that of Miller, which rest on a simplified distinction between personality and convention and which fail to consider any more comprehensive design for the sequence than self-expression or poetic competition. LaBranche's general analysis, on the other hand,

identifies a sense of purpose enacted in the characteristic activity of Daniel's work, and hence suggests the need for re-evaluation:

> Most of Daniel's rhetorical traits...point to the welcoming of a thought process as the basic activity of his poetry--the imitation of an argument rather than the argument itself...[His poems]...owe greater allegiance to a single, continuing philosophical discourse within themselves than they do to the call of social need or of external occasion...And the highly "imitative" uses to which he puts the normal devices of apostrophe, exclamation, and self-examination in shadowing forth a sincere and earnest speaker have discouraged our critical attention. (131-32)

These rhetorical traits serve in Delia to characterize a speaker whose inwardness and desire for sincere expression are predominant features, but whose reflections should not be confused with moments of self-revelation on the part of the poet. Capable of exploring the issues involved in expression more extensively than have the fictional lovers of other minor sequences, Delia's speaker nevertheless does not move beyond the boundaries established by his desire only that his work intercede with the lady.

A number of the work's formal features--the characteristic form of its individual poems, the pattern of imagistic development, and the emphasis placed on the illusion of action unfolding in the present--reinforce the impression of the lover's distance from the figure of his creator. Although it is not shaped towards a firm narrative resolution like that of Phillis, Delia shares with the other minor sequences a high degree of coherence which contributes to a sense of consistent progression within the bounds of the "story" told by the sequence. Pausing briefly after a series of introductory sonnets which outline his attitude towards expression in verse, the lover offers in

Delia 5 an account of the "sudden change" which occurred earlier with his falling in love. That occurrence provides the outer limit of one end of the sequence's temporal continuum, a period of time later identified specifically when the lover speaks of "Faith being with blood, and five yeares witnes sign'd," in sonnet 32.[2] The account is useful also as background to efforts at accepting the lover's characteristic self-division:

> Whilst youth and error led my wandring minde,
> And set my thoughts in heedlesse wayes to range:
> All unawares, a Goddese chaste I finde,
> (Diana-like) to worke my sudden change.
> For her no sooner had mine eyes bewraid,
> But with disdaine to see me in that place;
> With fairest hand, the sweet unkindest Maid,
> Cast water-cold Disdaine upon my face.
> Which turn'd my sport into a Harts dispaire,
> Which still is chac'd, while I have any breath,
> By mine owne thoughts, st on my by my Faire:
> My thoughts (like Houndes) pursue me to my death.
> Those that I fostred of mine own accord,
> Are made by her to murther thus their Lord.

Daniel's use of a few suggestive details which concretize the love's mental landscape evokes the sense of an environment apart from the work's larger social, political, or literary background, but there is never any danger that evocative description will divert attention from the lover and his concerns; natural elements serve a clearly metaphoric function throughout, providing visual analogies to mental categories as in Delia 5, and thus reinforcing the sequence's predominant inwardness.

At the same time, the natural elements serve to foster the illusion of progressive development. Implicitly recalled in the two poems immediately following sonnet 5, they establish in conjunction with the metaphorical landscape of that poem a contrast between the work's central characters, and confirm the lover's perception of his state:

sonnet 6 describes Delia as one "Whose feete doe treade greene paths of youth and love," not a maze of error, while only in speculating on what might otherwise have been can the lover imagine such a confident stride for himself--"Then had I walkt with bold erected face,/ No downe-cast looke had signified my misse." (7) Internal references of this kind are frequent in Delia, as allusions back to episodes described or cited earlier nurture a sense of the work's self-sufficiency, its illusion of personality and actual experience. Sonnet 5, for instance, is recalled to initiate the development of sonnets 18 ("Since the first looke that led me to this error,/ To this thoughts-maze, to my confusion tending") and 33 ("Still in the trace of one perplexed thought,/ My ceaseless cares continually run on"), while its primary motif draws to a close Delia 34's consideration of the mistress' eyes as stars: "Fixt sure they are, but wandring make me stray,/ In endles errors, when I cannot part."

The illusion is also fostered by formal connective devices: like Smith, Daniel links a number of pairs of sonnets by beginning the second with the final line of the first, or with a key phrase from that line. A sense of continuity is conveyed as well by series of poems focusing on the same thematic concern, as in the treatment of aspiration in sonnets 35 through 37 or of time in Delia 22 and 23, 38 through 43. Finally, certain motifs recur to yoke groups of poems or to extend the strand of a particular concern throughout the work. Although no central metaphor is developed to the extent, for example, of Licia's sun and the images clustered around it, "the boundlesse Ocean of thy beauty," to which the reader is introduced in the first sonnet, reappears as "th'Ocean of my

teares" in Delia 32, while the increasingly valedictory tone of the concluding poems is reinforced by the speaker's allusion to "The shipwracke of my ill adventred youth." (54) The over-arching metaphor of the sea-voyage, appropriate to the lover's sense of direction and itself evocative of the pasage of time, thus recurs at key points in the work not only to establish a degree of consistency in the lover's mode of thought and expression, but also to signal a gradual change in attitude resulting from the experience reflected in the individual poems, as he focuses ever more intensely on his emotional state and struggles to come to terms with the transformations wrought by love:

> Raigne in my thoughts fair hand, sweete eye, rare voice,
> Possesse me whole, my hearts triumvirate:
> ...
> When backe I looke, I sigh my freedome past,
> And waile the state wherein I present stand:
> And see my fortune ever like to last,
> Finding me rain'd with such a heavy hand.
> What can I do but yeeld? and yeeld I doo,
> And serve all three, and yet they spoile me too.
> (28)

Incapable of remedying the situation--"my selfe cannot wake/ A way through want to free my soule from care" (29)--Daniel's speaker turns his attention from the world around him and retreats within himself, moving towards reconciliation to his captivity in the role of lover rather than to liberation from its restrictions.

The pattern of withdrawal is evident in such stylistic features as the handling of classical allusion and in the development of such sonnets as 5 and 21. The Diana-Actaeon myth which underlies the retrospective vision of Delia 5 is one of the sequence's most explicit and fully developed classical allusions; Daniel's handling of the

mythological reference characteristically turns attention in the sestet increasingly to the lover's inner life, emphasized by the proliferation of first-person pronouns. A similar effect is produced in Delia 16, in which the phrase "the Hydra of my care" functions to intensify depiction of the lover's despair and sense of futility, but not to evoke a fuller sense of correspondence between his state and Hercules' Labours. In neither case are the mythological narrative and figures allowed to take on a life of their own, to interact more dynamically with Delia's situation and central characters, or to set up reverberations between Daniel's work and a larger literary context. Elsewhere, Ixion and Sisyphus are referred to by context though they remain unnamed, a technique comparable to what LaBranche terms Daniel's use of "sunken" imagery, "which in...[his]...hands avoids witty similarities and resemblances while plunging down to the level of natural and unavoidable (rather than striking) associations." (127) Ultimately, the mythic background contributes to the fifth sonnet a sense of sudden, violent activity and an implied natural setting without infringing on the predominantly mental landscape in which the activity occurs.

The movement inward is embodied as well in the development within individual sonnets and over the course of the sequence as a whole. In sonnet 28, for instance, the movement from the lady's sovereignty over him to the internal paradoxes and loss of time that result from his pursuit reflects in its most general terms the lover's development throughout the course of Delia. As was the case with the lovers of other minor sequences, this development is an intensification of tendencies already present at the beginning of the work, not a shift in

stance. From the early sonnets on, a movement inward from the more self-consciously rhetorical stance, employing the resources of wit and imagination to produce a striking poetic effect, is repeatedly enacted. As LaBranche argues, Daniel's speaker employs what appears to be "a breach of contract in the rhetorical relationship"--"he engages us at the level of argument, but ends by giving us autobiographical revelation" (135)--to establish a mode of discourse which reconciles expression with inward thoughtfulness and sincerity. The reconciliation is often won at the expense of poetic impact. The movement inward may produce the frustrated expectations and anticlimactic conclusion of a sonnet like Delia 11, in which the lover's acknowledgement of the incapacity of his "Teares, vowes, and prayers" yields, in the third quatrain, to a suspenseful repetition of "though":

> Yet, though I cannot win her wille with teares,
> Though my soules Idoll scorneth all my vowes;
> Though all my prayers be to so deafe eares,
> No favour though, the cruell faire allowes.

The couplet, however, provides no witty turn on the central idea of futility such as might be expected after its lengthy development and the series of qualifications. Instead, the lover closes with an announcement of dogged persistence in the efforts which have, so far, been futile:

> Yet will I weepe, vowe, pray to cruell shee:
> Flint, frost, disdaine, weares, meltes, and yeeldes
> we see.

The effect of punctuation in so emphatically breaking up and slowing down the rhythm of the final line conveys the speaker's emotional strain in reaching for naive reassurance which stands, despite the proverbial cast provided by "we see," in flat contradiction to the sonnet's opening

statements: "Teares cannot soften flint,.../ Prayers prevail not with a quainte disdaine." In the expression of personal emotion, then, the speaker has revealed the limitations of his capacity to resolve his dilemma, and the poetic impact is an anticlimactic one.

The anticlimactic effect is produced, however, by the lover's satisfaction with a recapitulative statement rather than because of an absence of rhetorical skill. In fact, the concluding couplet of Delia 11 employs a common and artificial device in its three sets of triplets, set up in echoing parallels, and the sonnet's careful arrangement throughout implies a degree of skill in the lover's handling of his materials. On this basis, Shawcross argues that the speaker here assumes an oratorical stance which complicates our reading of Delia:

> First, he is not simply writing love poems to the addressee, Delia; second, he implies that at times his audience is conceived of as other than Delia; third, the poem implies that the sequence presents a past situation, despite the importance for the present, and perhaps the future. (17-18)

The speaker Shawcross envisions is very much self-conscious poet rather than lover, and the sonnet's forensic mode, he claims, invites the reader's rather than the mistress's response to that speaker on two levels: as narrative, it requests "a positive judgment...of his past actions as he has narrated them and a negative judgment of the mistress's cruel treatment of him," (17) and by emphasizing a continuing concern with his craft, it "involves judgment of his poetic abilities." (18) Yet while such devices as the insistent repetition draw the reader's attention to the rhetorical qualities of the sonnet, they also indicate the limitations of the lover's ability to handle the materials of his experience; the type of rhetorical device employed, in other

words, communicates the distinguishing features of a mind in action rather than implying a mode of performance before the work's larger audience. As LaBranche argues,

> Daniel's rhetoric is not really oratorical in purpose and tone, but it is a rhetoric of thoughtfulness, creating a poetry that presents habits of mind through certain rhetorical signals, a mind given...to tracing cause and effect, analogy, recapitulation and the like. (128)

The third-person reference to Delia ("though I cannot win her") could in fact suggest that sonnet 11 is meditative, while the final "we see"--given the anticlimactic ending--might be seen as reaching for proverbial lore as reassurance rather than creating an implicit dialogue, and thus the poem reinforces that sense of inwardness which is characteristic of Delia as a whole.

The anticlimactic effect is more simply apparent in Delia 20, which overcomes the awkward rhythm of its opening line to develop a poignant sense of tension between public and private selves as one aspect of the lover's paradoxical condition, but which collapses at the end into a predictable analysis of cause and effect: "This cruell knowledge of these contraries,/ Delia my heart hath learned out of those eyes." The couplet's demonstrative pronouns convey the immediacy of the lover's emotions, but the conclusions he draws are effective in expressing personal feeling by the very nature of their retreat from a more evocative depiction of contrarious emotions to a plain statement which seems, by contrast, flat and reductive. As in Delia 11, the couplet strikes the reader as simultaneously plausible and anticlimactic; it characterizes the lover as one who seeks to reconcile himself to his dilemma or to recapitulate its central elements, and by embodying his

limitations, the lines' poetic impact is weakened.

Metaphorically, a sense of the lover's restrictions is conveyed by the motif of encirclement, as the youthful maze of error is succeeded by "The circle of my sorrowes never ending" (18) or by "My fortunes wheele the circle of her eies,/ Whose rouling grace deigne once a turne of blis." (12) Like Sisyphus, the speaker complains, he continues "The never-resting stone of Care to roule," (9) and efforts at progression are steadily converted into cycles of futile action:

> Thus often as I chase my hope from me,
> Straight-way she hasts her unto Delias eies:
> Fed with some pleasing looke there shall she be,
> And so sent backe, and thus my fortune lies. (25)

As a result, the customary divisions of time become merely interminable periods of frustrated expectation--"Long are their nights whose care do never sleepe,/ Lothsome their daies, whom no sun ever joyd" (26)--and Daniel uses the natural cycle to striking effect in communicating the perversion of ordinary patterns of growth and development:

> I sacrifice my youth, and blooming yeares
> At her proud feete, and she respects not it;
> My flower untimely's withred with my teares:
> And Winter woes, for spring of youth unfit. (24)

> And yet the Hydra of my care renues
> Still new borne sorrowes of her fresh disdaine:
> And still my hope the Sommer windes pursues,
> Finding no end or period of my paine. (16)

Like other lovers in the minor sequences, since reward from his "cruel fair" will ever be denied, Delia's speaker can only hope to evade the dreary continuum by the plea to "let me sleepe, imbracing clouds in vaine,/ And never wake to feele the dayes disdaine." (54)

As Daniel turns temporal progression back on itself, into endless cycles of frustrated expectation, so spatial images characterize the

lover's experience by reversals of direction. He intends his "streames of zeale" to take an unimpeded journey to "the boundlesse Ocean of thy beautie," (1) but the amplitude of his goal has been converted, by Delia 46, into "the Oceans of my cares" which look instead to the security of the shore:

> Most faire and lovely Maide, looke from the shore,
> See thy Leander striving in these waves:
> Poor soule quite spent, whose force can do no more
> Now send forth hope, for now calm pitty saves.
> And waft him to thee with those lovely eies,
> A happy convoy to a holy Land:
> ...
> Once let the Oceans of my cares find shore,
> That thou be pleas'd, and I may sigh no more. (46)

Straightforward pursuit having failed, then, the speaker can only plead for direction from Delia herself, and while she has been the goal of his expression from the beginning, the reversal of this key spatial image signifies a narrowing-down from a more adventurous and expansive motion to an exhausted desire for security from the vicissitudes of his metaphoric journey. Similar images create a landscape of despair in Delia 48, in which "the waters of mine eies" represent ocean tides "that never fall to ebbe, but ever rise,/ For to their flow she never grants an end." The parallel treatment of temporal and spatial imagery is most readily apparent in this poem, with its characteristic "never/ever/ never" (like "still" and "no more," key words in Delia), its perversion of the normal tidal pattern governed by time, and its endlessness, despite the dogged persistence of the lover: "Yet nought the rocke of that hard hart can move,/ Where beat these teres with zeale, and fury drives."

Sonnet 52, written we are told on the author's travel to Italy,

reinforces the message implicit in earlier scenes, that each locale will, instead of remedying the lover's situation, reflect back to him the visage of his despair:

> And whither (poor forsaken) wilt thou goe,
> To goe from sorrow, and thine owne distresse?
> When every place presents like face of woe,
> And no remove can make thy sorrowes less?

Once again, the more expansive impulse to journey and exploration brings about a reversal of direction, as the painful experience which the lover seeks to escape confronts him in each new locale; moreover, as we have noted of Daniel's suggestions of a natural environment, indications of external place are subordinated as the poem develops to the mental landscape which is Daniel's primary subject. In the sonnet following, the lover's thoughts are like a magnet attracted to Delia and the country with which she is identified: "Drawn with th'attractive vertue of her eyes,/ My toucht heart turnes it to that happy cost." (53) Significantly, the locale to which his thoughts are drawn is imaged as a fortification held in the arms of Neptune and "Divided from the world, as better worth,/ Kept for himself, defended from all harms." (53) Retreat to an enclosed space is thus associated for him with security, and the sequence ends with his sending "These tributary passions, beauties due" (60) not to the "boundlesse Ocean" (1) as he did the initial tributary streams, but to "those eyes the cabinets of love." (60) Some of the capacity to will his own direction lost in the allusion to Leander or the image of the magnet is here regained, but the direction of such force, in reaction to the connotations of wandering error on land or sea, is now towards enclosure and storage rather than to a flowing vastness.

Encirclement becomes a structural pattern in the series of sonnets beginning with Delia 27, which presents an attempt at liberation only to end by acknowledging the mistress as "my soules soveraigne." In this poem, it is the speaker's body which is treated as a fortress, and his efforts to free himself from her domination proceed, ironically, by enclosures:

> Oft and in vaine my rebel thoughts have ventred,
> To stop the passage of my vanquisht hart:
> And shut those waies my friendly foe first entred,
> Hoping thereby to free my better part.
> ...I garde the windowes of this forte.

Despite this defense, the speaker is betrayed by the appeal of her voice; she conquers "all by arte," and her victory is confirmed in the sonnet following as her faculties, unlike the divided, "rebel" forces of the lover's body, "all erect their Trophies on my fall." (28) In the next poem, which moves from military to natural imagery, the imprisonment on which the lover comments is enacted as the parallel between the quatrains yields to a sense of increasing confinement:

> Like as the spotlesse Ermelin distrest,
> Circumpass'd round with filth and lothsome mud:
> Pines in her grief, imprisoned in her nest,
> And cannot issue forth to seeke her goode.
> So I inviron'd with a hatefull want,
> Looke to the heavens; the heavens yeeld forth no grace:
> I search the earth, the earth I finde as skant,
> I view my selfe, my selfe in wofull case. (29)

The narrowing-down of the lover's scope, from heavens to earth to self, embodies the imprisonment which is the poem's theme, illustrates his steadily increasing restriction, and thus epitomizes the development of the sequence as a whole. The sestet, moreover, substitutes for the earlier sense of external, physical space a mental landscape in which

"my selfe cannot wake/ A way through want to free my soule from care" and in which "I must pine, and in my pining lurke"; ultimately, even the objectified internal state is shrouded to emphasize a depth of inward experience, obscured to physical sight: "My fortune mantled with a clowde s'obscure;/ Thus shades my life so long as wants endure." (29) The pattern is repeated in sonnet 30, which opens as "My cares draw on mine everlasting night"; in response to the darkening of his world, the lover in the second quatrain announces his intention to "goe before unto the Mirtle shade/ To attend the presence of my worlds Deere," and the notion of flight to a private realm from the unhelpful physical universe which "invirons" him is picked up as well in Delia 31, in which "my poore heart flew/ Into the sacred Refuge of thy brest:/ ...that Sanctuary."

Thus a number of Delia's formal features cooperate to convey the habitual thought-patterns of a speaker limited to the role of lover, in full retreat from adventurous exploration and focusing instead with increasing intensity on the refuge composed of the tyrant lady and the subjective self. The contemplative mode which predominates in the sequence thus operates in a self-enclosed sphere which the poet, standing behind the figure of the lover, allows us to witness and observe. No movement towards a self-consciously rhetorical stance draws the lover closer to the figure of his creator or involves him in more direct engagement with the larger audience of the work's readers; instead, all aspects of Delia cooperate to emphasize an increasing immersion in his experience rather than the attainment of a more detached perspective on its significance. His characterization of Delia

herself reinforces this impression: she is consistently presented as the "cruel fair," that guise most capable of provoking conflicting responses in the lover and hence most appropriate to a work concerned primarily with his internal state. Her response is entirely consistent within the sequence, which contains neither kisses granted nor recollections of a more reciprocal relationship in the past, and the alternatives "cruel fair" and "my friendly foe" are sufficient to account for each facet of her personality and behaviour revealed in the sonnets. The reader learns nothing further about her save her youth and the fear of aging on which the lover plays quite poignantly in a series of related sonnets, yet even this apparently distinctive quality is ultimately subsumed to a more abstract comment on the nature of women in general:

> Beautie (sweet Love) is like the morning dew,
> Whose short refresh upon the tender greene:
> Cheeres for a time, but till the Sunne doth shew,
> And straight tis gone as it had never beene.
> ...
> When thou surcharg'd with burthen of thy yeeres,
> Shalt bend thy wrinckles homeward to the earth,
> And that in Beauties leafe expir'd, appeares
> The date of Age, the Kalends of our death.
> But ah! no more, this must not be foretold,
> For women grieve to thinke they must be old. (50)

Not even the eyes which are Delia's distinguishing physical feature are described, and she takes within the sequence no action, speaks no word, that might convey a vivid sense of her actual presence.

Instead of developing the lady's personality, the lover explores more extensively than has the speaker of any other minor sequence his concern with expression, which especially at the beginning and conclusion is Delia's main theme. It is a theme, moreover, which is

pursued without effecting any shift in the speaker's stance, for not only is the idea of poetic fame, independent of the work's central love story, subordinated to the lover's desire, but the lover's goal "to move her will" (4) by pleasing may interrupt the suggested development of an effective argument on his behalf. This seems to be the pattern of sonnet 50, in whose conclusion two points are especially relevant to the lover's stance: first, that he reaches for a generalization about the nature of women not to attain an instructive mode or to direct the poem's development towards the reader, but to understand better how to win Delia; and secondly, that this consciousness of what is likely to displease her cuts short the revenge motif partially developed to this point. The revenge of time is a theme which may allow the lover to exert some control over the situation, and to gain the rhetorical upper hand in his relation to the lady, yet Delia's lover is sufficiently preoccupied with what will please her to abdicate the mode of effective argumentation whose potential has just been glimpsed.

Like effective argumentation, skill in poetic expression is not of itself a central value in Delia; the lover's concern with self-expression reinforces the sequence's other techniques of conveying the limitations of his vision, and it is a key component in understanding his stance and relation to the work's audience. As a comment on the sequence as a whole, sent to Delia as "the tribute of my dutie," the opening sonnet reflects some awareness of the work as artefact, but allusions to the poems which compose it are so quickly metamorphosed into "streames of zeale" and "th'accounts of all my care" that any sense of the speaker as self-conscious poet is overwhelmed by

his desire to give evidence of the abundance and quality of his feelings:

> Unto the boundlesse Ocean of thy beautie,
> Runnes this poore River, charg'd with steames of zeale:
> Returning thee the tribute of my dutie,
> Which here my love, my youth, my plaints reveale.
> Here I unclaspe the Booke of my charg'd soule,
> Where I have cast th'accounts of all my care:
> Here have I summ'd my sighs, here I inrole
> How they were spent for thee; looke what they are:
> Looke on the deere expences of my youth,
> And see how just I reckon with thine eies:
> Examine well thy beautie with my truth,
> And crosse my cares ere greater summes arise.
> Reade it (sweet maide) though it be done but sleightly;
> Who can shew all his love, doth love but lightly.

The sonnet employs two central metaphors, hinging on the notion of "tribute": that of the river, and in the second and third quatrains, that of accounts rendered. Both stress the lover's dependence on the lady as the goal of his efforts, and the emotional nature of his reliance is emphasized by the repetition of "charg'd" in increasingly close conjunction to the lover himself. Hence the images' tendency to take on an independent life is curtailed by reminders of the more personal reality from which they emerge and which they are designed to mirror, while the narrowing-down of their context from the landscape of the first quatrain to the financial relations of the second directs the reader's attention to a gradually increased focus on the lover's emotional state.

This development is aided by intensification of the sonnet's dramatic mode. From the demonstrative pronoun which focuses attention on "this poore River," the lover insists increasingly on the immediacy

of the situation: "Here I unclaspe," "Here have I summ'd." The third quatrain not only addresses Delia but instructs her in the proper response to his offering, while its syntactical arrangements reinforce the interrelations inherent in the poem's key images. Especially in line 10, the delay in the prepositional phrase adds to the speaker's command that she respond to his verse ("see...with thine eies") the suggestion that it mirrors his habitual response to her eyes, traditionally the site of love and aspiration ("I reckon with thine eies"); line 11 uses a similar syntactical ambiguity to balance the opportunity for self-examination which his "truth" provides (examine thy beauty by means of my truthful lines) with an appeal for just consideration (examine thy beauty in relation to my truth, my fidelity) which in turn echoes the just reckoning of line 10. As the lover presents his instructions, then, her response becomes a venture in which both characters cooperate--she by the action of reading, he by his "presence" in the work read.

While the central metaphor of this poem, "the Booke of my charg'd soule," has insisted on an identification of the work with its creator's emotional state, consciousness of the work as artefact has given the lover, temporarily, a more detached perspective on its workings and desired effect. As he stands apart from the physical product of his expression, then, the lover is able to comment on it more dispassionately and with an orator's sense of the dialectic it might establish between himself and the lady. His emotional distance enables him to play with more self-conscious wit than is generally evident in <u>Delia</u> on sonnet 1's primary figure: the image of a book from which both characters stand

apart, as writer and as reader, yet in which both are simultaneously present as subject. The sets of relationships thus treated place the characters on the same level, and the lover's stance is accordingly distinct from his more usual subservience to the lady. The final couplet, however, undercuts the advantage which his adoption of the poet's role has gained him, returning as it does to the notions of truth and emotional sincerity which have been, as in the repeated "charg'd," a steady undercurrent in the poem's development and a source of tension as they pull against the evidence of the poet-lover's rhetorical skill. The imperative opening retains the sonnet's dramatic mode, but the parenthetical address following disrupts the formality of the sonnet's structure and expression, which to this point has accommodated both immediacy and evidence of attention to poetic effect. It signals the sudden change introduced by the lover's final qualification, an acknowledgement of the limitations of formal expression. Wit and ingenuity thus collapse into plain statement intended to embody its own logical justification: the slightness of the performance itself is proof of the speaker's emotional sincerity, of the depth of his love.

The sacrifice of rhetorical impact to quality of feeling, which results in the anticlimactic conclusions to many of Delia's sonnets, is thus a conscious principle with the sequence's speaker. Nowhere is this principle more emphatically stated than in sonnet 43, where notions of fame and immortality produce some evaluation of Petrarch and Laura. Hesitant about his own place in the lyric tradition thus evoked, the lover asserts nonetheless his confidence in the personal sincerity his verses reflect, and it is on the basis of genuineness of feeling that

expression is here considered capable of granting frame and immortality:

> Thou canst not die whilst any zeale abound
> In feeling hearts that can conceive these lines;
> That thou a Laura hast no Petrarch found,
> In base attire, yet clearly Beauty shines.
> And I (though borne within a colder clime,)
> Do feele my inward heat as great (I know it:)
> He never had more faith, although more rime,
> I love as well, though he could better show it.
> But I may adde one feather to his fame,
> To helpe her flight throughout the fairest Ile,
> And if my pen could more enlarge thy name,
> Then shouldst thou live in an immortal stile.
> For though that Laura better limned be,
> Suffice, thou shalt be lov'd as well as she.[3]

As elsewhere in Delia, the couplet here conveys simultaneously the plausibility of the lover's emotion and expression, and a degree of flatness in its plain statement. The sonnet has communicated not only his vision of his own role as poet, subordinated to his "inward heat" as lover, but as well a correspondingly limited perspective on the poetic tradition within which he writes: as he expects to be judged, on the basis of true feeling to be found in his verse, so he judges Petrarch, whose superiority as poet is thus cast aside to concentrate on the lover's own equivalent degree of faith and love.

That the priority of self-expression will set bounds to the speaker's development in Delia is evident in the work's first four sonnets. These poems define his attitude towards expression and the audience for which he is writing in such a way as to limit the range of voice achieved within the sequence, and while self-conscious treatment of his impulse to sonneteering allows more extensive analysis of the motif than has occurred in other minor sequences, the speaker never wavers in his stance throughout the course of Delia. A larger audience than the lady herself, for instance, may be acquired accidentally--"If

so it hap, this of-spring of my care,/.../ Come to their view, who like afflicted are" (3)--but expression in this sequence is designed to ease the lover's pain and to sway the mistress, not to gain public renown:

> No Bayes I seeke to decke my mourning brow,
> O cleere-eyde Rector of the holy Hill,
> My humble accents beare the Olive bough,
> Of intercession but to move her will.
> These lines I use, t'unburthen mine owne heart;
> My love affects no fame, nor steemes of Art. (4)

And if by Delia 21 the futility of the second motive, intercession, is becoming clear, this recognition intensifies the desire for self-expression in a growing tension between the subjective speaker and the public world: "vapours of disdaine so overgrowne/ That my loves light wholy in-darkned is./ Why should I more molest the world with cries?"

Not surprisingly, then, the lover repeatedly denies more worldly ambition in a manner familiar from the lovers of other minor sequences, and the use of images of imprisonment to articulate this desire emphasizes its effect in restricting the range of the speaker's voice:

> M'ambitious thoughts confined in her face,
> Affect no honour but what she can give:
> My hopes doe rest in limits of her grace. (12)

Even within this more personal realm, the lover's failure in his more limited aspiration provokes a critique of his techniques--"My slender meanes presum'd too high a part," (36) "th'attempt was farre above my arte/ Her pride brook'd not poore soules should so aspire" (36)--even as he protests his essential humility and worth: "'tis to me no blot,/ To have attempted, though attained thee not," (35) "Yet I protest my high desiring will/ Was not to dispossesse her of her right." (36) The opposition of world and self is thus extended to a contrast between

rhetorical means, the "arte" which he lacks and with which she has triumphed in Delia 27, and the worthiness of his intentions, that which lies within. As a consequence, he never conceives of his verse as gaining the autonomy as artistic creation which might otherwise replace its primary function as witness to her beauty and mirror of his love:

> Let others sing of Knights and Palladines:
> In aged accents, and untimely words:
> Paint shadows in imaginary lines,
> Which well the reach of their high wit records;
> But I must sing of thee, and those faire eies,
> Autentique shall my verse in time to come,
> When yet th'unborne shall say, Lo where she lies,
> Whose beauty made him speake that else was dombe.
> These are the Arkes, the Trophies I erect,
> That fortifie thy name against old age:
> And these thy sacred vertues must protect,
> Against the darke and times consuming rage.
> Though th'error of my youth in them appeare,
> Suffice, they shew I liv'd and lov'd thee deare. (55)

The keynote of this sonnet is "autentique": as with his treatment of Petrarch, the lover wants only that renown that is based on the sincerity of his feelings, on a critical vision that judges him as a character within his work. The opposition between his own authentic verse and the imaginary shadows of other authors is here reinforced by a contrast in subject matter, between love and beauty on the one hand and adventure, battle, and power on the other. To these dichotomies are added differences in artistic motivation and technique: others write to record the high reaches of their wit, through imaginative treatment of material apart from their personal experience--hence distancing poet from character and narrative--but no such separation troubles the lover's creation, for Delia's beauty inspires him as lover and as poet simultaneously, and his verse mirrors faithfully that inspiration. While the sonnet considers a future audience, moreover, it is not directed

rhetorically to that audience, and the effect of this consideration is to stress, as in sonnets 3 and 43, the ultimate value of emotional sincerity and worthy subject-matter over the "height" of wit and more striking rhetorical devices ("good accents, and untimely words") in attracting the positive judgment of a reader.

The treatment of time in Delia 55 develops an increasing sense of his verse's value as "thy lasting monument,/ Which happily posterity may cherish," (42) as a means of defeating time's inevitable effects on both protagonists, which has been a concern in sonnets around the midpoint of the sequence. This sense provides a new direction for his instructions:

> Goe you my verse, go tell her what she was;
> For what she was, she best shall find in you.
> Your firy heate lets not her glory passe,
> But (Phoenix-like) shall make her live anew. (38)

These sonnets which treat "the time to come" are among the most striking in the work, and Delia 55's most moving expression is similarly generated by tension between past, present, and future. His contemporaries, sonnet 55 implies, make self-conscious use of distortions of time by employing archaic diction and rhythm; apart from its critique of a more difficult style, the second line may also convey a sense of ephemerality reinforced by the connotations of "shadows" and "imaginary" in the following line.[4] The lover's work, in contrast, may include a record of his personal past ("th'error of my youth") along with his present apprehension of "thy sacred vertues," but will nevertheless retain the capacity to revivify. Future reading thus becomes proof of his existence and emotional sincerity--"they show I liv'd and lov'd thee deare." Nevertheless, the sonnet's evocative image of defense "Against the darke and times consuming rage" participates at

the same time in the sequence's tendency toward static preservation, as the image of the Phoenix is replaced by arks, monuments, and cabinets of love. In his most despairing moments, the lover declares that her "frownes should be/ To m'infant stile the Cradle, and the Grave," (59) but the enclosures evident in even more affirmative poems signify that it is the threat of dissolution urging him to preserve, not the independent desire for imaginative creation, which provokes the lover's most vivid expressions of feeling.

Such efforts call for an audience less concerned with poetic evaluation than with personal sympathy, and Daniel's speaker early rejects the possibility of more objective evaluation:

> But untoucht hearts, with unaffected eie,
> Approach not to behold so great distresse:
> Cleere-sighted you, soone note what is awrie,
> While blinded ones mine errours never gesse. (3)

In The Passionate Centurie of Love, we understand the invitation to compare experience as the self-conscious rhetorical ploy of a poet-speaker for whom love has always to do with its literary guises. The lover in Delia, however, persists in dichotomizing his larger audience, in the few instances of address to it, and in directing his expression to those who, like him, are "blinded soules whom youth and errour leade,/...and out-cast Eaglets, dazeled with your Sunne." (3) In sonnet 43, again, he claims that Delia "canst not die whilst any zeale abound/ In feeling hearts that can conceive these lines," founding his faith in her poetic immortality on the understanding of those who will respond to his verse as he has to Petrarch's. The identification of hypothetical reader and speaker is stressed by the echo, in "zeale abound[ing]," of the opening lines of Delia's first sonnet, and

confirmed in the couplet of sonnet 51 as the lover articulates the response he has earlier assigned to his future readers: "Make me to say, when all my griefes are gone,/ Happy the heart that sigh'd for such a one." The sequence thus works towards a remarkable identity of speaker, verse, and sympathetic audience, but neither this merging, nor the lover's characterization of his work as a "lasting monument," invite the reader to identify the figure of the fictional lover with the work's historical creator, the poet Daniel. Through his treatment of expression, Daniel's speaker has incorporated a distinctive understanding of his role as poet into his primary guise as lover, but that treatment has been concerned to subordinate the former to the latter, to ease rather than to exploit the possibility of tension between the two roles, and to restrict carefully the expressive power that is simultaneously celebrated.

As a result, although the speaker of Delia has a fuller sense of himself as poet than do the lovers of the other minor sequences, this consciousness never shifts his stance by closing the gap between himself and Daniel. Analysis of his expressive power is thus balanced by a naive and dogged persistence--"still expecting when she will relent,/ Growne hoarse with crying mercy, mercy give" (16)--and statements of dependence similar to those of the least self-aware of sonnet-lovers. Any skill his voice achieves, for example, is entirely dependent on her role as his inspiration, a dependence emphasized by imaging the process as a physical one within which he is relegated to the role of mere instrument:

> So sounds my Muse according as she strikes
> On my heart-strings high-tun'd unto her fame.
> Her touch doth cause the warble of the sound

> ...
> Else harsh my stile, untunable my Muse,
> Hoarce sounds the voyce that praiseth not her name;
> If any pleasing relish here I use,
> Then judge the world her beauty gives the same. (57)

The declaration recalls earlier poems in which his notes are "sad [and] neglected" and his Muse "afflicted" (17) because of Delia's refusal to favour him, and which develop a sense that "I live hatefull to those ruthlesse eies,/ Vexing with untun'd moane her dainty eares." (21) The tension between the futility of address and the painful paradox of "think[ing] much and hav[ing] no words to speake" (20) has, however, generated in the course of Delia not a more encompassing perspective but a gradual reconciliation to the difficulties and limitations of self-expression in private discourse, a reconciliation which involves explicit repression of the potential for tension and growth.

This reconciliation is in part fueled, as we have already seen, by rejection of more worldly fame for "mine unambitious Muse." (58) Such denial confirms the association of the lover's dependence on Delia with a private mode of discourse. Accordingly, he judges more worldly honours "meaner priz'd and momentary," (58) and identifies a more public stance with obsequious hypocrisy:

> With mercenary lines, with servile Pen:
> Praising vertues in them that have them not,
> Basely attending on the hopes of men. (58)

Yet while his own lines are neither mercenary nor in praise of a woman whom the reader has any opportunity of judging as unvirtuous, the lover's restricted vision of his own situation seems here to prevent his perceiving the irony of his evaluation. His pen is indeed servile, as

the lute-strings of the sonnet immediately preceding are subject to the woman's touch; and in his desire that his verse will intercede on his behalf, the lover waits on hopes of reward from Delia. Most significantly, the poet's capacity has been subordinated to the lover's interests as a means of resolving the sequence's only ethical dilemma, produced by frustration in these hopes, as the lover debates the alternatives of honestly expressing his sense of injustice, thus revealing to the world her cruelty, or of silencing such objections to further her fame. In the resolution of this dilemma, we share with Daniel a more encompassing perspective on the restricted scope within which the lover conducts this internal debate, appreciating in such sonnets as 57 and 58 and in their telling conjunction an irony of which the lover himself is unaware.

The notion that his verses may gain Delia notoriety for her cruelty rather than fame for her beauty and virtues--a possibility inherent in the "cruel fair" guise--first appears in sonnet 15's consideration of revenge, although the series of "if" clauses which compose each pair of lines places this threat very much in the conditional mode:

> If I have done due homage to her eyes,
> And had my sighes still tending on her name;
> If on her love my life and honour lyes,
> And she (th'unkindest maid) still scornes the same:
> Let this suffice, that all the world may see
> The fault is hers, though mine the hurt must be.

Moreover, the poem is not directly addressed either to Delia herself or to the world as judge (the role to which the speaker's larger audience is generally assigned, in order to evaluate, as we have seen, the quality of his emotions, not of his verse). It takes the form instead

of a meditation on his state, and thus the only spectator to the mingled love and despair "bewraied" and "laid to vew" in the second quatrain is the speaker himself. Accordingly, the final couplet serves not so much to set out a plan of action as to provide a measure of the intensity of emotion which the poem's imagery has earlier been concerned to stress: "hunger-starven thoughts," "a brow with cares characters painted," "my Vulturgnawne hart open." In this context, emphasis falls on the inevitability of his pain ("mine the hurt must be") and on the search for an adequate response to his consuming appetite ("Let this suffice").

The inextricability of praise and blame recurs in Delia 26, in which a more general audience is urged to examine and sympathize, not to condemn: "Looke in my griefes, and blame me not to mourne." The self-justification of the "Orphan of fortune," however, necessitates disclosure of the mistress' hard-hearted resistance, and the sestet analyzes the relation of praise and blame in the context of an evaluative public:

> But since the sweetest roote yeelds fruite so sowre,
> Her praise from my complaint I cannot part:
> I love th'effect the cause being of this powre,
> Ile praise her face, and blame her flinty heart.
> Whilst we both make the world admire at us,
> Her for disdaine, me for loving thus.

The tone of the couplet, its first line suggestive of Donne's love poems or of Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra, is celebratory rather than vengeful, but the ambiguity of "admire" as it applies to her disdain is echoed in sonnet 27's exclamation at the discrepancy between her vast powers and his vulnerability--"But ah, what glory can she get thereby,/ With thee such powers to plague one silly hart." The lover is aware, that is, even as he acknowledges in the military images of sonnets 27

and 28 his subservience to "My freedomes tyrant," that the injustice to which he reconciles himself on a personal level may appear to an admiring world as infamous. Accordingly, the retreat to a private refuge, which we have noted as a recurrent motif in sonnets about the midpoint of Delia, takes on connotations of concealment from a critical world. Highly coloured diction emphasizes this sense of vigilant secrecy, as the lover declares that he must "in my pining lurke,/ Least my sad lookes bewray me how I fare." (29)

The lover's desolation may seem an inadequate motive for such a retreat, especially in a sequence which elevates the capacity for strong feeling itself to the level of truth and fidelity as proof of the speaker's merit. Delia 30 provides a fuller account, but the terms of discourse which allow such disclosure are as significant to the characterization of the lover as his unveiling of a concern for her reputation. The octave, initiated by the drawing-on of "mine everlasting night," narrows down the lover's scope to his projected journey to "the Mirtle shades," so that the hypothetical audience which enters at line 9 is composed of other-worldly spectators to his preparation of "flowres that never fades,/ And all things fit against her comming there." The mingling of Biblical phraseology and Dantesque scenario emphasizes the speculative mode of the speaker's thought, his temporary detachment from the immediacy of his experience, and his resulting power to control fully the impression created by his self-expression:

> If any aske me why so soone I came,
> Ile hide her sinne and say it was my lot:
> In life and death Ile tender her good name,
> My life nor death shal never be her blot.
> Although this world may seems her deede to blame,
> Th'Elisian ghosts shall never know the same.

While the lover may return immediately to set off Delia's tyrannical injustice against his deserving nature and her apparent virtue--"I die from whence my life should come,/ And by that hand whom such deeds ill become" (31)--protestation is now typically limited to sonnets directly addressed to Delia, and even in this mode of expression, she is assured that he will never provide an opportunity for more public criticism of her behaviour:

> Injurious Delia yet I love thee still,
> And will whilst I shall draw this breath of mine,
> Ile tell the world that I deserv'd but ill,
> And blame myself t'excuse that heart of thine.
> See then who sinnes the greater of us twaine,
> I in my love, or thou in thy disdaine. (33)

Hence at the midpoint of Delia, in a strand of development closely interwoven with an increasing concentration on the lover's own state, his denial of worldly ambition, and his conversion of verse from intercessor to means of immortalizing the lady, the lover quells the impulse to protest and self-justification which might redeem the abjectness of his posture in the eyes of the world. The ethical considerations introduced by the word "sinne" in sonnets 30 and 33, for instance, are reserved for private discourse, lest they reverberate to her discredit, and the lover stands revealed as a partner in the tyrannizing of his freedom of expression, sacrificed here to the interests of her fame.

A number of sonnets of this type have been altered from earlier versions in which the possibility of public criticism lingers, and the revisions suggest that a repression of the impulse to blame is a characteristic of the lover consciously emphasized by the poet. Successive revisions to Delia 32, for instance, retain the analogy to

Icarus, but by a significant change in the couplet the lover redirects responsibility for his plight from Delia to himself: in the 1592 edition, "my death shall christen her anew,/ And give the cruell Faire her tytle dew," while the 1601 version develops more smoothly from an earlier assumption of responsibility to a final recapitulation of this theme:

> Yet thee I blame not, though for thee tis done,
> But these weak wings presuming to aspire,
> Which now are melted by thine eyes bright sun,
> That makes me fall from off my hie desire.
> ...
> My heates must drowne in th'Oceane of my teares.
> Which still must beare the title of my wrong,
> Caus'd by those cruell beames that were so strong.
> (32)[5]

A similar though less pronounced effect is evident in revisions to Delia 46, in which consciousness of blame fades in the alteration of line 11 from "Ile not revenge old wrongs" to "I shall forget all wrongs." Even in denial, the lover is presented in the final version as concerned rather with thought than with possible action, and the trend of these revisions is to intensify Delia's predominant inwardness.

The intensification is felt as well in the lover's depiction of Delia and of his relation to her; sonnets 21 and 49 are both altered to turn from his desire for a verbal acknowledgement of his merit and her wrongs, to the realm of thought and emotion. The couplet of the former, for instance, originally reads "Yet let her say that she hath doone me wrong,/ To use me thus and knowe I lov'd so long," while revisions tone down the impression of conscious mistreatment to suggest inadvertent wrong-doing, and to minimize what is expected of Delia--"Yet sure she cannot but must thinke a part,/ She doth me wrong, to grieve so true a

heart." The change is particularly marked, at this relatively early point in the sequence, because it begins to affect the transition to sonnets at the midpoint in which the lover himself assumes responsibility. Opening poems have stressed the capacity of his verse to dramatize the lover's suffering and to simultaneously "justly praise, and blame my lovelesse Faire" (2); they have suggested as sufficient redress "that all the world may see/ The fault is hers, though mine the hurt must be," (15) but as Delia develops there is increased emphasis on the lover's reconciliation to his situation, evoked in his acceptance of responsibility and in his less dramatic expectations of the lady. Sonnet 49 is also revised to drop the sense of a public (or at least verbal) confession: instead of claiming that "I know she cannot but must needes confesse it,/ Yet deignes not with one simple signe t'expresse it," the lover in the altered couplet rests his case on an internal justice: "I know her heart cannot but judge with me,/ Although her eyes my adversaries be."

As the sequence is thus revised to stress internal states, to minimize a sense of Delia's injustice, and to emphasize instead the lover's reconciliation to his condition of hope and frustration, a corresponding set of alterations increases the number of sonnets in which he addresses her directly. In Delia 31, 32, 34, and 45 "she" is revised to "thee" so that the lover speaks to the lady rather than to some implied other audience. The effect is particularly interesting in sonnet 34, since it compensates to some extent for the loss of dramatic impact resulting when Daniel drops the opening exclamation: "O why dooth Delia" becomes "Why doost thou Delia," and direct address persists

throughout. Miller argues that the deletion of expletives and interjections is partially responsible for a diminution of passion in the revised sequence, but he ignores both this compensatory alteration and the appropriateness of a quieter tone to the lover's rhetorical stance throughout the sequence. The exaggerated poses and more aggressive rhetoric which Miller would prefer would be likely to create a speaker mindful of his public context and manipulative of his experience to produce a striking self-presentation; Daniel chooses instead in Delia to stress the effects of love on the inner man, and in his demonstration of these effects in the fictional character of the lover, a conversion of public to private values--by means of rhetorical stance, by a contemplative rather than a dramatic tone, and by explicit statement--plays a central role.

The increased number of sonnets in which Delia is directly addressed, then, conveys a sense of immediacy despite the fact that she is not vividly characterized nor depicted in the course of the sequence. It serves, moreover, to emphasize the exclusion of a larger audience from the lover's customary mode of discourse: in Delia 37, for instance, the sole observer is the woman herself, who is instructed to "leave thy glasse, and gaze thy selfe on me," to enlarge the scope of her vision from the potentially immobilizing narcissism of mirror-gazing to an ideal reciprocity which will counterbalance the circles of futility depicted in such sonnets as 12, 18, and 25. The significant redress of an unjust situation, in other words, is to be achieved within the private realm of the sequence's two central characters, a realm in which "meane observer[s]" have no place. The same impulse is evident in self-

presentation and in treatment of the lover's verse, as he and his work become best mirrors of her power and virtue:

> ... rather looke on him (alas)
> Whose state best shewes the force of murthering eyes.
> (37)
>
> That Grace which more then in women thee
> Lives in my lines. (45)

As we have seen, there are two significant, and related, aspects to this operation: it is never employed, past the midpoint of Delia, as a threat to display the lady's disdainful cruelty to the world; and in its promise to eternalize her beauty it compensates for the lover's refusal to capitalize on the "revenge of time" motif to gain the advantage in his efforts to persuade her.

The seasonal motif dominates in later stages of the sequence. Balancing thoughts of the lover's own "Winter woes, for spring of youth unfit" (24) and regret at "spend[ing] the April of my yeares in griefe," (32) sonnets 38 to 42 play on the inevitable passage from April to May, from spring through summer to Delia's own winter woes, yet the potential for a vengeful projection of the lover's own untimely withering onto the lady is repeatedly subdued. As early as Delia 23, although it opens with the command, "Time, cruell time, come and subdue that Brow," the development of the poem nevertheless mutes that emotional imperative with a note of lingering regret, generated by his desire to attain what pleasures may be available in the present: "Yet spare her Time, let her exempted be,/ She may become more kind to thee or me." (23) Similarly, while Delia 41 ends with the reminder that "Thou maist repent that thou hast scorned my teares,/ When winter snowes upon thy sable haires," its effect is undercut by the gentler consolation which follows. As

elsewhere in Delia, the threat of time's dissolution is evoked not for purposes of examination or to generate a more encompassing perspective, but to provoke a strikingly intimate scene and to heighten concentration of the lover's present emotional state, like Delia's virtue and beauty the subject of his verse's immortalizing power. Thus his verse operates as compensation for the losses incurred by time--a repression of the brutal reality of age and neglect by "men [who] shall find thy flower, thy glory passe,/ And thou with carefull brow sitting alone" (41)--even as it transforms his suffering, initially evidence of her cruelty, into an artful tribute to her gifts.

Hence while Delia's lover is not so reconciled to his situation as to abandon all hopes of swaying the lady to look favourably on his suit, his rhetorical stance is distinguished by the effects of his relatively limited goal of pleasing her. The poetic impact that might be achieved by a more distanced, witty, or playful perspective on his own situation is sacrificed to the lover's efforts at a sincere self-revelation which may convince Delia of his worth; similarly, motifs like the passage of time which might gain for the lover a rhetorical advantage over the lady are instead handled in such a way as to suggest a power to offer the consolation of poetic immortality, and thus to demonstrate his personal merit as a lover. In short, Delia's technical and thematic features reinforce a consistent subordination of the role of poet to that of lover, evident both in its speaker's treatment of matters of expression and personal aspiration and in his deliberate rejection of a public context for his verse, beyond its significance in celebrating the lady. This rejection is sustained to the sequence's final sonnet: "I say no

more, I feare I sayd too much." (60) More than a conventional gesture towards the secrecy which (as Lodge's Damon has observed) true lovers must respect, the line appropriately and plausibly closes a sequence whose primary concern has been to sustain the illusion that the reader is privileged to overhear private patterns of thought and feeling. Daniel's achievement in Delia has been the depiction of the inner life of a thoughtful fictional lover; the consistency and plausibilty which have been guidelines in the presentation of fictional characters in other minor sequences are here elevated to the level of positive virtues, enhanced by Daniel's skill in presenting the process by means of which his lover reconciles himself to his situation.

II. Greville's Caelica

In striking contrast to the fictional personality which Daniel develops in Delia, the speaking voice of Greville's Caelica invites the reader to identify poet and speaker throughout the course of the sequence. Larson's argument concerning its final 26 sonnets, "that personality is here firmly subjugated to the cause of directness of expression," (110) can be extended to the effect of the work as a whole, in which the central rhetorical engagement seems to be that of reader and theme, managed by the direction of a self-conscious, but relatively self-effacing, poet-speaker. In a more detailed analysis of Greville's speaker, in "Love's Newfangleness: A Comparison of Wyatt and Greville," Rebholz supports this view. He emphasizes the matured perspective which the reader is encouraged to share with the speaker on the world of Caelica: weathered in the experience of change and infidelity, Rebholz

argues, Greville's speaker has come to regard them as the inevitable outcome of human relationships and to accept them with resigned detachment, Ovidian cynicism, or Christian contempt, and the sequence includes no hints of a more encompassing perspective which might subsume or offer an independent means of judging the attitudes of its speaker. No distance, in other words, separates poet from speaker; Caelica includes the intellectual and moral drama inherent as the individual mind probes those issues raised by the Petrarchan mode--and in this respect is considerably superior to those other works presented by a poet-speaker, Watson's Passionate Centurie of Love and Constable's Diana--but there is in this drama no ironic relation between the conclusions which the poet invites his reader to draw and the attitudes and more limited understanding of a fictional persona. As Waswo points out, "the dry mockery of profane love, which proceeds from its incompatibility with the divine, operates as a broad principle of thematic order in Caelica" (43); it proceeds from that consistent moral vision of the world which the poet-speaker shares with the figure of his creator, as he demonstrates throughout the sequence his ironic consciousness of the inadequacies of the Petrarchan tradition of adoration and his full awareness of the potential for self-deception inherent in the conventional lover's stance.

As Hedley argues, then, "Greville is not...dramatizing a particular moment in the mental life of a man in love," (58) an impression reinforced most obviously by his use of several names--Caelica, Myra, Cynthia--for the mistress. To some extent, this technique picks up on the implications of the sequence's title, which suggests that the work

will celebrate a whole galaxy rather than a single star, perhaps in rivalry with Sidney (Waswo, 43); culminating in Caelica 74's address to her by all three names, its effect is to subordinate personality to the ideas which can be explored by means of the conventional situation and characters of the sonnet sequence. MacLean points out that Greville's speaker

> is similarly, though not so thoroughly, inconsistent elsewhere. This kind of thing causes the biography-hunters to throw up their hands in despair. The identities are of course irrelevant; Greville is writing about the nature of emotion, not personalities, and uses whatever name suits the convenience of his meter, imagery, or theme. (179-80)

Love is largely an abstraction in Caelica, and the lady, under whatever name she is addressed, serves as a figure in the analytic design which the poet-speaker's experience is shaped to illustrate. His rhetorical stance throughout the sequence, moreover, indicates that he shares his creator's understanding of this design and, distanced from the immediate experience of love, reflects self-consciously on its meaning. Unlike Delia, in which the role of poet is subordinated to that of lover in the depiction of a fictional character's inner life, the experience of love is here employed as subject matter for the moral observations of the poet-speaker, whose guise as teacher overwhelms not only any impression of personal susceptibility to love but also the concern with poetic style and self-presentation so evident in Watson's Passionate Centurie.

Those larger designs which Caelica serves are evident in its overall structure, which bears a closer relation to that of The Passionate Centurie or Diana than to the narrative coherence of those sequences which present the fictional character of the lover. As we saw

in Chapter 1, Constable arranges his poems according to a relation to public and private realms which is central to his complimentary intentions in Diana, and the centrality of that relation emerges as well in the consciousness of his poet-speaker, who thus seems closely identified with the figure of his creator. Although Watson makes a gesture towards plausible narrative development in effecting the transition between love-poems and those which compose the sequence's final section, My Love is Past, any sense of gradual progression provoked by fictional circumstances is undercut by the predominant impression that the poet-speaker has exhausted the opportunities for creation and self-display offered by the conventional situation in the first 80 sonnets. The final 20 poems thus resolve apparent dilemmas by casting the poet-speaker into the role of teacher, making explicit that direct engagement with the work's larger audience which has been more subtle a feature of The Passionate Centurie to this point.

There are significant parallels to the arrangement of Watson's work in the structure of Caelica, whose first 84 sonnets end with a farewell to love, after which the poet-speaker adopts an explicitly instructive role in his advice to the general "man" or "mankind". Yet there are differences as well: Caelica's first part having analyzed thoroughly the experience of love from a consistent moral perspective, the final 26 poems simply broaden the sequence's scope by applying the same perspective to more general concerns. In contrast to the dichotomies emphasized by the ostensible change in attitude in My Love is Past ("I practise nowe the quite cleare contrarie"), the significant transition in Caelica is in subject matter. The consequence is an emphasis on the

elements of the poet-speaker's moral perspective, rather than on personality or experience, and on their coherence as a means of treating and understanding a variety of ethical issues embodied in such themes as love and worldly ambition.[6]

These elements are present from the beginning of Caelica, although they become clearer and a sense of their coherence more fully developed as the sequence proceeds. Waswo argues that sonnet 5 "begins to suggest the inadequacy of the complete self-abnegation demanded by the [Petrarchan lover's] conventional pose," (48) a central concern in Caelica's testing of human ideals and behaviour, but several features in the poems preceding identify from the beginning the poet-speaker's analytic procedure, his distance from the experience of love and his encompassing perspective on the situation of the lover. That he has "vow'd in strangest fashion,/ To love and never seek compassion" (4) for instance, establishes his ironic awareness of "fashions" in love and his wry understanding of the distance between ideals of selfless devotion and the reality of the lover's customary pleas for mercy and a return of love. To some extent, Caelica's first ten sonnets are concerned to identify the nature of this distance and to offer a preliminary resolution of the Petrarchan lover's dilemmas and paradoxical condition in terms of the dualism which will predominate throughout the sequence. Even in these early poems, however, there is no sense of immediate experience confounding the poet-speaker's expectations and awakening thus a fuller understanding. Instead, such features as the arrangement of individual poems, treatment of the lady, and the philosophical and religious terms of his discourse stress his firm grasp of a moral

perspective which is gradually revealed to the reader.

At first, the lady is presented as a special case, not so much the epitome of all virtues as the exception to the general rule of flawed human nature: "let it be/ To set all women light, but only she." (1) This distinction is picked up in the refrain of Caelica 3:

> If in my heart all saints [nymphs] else be defaced,
> Honour the shrine, where you alone are placed.

The shift after the first two sonnets to a dramatic mode of address, however, is significant: the lady herself is implored to preserve the status assigned her, suggesting the possibility of a fall from grace and apparently undermining the first sonnet's confidence in what there seemed an absolute fact. The juxtaposition of sonnets 1 and 2, which presents a similar discrepancy, also implies its resolution. In the former, the lady's beauty, or "cover," reflects perfectly the virtue within, as "clear springs of wisdom/...[are]...imag'd in her words and deeds," suggesting an ideal coherence, or "true measure." The latter begins with a contrasting image of rage and violence concealed under "These sweet enticing joys, thy forehead showeth," and the compliment that "Her worth is passion's wound, and passion's physic," (1) is expressed more harshly in the assertion that "with thy tongue thy bitings may be healed." (2) Sonnet 2, like 4, focuses on the operation of love within the lover rather than on its embodiment in the figure of the lady, on his perception of her as an ideal rather than the assertion of that ideality itself, and it is from an understanding of this discrepancy that the resolution of his antithetical state will emerge.

The direct address to the personified figure of Love in Caelica 9 and 10 precipitates this resolution. The invocation which opens each

implies a distinction between love as an ideal, a mode of aspiration towards the divine, and love as a human experience, confined to the sublunary realm and susceptible to all the ills that flesh is heir to. It is the latter with which the poet-speaker is here concerned: a "mortal sphere of powers divine," love is "The paradise of nature in perfection," (9) but in embodying "the restless being" (10) of man's thoughts it is as well associated with the natural human tendency to dissatisfaction and changeability. The distinction is reinforced in the poem's predominant pattern of ascent and descent, as Greville's poet-speaker describes the consequences of Love's movement "from those joys which you aspired,/ Down to my darken'd mind." (10) Playing with the images of eclipse and shadow which have been used in sonnet 5, and which will be recurrent in the sequence, the second stanza makes clear the poet-speaker's distanced and analytical perspective on these consequences:

> Truth clouds itself, wit serves but to resemble,
> Envy is king, at others' good offended,
> Passion to ruin passion is intended,
> My reason is but power to dissemble;
> Then tell me Love, what glory you divine
> Yourself can find within this soul of mine? (10)

The question is rhetorical, "its irony underscored by the grammatical ambiguity of divine (which can be taken as adjective or verb)." (Waswo, 52) Other aspects of the poet-speaker's language indicate his firm grasp of the ironies implicit in a celebration of human love and his interest in analysis. As Rebholz points out, metaphor and personification here add a vivid particularity to his description of the lover's mental kingdom, (1971; 61) but emphasis falls nevertheless on the abstractions which aid rational analysis

rather than on an evocation of the emotions felt by one immersed in the experience of love.

The final lines similarly stress the philosophical intent and relative detachment of the poet-speaker. Most clearly articulating the significance of that distance between real and ideal gradually developed to this point, he advises that

> ...those sweet glories, which you do aspire,
> Must as ideas only be embraced,
> Since excellence in other form enjoyed,
> Is by descending to her saints destroyed. (10)

The resolution of the early sonnets' shifts in attitude, especially towards the lady, is thus achieved not by denying any aspect of the lover's experience, but by accepting the division between flesh and spirit as inherent in the human condition: the conventional lover will be frustrated by his desire for an ideal which cannot be realized in the flesh. The poet-speaker's distance from the immediate experience of love is apparent in "The precise philosophical terms of the poem [which] continue and intensify the irony of adoration," (Waswo, 53) and in his subtle wit: the words "embraced" and "enjoyed," for instance, evoke the language and goals of sensual love to imply the impediments to human aspiration towards the ideal which the poet-speaker will treat over the course of the sequence.

Even in these early poems, this distance removes from the sequence's love situation many of the emotional dimensions conventionally associated with it: expectation is conditioned by fuller understanding, frustration converted to resigned acceptance of the inevitability of "Change...by no faith to be charmed," (5) and attitudes to the lady controlled by awareness of the complex relation between her

role and personality. Caelica presents a mistress whose behaviour is occasionally at odds with the ideal of love which the speaker has chosen her to represent, yet such discrepancies illustrate the "descent" of his idea into the human form of his "saint." Myra's resistance, the poet-speaker reflects, may be associated with an anticipation of changed affection even while she enjoys the game of love-tokens--"posies of her own hand-making," "A garland sweet with true-love knots in flowers" (22)--with him:

> Yet would she never write her love to me;
> Thinks wit of change while thoughts are in delight?
> Mad girls must safely love, as they may leave,
> No man can print a kiss, lines may deceive. (22)

The poem's tone, however, is rather bemused and curious than resentful; typically, its development dissolves whatever emotional force may have been generated over the course of the personal narrative in the statement of a general rule which accounts for his disappointment, and in the witty detachment of his play on "print" and "lines." The ephemerality of human love, in other words, is a principle which the poet-speaker's experience serves primarily to illustrate, and any tendency to blame the lady for personal failings is cancelled by the articulation of such principles and, in a related development, by criticism of the flawed understanding of the stargazing lover, who has failed to recognize them.

Shadows and light are recurrently employed in Caelica to image the limitations of human understanding and the errors to which man is prone. Caelica 16, like 10, seizes an early opportunity to establish the poet-speaker's encompassing awareness of the issues involved and to offer advice to the broadest possible audience. The address to the

"foolish earth" and "fond desire," (16) while it dramatizes the rhetorical situation, also serves to personify those aspects of the human experience of love with which the poet-speaker is most concerned, and so the colloquial vocatives which open the first two stanzas, anticipating to some extent the abrupt dramatic openings of some of Donne's love poems, are muted by the disdain for a limited viewpoint which follows. Moral intention, that is, predominates over other effects in the poem:

> Fie foolish earth, think you the heaven wants glory,
> Because your shadows do yourself benight?
> All's dark unto the blind, let them be sorry,
> The heavens in themselves are ever bright.
>
> Fie fond desire, think you that love wants glory,
> Because your shadows do yourself benight?
> The hopes and fears of lust, may make men sorry,
> But love still in herself finds her delight.
>
> Then earth stand fast, the sky that you benight
> Will turn again, and so restore your glory;
> Desire be steady, hope is your delight,
> An orb wherein no creature can be sorry;
> Love being plac'd above these middle regions,
> Where every passion wars itself with legions.

The extent of the speaker's awareness and his confidence in the perspective offered are reflected in the poem's technical control. The tone is calm and assured, and parallels in sentence structure cooperate with the repetition of key words and phrases to set off self-deception against the fuller vision with which each stanza concludes. Human blindness and susceptibility to lust (which makes man prey to alternating "hopes and fears," and to regret) are not to be projected onto the heavens and the nature of ideal love; such realms exist, argues the speaker, although those in the sublunary world may not always see and cannot attain them. Ultimately, "hope is your delight," and

with this reward the earthly lover is advised to content himself, avoiding the self-deception inherent in frustration and despair.

As the images of Caelica 16 indicate, one of the most striking indications of the speaker's distanced perspective on the experience of love are the vast temporal and spatial dimensions repeatedly evoked in Caelica's poems. Such dimensions offer a vivid metaphor for the broad range of his consciousness, and also create a moral cosmology in which such recurrent motifs as ascent and descent, light and darkness, or clarity and obscurity gain resonance as consistent means of pointing his moral analysis of earthly love. References to time, for instance, consist primarily of two sets of contrast: past and present, on the one hand, and time and eternity, on the other. The weighing of present misery against a happier and more hopeful past is a characteristic feature of the sonnet sequence in general, as it intensifies a sense of the sonnet-lover's despair and frustration, and the motif is occasionally used in Caelica--"'tis true, I lov'd, and you lov'd me." (72) Greville's poet-speaker is unusual, however, in preferring evocations of a distant, historical past--often defined by Biblical or classical allusion--to the identification of moments in his immediate, personal history, which are frequently presented in such a way as to link events in the speaker's life to the broadest contours of human history. A striking instance occurs in the narrative which anticipates sonnet 84's farewell to love:

> In Paradise I once did live; and taste the tree
> Which shadow'd was from all the world, in joy to
> shadow me.
> The tree has lost his fruit, or I have lost my seat,
> ...
> I may not know the cause I fell, nor yet without
> cause love. (83)

Elsewhere, a sense of the vast reaches even of mortal time is created by references to Rome (Caelica 30), to Babylon (39), or to the classical account of the world's decay from a Golden to a Brazen Age (44), and the time span thus created shades off into the distinction between time and eternity. This distinction is evident in the sequence primarily in awareness of the fundamental principles that "The world, that all contains, is ever moving,/ The stars within their spheres for ever turned" (7) and that whatever "is felt with hand, or seen with eye,/ As mortal, must feel sickness, age, and die." (28) The inevitability of change in the natural and human realms is a fundamental feature of Caelica's use of a vast scope to limit the significance of an immediate moment in the time and of the individual's experience. Its effect is felt most vividly in the treatment of love, for Cupid is "no god of years but hours" (13) who "with one humour cannot long agree" (26); the lover who serves Cupid is thus an apt model of human susceptibility to change and corruption.

Caelica 28's implicit association of the senses with decay and the passage of time is amplified by the relation of classical mythology and Christian teaching, which underscores the sequence's general concern with the inadequacies of human perception. As early as the pastoral narrative of Caelica 22, the speaker's questions--"Must I now lead an idle life in wishes?/ And follow Cupid for his loaves, and fishes?"--suggest the futility of expecting from Cupid a miracle of the kind which only Christ can provide, and Caelica repeatedly treats mythological figures and tales as offering, at best, a partial revelation of a more encompassing truth. That mythic paterns offer only

limited help in understanding human nature and behaviour is incidentally pointed out in Caelica 34's address to "Cupid, thou whom man has made a god," and in the concluding summary of sonnet 62:

> Mercury, Cupid, Mars, they be no gods,
> But human idols, built up by desire,
> Fruit of our boughs, when heaven maketh rods,
> And babies too for child-thoughts that aspire:
> Who seeks their glories, on the earth must pry;
> Who seeks true glory, must look to the sky.

The classical gods are thus an embodiment of the child-like and idolatrous impulses in human nature; as imaginative creations, furthermore, myths are ultimately a narcissistic form of art which merely reflects back to man his imperfections rather than articulating a pattern for his regeneration. Like man, "gods are best by discontentment known," (76) and by apotheosizing his discontent man reveals his pride and self-indulgence, handicapping his potential for true aspiration and growth. The lesson on self-deception, then, is coherent with the one offered in Caelica 16.

Yet the relation of temporal to spatial dimensions in Caelica makes clear that its poet-speaker holds little hope for the impact of the Christian revelation on man. His emphasis is throughout on the condition of fallen man: Caelica 38, a dream-vision of the Fall as it is enacted in each man's personal history, is replayed in a classical mode in sonnet 44's account of the Brazen Age, "when earth is worn,/ Beauty grown sick, Nature corrupt and nought," and echoed in sonnet 64's allusion to "my fall" or in the preceding poem's allusion to Icarus.[7] This emphasis is supported by the extensive spatial backdrop suggested in poems which invoke, for instance, "You little stars that live in skies" (4) or address Cynthia as the moon whose "horns look diverse

ways,/ Now darken'd to the East, now to the West" (55); such an expanse again reduces the significance of the individual man and cooperates with the sequence's temporal dimension to set off the sublunary realm, whose inhabitants are subject to change and decay, against the "higher" realm of ideas and absolute truths, which participate in eternity. The poet-speaker pairs spatial and temporal imagery in poems 1 and 7: in the celebratory mode of the opening poem, he declares of Caelica that "Time fain would stay, that she might never leave her,/ Place doth rejoice, that she must needs contain her," and the subservience of time and place is an important factor in establishing her status as an exception to the general rule of mutability and mortality in the sublunary world--

> Her plants, which summer ripes, in winter fade,
> Each creature in unconstant mother lieth,
> Man made of earth, and for whom earth is made,
> Still dying lives, and living ever dieth. (7)

The third and fourth lines of this stanza suggest the original Creation, and the chiasmus in each emphasizes the paradoxical nature of man's status in a world initially under his dominion. In the world of his post-lapsarian state, however, "Place is not bound to things within it placed,/ The present time upon time passed striketh." (7)

The poet-speaker's sensitivity to spatial dimensions is evident throughout the sequence, whose poems frequently image human emotions as types of place: in sonnet 10, as we have seen, "Memory doth worlds of wretchedness assemble," and the speaker later describes "worlds of woe," (24) the "kingdom of desire," (28) the "monarchy of fear" and "empire of confused passion." (59) While this tendency might suggest the characteristic thought-patterns of Lodge's Damon, it has a very

different effect than that encountered in Phillis. For Damon, the sequence's frequent spatial images are a means of self-dramatization, a way of asserting the primacy of the individual experience, which thus expands to occupy his entire perspective and to prevent more detached understanding of his situation. In Caelica, as sonnet 16 and his comments on the classical gods in 62 have revealed, the poet-speaker is fully conscious of the self-deception inherent in such a narcissistic pattern of perception. Hence the alternative cosmos constructed by various types of human passion is consistently evaluated by the moral implications of Caelica's hierarchical universe. At the same time, the speaker's consciousness of this larger hierarchy serves to identify his lowly status and to articulate his relation to other elements in the scheme of things; he remains throughout the sequence in the company of "Stargazers [who] only multiply desire," (17) combining humility with an encompassing perspective.

More than simply establishing the poet-speaker's capacity to see beyond the immediate moment in a specific place, the vast dimensions of Caelica--their implications often made explicit by such general comments as those on mutability in sonnet 7--confirm that he shares with his creator "a predisposition to see all experience in moral terms." (Waswo, 10) Larson notes in particular the dichotomous aspects of these dimensions and their applicability to moral purposes, when he comments on the astronomical setting of Caelica 5:

> The sense of physical vastness fraught with peril created by this use of celestial imagery...is one of the most striking qualities of Caelica; Greville returns to the perspective in several of his very best poems, filling his cosmos alternately with blinding fire and darkest shade--both images

> adaptable to either the contrasts inherent in the passion of human love or the dichotomy of fierce divine splendor and worldly corruption. (27-28)

More generally, he comments on the poet's "seeming proclivity...to evaluate earthly events and emotions in comparison to supernature and eternity," (37) and the fact that this set of contrasts informs the speaker's use of temporal and spatial imagery signifies the extent to which he shares, in Waswo's terms, "the irrevocable dualism which consistently controls Greville's vision of life." (31) It is this dualism, Waswo argues, which shapes the treatment of love in Caelica: Greville "denies the Platonic pretensions to create a continuum, a unity of flesh and spirit in this world," using Platonic idealism to explain the paradoxes of Petrarchan suffering,

> and ultimately to discredit the Petrarchan pose altogether: suffering under an absurdity is absurd. The same perception of the lover's chaotic frustration that prompted Cardinal Bembo to climb the famous ladder of love will prompt Greville to saw it in two. (53)

Most significantly, Caelica's analysis of the Petrarchan pose and its implications proceeds not from ironic treatment of the fictional character of the lover, whose limited understanding invites the reader's more encompassing perspective, but from the guidance of a self-conscious poet-speaker who shares his creator's ironic understanding of his subject. Both figures, that is, comprehend the inevitability of change and infidelity in this world and present the lover's suffering as the result of false expectations shaped by self-deception. These perceptions are largely responsible for the distinctive quality of Caelica and also account, Waswo claims, for Greville's stance on those conflicting claims which in the world of Astrophil and Stella remain a

constant, irreconcilable source of tension: in Caelica, as we have seen in sonnet 16, the ideal is not discredited by man's failure to realize it, but the human tendency to express love carnally or to devote oneself to unworthy objects means that earthly love is best regarded as an urbane game, not a reflection of the divine and ideal or a mode of spiritual aspiration. Greville does not resolve the conflict between flesh and spirit, in other words, but emphasizes its inevitability; he mutes the felt tension which might derive from presentation of this conflict "by denying the possibility of realizing ideal love in this world." (Waswo, 44).

One consequence of the poet-speaker's concern with moral issues, that Caelica is "more compacted with ideas" (Larson, 22) than is usual in the genre, is a feature noted by most critics of the sequence. Its prominence has led to some emphasis on Greville's mode of teaching by negative example, informed occasionally by biographical assumptions which identify poet and speaker on the basis of a common experience of love. Croll maintains, for instance, that Greville's "tendency toward gloomy reflection may well have been encouraged by his physical frailty," (27) while Rebholz in his Life of Greville speculates that the selection of themes in Caelica "would by itself lead us to infer a limitation in his personal experiences," (52) an inference supported by "the image of the lover Greville projects--a man who can neither elicit nor give an enduring affection" (53)--and by biographical evidence of Greville's narrow experience of love. Arguments based on a temperamental incapacity which restricts Greville's treatment of love tend also to focus on what are defined as stylistic limitations: while

acknowledging that plainness of diction can be a source of power in Caelica, Croll warns that it can become "mere baldness, when the thought is not high enough to ennoble it, and there are many prosaic lines in the sonnets." (24) Similarly, Rebholz claims that as Greville's experience contradicts the contemporary idealization of love, so "his generalizing intellect wrestled awkwardly with the particular beauties of Petrarchan rhetoric." (51)

More often, Caelica's instructive mode is treated by reference to what can be determined of Greville's critical theory. Waswo argues that Greville's ideal poet is one who "shows us how to balance the passions of our unruly nature," (37) and who thus envisions art as an instrument of moral correction. Farmer distinguishes Greville's methods, in similar terms, from the verisimilitude that imitates the world as it is; arguing that Greville creates by "borrowing from the staple goods of the known world and 'inventing' an instructive lesson through an 'original' moral climate," (664-65) he claims that the poet "prefers to allegorize the moral choices that are faced in life" rather than mirroring "the day-to-day living of life." (670) Such an attitude is certainly found in Caelica's poet-speaker, who argues that human art, instead of illuminating the reader, may "dazzle truth, by representing it." (66) The consequences of such a preference are the subject of several studies. MacLean points out that Greville uses the presentation of a particular case, in the Caelica sonnets, as empirical evidence from which to derive conclusions of a semi-philosophical, abstract nature, and Rebholz adds that even in those sonnets which open in an abrupt and colloquial style,

> The 'figuring' of passion often gives way to analysis of its causes, the events actually referred to are in the past, and the party addressed almost indistinguishable from the reader by the end of the poem. Such poems, whatever the dramatic quality of their openings, differ little from those in which the lover speaks more reflectively to himself or to the reader, or simply narrates and comments on his experience. (60)

Greville's vision of art, Waswo points out, involves some distrust of the traditional aims of rhetoric, with its potential to deceive, and this distrust has implications for the poet's considerations of the audience and its response. As MacLean notes, although both Sidney and Greville write in a social context, the second audience of "best wits" which adds another dimension to Astrophil's address to Stella is missing in Caelica. The sequence lacks as well any evidence of concern with the process of sonneteering, and Greville alludes only occasionally to the function or methods of the poet, in contrast to Sidney's recurrent treatment of this theme.[9]

Such analyses as these imply the appropriateness to Greville's poetic purposes of a relatively self-effacing speaker, whose instructive role takes precedence over the display of personal qualities in a self-conscious, virtuoso performance of the kind which we witnessed in Watson's Passionate Centurie. His role is most clear in the explicitly religious, philosophical, and political themes--"thoughts that please me less, and less betray me" (84)--of the final 26 poems; because the subject matter is no longer ostensibly personal, the relation of the poet-speaker's perspective to his instructive intentions is easiest to discern. That is, the awareness "That all his glory unto ashes must/ And generation to corruption turns" (87) is less surprising a premise to

the later sonnets' delineation of the vanity of human life, of "earthly power, that stands by fleshly writ," (91) and of "Ambitious dreams, or fears of overthwart," (94) than it is to Caelica's earlier treatment of the conventional amatory material. As we have seen in those earlier poems which explicitly offer advice, however, the poet-speaker's stance as teacher and moral guide is consistent throughout Caelica: he conducts an analysis of love rather than functioning as a fictional character through whom the poet demonstrates, for instance, the self-deceptive tendencies inherent in human love.

Even in the earliest sonnets, which more often employ the conventional modes of adoration and supplication, as well as the rhetorical structures of the ornate style,[10] the poet-speaker's humble stance seems to derive from his moral perspective, not from his whole-hearted dedication to the ideals of the Petrarchan lover. Waswo comments of Greville's rhetorical strategies in general that "the idea of true wisdom as moral regeneration...seems...to have instructed Greville into humility," (24) and this idea prevents Caelica's speaker, in his instructive role, from assuming any personal immunity to the contagion of sin and corruption. The argument that in the Golden Age, or man's prelapsarian state, "The laws were inward that did rule the heart" (44) discovers its logical conclusion in Caelica 66's cautionary words on the effects of human learning enshrined in books: "outward wisdom springs from truth within," so that the arts of unregenerate man are merely "False antidotes for vicious ignorance" and "beams of folly." Products of man's limited awareness, the arts create partial revelations like the classical legends; at best, the wisdom they offer is further

subjected to the audience's flawed understanding, and they may instead of enlightening, "dazzle truth, by representing it,/ And entail clouds to posterity." The compounding of error will continue inevitably "till the inward molds be truly plac'd," and Caelica 66 thus initiates a concern with internal regeneration that develops in poems immediately following: "Unconstancy and doubleness depart,/ When man bends his desires to mend his heart." (67).

Elsewhere, the curious probing for knowledge is itself defined as "crafty sin's delight," (88) and the motif of travel, as an image of such probing, is appropriately accompanied in sonnets like Caelica 59 by images of danger, confusion, and deceit. Ultimately, the poet-speaker claims,

> The greatest pride of human kind is wit,
> Which all art out, and into method draws;
> Yet infinite is far exceeding it,
> And so is chance, of unknown things the cause,
> The feet of men against our feet do move,
> No wit can comprehend the ways of love. (63)

Distrusting reason's claims to understanding, Caelica's speaker is led to the assumption of the role of lover, made in the course of the sequence an emblem of man's blindness and self-deceptions, as a means of presenting his own susceptibilities and of providing--without the presumption of pride--the opportunity to teach.

Accordingly, a number of Caelica's love poems are able to avoid the overtly didactic methods of the final 26 sonnets by making of the poet-speaker and his experience "the world's example...a fable everywhere." (83) It is a rhetorical procedure in which the poet-speaker is himself fully implicated, and several features of his most striking statement of technique in Caelica 83 are worth noting. In

the first place, although he presents himself as a lover "Whose love is lost, whose hopes are fled, whose fears for ever be," any implied narrative development is submerged in the broad perspective which links the speaker's own "woe and lack of worth" to man's Fall. This perspective diverts attention from character and action to thematic concerns: inevitable corruption ("My soul both black with shadow is, and overburnt with heat") and the need for moral regeneration to resolve the paradoxes of the mortal condition--

> Unpossible are help, reward and hope to me,
> Yet while unpossible they are, they easy seem to be.
> Most easy seems remorse, despair and death to me,
> Yet while they passing easy seem, unpossible they be.

As these lines suggest, the poet-speaker is poised just before Caelica 84's farewell to love in a static posture, frozen between hope and despair, which epitomizes man's capacity to perceive error and self-deception simultaneously with his incapacity to achieve an independent regeneration. At several points, moreover, the generality of his diction makes explicit the relevance of his own situation to the understanding which he attempts to arouse in his reader:

> So neither can I leave my hopes which do deceive
> Nor can I trust mine own despair, and nothing else receive.
> Thus be unhappy men, blest to be more accurst;
> Near to the glories of the sun, clouds with more horror burst.

Unlike the lovers of Licia and Delia, the speaker of Caelica shares with his creator an awareness of the ideal which is "shadowed forth" in the figure of the lady--an ideal which alone justifies the lover's desire and adoration, yet which here informs despair at the loss of love with a fuller understanding of man's general incapacity to regain the "Paradise

[in which] I once did live."

It is appropriate, then, that Caelica 83 ends with a punning identification of poet and speaker--an identification, moreover, which combines an insistence on individual identity with an acknowledgement of those qualities shared with other men:

> And I myself am he, that doth with none compare,
> Except in woes and lack of worth; whose states more wretched are.
> Let no man ask my name, nor what else I should be;
> For Grieve-Ill, pain, forlorn estate do best decypher me.

The conventional lover insists on a singularity of experience and depth of emotion which sets him apart from others and which makes lovers "keep secret what they feel," as we saw in Phillis; Caelica's poet-speaker rather wittily subordinates any effort to distinguish himself from others to his claim on those excessive feelings of grief and humility which establish his typicality in the role of lover.[11] At the same time, sorrow and the conviction of sin characterize the human experience in this world, and make the lover in his wretched state a figure of man in general. In this striking inversion of the conventional gesture towards privacy and secrecy, then, the poet-speaker plays urbanely on the notion of "decyphering" the sonnet-lover's identity and yet sustains the serious moral intent which has led him to make of his estate

> ...the map of death-like life exil'd from lively bliss,
> Alone among the world, strange with my friends to be,
> Showing my fall to them that scorn, see not or will not see.

The terms of his "fall" and "exile" again suggest a religious undertone to the poem, and the poet-speaker's concern with the impact on a larger and more diverse audience of the "map" which Caelica presents further

allies him with the figure of his creator. Thus the solitude which is the lover's traditional lot is reconciled with the demonstrative function of his expression in the sequence, the unwillingness of his audience to learn what he would teach providing a further justification of his isolation.

Within the series of love poems, the dramatic metaphor occasionally serves a similar function, to reconcile the implicit limitations of the lover's single-minded devotion with his capacity in this sequence to see beyond those limitations. Caelica 9, for instance, moves initially from a contrast of paradisal and earthly kingdoms to a mode of imaginative speculation:

> If I by nature, wonder and delight,
> Had not sworn all my powers to worship thee,
> Justly mine own revenge receive I might,
> And see thee, tyrant, suffer tyranny:
> See thee thy self-despair, and sorrow breeding,
> Under the wounds of woe and sorrow bleeding.

The pattern of development in this stanza echoes that of The Passionate Centurie 38, in which Watson's poet-speaker briefly protests a capacity for insight and expression greater than that allowed by the role of conventional lover: "And yet I coulde, if sorrowe woulde permit,/ Tell when and how I fix't my fancie first." The role does not inhibit the capacity of Caelica's poet-speaker for a more encompassing awareness, either, and a similar sense of detachment from the experience of love is created, but handled to a different effect than the self-conscious display of skill that characterizes sonnets in Watson's sequence. Any vituperative tone which description of the speaker's "revenge" might convey, and which would indicate his desire to seize the rhetorical advantage, is undercut by the opening qualification: his vow to the

ideal of love which the lady represents prevents his launching a full-fledged attack on the role of tyrant she might assume as individual. (A similar hesitance is evident in the poem immediately preceding, in which the effects of time, "Writing in furrows deep, she once was fair," [8] are treated not as a persuasive or vengeful device--the poem is not addressed directly to the lady--but as the summary of a carefully patterned meditation.)[12]

Accordingly, Caelica 9 expands from its concentration on the mistress' future sorrow to a more general survey of human life, using a series of metaphors to assert sorrow's control over mankind:

> For sorrow holds man's life to be her own,
> His thoughts her stage, where tragedies she plays,
> Her orb she makes his reason overthrown,
> His love foundations for her ruins lays;
> So as while love will torments of her borrow,
> Love shall become the very love of sorrow.

Adopting the detached perspective of the critic, the poet-speaker uses the experience of sorrow--man's inevitable lot in the "mortal sphere" identified in the first stanza--to mute distinctions between the elevation of the mistress and the submissive posture of her adoring lover. Waswo comments of the final couplet's "insight into the tenacity of human emotion" (52) that it furthers the analysis of the Petrarchan lover's suffering which is a central concern in the early sonnets of Caelica:

> The self-pity of the conventional pose is here given a rational and a psychologically accurate explanation...When passion fails of an object to which it is irrevocably committed, it must willingly embrace the failure, which is the only sign of the commitment, as the only way it can be reaffirmed. (51-52)

Significantly, there is no self-pity in the poet-speaker's tone, and the

centrality of sorrow to the human condition persists as a more general source of torment (from which love only "borrows"); the emphasis, that is, falls on analysis of the most general kind. Even at this early stage in Caelica, the function of the conventional amatory material as one means to demonstrate tendencies inherent in human nature is clear, and the effect of this demonstration is to reduce the significance of distinctions between the human participants, as the self-pity of the lover is allied to the "self-disdain" which the poet-speaker has projected for the lady in a common egocentric and limited vision.

The dramatic metaphor recurs at certain points in Caelica, signifying the speaker's capacity to see his own actions from without, as in sonnet 9, and permitting a startling degree of freedom in address to the lady, in exploitations of the ribald possibilities in the conventional situation, and in self-directed irony. Given his insight into the human capacity for self-dramatization, aware that such a capacity may become an obstacle to clear vision, the poet-speaker is in no danger of taking too seriously any role which he may temporarily assume. "Are you afraid," he asks the lady in sonnet 17, "because my heart adores you,/ The world will think I hold Endymion's place?" That he never mistakes role for identity is further emphasized in the next sonnet; "Absence and time have made my homage faint," so that he compares himself to the errant Cupid, self-consciously describing his own performance:

> With Cupid I do every where remove.
> I sigh, I sorrow, I do play the fool,
> Mine eyes like weathercocks on her attend. (18)

The theatrical metaphor is altered slightly in the sestet, as the

poet-speaker uses oratorical terms to evaluate the impact (rather than the moral value) of the lady's advice:

> She saith, All self-ness must fall down before her:
> I say, Where is the sauce should make that sweet?
> Change and contempt (you know) ill speakers be:
> Caelica: and thus be all your thoughts of me.
> (18)

Interestingly, the sonnet unfolds in a dramatic present, as does the series of poems which frames it (Caelica 11 through 20, with the exception only of 15). It is characteristic of the sequence that even where spatial and temporal reminders of a more encompassing perspective are absent, and the dramatic mode conveys a sense of immediacy, the poet-speaker's capacity for self-directed irony sustains the controlled detachment which governs the work as a whole. In sonnet 18, this detachment results in a playful tone which has already sacrificed the conventional lover's self-interest in order to exploit the situation's possibilities for witty argument, and the parenthetical "you know" expresses the speaker's urbane confidence in a game whose rules are familiar to both players.

The same tone predominates in the witty lesson of Caelica 56, drawn from experience and recounted with a wry self-deprecation. A dream-vision, the poem is generated by desire (the speaker's senses are "like beacon's flames" and "set all my thoughts on fire") amplified by "Fury's wit," yet the speaker's dialogue with himself as he seems to wake is immediately touched with a note of comic confusion: "Sweet god Cupid where am I," "Am I borne up to the skies?" Giving rein to his "conceit" of a Milky Way inhabited by the playful gods, "I stepp'd forth to touch the sky,/ I a god by Cupid dreams," only to discover himself

and Cynthia metamorphosed into types of landscape:

> Cynthia who did naked lie,
> Runs away like silver streams;
> Leaving hollow banks behind,
> ...
> There stand I, like Arctic Pole,
> Where Sol passeth o'er the line.

He has hoped for an experience of ideal harmony such as seems promised by his vision of the skies--"See where Jove and Venus shine,/ Showing in her heavenly eyes/ That desire is divine"--but the poet-speaker's language has made clear that his vision is compounded of self-deception and self-aggrandizement, and he discovers instead the elusiveness of his dream and the cold reality of disappointment. Neither Jove nor Cupid, he now stands

> ...like men that preach
> From the execution place
> At their death content to teach
> All the world with their disgrace.

As Waswo points out, in this development the dream-vision becomes "a metaphor for the debilitating self-absorption of love whose delusive power is suggested by certain myths." (67) The simile of the man about to be executed, and preaching to those who witness, has an obvious relevance to commentary elsewhere on the speaker's use of his own experience as "the world's example" (83) of disgrace, but what is most significant is the wit which derives from the poet-speaker's detached, self-deprecating irony. As in his use of the theatrical metaphor elsewhere, this recounting of a past experience allows him to see himself from without and to puncture, not only those pretensions to power enacted in his dream, but as well the "elevation" of his role as teacher.[13]

The distance between real and ideal, body and spirit, is measured in Caelica 56's final lines. The return to a worldly perspective is emphasized by a double entendre which returns the dream-vision to the inflamed desire with which it began:

> Love is only Nature's art,
> Wonder hinders love and hate.
> None can well behold with eyes,
> But what underneath him lies.

This is not the only point at which Greville's poet-speaker exploits an erotic vein of wit to puncture human pretensions, and his method occasionally touches on the kind of misogyny which has been associated with double entendres in Barnes' Parthenophil and Parthenophe. An anecdote about the child Merlin's response to a funeral, for instance, seems to associate innocence with a capacity for insight ("for children see what should be hidden"), but Merlin's own perception of cuckoldry in the final stanza is utterly cynical:

> 'This man no part hath in the child he sorrows,
> His father was the monk that sings before him:
> See then how nature of adoption borrows,
> Truth covets in me, that I should restore him.
> True fathers singing, supposed fathers crying,
> I think make women laugh, that lie a-dying.' (23)

That the poet-speaker merely recounts Merlin's words is in part responsible for the humorous effect, reinforced by the double rhymes; his detachment, moreover, prevents the impression that he subscribes to such misogynist sentiments, and this feature of the poem consistently distinguishes Caelica's treatment of changeability in women from that of Barnes' speaker, which results more immediately from the fictional circumstances in which his creator places Parthenophil.

When a more direct critique occurs, various features combine to

moderate its impact. Caelica 38 presents a curious amalgam of religious allusion and personal narrative in which the lady's resistance ultimately impels a savage attack:

> Caelica, I overnight was finely used,
> Lodg'd in the midst of paradise, your heart:
> Kind thoughts had charge I might not be refused,
> Of every fruit and flower I had part.
>
> But curious knowledge, blown with busy flame,
> The sweetest fruits had down in shadows hidden,
> And for it found mine eyes had seen the same,
> I from my paradise was straight forbidden.
>
> Where that cur, Rumour, runs in every place,
> Barking with Care, begotten out of Fear;
> And glassy Honour, tender of Disgrace,
> Stands Seraphin to see I come not there;
> While that fine soil, which all these joys did yield,
> By broken fence is prov'd a common field.

There is as much social satire as personal criticism in the vivid personification of the sestet, although the couplet is evocative of an emotional response. The sonnet immediately following, however, offers a re-enactment of the tower of Babylon in the speaker's personal history as Caelica 38 has of the Fall, and thus emphasizes the larger dimensions of the earlier tale. Moreover, the relation of the two poems may identify "curious knowledge" (38) with proud aspiration "to overreach the sky," (39) and the sestet of sonnet 39, while it retains some suggestion of the woman's infidelity, seems designed primarily to indicate the poet-speaker's responsibility for his own disappointment:

> So I that heavenly peace would comprehend,
> In mortal seat of Caelica's fair heart,
> To Babylon myself there, did intend,
> With natural kindness, and with passion's art:
> But when I thought myself of herself free,
> All's chang'd: she understands all men but me.
> (39)

The dichotomy of "heavenly peace" and "mortal seat," given Caelica's central dualism, is especially telling: the poet-speaker's error consists not in his mistaken impressions about a particular woman's moral nature, but in his very expectation that the ideal can be discovered in the sublunary realm. At the same time, the erotic implications of sonnet 38's first two stanzas, like the ambiguity of "free" in 39, undercut further the account of his "aspiration"; the self-directed irony dissolves the issue of blame by placing both protagonists on the same level.

This impression is reinforced by treatment, in a number of poems surrounding these, of misdirection of blame: it is the central thematic concern of Caelica 32, echoed in the analogy of young Kings' whipping boys in 36, and applied to the speaker's own situation in 43--"I, like the child, whom nurse hath overthrown,/ Not crying, yet am whipp'd, if you be known." The general principle is articulated most clearly in Caelica 53, which uses natural imagery and mythological allusions to insist on the individual's responsibility even for such surprising choices as Venus' to share "with Mars the netty bed,/ Before that heavenly life, which Vulcan led." With the implied descent from the reflection "in fairest stars [of] man's fatal stories," the second stanza turns to the sublunary world, in which it is futile to "intreat the winter not to rain,/ Or in a storm the wind to leave his blowing." The stanza implies that changeability in women is a similar force, but the lines following emphasize instead the logical consequence of this premise, placing the blame for his disappointed hopes squarely on the shoulders of the lover: "Fair nymphs, if I woo Cynthia not to leave

me,/ You know 'tis I myself, not she deceives me."

Interestingly, the final stanza confirms the speaker's message with a series of homely analogies similar to those towards which Watson's poet-speaker tends in his instructive role in My Love is Past. They have in Caelica 53 the same effect of clarifying for the work's larger audience the general principle in which the speaker is primarily interested:

> Masters that ask their scholars leave to beat them,
> Husbands that bid their wives tell all they know,
> Men that give children sweetmeats not to eat them,
> Ladies, you see what destiny they go:
> And who intreats, you know intreats in vain,
> That love be constant, or come back again.

The use of analogy in such poems as this or Caelica 43 demonstrate how figures of speech--like the sequence's spatial and temporal dimensions, the high degree of abstraction in its diction, and the development of the individual poem towards the expression of a general principle--are shaped by the primacy of Caelica's moral and intellectual concerns, and reflect the poet-speaker's stance. Hedley, for instance, argues that "Greville's leading motive for metaphor, and in particular for personification, is to facilitate the apprehension of universal truths." (65) In consequence, she claims, he typically holds back from full personification, employing the trope to present economically and precisely the interrelations of the poem's central ideas, "but without turning them into actors in a drama." (53) That practise is evident in the brevity of a simile like that used in the final stanza of Caelica 78: "like Aesop's dog, men lose their meat,/ To bite at glorious shadows, when they eat." The reader's recognition of the fable alluded to is reinforced by the vivid images which particularize the general

message it has introduced; the poet-speaker's handling of the simile is thus economical, but effective, and throughout the sequence he is able to make such figures serve his instructive purposes without utterly sacrificing their intrinsic interest.

Greville's handling of the personification of desire available in classical mythology is comparable in some respects to Daniel's classical allusions, whose brevity prevents any diversion of attention from the essentially mental landscape of Delia. Yet at the same time, as is appropriate in a sequence which creates a more direct engagement between poet-speaker and reader, Caelica tends to exploit the connotations of the legends alluded to: as Aesop's fable becomes the source of vivid metaphor in the speaker's general conclusion, so too do the series of mythological allusions in Caelica 42, yet in both cases the connotations are firmly controlled by the poem's instructive purposes. Their relevance to the speaker's experience recurrently made clear, the metamorphoses presented in Caelica 42's first four stanzas are vivid but brief narratives. Their impact is reduced by the rapid succession of legends, which keeps the reader's attention focused on the themes of change and self-deception, and ultimately subordinated to the lesson with which the poet-speaker is concerned, in the final two stanzas:

> Thus our desires besides each inward throe,
> Must pass the outward toils of chance, and fear,
> Against the streams of real truths they go,
> With hope alone to balance all they bear,
> Spending the wealth of nature in such fashion,
> As good and ill luck, equally breeds passion.
>
> Thus our delights, like fair shapes in a glass,
> Though pleasing to our senses, cannot last,
> The metal breaks, or else the visions pass,
> Only your griefs in constant moulds are cast:
> I'll hold no more, false Caelica, live free;

Seem fair to all the world, and foul to me.

As happens frequently in Caelica, the handling of mythological figures and tales and the narration of the speaker's own experience is directed by the general conclusions he wishes to reach. Emphasis falls in this poem on "our desires," "our delights," and "our griefs"--the common experience of mankind--and its essentially argumentative structure is reinforced by the repeated "Thus" of the final two stanzas. The metaphors which derive from the tales alluded to in the opening stanzas, however, add the force of particularity to the generalities of the poet-speaker's lesson.

The role of Cupid most closely approximates that of a fully-fledged actor in a drama of love. Over the course of the sequence, Cupid serves the ongoing function of particularizing the nature of human love, "Of man's thought the restless being," (10) on which Caelica concentrates. Accordingly, he is depicted in perpetual motion, a boy "for vagabonding noted," (12) who "wandreth many places" (13) but who, "in thy running hence,/...found'st nothing but desire's pain" (35); thus described, he offers a compelling image of unsettled, futile, and disappointing human desire. Yet comparing those sonnets in Astrophil and Stella and in Caelica which employ Anacreontic legends about Cupid, Waswo speculates that Sidney uses the conventional myths "not to devalue the experience he presents, but to assert its dramatic force," (57) while Greville uses them "virtually to deny the validity of the experience they traditionally described," to demonstrate that "in this world...love is destroyed by lust, ingratitude, or inconstancy." (58) Used to lend force to the lessons whch the poet-speaker presents and to aid in the

analysis of those errors with which Caelica is concerned, Cupid attracts interest in direct proportion to his representational function. The dramatic impact of his action in the first two stanzas of Caelica 70, for instance, is deflated when the poet-speaker reminds his listener that "Caelica, this image figures forth my heart," and the reader's attention is thus drawn to the poet-speaker's control over his conventional materials. The interest the story stirs, in other words, is firmly subordinated to the conclusions it enables the poet-speaker to reach and articulate.[14]

As might be expected from the poet-speaker's comments on the classical gods, moreover, there is always a note of skepticism in his presentation of Cupid's alleged power over men. Himself a captive in Myra's eyes, for instance, Cupid "yet take[s] pleasure to 'tice hither youth:/ That my school-fellows plagu'd as well as I,/ May not make merry when they hear me cry" (35); his power is thus limited to inflicting on others the full effects of a shared vulnerability. The sonnet following points out that only "common error" makes Cupid defamed for women's "newfangleness," (36) again distinguishing his involvement from the self-deceptive pattern which makes Cupid a god and blames him for men's errors. Instead, the poet-speaker claims:

> Who worships Cupid, doth adore a boy,
> Boys earnest are at first in their delight,
> But for a new, soon leave their dearest toy,
> And out of mind, as soon as out of sight,
> Their joys be dallyings, and their wealth is play,
> They cry to have, and cry to cast away. (62)

The development of the analogy identifies the relevance of Cupid's character and actions, as well as the character and actions of the child to which he is often compared in Caelica, to those human impulses which

most concern the poet-speaker. The motif of the child is as well independently pursued in the sequence: the tale of Merlin makes it clear that children will evoke no sentimental myth of innocence, and the reference to "Men that give children sweetmeats not to eat them" (53) indirectly suggests their vulnerability to temptation. Cupid is similarly cajoled with the promise of "bells or apples," (25) and consistently presented as "my little boy" (35) who desires on a whim, weeps over "toys dear to get," (42) and, "his boy's play many times forbidden," (13) fears punishment for his childish sins. Finally, the motif is employed as a metaphor for emotional vulnerability: in the lengthy narrative of Caelica 75, Philocell's eyes are "great with child with tears," and the speaker has earlier hoped that Myra can be made to "play the child [i.e. weep] with love, or tears." (25)

The figure of Cupid and the motif of the child thus serve to emphasize the child-like nature of human motivations in love, in striking contrast to the view of love as an aspiration towards the divine, an ennobling and educative impulse. Although this emphasis justifies the poet-speaker's instructive role, his relation to these figures epitomizes the humility sustained in his role as teacher: "With Cupid I do everywhere remove," (18) he declares, acknowledging "child-thoughts of mine own" which make him "over-match'd with boy." (26) Ultimately, his own experience illustrates the vulnerability of all human hearts to passion, which makes them able to

> ...neither rest, nor stand,
> Nor anything erect; because they nothing be
> But baby-thoughts, fed with time-present's hand,
> Slaves, and yet darlings of authority. (78)

To evoke his participation in this vulnerability, the poet-speaker

balances his more encompassing perspective on human folly and the child-like aspects of man's nature with a role as one of Cupid's "school-fellows," as resistant as he to the process of being "weaned" from dependence on "sweet Myra" when "reason say[s] that boys must be restrained." (25) Yet the humorous attitude in this poem, as elsewhere in Caelica, implies the witty distance which enables the poet-speaker to analyze critically his ostensible experience of love and to shape the recounting of that experience to consistent moral ends.

Like other elements in Caelica, then, the personification of human desire amplifies without detracting from the sequence's instructive purposes. The witty control and self-directed irony which often emerge in description of Cupid, moreover, are typical of the tone sustained throughout Caelica. Sufficiently detached from the experience of love to gain some insights into its typical workings, the poet-speaker nevertheless includes himself in his wry assessment of human susceptibilities, and thus manages to gain authority in an instructive pose which avoids a proud or authoritative tone. In defining the balance in Greville's mature style, Larson says that his poems give the impression

> of judicious wisdom conveyed in the tone of a man who has long observed human frailty, who has no particular hope of its amelioration, but who is not so weathered and cynical that he feels it pointless to comment on the subject. (39)

Personality is significant in Caelica to the extent that qualities evoked by its speaking voice encourage the reader's confidence in that voice and hence a willingness to entertain the vision it presents. Breadth of perspective, firm control over the recounting of experience,

over Biblical and classical allusion, over the form of the sequence itself--these are features which create the impression of "judicious wisdom" over the course of Caelica and support the instructive stance of its poet-speaker, without conveying a sense of vivid personality, interesting in its own right, which might interfere between the lesson and the work's larger audience. The resolution of Caelica 10, subtly anticipated in the diction and arrangement of the opening poems, establishes the moral perspective which allows the poet-speaker to analyze coherently and to resolve the dilemmas posed by human love, its conventional postures and attitudes. While sonnets following may dramatize various aspects of this analysis, the dramatic element is created for the reader's fuller and more vivid realization, to amplify and particularize conclusions otherwise more generally stated; Caelica gives little impression of the speaker's grappling with the experience of "time-present," his vulnerability to the impact of love, embodied in the lady, or his struggle for comprehension. Rather than conveying a sense of the speaker as lover, immersed in the immediate circumstances of his pursuit of the lady, poems which present his ostensibly personal experience are shaped towards the reinforcement of his role by emphasizing his common humanity in just those terms which dominate Caelica's analysis of the mortal condition: a susceptibility to sin, error, and self-deception, a child-like lack of full understanding or self-control ironically combined with misplaced faith in the powers of human reason and learning.

The terms of his own analysis, then, insist on certain limits to the poet-speaker's more encompassing awareness; his role as lover, by

embodying those limitations, is thus put to the service of his primary role of teacher in order to fulfill Caelica's serious moral intentions. At times, the sequence may approach satire, but the nature of its speaker's self-presentation ensures that its perspective on human frailty remains simultaneously critical and sympathetic, insightful but fully conscious of impediments to human vision, aware of the "Heavens' will" but reflective of "Nature's story" (4) as it inevitably unfolds in the life of man. If Caelica never succeeds in conveying the felt reality of the lover's experience and emotions, as Daniel's Delia has done, or in setting this effect in tense and productive relation to the insights provided by the more detached perspective of the poet-speaker, as we shall see Astrophil and Stella and the Amoretti do, it nevertheless convinces the reader that its analysis is both valid and significant. The nature of its speaker is central to the creation of this conviction. He is self-effacing in that attention is never drawn to his personal qualities for their own sake or for purposes of self-aggrandizement; instead, evidence of his broad awareness, which emerges in Caelica's vast dimensions and its characteristic style and tone, functions to support the validity of his insight. The reader is impressed, then, not with his capacity for a virtuoso performance, but with the extent to which the poet-speaker shares his creator's serious intentions and his firm grasp, from the beginning of Caelica, of a moral framework in which the apparent contradictions of the lover's state are subsumed.

The role of the speaker is equally important to the success of Delia, whose creator allows the reader to witness the efforts of a

thoughtful and plausible personality to come to terms with his experience. As in Caelica, the speaker becomes a coherent centre for an examination of human love, but Daniel's procedure offers a point-by-point contrast to Greville's analytic technique. He creates a fictional character, whose role as poet is subordinated to and put to the service of his primary role as lover: rejecting the aesthetic or moral criteria which might have derived from a more detached perspective on the subject matter and methods of his verse, Delia's speaker substitutes emotional sincerity as the sole standard of its worth, and dedicates his efforts (insofar as they relate at all to a larger audience) to immortalizing the lady. Poetic capacity thus becomes a means of freezing the experience of "time-present" in which the lover is immersed, and to which he clings, just as the poetic artefacts he produces for the lady are intended to represent a vividly as possible the form of his present desire. In contrast to the increasing inclusiveness evident in the progression of Caelica's subject matter, the structure of individual sonnets and the development of Delia itself indicate the extent to which this dedication represents a narrowing-down of the lover's scope.

Perhaps the most striking indication of differences in the nature and rhetorical stance of these speakers emerges in the attitude each takes towards his lady. Delia's lover, immersed in the fictional circumstances of the work, begs for her physical presence, her acknowledgement of his devotion, and the return of love; while the reader recognizes that her name and celebrated virtues suggest Delia's larger role in representing an ideal for human aspiration, the lover's

thoughts remain fixed on an actual figure and her personal worth. From Caelica's speaker, on the other hand, the reader hears directly of the relation between abstract ideals and their human exemplars, and this understanding is reflected in his presentation of the lady: she may stand figuratively, under a variety of names, for an abstract ideal; when she is depicted as an actual woman, such characteristics as her susceptibility to change in affection measure the gap between ideal and real. The recognition of that inevitable gap colours whatever impression the reader is given of direct contact between speaker and lady, so that attention is diverted from personal blame to the poet-speaker's more general analysis of human frailties. In Delia, where again a sense of distance dominates in the relation of the two characters, the lady's aloofness reinforces the lover's conviction of her worth, while the possibility of assigning to her responsibility for his plight is gradually submerged as the sequence develops towards an accepting and humble stance, towards the lover's contentment from afar.

In that process, Daniel's speaker accommodates attitudes towards expression, worldly fame and posterity, time and aging to the acceptance of his primary role of lover. Emphasis falls on the gradual restriction of his scope, while various devices create as well a smooth continuity within the boundaries of the work's fictional circumstances. Nevertheless, Delia's portrayal of a mind actively engaged in the process of discovery, probing the nature and implications of his role, provides much of the sequence's interest. The capacity for a more detached, encompassing, and self-conscious perspective which Daniel's lover sacrifices to an acceptance of his lot as lover is in turn

responsible for the coherent and frequently self-deprecating analysis which raises Caelica above the level of the minor sequences treated in the first three chapters. The interest derived from this analysis compensates to a great extent for the absence in Caelica of a vivid rendering of the lover's experience. Like Delia, Caelica ultimately lacks the impact of Astrophil and Stella or the Amoretti, since the consistency of its speaker's stance prevents the development of a productive tension between modes of perception and experience. To Greville's poet-speaker, such tension is a subject of analysis, since the extent to which human knowledge and experience are at odds is a consequence of man's fallen condition; it never emerges, however, as a felt reality, a struggle within an individual character. Nevertheless, together the sequences demonstrate that either of the two poles of expression and modes of creation available to the sonneteer, as he chooses to depict a fictional character or to allow the work to be spoken by a poet-speaker closely identified with the figure of his creator, may become a coherent centre for a thoughtful treatment of the human experience of love. Each converts the consistency which has been a lesser pleasure in the other minor works into an effective means of approaching those larger questions raised by this experience.

CHAPTER 5

The terms used to acknowledge Sidney's achievement in Astrophil and Stella have long been consistent: according to several generations of critics, the work's characteristic features are irony, wit, and a dramatic impact which makes Astrophil a more compelling figure than are his contemporaries, the protagonists of other Elizabethan sonnet sequences. Yet the consistency with which these terms are applied to an analysis of Astrophil and Stella is deceptive. Instead of signalling a coherent interpretive focus on the work, they suggest a series of critical issues, hinging on the relation of the sequence's protagonist to its creator and on the associated question of Sidney's intentions in the work, which remain largely unresolved. There is no general consensus, for instance, on the way in which irony functions in Astrophil and Stella: does the speaker share the encompassing perspective of the sequence's creator, and so evince an ironic self-consciousness, or is irony a weapon wielded by the poet at the expense of his character, the fictional lover? Similarly, critics have failed to agree whether Astrophil's wit is a sign of his mastery over the conventional situation or, as Roche would have it, merely a symptom of those "verbal victories, all to no avail," allowed him by the poet who provides simultaneously "a subtext.that assert[s] Sidney's control of this mad outburst of love." (178) The answers which an individual critic finds to these questions will largely determine his account of the sequence's dramatic impact, whether it allows Sidney "to speak out for himself...to find a richer and more exacting freedom than that given

by the persona of convention" (Spencer, 268) or whether it creates a particularly vivid moral instrument, compelling the reader to learn from Astrophil's errors and, reluctantly, to recognize the tragicomedy which results when "reason...is subordinated totally to self-will and the appetite for fleshly 'food.'" (Scanlon, 69)

Debate about Astrophil and Stella is thus centrally concerned with the issue of rhetorical stance which is the subject of this thesis. An overview of critical treatments, moreover, reveals that such discrepancies do not emerge from an historical evolution of attitudes towards Astrophil and Stella itself or towards the sonnet sequence in general, although study of the Petrarchan tradition and of Renaissance poetry has frequently provided new insights into Sidney's work. The coexistence of divergent interpretations of Astrophil's relation to the figure of his creator, and the persistence of this divergence, suggest that some ambiguity is inherent in his rhetorical stance, a suggestion supported not only by study of his degree of awareness in individual sonnets but as well by attention to those shifts in stance which Sidney effects over the course of Astrophil and Stella.

It is nevertheless true that, until quite recently, the prevailing attitude to Astrophil has been that he exists as a fictional character, responding to circumstances established and controlled by the detached figure of his creator, Sidney; as a result, debate has centred rather on the reader's proper response to Astrophil than on his fictional status or proximity to Sidney. Implicitly summing up such debate, Jones and Stallybrass measure "sympathetic" against "suspicious" readings of Astrophil's verbal strategies in several sonnets, yet a distinctly

modern note is added by their attention to the interpenetration of the modes of public courtiership and private courtship, to "the conflicting discourses of politics, love and lust [which] cannot finally be reconciled." (67) Such an approach acknowledges the tension between public and private spheres which Astrophil and Stella exploits instead of resolving, as the minor sequences have done, by developing a public stance or by rejecting the larger world for the private realm of love. Similarly, it acknowledges the sustained tension between conflicting aspects of Astrophil's dual role of poet-lover: that is, while in the minor sequences one role is subordinated to the other, leaving the predominant impression either of the speaker's identification with the figure of the historical poet and his control over the sequence's amatory material, or of his submission to the fictional circumstances of the text which the poet manipulates, in Sidney's work a resolution of the genre's complex relations of power and submission remains elusive. If Astrophil's "role as poet allows him to control most of the fiction, and the activity within the sequence," (62) claim Jones and Stallybrass,

> It is important, however, not to overstate...[his]...mastery. Whatever his machinations, Stella controls the outcome of the sequence. Her judgment of Astrophil, her limited consent, her final rejection determine his responses. The lady's supremacy is given in the sequence, as it is in all the poetry contributing to the convention within which Sidney worked. (61)

Astrophil thus seems both to function as a figure within the conventional design which Sidney inherited and, at least intermittently, to share his creator's awareness of the constraints which that design imposes and with which the poet must struggle for independent expression.

As Campbell points out, for instance, Astrophil's early declaration that "I call it praise to suffer Tyrannie" (AS 2) offers a self-conscious insight into "the duality of the Petrarchan language which he is forced to adopt" and thus signals to the reader that, "as poet, he is exploring how far these conventions can take him in articulating his emotions." (86) Campbell's argument that Astrophil uses poetry-writing as a surrogate for love-making subordinates his role as poet-a role which suggests a measure of identity with Sidney's aesthetic concerns--to his fictional character as disappointed lover; her identification of a sense of incompleteness as the persistent element in Astrophil and Stella, however, places the analysis within the most recent critical tendencies. Overall, she argues, Sidney's work

> dramatises the process of creating a self and of narrating that self's history without these processes ever crystallising into the product of a self created or a story told. (93)

If Campbell's study emphasizes the absence of fulfillment for Astrophil as a fictional lover in producing this effect, others have been quick to balance this approach with attention to the protagonist's own involvement in the process of interpretation highlighted by the sequence's deferral of formal resolution. Instead of claiming that, after the rejection of the Eighth Song, "Astrophil merely acts out a series of Petrarchan poses, trapped inside a convention that no longer expresses any of the emotional realities of his situation," (Campbell, 90) such critics have focused on the protagonist's awareness of the related problems of language, style, and self-presentation, on the social and political context which he shares with his creator, and on

the role of Stella in disrupting the fiction of the sequence. Such approaches frequently involve some treatment of Astrophil's capacity at certain points to take a more detached perspective on his emotional state and to recognize the role of that state as subject-matter for effective verse, rather than identifying him throughout with the emotional susceptibility that characterizes the fictional character of the lover.

Marotti, for instance, draws attention away from the fictional world of amorous courtship to its interpenetration with the "real" world of political ambitions and frustration; the two realms share, he argues, "temptations to self-delusion and dangers to self-esteem," (405) while the disappointments Astrophil suffers mirror those of his creator,

> a fiercely ambitious courtier who faced the reality of a failed political career...Lady Rich was for him, as was Anne Boleyn for Wyatt, a fit symbol of his unattained and unattainable social and political goals. (400)

As the sequence develops, then, Sidney ironically manipulates its "relationship to specific biographical and social contexts" (405) and assigns to the poet-lover's friends a rhetorically significant place which takes priority over the protagonist's implied and explicit dialogue with the lady.[1] The significant rhetorical engagement of Astrophil and Stella, Marotti claims, thus occurs between a persona "left disgraced and exiled in a state that characterizes Sidney's own political frustrations and disillusionment" (405) and the audience most capable of perceiving and appreciating such relationships:

> [Sidney] thus invited his sophisticated readers to exercise their critical faculties to such a degree that the whole work must have begun to take the shape of a metapoem, that is a literary work whose

> metacommunicative character made the relationship of poet and audience more important than either the ostensible amorous subject-matter or its sociopolitical coordinates. The shared attitudes, the common method of interpreting social experience, the sensitivity to the ironic interplay of literature and its immediate historical context--these became the real center of the communication. (406)

Feinberg and Jacqueline T. Miller, on the other hand, stress the role of Stella in disrupting the conventional fiction of the sequence. Although Astrophil addresses his friends and peers more frequently than he does the lady, Feinberg argues, only Stella is endowed with language, and the sequence "invites a feminist interpretation" because it "shows a poet departing from lyric conventions to allow a female figure some autonomy of voice and character." (5) The pressure of Stella's felt reality--her "blush" in sonnet 67, for instance, representing a mode of discourse which renders him helpless--is a central element in deconstructing Astrophil's assumptions, while her words in the Eighth Song begin to lift the burden of solipsism which Astrophil has shared with the fictional lovers of the minor sequences. This development has important implications for our understanding of the sequence's speaking voice:

> Stella's emergence from silence does indeed constitute a threat to Sidney's poetic corpus. In the shock of the moment, Sidney feigns to forget that he has carefully distanced this song through a third-person pastoral frame. What should be "his", Astrophil's song, has become Sidney's own. (16-17)

In consequence, Astrophil and Stella "does not remain wholly imprisoned in its narcissism." (5) Miller too sees Stella assuming a more active role in Sidney's sequence than has been the case in the objectificaton of the lady characteristic of the minor sequences. As reader of Astrophil's poems, she argues, Stella serves as a locus for those

problems with language which Sidney is concerned to highlight rather than to transcend. If, as Hedley has claimed, "Sidney calls attention in various ways to the ironic or problematic character of the poet's undertaking," (55) then the complexities of Stella's behaviour, reported speech, and actual words take on added significance as they contribute to "the emphasis on the indeterminacy of words, their lack of fixed points of reference." (Miller, 1984; 96)

Each of these studies focuses on those devices which ensure the reader's continuing engagement with the text rather than on a resolution of its rhetorical strategies into a single pattern of meaning--in Campbell's words, on Sidney's involvement of the reader "in the process of interpreting, the play of signification" rather than on Astrophil and Stella's production of "any transcendent unifying interpretation, any ultimate signified." (94) This chapter will argue that shifts in Astrophil's rhetorical stance--a feature which distinguishes Sidney's sequence from the work of minor sonneteers and which Astrophil and Stella shares with Spenser's Amoretti--are a central factor in this emphasis on process instead of product, the factor which generates the reader's most profound involvement with the complex and ironic workings of the text. Instead of standing in a fixed relation to the figure of his creator (and, correspondingly, to the poems' immediate audience, Stella, and its larger audience of courtly wits), that is, Astrophil's stance is ambiguous in certain individual sonnets and shifts over the course of the sequence between a fictional identity in the character of the lover and a closer identification with the historical poet. Those poems which employ biographical allusions or refer to an historical

context which the protagonist shares with the poet most obviously invite the reader to envision Astrophil and Sidney standing in close proximity; the extent to which the speaker shares his creator's perspective is perhaps more provocative a measure of this identification as well as of those points at which Astrophil appears as a wholly created character at some distance from the poet, more limited in his understanding and betraying the conventional lover's susceptibility to his fictional circumstances. In particular, such shifting degrees of awareness sharpen the reader's sense that questions of perception and self-knowledge are central to Astrophil and Stella's explorations.

The elusiveness of a structural pattern which determines the arrangement of sonnets in Astrophil and Stella is one indication of Sidney's effectiveness in provoking a full and active response from the work's reader. The most striking feature of traditional efforts to define the sequence's "story" and its main divisions is the diversity of structural patterns discerned and the variety of conclusions reached, both about Sidney's intentions in the sequence and about the nature of his speaker. Moreover, the various patterns which emerge draw attention to the poet's skill in composition and arrangement, rather than conveying the sense of a fictional character's progression; this effect combines with the implications of Astrophil's diction in certain sonnets to raise the question of his self-conscious participation in such artful proceedings. A survey of these patterns thus provides a useful background to an analysis of his shifting stance in Astrophil and Stella.

Nashe's 1591 introduction to the work, which defines it as a

"tragi-comedy of love" whose "argument [is] cruell chastitie, the Prologue hope, the Epilogue dispaire," has provided a springboard for a number of studies which discover in Astrophil and Stella a three- or five-part structure resembling that of drama. Whether critical of or sympathetic to Astrophil, these analyses assume, in Robertson's words, that "a sonnet sequence tells a story...This is the Petrarchan pattern," (119) and identify one of several sets of oppositions as the element which generates the development of this story: the conventional debate between reason and will, the argument of virtue and sense, or the tension between Astrophil's expectations of love and the reality of his experience. The tripartite pattern is particularly favoured as a means of demonstrating the work's coherence. Ringler, for instance, identifies shifts in the speaker's attitude as the principle of organization from which Astrophil and Stella derives a greater overall unity and more careful construction than most other Renaissance sonnet sequences: to sonnet 51, he maintains, we are presented with the protagonist's first reactions to being in love and the elaborate game of self-deception he concocts; in sonnet 52, the mask is dropped so that Astrophil can go in active pursuit of Stella; while after the Eighth Song, the sequence is given over to despair. Young and Montgomery agree that a three-part structure is used, not simply to trace the beginning, middle, and end of a fictional courtship, but for "analysis and synthesis, with the Petrachan convention as its subject matter." (Young, 88) Thus, they envision a central section, whose mode of expression blends parody and earnestness, framed by opening and closing sections which present Astrophil in the pose of lover.

Yet within this general agreement, there are varied opinions both about the exact nature of the sequence's divisions and about Sidney's intentions in creating such a design. Young, for instance, breaks the work after sonnet 43 and again following sonnet 83 and the third song, creating a pattern distinct from Ringler's, while he and Montgomery debate the proper reading of the work's conclusion. According to Montgomery, "it is proper to ask whether Astrophil's validation of the convention is one that approves its idealism or recognizes the painful reality of its contradictions," (Symmetry and Sense, 103) whereas Young argues for the completion of a more positive development:

> At the end of the sequence, through his relation to Stella, Astrophil has been made aware of love as the Petrarchan universal: he has discovered himself as part of the convention, which, by virtue of his participation in it, has acquired permanent validity. (88)

Each seeks that resolution which would confirm an orderly pattern of development and justify a unifying interpretation, yet their differences of opinion--despite agreement on the general shape of Astrophil and Stella and on the nature of its central concerns--imply the elusiveness of such satisfaction.

Moreover, alternative structures proliferate in studies which pursue different principles of organization. Hamilton's division of the sequence into three nearly equal parts, at sonnets 35-36 and 71-72, is supported by his argument for an imagistic pattern which moves the work through three senses and which corresponds to the gradual intensification of Astrophil's feelings: "Sight awakens love; hearing arouses desire; and...touch seeks to satisfy desire." (84) Brodwin, while in agreement with Hamilton on the significance of Astrophil's

first address to Stella in sonnet 36, extends the central section to sonnet 86, according to the argument that the main organizing principle is "the source of action" (26)--that is, Astrophil alone until sonnet 35, then he and Stella together in the second section's narrative activity, and finally Astrophil again in isolation. This division, she points out, is supported by internal coherence, thematic cross-references, and an underlying pattern of imagery which transforms Stella, the star, into the sun:

> Yet the transformation of Stella into the sun implies no contradiction of her stellar essence. The form of the sequence falls into a pattern of night, day, and then again night...It is in the second section that Stella is most active. The true star of the sequence comes, therefore, at its centre, surrounded by darkness. The very structure of the sequence serves, then, as an emblem of Stella's ideal nature, the unobtainable star which the poet star-lover may adore but never hope to control. (29)

What such a variety of plausible alternatives suggests, above all, is the elusiveness of a structural pattern which can account for the disposal of all formal elements in Astrophil and Stella, even as certain of these elements can be seen to cohere in such a way as to arouse expectations of ordered development, and to intensify the reader's desire for a coherent story. That is, the diverse interpretations of Astrophil and Stella's structure imply that Sidney may be as concerned to unsettle the reader's expectations as to fulfill them. As Campbell argues,

> Astrophil and Stella offers itself to us as a formal unity in a number of ways (narrative, psychological, thematic, stylistic), but however much our expectations of closure may be satisfied in the case of individual sonnets or groups of sonnets, those expectations are defeated over the entire collection...It holds out the promise of unity, but refuses to provide it. (92)

If this is the case, then Sidney has not been, as Brodwin speculates, "too successful" (25) in concealing the principles behind the work's unifying structure, but skilled in deliberately providing the means by which a multiplicity of responses is provoked and critical activity on the part of the reader sustained over the course of Astrophil and Stella.

This possibility is supported, finally, by the fact that imagistic and thematic connections encourage the reader to draw together for comparison, contrast, and analysis poems located in different sections of the work. The effect of such connections is comparable to that which Warkentin has described arising from the principle of variatio in Petrarch's Canzoniere; this principle dictates the dispersal throughout the collection of

> poems on similar themes, or treated from different points of view, or initiated by the same moment of an experience...The jewel-like synchronic complexity which...[the principle of variatio]...creates is to be found as a constant aesthetic resource in the Canzoniere, creating a beauteous unifying rationale of its own distinct from, though never in conflict with, other considerations. (1975; 18)

To choose one obvious example in Astrophil and Stella, sonnet 93's question--"What inke is blacke inough to paint my wo?"--echoes Stella's vision, according to the speaker, of "the verie face of woe/ Painted in my beclowded stormie face" in AS 45 (an echo reinforced by the use of "wracke" in both poems to describe the speaker's state) and the search for "fit words to paint the blackest face of woe" in the sequence's opening sonnet. It is worth noting that, unlike the case of Delia's recurring metaphor of the ocean, which measures the lover's gradual reconciliation to the hopelessness of his situation, the recurrence of

this image-cluster in Astrophil and Stella does not reflect a change in the speaker's attitude which would correspond to a sense of narrative progression. Instead, these three poems simultaneously draw attention to the historical poet's role in arranging the individual sonnets and, because the repeated phrase addresses Astrophil's concern with effective expression and self-presentation, imply a degree of similarity between the poet and his speaker.

A similar effect is produced by those poems which allude to a specific historical context shared by Sidney and Astrophil. While two tournament poems (AS 41 and 53) are placed in close proximity, on either side of a sonnet which treats horsemanship as a a metaphor for "the Manage" (AS 49) of love, the competitive context so vividly evoked in these poems reverberates throughout the sequence, as Astrophil's early sense that he has disappointed "Great expectation" (AS 21) yields to a recurrent awareness of those "curious wits" (AS 23), "courtly Nymphs" (AS 54), and "envious wits" (AS 104) who witness his efforts. The existence of such poems is a central means of creating the context of actual experience out of which Astrophil and Stella thus seems to emerge, and their synchronic arrangement diverts attention from consecutive narrative, or the sense of developing fictional action in which Astrophil is immersed. It reminds the reader instead of the presence within his work of the poet who can display his wit and versatility by varied treatment of similar themes, images, or occasions. Moreover, the display is most effectively directed towards the larger audience addressed or evoked in these poems, and while it is true that Sidney has Astrophil "renounce ambition for love" (Marotti, 401) and

thus reject values which the sequence's audience would recognize as highly important to Sidney himself, the handling of the renunciation blurs the line which distinguishes speaker from poet. That is, Astrophil's rejection of the courtly world, unlike that of the minor sequences' fictional lovers, is shaped by the values and expectations of that world and its representatives, to the extent that his engagement with public values and expectations may be argued to predominate over the renunciation of worldly ambition conventional, as we have seen in Chapters 2 and 3, to the fictional lover's role.

The arrangement of individual poems within the sequence thus draws the reader's attention to the historical poet's skill in designing the work as well as inviting, by means of certain unified groups of sonnets, expectations of narrative development not entirely satisfied by the sequence as a whole. The suggestion of mixed signals is implicit in a treatment like Brodwin's, for the three-part structure she identifies as a means of stressing Stella's centrality and ideal nature reminds us of the poet's control over the work rather than emphasizing the moral development of a character whose multiple uses of the word "virtue" are the subject of much of Brodwin's analysis, as of Young's. Moreover, the poetic handling of experience seems at least occasionally to involve Astrophil himself as more detached creator, conscious of various facets of his larger audience's response to the work. Astrophil and Stella does not efface the aesthetic concerns which remind the reader of the presence of the historical poet, in other words, as have the minor sequences which present the fictional character of the lover; instead, a complex structural pattern which plays a synchronic arrangement

against suggestions of narrative development insists on our recognition of the poet's involvement in the speaking voice of the sequence at the same time as the coherence of certain groups of sonnets implies Astrophil's integrity as a fictional character.

In certain respects, then, Sidney's work is comparable to Diana and The Passionate Centurie of Love, which invite an identification of poet and speaker by means of mode of expression within individual sonnets as well as by the arrangement of poems within the work. Warkentin points out that, in adapting Petrarch's excusatio in his opening poem,

> Sidney is issuing an explicit invitation to consider this poem, and possibly the rest of his collection, in the light of its compositional procedures. (1982; 37)

It is of course conventional to begin with a dedicatory or opening sonnet in which the work's creator speaks in his own person, and we have seen in the minor sequences that such a beginning may lead to the immersion in experience and the limited understanding of the wholly created lover. Sidney, however, retains a subtle reminder of his poetic versatility even as the sequence initiates, with sonnet 2, an account of Astrophil's first falling in love:

> One of the first things one notices in Sidney's first few sonnets is their formal variety. Within the limits of the traditional fourteen lines Sidney has woven a great many rhyme schemes (there are for example no two alike in the first six poems) with the coincident of complementary rhetorical structures which these various forms imply. (Woods, 39)

More significant is the fact that this variety is at least implicitly a concern of the speaker himself, for whom the role of poet is thus not simply, as Rudenstine has argued, one aspect of a "single, complex personality,...the first fully realized, poetically conceived character

in modern English literature," (213, 169) but instead one means by which we are invited to identify Astrophil with the figure of his creator, and by which Astrophil and Stella raises complex questions about the nature of consciousness and perception.

Within the space of the first seventeen sonnets, for instance, Astrophil presents two contradictory accounts of love's first moments, thus accomplishing on a narrative level a sense of variety duplicated in the diverse formal patterns of the opening sonnets. In the first, he sets himself off implicitly from conventional lovers by insisting on the gradual development of his love and on its distinctive nature, as a consequence both of the traditional sense of compulsion and of reasoned acceptance:

> Not at first sight, nor with a dribbled shot
> Love gave the wound, which while I breathe will bleed;
> But known worth did in mine of time proceed,
> Till by degrees it had full conquest got.
> I saw and like, I liked but loved not,
> I lov'd, but straight did not what Love decreed:
> At length to Love's decrees, I forc'd, agreed,
> Yet with repining at so partiall lot.
> Now even that footstep of lost libertie
> Is gone, and now like slave-borne Muscovite,
> I call it priase to suffer Tyrannie;
> And now employ the remnant of my wit,
> To make my selfe beleeve, that all is well,
> While with a feeling skill I paint my hell. (AS 2)

Even within the confines of this one sonnet, Astrophil's stance is a complex and ambiguous one. As Rudenstine points out, the opening line's controlled precision is counterpointed by the long vowels and softened consonants of line 2; similarly, the constantly interrupted rhythm of line 7 conveys a sense of resentment under the surface control, released in the sestet's more forceful lines to lend a surprising depth of

feeling to the couplet. Nichols discovers complementary effects in the half-rhyme "all/skill" which mutes the otherwise strong rhymes of the couplet and which, like the qualifying "To make my selfe beleeve" and the parenthetical "with a feeling skill," works against the neatness of the couplet's resolution.

The balance of restraint and strong emotion achieved here, then, is plausible as the expression of one who struggles "To make my selfe beleeve" what he knows not to be true, yet there is a note of detachment in the humorous image of love's "dribbled shot," and in the self-consciousness both of Astrophil's comment on his "feeling skill," so ably demonstrated in the preceding thirteen lines, and of his declaration that "I call it praise to suffer Tyrannie," already noted.[2] The sonnet follows, moreover, the sequence's opening poem, and must be read both as an enactment of its final advice to "'looke in thy hearte and write,'" (AS 1) thus contributing to a sense of narrative progression, and as a complication of that advice, since Astrophil employs in sonnet 2 several of the techniques parodied and rejected in AS 1. From the beginning, Astrophil is established as an accomplished and conscious stylist, and together, "In depicting the struggle to show inward states in poetry, the opening two sonnets demand that the reader think of Astrophil's loving as the matter for his invention." (Ferry, 132)

It is axiomatic, furthermore, to note how Astrophil's style in certain sonnets contradicts his repeated assertions that his is a plain manner, whether "Copying" (AS 3) Stella's beauty or expressing himself "When trembling voice brings forth that I do Stella love." (AS 6) His

second account of love's beginning is one of those sonnets which employs the allegorical frame elsewhere rejected, thus joining a narrative contradiction to a stylistic one which converts his parody of elaborate styles, as Ferry has noted, into "self-parody." (177) At the same time, it presents Astrophil as innocent victim of Cupid, who, "like wags new got to play,/ Fals to shrewd turnes, and I was in his way." (AS 17) The colloquial simplicity of the final line, echoing that of the opening sonnet and similarly set off from the weight of stylistic or allegorical elaboration preceding, seems the mode of direct feeling; Rudenstine notes of this technique of contrast that an intimate conversational tone, in sonnets located in the middle of the sequence, is directly associated with Stella's addiction to "the playful ambiguities of courtly flirtation." (235) Like the wholly imagined characters of the minor sequences, then, Astrophil is capable of setting himself off convincingly from more sophisticated guises in a pose of plainspoken honesty, but in Astrophil and Stella--unlike the case in any minor works in the genre--the extent of his awareness of that simple honesty as a pose is deliberately ambivalent. The contrast between sonnets 2 and 17, implying respectively a reasoned and fully conscious acceptance of love and a naive susceptibility to love's ploys, suggests the range within which Astrophil moves.

In contrast to this sense of Astrophil's ranging, over the course of the sequence, between poles of naive susceptibility and detached self-consciousness--a sense which corresponds to Astrophil's distance from and proximity to the figure on his creator, at different points in the work--stand traditional views of the protagonist as a wholly created

character. As Connell points out, two attitudes towards Sidney, as moral and as "modern," have provided mutually exclusive approaches to his work's central concerns and to his intentions in the work; both, however, have regarded Astrophil as a fictional creation, varying only in the degree of distance which they believe exists between him and Sidney and in their arguments about the function of that distance. Those critics who emphasize Astrophil's role as a negative example, that is, examine his detachment from Sidney as a means by which the reader is encouraged to draw conclusions critical of Astrophil's motives and behaviour, and unavailable to Astrophil himself, while those who view him more sympathetically praise Sidney's skill at effective characterization, frequently focusing on Astrophil's wit and verbal strategies in such a way as to anticipate the most recent explorations of parallels between the two figures of poet-lover and historical poet.

Both approaches are valuable to this chapter's argument that Astrophil's relation to Sidney is a flexible one. Those who regard Sidney as predominantly moral in his concerns and intentions argue for a radical separation of the sequence's central character from the historical poet; Sidney "is using Astrophil's journey from hope to despair as a fictional device for the analysis of human desire in Christian terms," (142) maintains Roche, who traces the various means by which Astrophil's perspective on his own situation is undermined and revealed as too narrowly sensual. According to Sinfield, "Sidney has contrived that the reader, although limited almost entirely to Astrophil's words, can see beyond them," (1978; 17) and the gap which results provokes a critical evaluation of the protagonist:

> Within this perspective the reader becomes aware of the many ironies planted at Astrophil's expense and of the less attractive aspects of his wooing...his sexual preoccupations obtrude through his punning language, eventually quite crudely. ("Sidney and Astrophil," 31)

These interpretations focus on the "strategic ironies...[which]...ensure that the reader, unlike Astrophil, is not deluded into thinking that "'all is well'" (Weiner, 9); they include Astrophil's insensitivity to Stella "as a moral and emotional being," (Charles S. Levy, 57) the revelation of pride which Levy argues frequently underlies Astrophil's treatment of the theme of solitude, the metaphor of blackness and technique of inversion, (Roche) and the use of words whose multiple connotations invite the reader to take a more encompassing perspective of Astrophil's errors and limited understanding.

Such an interpretation makes the sequence's representation of Astrophil's story, in Scanlon's terms, a mimesis of the folly of sensual love. Its dramatic element, Ryken insists, is more than a matter simply of the conflict between reason and virtue, and Levy similarly refocuses attention from Astrophil's largely conscious exploitation of this combat to his inadvertent failures of understanding. Ryken stresses the number of sonnets in which Astrophil is shown making a choice, to argue for his resemblance to the tragic protagonist of drama:

> he chooses a set of values, remains resolute in maintaining his vision, and goes down to defeat, still clinging to his vision, but in complete bondage because that vision has proved inadequate. (654)

Terms borrowed from the drama have provided one means by which these critics have attempted to cope with a central obstacle to whole-hearted acceptance of Astrophil's function as a negative example: his singular

force and attractiveness to the reader. His perseverance, Weiner argues, conveys to Astrophil an almost heroic stature; "there is something pathetically ennobling in his continuing love of Stella" (18) which, while we recognize it as misguided, may suggest the best man can achieve in this world.

This approach, however, allows Astrophil to be damned with faint praise even as it fails fully to account for the force of his personality. The failure is reflected generally in the greater attention these studies pay to "the ethical field of Astrophil and Stella" (Levy, 59) and to the process by which the reader supplies "the insufficiencies of Astrophil's insight into his predicament" (Roche, 143) than to the protagonist's overt concern with the issue of sincerity and to his dramatic energy. Indeed, Roche claims that these features of the sequence's manner should be disregarded to focus instead on its matter, according to which Astrophil is no hero because he succumbs so whole-heartedly to the pursuit of his desires. Yet Roche, like Scanlon and Sinfield, does take the force of Astrophil's personality into account insofar as it enables the sequence to elicit a mixed response and thus to enliven its instructive purpose. According to Scanlon,

> whilst Sidney has encouraged us by his use of the first person to find ourselves in Astrophil he has also prevented us from endorsing him. He has made Astrophil's self-deception yield psychological subtlety and yet placed it within a firm ethical structure. (17)

Sinfield argues similarly for a dual response of the part of the reader which, while it recognizes the effectivenes of Astrophil's dramatic claims on our attention, again subordinates this sympathy to the judgment which must finally be passed on his partial awareness:

> We are impressed, with the full strength of first-person presentation, by Astrophil and feel drawn into his point of view, but also are aware that he is a dramatic creation and that there are other possible, even preferable, perspectives. (1980; 38)

This ambivalence, he speculates, may function to suggest our own vulnerability to the errors and self-deception we witness in the development of Astrophil, so that the pattern of simultaneous involvement and detachment which Sidney elicits from his sequence's readers has the most profound moral impact by provoking self-scrutiny as well as the evaluation of a fictional character's words and actions.

There is a good deal of merit to such arguments. Traister, for example, bases a sophisticated analysis of sonnets 59 and 83 on Sidney's conception of comedy as a didactic mode; he probes various dimensions of the reader's response to the poems in order to distinguish laughter _per se_ from the delight which facilitates teaching. In these poems, he argues, our sympathetic reaction to Astrophil's wit is succeeded by a more critical evaluation of "the moral quicksand" (760) which his situation has proven to be and of his divergence from ideals of human behaviour, so that

> didacticism emerges from a reader's amusement...As laughter proves inadequate to the complex experiences the sonnets record, the reader is forced to reconsider those experiences and the implications of his first response to them. Such reconsideration is designed to teach him his own susceptibility to the errors the sonnets represent and that he must be wary of the deceptive attractiveness of such errors now that he is able to recognize them. (753)

Traister's argument is particularly compelling because it does not attempt to force the whole of _Astrophil and Stella_ into such a pattern. While he asserts that a number of the work's individual poems "question

the precise meaning and value Astrophil gives to and finds in his 'love'," (759) he acknowledges too that "the witty geniality of his voice" (751) succeeds with most readers as it does not with Stella, and that the work's "multiple viewpoints" (759) are functional in more ways than those outlined in his treatment of sonnets 59 and 83:

> In fact, the deliberately comedic balance of, first, what most readers regard as Sidney's own most intimate concerns, and, second, his ironic detachment from the tale and its fictional protagonist, has seemed a major source of the poetry's success. (751)

Traister, in other words, does not neglect the possibility of other responses to Astrophil than the ultimately didactic and critical judgment which he claims is provoked by the two treatments of Stella's pets. The balance of which he speaks, moreover, acknowledges the whole texture of biographical relevance which contributes so vividly to the impact of Astrophil and Stella and which is created most obviously by its biographical allusions.

The significance of this texture, closely associated with Astrophil's wit and the issue of personality and sincerity in the sequence, is a further obstacle to accepting the speaker as a wholly created character who stands at a consistent distance from the figure of the historical poet and who serves, in his response to the fictional circumstances created for him by Sidney, to point a lesson by negative example. Sinfield deals to some extent with this issue, commenting that Astrophil's proposal to fictionalize himself in sonnet 45 is part of Sidney's strategy to prevent the reader from settling into a stable relationship with the protagonist. Yet he draws from the poem's provocative final line--"I am not I, pity the tale of me"--an

interesting but ultimately disappointing conclusion:

> For a moment it asserts his actuality by setting him off against a manifest fiction, but his readiness to transform himself into reading material turns us back upon our own role as readers, inviting us to consider how the tale of Astrophil works upon our sympathies. (35-36)

Thus the suggestion that Astrophil is here capable of viewing and considering himself from without--from a vantage point, in other words, which he shares with the work's creator--is muted in the narrower implication that the proposal simply sharpens the reader's consciousness of the medium itself and promotes a similarly restricted understanding of the reader's role.

It is ultimately the narrowness of conclusions drawn from a vision of Astrophil as a fictional and negative example, then, which makes such an approach inadequate to account for the moving power and success of Astrophil and Stella. Wallace comments more generally, in an analysis of Renaissance authors' "standard practice" (274) of inventing a fable to suit a predetermined moral point, on "The wide latitude of response permitted within the pale of unstrained interpretation" (275) during the period. While Roche bases his moral analysis on the claim that "Our training in finding 'dramatic situations' for poems falsifies the intent of many Renaissance poems," (167)[3] Wallace cites contemporary commentary on the classics and on Renaissance epics to argue against exclusively moral interpretations and to demonstrate that Renaissance readers were less concerned than modern criticism has sometimes been with the coincidence of interpretation and authorial intention:

> what mattered extremely was the power of the work itself, which alone could induce a reader to be moved by it and to pay attention. Once the explicatory

> process had begun, the reader was involved for his own good, and it was immaterial (or only occasionally material) whether one reader's interpretations were the same as another's, or identical with the author's aims. (275)

The claim made by those who focus particularly on Sidney's moral concerns, that our mixed response to Astrophil and his situation inspires a self-corrective evaluation, finds an echo in Wallace's focus on the self-education which a Renaissance work is supposed to provoke in the reader. Nevertheless, his argument shifts attention from the precise nature of the lesson to be learned, to the preconditions for that learning process: the power of the text to move, and the reader's capacity for inference. Accordingly, Wallace contrasts the narrowness too often consequent on a strictly moral or thematic approach with the multiplicity of topics and directions in which he claims Renaissance critics delighted:

> However recondite some of the values...appear to be, the mind which finds these meanings "in" or "under" the fictions...is engaged in the same activity as the more cautious mind which rests content with a simpler moral analysis. (276)

Significantly, he treats Sidney's Defense as a key document which "encouraged the maximum activity for the reader's invention," (284) in its faith in the reader's capacity to draw inferences and to respond fully to the text's capacity to stimulate thought.

Wallace's general observations are clearly relevant to those recent studies which have focused rather on those ways in which Astrophil and Stella provokes thoughtful activity on the part of the reader than on the conclusions which Sidney may have intended the reader to draw from his text. Derived from an alternative response to Sidney as

"modern"--that is, as a precursor of developing tastes for an ironic questioning of conventional assumptions--such treatments do not deny the sequence's concern with virtue and desire, or the significance of that theme; in "The Rewriting of Petrarch," however, Waller points out that even if we see Astrophil as misguided, we enter into a debate with poems which thus demand performance rather than passivity from the reader. Warkentin is more emphatic in her rejection of a response which perceives only one side of Sidney's "truly dialectical, and fully ironic poetry." (1984; 30) In Astrophil and Stella, she argues, he uses certain features of the Petrarchan model--"the psychology, the virtually neoplatonic forms of idealization, and the meta-poetic stance" (29)--to modify radically the ethos of the mid-Tudor poetic voice, whose moral language shapes an orderly vision of the battle between reason and passion. Using an ironic route to escape the constraints imposed by that orderliness, Sidney is able to voice

> another kind of vision entirely, one which disrupts the firmly conceived moral universe of the mid-Tudor libello and plunges poet and reader into the conditional and problematic. (30)

Like Waller, then, Warkentin grants to the battle of virtue and desire a significant place in Astrophil and Stella, but emphasizes its role as one element in a complex texture--in her analysis the consequence of diverse literary traditions which intersect in Astrophil and Stella--which makes demands of the reader and which resists the formal resolution characteristic of works more limited in scope.

Attention to the complex demands which the sequence makes of its readers is occasionally a feature of those traditional readings which are most interested, not in the conclusions which Sidney wishes us to

draw from Astrophil and Stella as a moral tale, but in the distinctive and attractive qualities of Astrophil's voice, and in the impression of a complex personality which they create. Hamilton, for instance, attributes a good deal of sequence's interest to the various and competing aspects of this personality, pointing out that they are responsible for the dramatic changes to the fixed positions of the Petrarchan mode which we discover in Astrophil and Stella. Rudenstine in turn associates this interest, and the conviction of personality from which it derives, with a flexible response on the part of the reader. The charm, wit, and sophistication which Astrophil maintains throughout the sequence, he claims, are means by which Sidney refuses to let the reader be narrowly moral in his reaction to the work:

> The tone is always complex: Astrophil's witty persuasions to love are never those of a mere seducer; his crises de confiance (AS 47) are so self-conscious and so close to self-parody that they prevent us from invoking similarly stiff moral standards in order to judge him; and finally, his poetry always manages to persuade us of his strong, perfectly human love...Sidney forces us to be more supple, and he never allows us to forget that many of Astrophil's own tactics are provoked by Stella's superficiality. (246)

For Nichols, who also warns against adopting a more moral outlook than the poems themselves invite, its implicit request that we remain sensitive to its nuances makes Astrophil and Stella a compliment to any reader.

Central to such studies is the way in which Sidney is able to use "a character in a love story" (Young, 7) to break through the constraints of an inherited tradition; the dramatic force which he achieves is held to distinguish Astrophil and Stella from other sonnet

sequences. According to this view of Sidney as a "modern," the opening sonnet offers "a manifesto of sincerity, an eloquent rejection of anything but the strictest devotion to honest feeling," (Spencer, 269) and the sequence's dramatic element emerges from the "defeat of expectations" (Kalstone, 29) which his familiarity with conventional responses to love has shaped in Astrophil. He is defined as a wholly created character distinct from the figure of the historical poet, yet superior to the fictional lovers of other sonnet sequences because of Sidney's capacity to convey the "felt reality' of his experience. Analysis of this capacity focuses on the sequence's dramatic and verbal elements. Young claims, for example, that Sidney invokes the larger world of sonnet 14's "friend" to effect "a shift from the conventionally insulated point of view of the lover to one...that is expressed...by a dramatic character who is independent of Astrophil," (43) and ultimately to intensify the reader's conviction of the protagonist's "real" presence and the seriousness of his concerns. To Rudenstine, Stella serves something of the same dramatic purpose: while moral interpretations of the sequence frequently point to her fixed resistance as a standard of virtue by which to measure Astrophil, Rudenstine claims that she ends by retreating to the safer world of courtly values and the noncommital dalliance of the game, so that Astrophil's depth of feeling is emphasized and his "triumph over courtliness is underlined by the comparison." (269)

Despite the tendency in such studies to see the biographical allusions of Astrophil and Stella and its other suggestions of a specific historical context as serving largely dramatic rather than

autobiographical purposes, their treatment of Astrophil's wit and characteristic style often stresses features which bring the protagonist into close proximity with the figure of his creator. Rudenstine is particularly impressed with Sidney's ability

> to express with marvellous fidelity the witty maneuvers of a mind doing battle with itself. Astrophil's self-consciousness, his defensive role-playing, his serious willingness to judge matters as they really are, and his persistent irony all emerge as aspects of a single, complex personality. (213)

The focus on faithful representation suggests the success of Daniel in rendering a plausible and consistent fictional personality with more provocative dimensions and a more life-like quality than the simpler lovers of Smith's or Lodge's sequences, but those features which define Astrophil's complexity also serve to blur the boundary which has, in works like Delia, Chloris, and Phillis, distinguished the character of the lover from the figure of his creator. If, as Rudenstine's analysis of Astrophil's tone would have it, many of his tactics are "provoked by Stella's superficiality," (246) suggesting the protagonist's immersion in fictional circumstances controlled by the historical poet, it is also true that his self-consciousness, his capacity to probe beyond appearances, and his control over the sequence's witty inversions suggest an awareness sufficiently detached and encompassing to invite identification with Sidney's.

Indeed, Rudenstine's comparison of Astrophil's style to that of various characters in the Arcadia, to that of Sidney as the narrator of the Arcadia, and to that of the Elizabethan courtier implies just such an identification, and so contradicts his view of the protagonist as a

fictional character. In the first place, it anticipates Warkentin's argument that Sidney's prior experience with the exploitation of dramatic voice makes him capable, in Astrophil and Stella, of transmuting static moral values into "an image where real and ideal can actively engage with each other: an image of the heroic task" (1984; 31) in which both protagonist and historical poet seem to be involved. Secondly, that Astrophil's voice takes on certain characteristics of the Arcadia's narrative voice suggests that he shares as well a degree of detachment from, and hence the possibility of control over, the work's material. This suggestion is reinforced by Rudenstine's analysis of Astrophil's courtly style as a means of expressing and controlling tension, in a poem like Astrophil and Stella 47:

> its irony is a constant reminder of Astrophil's self-knowledge and self-consciousness, and these qualities assure us that, when other forms of control fail, intelligence at least remains. (180)

In such a sonnet, he claims, Astrophil makes himself the object of wit in order to present and deal with an otherwise intolerable situation, duplicating the solution on which Sidney himself relied in the Old Arcadia, to

> convert potentially serious material into a source of comedy...and to suggest that a sophisticated response to the dilemmas of love is perhaps the only final means of exerting some control over them. (181)

The capacity to reconcile himself to an unresolved situation by means of wit, intelligence, and a self-consciousness which "separates him decisively from the heroes of Arcadia" (181) thus implicitly identifies Astrophil, at certain points in the sequence, with what Rudenstine argues are the rhetorical strategies and attitudes of the historical

Sidney. The point is not to enter into debate on Sidney's techniques in the Arcadia, but to recognize the extent to which Rudenstine's analysis of Astrophil's complex personality and distinctive voice commits him to a reading which suggests, despite his argument for Astrophil's fictional status, that the two figures share certain characteristics and stand in close proximity.

Similarly, while Young's analysis of the sequence's development pays attention to inadvertent revelations, dependent on distance between Astrophil, on the one hand, and Sidney and the reader, on the other, it also acknowledges how his fictional status in certain poems is played off against a manner that elsewhere identifies poet and speaker in their rhetorical stance. The two points of view, he argues,

> are presented as extreme limits of a continuous scale, poles between which the lover moves, the "life" he so confidently expresses generated by a dynamic relation to both...Sidney has exploited the technical problem, the poetic relation to manner and matter, as the chief means of presenting the dramatic problem, the relation of lady and lover. Midway between the two areas is the Janus-like figure of the poet-lover looking in both directions: within the dramatic context toward the lady and beyond it to the reader. (9)

This claim suggests a more open-ended process of discovery and definition, involving poet, lover, and reader in a shifting and stimulating set of relations, than does the "effect of permanence" (88) with which Young believes Astrophil and Stella to conclude. The process is inevitably difficult to define, in a sequence whose protagonist is characterized in part by his self-conscious adoption of roles and his capacity for self-dramatization. Rudenstine argues that the role of naive lover or plain-spoken poet are artful strategies, convenient means

to distinguish Astrophil from other courtiers in his effort to persuade Stella to love, and hence consistent with the presentation of a wholly created character, plausibly motivated by the circumstances of his fictional milieu and by the nature of his temperament. Ultimately, the fact that Astrophil must face up to the consequences of his witty solutions to emotional dilemmas, or of the "antic disposition" of varying postures and styles he puts on after sonnet 40, determines for Rudenstine his fictional status.

Lanham, on the other hand, raises a critical problem inherent in discussions of Astrophil's role-playing when he claims that such posturing, once acknowledged, admits of no natural limitation, and thus prevents the reader's discovering an artistic pattern within the series of shifting roles. If Astrophil is clearly "acting" at one point, that is, so he may be at any other, and Lanham accordingly counters attempts to identify a master persona with the argument that Astrophil and Stella is "a vehicle of direct courtship" (108) whose "essential cause...is [the] sexual frustration" (102) shared by poet and speaker, figures he thus identifies throughout his analysis of the work's efforts to persuade. That the narrowly biographical approach limits the interest of Astrophil and Stella is a consequence Lanham accepts,[4] but most readers would be unwilling to concede the point, and in fact the retreat from a bewildering profusion of roles to a consistent identification of Sidney and Astrophil is unnecessary, even granting the validity of the critical problem Lanham raises. Instead, the interconnection of technical and dramatic problems which Young defines can provide the basis for an analysis of Astrophil's roles that accommodates his

shifting stance and takes into account the different relations around which Astrophil and Stella revolves: the relation of Astrophil as poet-speaker, closely identified with the figure of his creator, to the work's larger audience of readers, and his relation as fictional lover, a character created by and at some distance from Sidney, to Stella.

This interconnection is pursued in Miller's study of Astrophil and Stella's treatment of language, a thematic concern which brings Sidney's poetic preoccupations to the surface of the sequence. The premise of active readers which underlies the Defence's claims for the superiority of poetry over philosophy and history, she argues, also raises the problem of the artist's control over the response to which his work moves the reader; "The very thing that proves poetry's superiority and constitutes its power and purpose is the same thing that can subvert its ends" (1984; 99) by leaving open the possibility of bad readers and false interpretations. Directly related to Astrophil and Stella's treatment of difficulties in communicating truth, especially in a competitive courtly context "Where truth it selfe must speake like flatterie," (AS 35) this issue exerts on the relation of love and lady within the text the pressure of the historical poet's own concerns. Ferry too notes the predominance of these concerns:

> The fact that the sequence focuses in its opening, and for the first time in English poetry, on the lover's struggle to write truly about what is in his heart, that it expands so often on this preoccupation, and that so many uses of language are employed to similar ends in its elaboration, make convincing evidence that Sidney's deepest concerns are involved in this struggle. (149)

Poems which address these concerns, however, may do so either directly or indirectly: that is, Astrophil may impress the reader as sharing

Sidney's awareness of the complex issues involved, or function as a fictional character whose limited control over responses to his words dramatizes the problem. (At the same time, his rhetorical goal of persuading Stella to love, like the poet-speaker's concern for his reputation, sharpens a sense of the issue's importance.)

Typically, Astrophil as fictional lover proclaims his honest directness of expression, arguing that eloquent praise of Stella is a matter merely of "Copying...what in her Nature writes." (AS 3) His advice to those who seek elaborate means of praise--"Stella behold, and then begin to endite" (AS 15)--suggests that he, like the fictional lovers of Smith, Lodge, and Fletcher, conceives of poetic expression as a means of representation in which conscious skill plays little part:

> ...nothing from my wit or will doth flow,
> Since all my words thy beauty doth endite,
> And love doth hold my hand, and makes me write.
> (AS 90)

He is more reluctant, though equally direct, in expressing his own feelings; like that of the conventional lover, Astrophil's "trembling voice brings forth that I do Stella love," (AS 6) and he "quake[s]" (AS 54) to say he loves. Despite the confusing effect of her presence, which "Doth make my heart give to my tongue the lie," (AS 46) nevertheless "my heart compeld my mouth to say," (AS 80) and the result is a verse about whose effect Astrophil is tentative and uncertain:

> Thus write I while I doubt to write, and wreake
> My harmes on Ink's poore losse, perhaps some find
> Stella's great powres, that so confuse my mind.
> (AS 34)

Hopes that his readers will discover Astrophil's intended meaning thus depend not on his own skill as poet, but on the lady's own power, to

which the lover's own susceptibility has made him sensitive and which he attempts merely to reflect in his verse.

Accordingly, Astrophil distinguishes his own writings from those which invite the "curious frame" (AS 28) of allegorical interpretation, and in fact subordinates their identity as writings to the quality of feeling which they are the means of conveying:

> With me those paines for God's sake do not take:
> I list not dig so deepe for brasen fame.
> When I say Stella, I do meane the same
> Princesse of Beautie, for whose only sake
> The raines of Love I love, though never slake,
> And joy therein, though Nations count it shame.
> I beg no subject to use eloquence,
> Nor in hid wayes to guide Philosophie:
> Looke at my hands for no such quintessence;
> But know that I in pure simplicitie,
> Breathe out the flames which burne within my heart,
> Love onely reading unto me this art. (28)

The final three lines are particularly evocative of the fictional lover's stance, as Astrophil merges reading and writing in a "pure," mirror-like coherence reflected in the lines' smooth flow, soft consonants, and simple diction. Nevertheless, as Nichols points out, lines 12 and 14 frame a comic touch in the veiled image of Astrophil as a fire-eating dragon, and the ironic gap which opens between his intended self-presentation and the reader's response embodies the lover's limited control. The image results, moreover, from his developing one of the most familiar of Petrarchan conceits, suggesting that--despite his protestations--love's impulses are not all that Astrophil has "read." In fact, he has earlier spoken of his familiarity with conventional responses to love in precisely these metaphoric terms: "those restlesse flames.../ Which others said did make their soules to

pine" (AS 16) have provided him with a measure of his earlier inexperience. The fact that sonnet 28 opens with concern for overingenious interpretations, finally, emphasizes Astrophil's inability to foresee all eventualities and thus to avert a reading of the final lines that is less simply approving than he has intended.

The impression conveyed in a poem like AS 28 is that Sidney stands apart from the figure of Astrophil and dramatizes, in the fictional character's limited understanding, problems of communication beyond those which Astrophil himself perceives. Elsewhere in the sequence, however, a more detached and humorous treatment of such difficulties implies the speaker's identification with the historical poet and his more encompassing perspective. Astrophil's depiction of himself as "great with child to speake, and helplesse in my throwes,/ Biting my trewand pen, beating my selfe for spite," (AS 1) refuses to take the lover's efforts to speak convincingly too seriously, and the comic impact of his self-presentation is echoed in the later assertion that "my thoughts in labour be." (AS 37) The association of poetic creativity with the processes of parturition recurs when Astrophil claims that aspirants to more worldly glory "seeke to nurse at fullest breasts of Fame," (AS 15) or criticizes those who employ ornament and imitation because they make "Of others' children changelings." (AS 28) What Astrophil seems to mock in such references is not so much techniques he identifies specifically (and which he uses in poems of his own) but rather a particular conception of poetic creation, one that views art as a direct and strenuous bodying-forth of the lover's own feelings or as a mirror-like reflection of the lady's excellencies.

When he speaks in the character of the fictional lover, it is clear that this view, by substituting an irresistible compulsion to write for conscious skill in creation, also tends to abdicate responsibility for the art produced; the verse is presented as bearing a closer relation to the lady who inspires him than to the lover himself, and the possibility of others' mistaking this relation may partially account for the reluctance already noted:

> ...the fulnesse of my thoughts of thee
> Cannot be staid within my panting breast,
> But they do swell and struggle forth of me,
> Till that in words thy figure be exprest. (AS 50)

Astrophil's capacity in other poems to shift his stance and present this view humorously distinguishes him from the more naive lovers of the minor sequences, who remain constant in their subordination of poetry-writing to love-making throughout. They would seem, in fact, perfect types of his satiric intent in sonnet 6, were it not that the poem's irony is at least partially self-directed:

> To some a sweetest plaint, a sweetest stile affords,
> While teares powre out his inke, and sighs breathe out his words:
> His paper, pale dispaire, and paine his pen doth move.

Astrophil's technique in such a poem manifests both his greater artistic sophistication than the naive lovers of the minor sequences and his controlled detachment: alliteration and repetition echo the verbal devices of the conventional complaint, while the greater length of the second line embodies the languishing effect Astrophil is mocking. Ferry points out, as well, that grammatical ambiguity in the last of these lines leaves unclear whether the lover is motivated by the power of his

emotion or by the desire to write (which thus "moves" him to a sense of despair and pain as appropriate topics). Thus an additional effect of Astrophil's identity as a poet, and particularly as a poet who operates in the competitive milieu created in Astrophil and Stella, is to endow him with a sharp satiric tendency enhanced by his capacity for self-parody, and to impress the reader with a sense of his detachment from, and degree of control over, a situation he has elsewhere described (as Parthenophil does his) as "this dungeon darke,/ Where rigrows exile lockes up all my sense" (AS 104) and "this darke fornace." (AS 108)

Even when Astrophil demonstrates sensitivity to the issue of audience response, then, his role as poet has dual potentialities, both of which Sidney exploits over the course of Astrophil and Stella. The same is true of the other two roles in which we can parallel the technical problems inherent in the creative process and the dramatic problems posed by the course of the fictional courtship: the roles of reader and text. The use of these terms to examine the interconnection of technical and dramatic problems and Astrophil's shifting stance is justified by the sequence's remarkable concern with literacy, which underlies a number of its motifs and which sharpens our sense of the search for self-knowledge and a deeper understanding in general in which Astrophil's pursuit of Stella involves him. Astrophil and Stella 11, for instance, compares the playful proceedings of Cupid to the reading methods of a child

> ...that some faire booke doth finde,
> With guilded leaves of colourd Velume playes,
> Or at the most on some fine picture stayes,
> But never heedes the fruite of writer's mind.[5]

The sonnet's development implicitly contrasts Cupid's "Playing and

shining in each outward part" to the speaker's goal--understanding Stella's heart and mind, or the inward part--and thus implies one of the sequence's continuing metaphors, that she is a kind of "text" from which Astrophil has "a lesson new...speld." (AS 16) Like the "art" read to him by Love in sonnet 28, this lesson is a matter of experience, in ostensible contrast to Astrophil's learning from that "Which others said," (AS 16) or his familiarity with conventional attitudes to love and to writing. As reader, he may attempt to probe and discover, duplicating within the text his creator's use of the genre as a vehicle for exploration and demonstrating a sensitivity to the nuances of reading which parallels his consciousness elsewhere of audience response to his own work. Astrophil's advice to Cupid, who has been content to "play" with Stella's surface beauties and to "straight look...babies in her eyes," (AS 11) defines by indirection an ideal of active reading and the possibility of discovering a deeper meaning "in Nature's cabinet." (AS 11) Stella's resistance to Astrophil's suit, the fact that "her heart is such a Citadell,/ So fortified with wit, stor'd with disdaine,/ That to win it, is all the skill and paine," (AS 12) is thus illuminated by the implication that she represents a challenge to interpretation. This implication is evident as well when Astrophil redirects attention to her beauty as an emblem of what lies within:

> ...Vertue thus...[Love's]...title doth disprove,
> That Stella (o deare name) that Stella is
> That vertuous soule, sure heire of heav'nly
> blisse:
> Not this faire outside, which our hearts doth move.
> (AS 52)

> Who will in fairest booke of Nature know,
> How Vertue may best lodg'd in beautie be,
> Let him but learne of Love to reade in thee,
> Stella, those faire lines, which true goodnesse show.
> (AS 71)

Significantly, both sonnets end with the witty reassertion of desire, which argues "That Vertue but that body graunt to us" (AS 52) or contrasts the operation of her "inward sunne," which moves to virtue, to the lover's urgent desire for "'some food'." (AS 71) Allegorical treatment of Stella's beauty as symbol of virtue and goodness, in other words, is rarely allowed to remain static; instead, it interacts provocatively with a sense of Stella's actuality and that of the lover, to imply the extent to which Astrophil's perception is shaped by his own desires and becomes a complex and active, rather than a passively receptive, process of "reading."

A sensitive reading of his text may involve Astrophil in self-discovery, as for instance in sonnet 67, where Astrophil recognizes that hope may "flatter me" in its translation of "Her eye-speech" and its interpretation of "blushing notes...in margine." Astrophil ends this analysis of his motives in reading by resolving "[hope's] errour to maintaine,/ Rather than by more truth to get more paine," (67) yet the word "truth" has here an ambiguity suitable to the complexity of his response: Astrophil is determined to persist in possible error, yet his resolution is informed by a striking self-awareness, an understanding of the forces which shape his perception. Miller argues that Astrophil's adoption of the reader's role in this sonnet "rounds out...[Sidney's]...insight into the writer's dilemma" (106) and thus enables him fully

> to figure forth his own unresolved uneasiness about the complicated relations between readers and writers--the way they can use and abuse each other, and the challenge to the efficacy of words this demonstrates--as Astrophil and Stella alternate roles as writers and readers of their own and each others' texts. (1984; 106)

Because Stella is involved in the implied action of the sequence, in other words, Astrophil must confront the question of audience response not only through his role as poet, but as well from the perspective of the audience.

The most striking instance of this confrontation occurs when Stella reads back to Astrophil words he has written for her:

> Doubt there hath bene, when with his golden chaine
> The Oratour so farre men's harts doth bind,
> That no pace else their guided steps can find,
> But as he them more short or slacke doth raine,
> Whether with words this soveraignty he gaine,
> Cloth'd with fine tropes, with strongest reasons lin'd,
> Or else pronouncing grace, wherewith his mind
> Prints his owne lively forme in rudest braine.
> Now judge by this: in piercing phrases late,
> Th'anatomy of all my woes I wrate,
> Stella's sweete breath the same to me did reed.
> O voice, o face, maugre my speeche's might,
> Which wooed wo, most ravishing delight
> Even those sad words even in sad me did breed. (AS 58)[6]

The traditional debate over the sources of rhetorical efficacy gains a new relevance through his discovery that "Stella's sweete breath" has such superior power over his own "piercing phrases" and their intended effect. At the same time, Astrophil's insight is associated with a controlled detachment from the emotional state described in this sonnet, the "breed[ing]" of "most ravishing delight"; the careful correspondence of the sonnet's central division into octave and sestet with the general debate and the illustrative example, respectively, is drawn to the attention of the sequence's reader by the confident directive, "Now judge by this," which opens line 9. Although the sonnet provides one of several accounts of Stella's superior rhetorical skill, then, the reader is impressed less with the speaker's susceptibility

than with his shaping of the episode into a complimentary mode self-consciously presented to his larger audience. Astrophil's sensitivity to Stella's speech is thus fulfilled in his directing the account to an audience expected to be similarly active in its response.

On the other hand, Astrophil may like the fictional lover of the minor sequences regard his "reading" as a more passive operation: in such sonnets, the lady generates and controls the impression received and Astrophil is left vulnerable to her absence, which prevents him from "read[ing] those letters faire of blisse,/ Which in her face teach vertue," (AS 56) or to any "change of lookes." (AS 86) The equal weight he assigns to each cause outlined in sonnet 86--his own "chang'd desert," his status as "your slave," or the inevitability of "torments" to the lover--implies a confused or limited understanding, and uneasily mingles submissive acquiescence to his "sweet Judge" with the protestation that "In justice paines come not till faultes do come." Ferry argues that in this poem, the reader perceives more than does Astrophil, and that

> The vehicle of deception is the metaphor of the lover as slave, pushed here to bare ugly facts which nevertheless do not fully account for what is in his heart. (149)

Astrophil's self-deception is fully exposed, she claims, when he calls his bondage "hell" in the final line.

The interplay of three sonnets concerned with Stella's blushes suggests something of the freedom with which interpretation can play on the "text" of the beloved, and the ambiguity of Astrophil's stance in the role of reader. In the first, the effect of Stella's presence on his performance stands in wry contrast to the courtly nymphs'

objections, immediately following, that he fails to "use set colours for to weare,/ Nor nourish speciall lockes of vowed haire,/ Nor give each speech a full point of a grone." (AS 54) The disintegration or disunity of the lover's forces demonstrated in sonnet 53 is, in fact, as conventional a motif as the formal signs of devotion for which the nymphs look, and the poem makes clear his susceptibility to Stella's power:

> In Martiall sports I had my cunning tride,
> And yet to breake more staves did me addresse:
> While with the people's shouts I must confesse,
> Youth, lucke, and praise, even fild my veines with pride.
> When Cupid, having me his slave descride
> In Marse's liverie, prauncing in the presse:
> 'What now sir foole,' said he, 'I would no lesse,
> Looke here, I say.' I look'd, and Stella spide,
> Who hard by made a window send forth light.
> My heart then quak'd, then dazled were mine eyes,
> One hand forgott to rule, th'other to fight.
> Nor trumpets' sound I heard, nor friendly cries;
> My foe came on, and beat the aire for me,
> Till that her blush taught me my shame to see (AS 53)

The poem stands in striking contrast, moreover, to Astrophil's successful integration of skills in the tournament of sonnet 41 ("Having this day my horse, my hand, my launce,/ Guided so well"), in which "the prize" bestowed on Astrophil is paralleled by Stella's approval: "Stella lookt on, and from her heavenly face/ Sent forth the beames, which made so faire my race." In sonnet 53, his response to public approval stands in need of correction by his teacher, Stella, as the "Martiall sports" of the tournament are succeeded by the battle of Cupid and Mars for the speaker's allegiance.

While the confession of shame is easily learned in sonnet 53, Astrophil responds to Stella's later blush with a note of doubt about

the validity of his interpretation:

> Or do I see some cause a hope to feede,
> Or doth the tedious burd'n of long wo
> In weakened minds, quicke apprehending breed,
> Of everie image, which may comfort show?
> ...
> And yet amid all feares a hope there is
> Stolne to my heart, since last faire night, nay day,
> Stella's eyes sent to me the beames of blisse,
> Looking on me, while I lookt other way:
> But when mine eyes backe to their heav'n did move,
> They fled with blush, which guiltie seem'd of
> love. (AS 66)

The poem's diction provokes from the beginning an ambiguous sense of Astrophil as lover, whose desires hope to "feede," and as poet, conscious of the mind's image-making capacity which here threatens his ability to understand his situation. This dual sense of the speaker is stressed by line 10's conversion of the literal night into the metaphoric day of Stella's gaze. The apparent correction, like the poem's situation in general, recalls such earlier episodes as Astrophil's missing a sight of Stella when, "wrapt in a most infernall night," he "could not by rising Morne foresee/ How faire a day was neare" (AS 33); the wish that "I had bene more foolish or more wise" which ends the sonnet creates the poles of naive self-deception and over-sophistication which might produce a mis-reading here.

The final incident, by contrast, is unequivocally sun-lit, expressed in a more confident tone, and places Stella herself at the centre of a public context as Astrophil has been in sonnet 53. Addressed to the Thames, the poem plays with an obvious poetic delight and lover-like devotion on the scene it interprets, and so reconciles the senses of the speaker as lover and as poet which have been in conflict in Astrophil and Stella 66:

> O happie Tems, that didst my Stella beare,
> I saw thy selfe with many a smiling line
> Upon thy cheerefull face, joye's livery weare:
> While those faire planets on thy streames did shine.
> The bote for joy could not to daunce forbeare,
> While wanton winds with beauties so devine
> Ravisht, staid not, till in her golden haire
> They did themselves (o sweetest prison) twine.
> And fain those AEols' youthes there would their stay
> Have made, but forst by Nature still to flie,
> First did with puffing kisse those lockes display:
> She so discheveld, blusht; from window I
> With sight thereof cride out; o faire disgrace,
> Let honor' selfe to thee graunt highest place. (AS 103)

With his distanced perspective on the text-like scene, Astrophil here achieves the imaginative freedom which has been granted intermittently in the nocturnal sonnets, and with it full control over the situation. Stella is discomfited by the public context of her dishevelment even as the speaker's allegorical treatment converts her shame into a "faire disgrace," thus redeeming her honour as she has his in sonnet 53, and converting her experience into an artful construct as, in 57 where by singing his plaints, she "So sweets my paines, that my paines me rejoyce."

The public context of sonnets like AS 41, 53, and 103 reminds the reader of the extent to which Astrophil is himself a "text" offered for the entertainment and understanding of Stella, the courtly wits, and the reader. A number of sonnets sharpen this sense by conveying Astrophil's own recognition of himself in this guise. The procedure of "Reason's audite" in sonnet 18 or the glances in "his unflattring glasse" (AS 27) which Astrophil claims keep him from pride suggest that he is capable of a cool, detached self-evaluation; the former also evokes a sense of the

historical Sidney standing behind the figure of his speaker by its mention of Astrophil's "birthright" and its wry awareness that "my knowledge brings forth toyes."[7] A similar self-consciousness is reflected as well in his awareness that "mine owne writings like bad servants show/ My wits, quicke in vaine thoughts, in vertue lame," (AS 21) an awareness distinct from the specifically poetic self-consciousness which has led Astrophil earlier to consider his "feeling skill" (AS 2) or capacity to move an audience by rhetorical means. Yet degrees of awareness--and hence a shifting stance--are relevant to this role as to those of poet and reader. At times, Astrophil's self-presentation sinks to an apparently unwitting bathos, as in sonnet 94's address to grief, which "growest more wretched then thy nature beares,/ By being placed in such a wretch as I"; significantly, the poem develops from an initial sense of obscurity and confusion, in which "inbent eyes/ Can scarce discerne the shape of mine owne paine." Elsewhere, however, Astrophil plays wittily on the notion that he is a "speaking picture" interpreted by those around him:

> Envious wits what hath bene mine offence,
> That with such poysonous care my lookes you marke,
> That to each word, nay sigh of mine you harke,
> ...
> Your morall notes straight my hid meanings teare
> From out my ribs, and puffing prove that I
> Do Stella love. Fooles, who doth it deny? (AS 104)

In one respect, like sonnet 28 in its rejection of allegorical interpretation, the poem light-heartedly parodies Astrophil's own efforts to discover "That inward sunne" which shines forth from Stella's eyes, and thus to understand "How vertue may best lodg'd in beautie be," (AS 71) by disclosing a self-evident simplicity at the heart of an

apparent mystery. Yet just as the conclusion that Stella, "not content to be Perfection's heire,/ Thy selfe, doest strive all minds that way to move" (AS 71) fails to resolve the conflict between virtue and desire to which she moves Astrophil himself, so the confident and straightforward assertion that "My words I know do well set forth my mind" (AS 44) only temporarily reconciles the ambiguity of self-presentation which we perceive over the course of Astrophil and Stella.

The paradigm of poet, reader, and text thus functions in several ways. Most obviously, perhaps, the extent to which the language and thematic concerns of Astrophil and Stella invite the reader to envision Astrophil in each of these roles focuses our attention on the intersection of technical and dramatic problems, and thus on the complex relation of the historical poet's concerns and experience to the fictional courtship Astrophil conducts. Secondly, the paradigm suggests that the speaker occupies rhetorical positions in which he is identified closely with Sidney, as creator, with the reader engaged in the process of interpretation and response, and with the fictional elements of the sequence's "story," respectively. Even as these last two correspondences imply a shutting-down of the full self-consciousness and encompassing awareness which Astrophil shares with Sidney in the more limited perspective of the fictional character, however, the apparent simplicity of this pattern is complicated by Sidney's exploitation of dual potentialities in each of these three roles.

In consequence, Astrophil emerges as a poet-lover significantly different from the minor sequences' poet-speaker, interested in love as the "ground" of his invention and an appropriate spur to writing and

self-presentation, and from the entirely fictional character, whose motive in writing is rather a desire to demonstrate his love and his worth as a suitor than an inherent interest in poetic creation. Each activity is important in Astrophil and Stella, and the speaker's shifting rhetorical stance and varying degrees of awareness operate through the conjunction of poetry-writing and love-making to raise questions of perception and self-knowledge beyond the scope of the fictional lover and of little concern to the poet-speaker. The effect of such shifts is felt in an ambiguity which plays on both roles, and which encourages the reader to probe the questions raised. Astrophil and Stella 60, for instance, uses the words "place" and "ground" to evoke both the physical reality of the lover's environment and the rhetorical resources of one who calls himself, in that sonnet, "wit-beaten long by hardest Fate,/ So dull." A similar ambiguity is present in the third stanza of the fourth song--

> Better place no wit can find,
> Cupid's yoke to loose or bind:
> These sweet flowers on fine bed too,
> Us in their best language woo--

and Cotter comments that "even in what is considered the climax of the poem," Sidney "is practising wit" (185) by exploiting the rhetorical as well as the literal meanings of his words. Cotter concludes that "narrative is subordinated to the conscious fiction-making of the poet," (185) but it seems truer to the tenor of the sequence as a whole to argue, not for a subordination of narrative interest to a focus on the self-conscious poet, but for the significance of such passages in drawing together the dual aspects of Astrophil's role.

More often in the sequence, Sidney exploits the varied suggestions

of a word or motif in different sonnets, so that Astrophil's shift in stance from the poet's to the lover's perspective may occur between as well as within poems. Filled with references to writing (Ferry notes that one-fifth of the sonnets in Astrophil and Stella explicitly consider the matter of showing love in verse), the sequence also provides reminders of the activity as a physical process, reinforcing a sense of Astrophil as self-conscious poet: "My verie inke turnes straight to Stella's name," while "my words...my pen doth frame," (AS 19) he tells us, and later, "my pen the best it may/ Shall paint out joy, though but in blacke and white." (AS 70) The reader's attention is thus drawn to the physical object before him, the actual text, in appreciation of the poet's treatment of words' inadequacy to reflect the shades of human feeling. Astrophil's focus on the colour black elsewhere in the sequence, however, is symptomatic of his role as lover, "reading" the features of his lady; it is recurrent in description of Stella's eyes, and occasionally generates a metaphor which epitomizes the lover's submissivenes--"Of touch they are, and poor I am their straw." (AS 9) In turn, the literal and metaphoric senses both of the colour black and of the activity of writing are evoked simultaneously in the question "What inke is blacke inough to paint my wo?" (AS 93) or in the description of Love who, in Stella's fair skin, "makes his paper parfit white/ To write therein more fresh the story of delight." (AS 102) The effect of such sonnets is to suggest Astrophil's possible identification with the figure of his creator at the same time as he speaks directly from the experience of love, and the extent of his detached self-awareness remains ambiguous.

In his acknowledgement that "what we call Cupid's dart,/ An image is, which for ourselves we carve," (AS 5) Astrophil more straightforwardly demonstrates a capacity to observe with some detachment the operation of the imagination on the materials of human feeling and experience. His moving address to the moon in sonnet 31, on the other hand, depends on Astrophil's collapsing the initial sense of physical distance in a moment of "fellowship" which makes no overt comment on the process of personification; there is no indication that Astrophil is aware of the irony which resounds to the reader when he asks if "even in heav'nly place/ That busie archer his sharpe arrowes tries?" While Ferry argues that he "is deliberately trying to universalize his experience...as a means of organizing his lover's world and transcending the limitations of his personal despair," (50) the sonnet's strikingly personal interpretation of the moon's silent climb seems at the same time to emphasize these limitations, by suggesting that the lover envisions the world around him as a reflection of his own condition:

> Sure, if that long with Love acquainted eyes
> Can judge of Love, thou feel'st a Lover's case;
> I read it in thy lookes, thy languisht grace,
> To me that feeles the like, thy state descries.

To criticize Astrophil for a subjective reading would be premature, however, and the poem's intimate tone and vivid immediacy have an appeal which forestalls such judgment. As a result, the reader is sympathetically disposed towards, if not logically prepared for, the reversal which occurs in the final line:

> ...o Moone, tell me
> Is constant Love deem'd there but want of wit?
> Are Beauties there as proud as here they be?
> Do they above love to be lov'd, and yet

> Those Lovers scorne whom that Love doth possesse?
> Do they call Vertue there ungratefulnesse?

Instead of descending into pathos or intensifying into naive self-dramatization, as such an address might do if voiced by a figure like Lodge's Damon, the poem ends by offsetting Astrophil's sense of injustice at the treatment he has received with his tacit recognition, in the final question, of how thwarted desire has unjustly shaped his perception of Stella's behaviour.

Sonnet 31 thus evokes two states of awareness. For much of the poem, the impression of the lover's immersion in the experience of love predominates, the attempt to look beyond his condition resulting only in the discovery of an imagined identity with a celestial lover. Yet the final line's suggestion of a more encompassing and fully detached perspective, and of sensitivity to the nuances of perception and expression (which can transform virtue into ingratitude, as it has done slavery into praise in sonnet 2), develops without interruption from the "fellowship" more naively imagined in the preceding lines. Two conclusions can be drawn from Sidney's method in this poem, and both are relevant to Astrophil and Stella as a whole. In the first place, its surprising conclusion is typical of the way a number of the sequence's poems frustrate expectations aroused in earlier lines or reverse meaning to sustain until the end the demands they make upon the reader. Such techniques support Waller's argument that Sidney is wrestling with an inherited model of the reader's passivity, with a tradition in which the personality of the originating author is effaced, so that his seems to be the voice of a collective experience speaking:

> The poet is less the originator than the articulator

> of his culture's valorization of love...The poet offers his poems to an audience of sympathetic listeners less as a mirror of his own experiences than of theirs--or, at least, of his experience as paradigmatic of theirs. (25)

Astrophil and Stella, on the other hand, makes more obviously open-ended demands on its readers, exploiting the potential for renewed, changing, or even contradictory meanings particularly by its use of "a continual shift in viewpoint so that a text's meanings are necessarily kinetic and constantly metamorphosing." (30) A similar surprise occurs when the voice of personified desire suddenly interrupts sonnet 71's apparently serious development of the motif of self-improvement through love, effecting at once a witty reversal of what precedes, and so suggesting the speaker's identification with his creator's perspective, and an evocation of the dramatic force of real desire:

> So while thy beautie drawes the heart to love,
> As fast thy Vertue bends that love to good:
> 'But ah,' Desire still cries, 'give me some food.'

Sonnets like AS 31 and 71 thus illustrate how Sidney's manipulation of the reader's expectation of a coherent "story," in the structure of the sequence as a whole, is duplicated at the level of the individual poem.

Secondly, questions of awareness and self-deception raised in Astrophil's address to the moon are closely associated with his creation of fictions, and his shift in stance seems to imply that, while insight may result from such invention, it depends on a recognition that any plausible fiction represents but a partial truth. Astrophil is capable of self-directed irony, in other words, when he realizes that what he reads ostensibly in the moon's demeanour is in fact a self-generated text. The conclusions to be drawn from sonnet 71 remain more ambiguous,

as the sense of a personification invented for the entertainment of the reader, by a self-conscious poet in full control of the situation's comic potentiality, wrestles with the impression that Astrophil, immersed in his frustration, experiences desire as a force from outside, seizing control despite his familiarity with neo-Platonic doctrines of love. In this case, the idealistic vision of love as a mode of self-improvement is vanquished by a competing fiction of all-consuming desire.

Occasionally, when his apparent role as reader is transparently a device to generate the poet's invention, Astrophil is able to have it all ways--to reconcile alternative fictions rather than selecting one implicitly limited interpretation over another or leaving in tense ambiguity different attitudes to his experience. This is true, for instance, when he considers Nature's motives in colouring Stella's eyes black:

> Would she in beamie blacke, like painter wise,
> Frame daintiest lustre, mixt of shades and light?
> Or did she else that sober hue devise,
> In object best to knit and strength our sight,
> Least if no vaile those brave beames did disguise,
> They sun-like should more dazle then delight?
> Or would she her miraculous power show,
> That whereas blacke seemes Beautie's contrary,
> She even in blacke doth make all beauties flow?
> Both so and thus, she minding Love should be
> Placed ever there, gave him this mourning weed,
> To honour all their deaths, who for her bleed. (AS 7)

Astrophil's apparent probing of Nature's motives can accommodate alternative intentions to dazzle or disguise, by means of the final metaphor, because his strategy is persuasive and complimentary rather than exploratory; or more precisely, because what Astrophil is

exploring in sonnet 7 is rather the fertility of the motif and his capacity for generating complimentary fictions than the nature of the lady. The description of Nature as an artist interested in the reconciliation of contraries signifies throughout the conscious artfulness of his approach, and Astrophil's sophistication--the degree to which he shares the poet's consciousness--can be measured by contrasting the controlled versatility he displays here to the desire expressed by Fletcher's unnamed speaker for Licia to unveil herself.

When fuller understanding of what lies within is the goal, however, the invention of a fiction seems a necessary means of approaching the heart's inscrutability. Indeed, Astrophil's shifting guises over the course of the sequence--from attempts to "paint the blackest face of woe" (AS 1) to the apparently contradictory appreciation of a friend "who saw through all my maskes my wo" (AS 69)--convey the sense of self-scrutiny at times either abetted or obstructed by the inevitable fictionalizing of inner experience in Astrophil's desire to communicate, even to himself. The vocabulary and syntactical ambiguities responsible for conveying this effect are the focus of Ferry's argument that the sonnets of Astrophil and Stella, in addition to their "try[ing] out new approaches to the subject of writing poetry," are innovative in their efforts to "portray areas of inward experience and to explore their complexity." (135) She notes, for instance, that the multiple connotations of words like "paint," "show," and "guise" are exploited more often in Astrophil and Stella than in any sonnet sequence other than Shakespeare's. Together with its variety of styles and conjunction of parody with self-parody, she concludes, the sequence's diction

creates

> a speaker who adopts a voice we are not allowed to equate with his own. We are therefore made aware that...Astrophil has an identity behind a humble posture, without our knowing from these sonnets themselves whether that disguise is deliberate, or unavoidable by the very nature of poetry. The multiple possibilities of the vocabulary therefore measure the distance perceived by Sidney between form and substance in art, which for the love poet is the distance between outward expression and what is in the heart. (177)

Similarly, she argues, Astrophil's use of the definite article in describing "the blackest face of woe" (AS 1) or "the verie face of woe," (AS 45) instead of speaking of "my face," indicates the presentation of fictional categories. The sense of distance between the lover's inward state and outward appearance is emphasized, in the latter instance, by the adjectival phrase immediately following, "Painted in my beclowded stormie face," so that when Astrophil concludes by offering Stella "the tale of me," we sense a continuity of posture as well as the sudden adoption of the fictional mode which may best please her.

In sonnet 57, a similar sense of distance is felt when personified woe uses Astrophil as a slave, sending him to "find/ The thorowest words, fit for woe's selfe to grone"; almost co-conspirators, they hope to take Stella unaware and thus move her to pity with the same technique Astrophil contemplated in the opening sonnet, but it is an emotion emphatically distinguished from Astrophil himself which plans the strategy and seeks the appropriate stance and expression. The sense of disjunctions between his inner life and outward expression recurs when Astrophil recognizes sighs as his only "true friends.../ That do not leave your best friend at the worst," unlike desire which has betrayed

its vow to be "my mate-in-arms" or sorrow which perversely "Kils his owne children teares, finding that they/ By love were made apt to consort with me." (AS 95) Such disjunctions not only operate to impress the reader with a sense of Astrophil's strategic self-awareness, but as well to imply the depths of his self-division. An alliance of the two--that is, when Astrophil's self-division is associated with proximity to the figure of his creator, evoked primarily by the artful language he uses and its intimations of a tentative self-awareness--creates within the sonnets that "inward tuch" (AS 15) which Astrophil claims renders verse at once sincere yet rhetorically effective. In such cases, the sense of an identification between the two figures lends conviction to the words of a plausible and consistent speaker whose exact nature is no simpler for the reader than for the speaker himself to define and to understand completely.

The process by which identification lends conviction to the experience rendered is most obviously assisted by the sequence's familiar biographical allusions: the "Rich" sonnets, the use of the Devereux and Sidney coats-of-arms, in sonnets 13 and 65, and the reminders that "to my birth I owe,/ Nobler desires," (AS 21) a "nobler course, fit for my birth and mind." (AS 62) Along with sonnets that place Astrophil in a circle of courtly wits, considering however distractedly the topical issues raised in AS 30 or engaged in social rituals like the tournament of AS 41, they establish for him a specific context remarkably evocative of Sidney's own. Purcell notes, for example, how the declaration that "my verse best wits doth please" (AS 74) or the mention of "publike heed" (AS 84) of his praise of Stella

suggests the friendly competition in verse-writing that he traces in Sidney's and Greville's sonnets on similar topics and motifs. (422) Young argues that the allusion to the Sidney coat-of-arms in sonnet 65 operates to establish Astrophil-Sidney and his "kinne," true love, as distinct from the artificial, unfeeling world, and hence functions dramatically to develop the fiction; it is a

> means by which Sidney, the real historical figure, in a sense lends his reality to Astrophil, the dramatic character, as a kind of concrete "existential" value. The poem deals with contrasting modes of existence, and the identification, in this context, has a rhetorical function. It identifies Astrophil <u>with</u> Sidney, not <u>as</u> Sidney. (20)

Similarly, he maintains, in the allegorical context of sonnet 13, the identification of Stella with Penelope Devereux establishes the argument that the essential superiority of Astrophil's lady lies in her reality. In this case, then, the allusion allows Sidney to give an unusual force to the motif of surpassing common in the sonnet sequence as a genre. Ferry, on the other hand, notes that the features Astrophil shares with his creator distinguish him equally from Petrarch's poet-lover, who praises Laura to immortalize her, or from Wyatt's lovers, with their impassioned complaints, so that the identification of Astrophil with Sidney has a distinctly personal and actual, rather than strictly literary, quality:

> Astrophil is identified with Sidney, who is not a famous poet. He is a courtier who writes verse for the entertainment of a lady and their small group of courtly acquaintances, professing the kind of nonchalance towards his composition deemed suitable by Castiglione...He shows the same aristocratic disdain as Sidney's of an amateur for vulgar professional poets. (126)

Conflicting effects thus emerge from the proximity of the two figures:

on the one hand, it lends reality not only to the characterization of Astrophil and Stella themselves but as well to the sequence's depiction of their world, while on the other it pulls the reader back from the fictional world, and from the impression of Astrophil's immersion in that world, to the reality of the poet who writes for "entertainment."

Together with the sequence's attention to the creative process, Astrophil's ambiguous relation to the figure of his creator adds depth particularly to those poems which treat his sense of self-divison: conventional to the genre, such poems often have the effect in Astrophil and Stella not merely of defining the paradoxical feelings traditionally aroused by love ("Blist in my curse, and cursed in my blisse," the speaker calls himself in AS 60) but also of illuminating the speaker's efforts to understand himself. The internal debate of sonnet 34 provokes the argument, familiar in minor sequences which present a fictional lover, that it is harder to "smarte, and not to speake," than to "speake and not be hard." The debate ends with a dismissal of Astrophil's "foolish wit," since "with wit my wit is mard"; the wordplay implies that he feels his capacity for understanding hindered by a talent for mental agility and verbal ingenuity which has elsewhere enabled him to control a situation which might otherwise overwhelm a susceptible lover. The impression of Astrophil's immersion in the experience of love as he dismisses his wit is reinforced by the way sonnet 34 develops from the poem immediately preceding. Here, he berates himself for missing the sight of Stella:

> ...to my selfe my selfe did give the blow,
> While too much wit (forsooth) so troubled me,
> That I respects for both our sakes must show:
> And yet could not by rising Morne foresee

> How faire a day was neare, o punisht eyes,
> That I had been more foolish or more wise. (AS 33)

As Ferry points out, the regret which concludes sonnet 33 links Astrophil to the "curious wittes," "fooles, or over-wise," (AS 23) who have earlier debated whether his pensive appearance is the consequence of literary work, diplomacy, or ambition. The echo strengthens the impression that Astrophil's interpretation of his own motives and behaviour is closely associated with those frequent episodes in which others attempt to understand and judge him.

The question of how conscious self-presentation in a public context may shape Astrophil's attempts at detached self-evaluation in a more private mode is complicated by his diction, which recurrently implies an interpenetration of the two realms which have been kept strictly apart in the minor sequences. On the one hand, rejecting the "right healthful caustics" (AS 21) of his friends' "Rubarb words," (AS 14) Astrophil asserts the superior value of the personal sphere of love to any mode of public value, and sounds very similar in tone and attitude to the minor sequences' fictional lovers: "Let all the world with scorne recount my case,/ But do not will me from my Love to flie." (AS 64) Even as he rejects the assaults of public opinion on his personal integrity as a lover, on the other hand, the fact that it is Astrophil's own wit which advises a wiser silence--"'Art not ashamed to publish thy disease?'" (AS 34)--and which must be dismissed implies the cost of such exclusion. It is a cost, moreover, which he appears at several points in the sequence reluctant or unable to pay. As Jones and Stallybrass comment,

> Astrophil claims the world of love as a fine and private place, a privileged sphere from which the concerns of the courtiers can be recognized as

> trivial and finally banished. Yet this site is bounded and shaped by his reactions to the "foolish wits" and "harder Judges" who represent the demands of the public world...[and]...his revision of their interpretation is shaped as much by their guesses as by the self-image he attempts to project instead. (55)

Thus at times, Astrophil's attempts to separate the two realms reveals, by structure and phrasing, "his participation in...[the courtiers']...world and their ways of seeing," (56) preparing in such early poems as AS 23 for the active appropriation of the public world's perception and values in sonnet 69, "in which Astrophil's delight at Stella's conditional acceptance of him as a lover is conceived in the language of the court's hierarchies." (58)

Ferry similarly focuses on the ambiguous diction which complicates Astrophil's rejection of public opinion in sonnet 23, apparently an assertion of the lover's single-minded devotion:

> ...the race
> Of all my thoughts hath neither stop nor start,
> But only Stella's eyes and Stella's heart.

She argues that the word "race," like his aspiration "to highest place/ ...even unto Stella's grace" in sonnet 27, implicates Astrophil in the social climbing endemic to his social context. The association of aspiration in love with an ambitious "climing slipprie place" (AS 23) is in Astrophil and Stella a close one, and although the courtly wits are not entirely correct about Astrophil's preoccupations, neither are they so blinded to his state as he would suggest. One of the questions his wit poses in sonnet 34--"But will not wise men thinke thy wordes fond ware?"--reveals a sensitivity to words as a kind of verbal transaction, rather than the consequence simply of internal compulsion, and the idea

of a commerce of conversation is reinforced in Astrophil's series of questions to a friend at the end of the sequence, when Stella's absence makes him long for any news of her:

> Be your words made (good Sir) of Indian ware,
> That you allow me them by so small rate?
> Or do you cutted Spartanes imitate?
> Or do you meane my tender eares to spare,
> That to my questions you so totall are? (AS 92)

The metaphor is highlighted by the concluding command to "Say all, and all well sayd, still say the same," which emphasizes the quantity of words Astrophil desires from his listener, and by the implied contrast between the commercial rate of words and Stella's power "to sweeten my poore name," or to confer value on a word by simply speaking it. It evokes in turn the notion of buying credit in sonnet 35, where "long needy Fame/ Doth even grow rich, naming my Stella's name," and the pun reverberates particularly in the Rich sonnet 37 or in Astrophil's later allusion to "the only metall.../ Of Love, new-coind to help my beggary." (AS 62)

In all, such references imply the pervasiveness of Astrophil's awareness that his words have a cultural currency apart from his desire to persuade Stella to love, and correspondingly, that his admiration of Stella confers value on him. These paired implications complicate his exploitation of a public context as a means to play others' misinterpretations off against the revelation of a "real" or "true" self. The procedure corresponds to Astrophil's playing-off of ornate and artificial styles against the supposed simplicity of his own self-expression, so that what appears initially as a confessional mode may on further examination suggest conscious self-presentation. In

sonnet 4's address to Virtue, for instance, Astrophil assumes the stance of simple penitent, engaging in his willingness to acknowledge faults, but skillful in his depiction of Virtue as a harsh and unsympathetic taskmaster:

> If vaine love have my simple soule opprest,
> Leave what thou likest not, deal not thou with it.
> Thy scepter use in some old Catoe's brest;
> Churches or schooles are for thy seate more fit:
> I do confesse, pardon a fault confest,
> My mouth too tender is for thy hard bit.

The play on the word "seate" (of faith or learning, on the one hand, and of the horse as providing a seat for the rider, on the other) conveys a more lighthearted attitude than is first apparent in the moral connotations of "vaine" and "opprest." The effect is to hint that Astrophil's confession--"I do confesse, pardon a fault confest"--is too easily reached and balanced, as if the words themselves, unattached to any depth of feeling, will purchase him absolution. The concession of Virtue's point, however, has a further strategic function, as Astrophil subverts the workings of his conscience with a more encompassing perspective. He grants the validity of Virtue's argument, that is, only to shift the grounds of debate from the nature of his desire to the allegorical significance of Stella:

> I sweare, my heart such one shall shew to thee,
> That shrines in flesh so true a Deitie,
> That Vertue, thou thy selfe shall be in love. (AS 4)

Beyond its merging of the values of the lover's heart with those qualities he celebrates in the lady, the conclusion tacitly asserts his power of discernment and appreciation. Together, Astrophil and Stella stand as a "text" from which Virtue can learn a lesson of love, and while she seems to confer on him the rhetorical power often denied

Astrophil, in the guise of conventional lover, the poem ends as well with a subtle evocation of the poet's power to present himself and the lady effectively.

The same idea is present in sonnet 50's treatment of the literal text of praise with whose "weake proportion" Astrophil is dissatisfied. Nevertheless, he concludes this demonstration of his relative incapacity,

> And now my pen these lines had dashed quite,
> But that they stopt his furie from the same,
> Because their forefront bare sweet Stella's name.

After the conventional lament, the vivid immediacy of these final lines dramatically evokes the poet's efforts to write, while the self-conscious commentary invites the reader to join Astrophil in a more detached evaluation of what precedes. Parodying the special significance to the lover of the beloved's name, Astrophil reminds the reader of the poet's reluctance to destroy a creation as much the product of his imaginative powers and rhetorical skill as the reflection of Stella's beauty. The strength of his feeling about the process of writing and the work produced may be implied by the personification of both pen and lines, the latter barely rescued from violent destruction. At the same time, there is an emotional validity to Astrophil's satisfaction in capturing Stella's virtue and beauty in verse, as his desire for her enables him to possess in an imaginative sense a mistress otherwise elusive: while her heart is presented as Cupid's "roome,/ Where well he knowes, no man can come," (AS 43) his in turn becomes her "Temple," (AS 40) so that imaginative power makes him "Copartner of the riches of that sight." (AS 48)[8]

Astrophil's more public role as poet and his creative power in that guise are responsible as well for the veiled threat of a public exposure with which he attempts to control Stella's response: "O let not fooles in me thy workes reprove,/ And scorning say, 'See what it is to love.'" (AS 107) Reminders of this role are particularly striking when they occur in poems ostensibly spoken in isolation, infusing into the private mode of Astrophil's meditation, as into his dealings with Stella, a sense of the public experience which shapes his thoughts and personality. Even when Astrophil presents himself as isolated from those around him, in sonnet 27, diction suggests from the opening lines that his stance is but a pose:

> ...I oft in darke distracted guise,
> Seeme most alone in greatest companie,
> With dearth of words, or answers quite awrie,
> To them that would make speech of speech arise.

His sense of the lover's standing apart, because of his preoccupied and troubled condition, in other words, is subtly undercut by the connotations of "guise" and "Seeme," which suggest Astrophil's consciousness of his appearance in a public context. The nocturnal sonnets which exploit a variety of voices available to the sonnet-lover suggest that the element of self-creation implicit in presenting oneself to the world is continuous with the mental operations conducted in a literal solitude and in an effort to understand oneself. Significantly, they convert the nightly liberation of "that unbitted thought [which]/ Doth fall to stray," of "fancie's errour," (AS 38) into the discovery of "Stella's image," "livelier then else-where," (AS 39) and so superior to the riches of India that Morpheus, as poet and prophet in sonnet 32, is moved to steal from the humble lover. In several of these poems, then,

Astrophil seems to discover himself as poet-lover fully capable of determining the meaning of his experience and of conferring value on it.

The conjunction of insistence on the "clos'd-up sense" (AS 32) of physical sight, on eyes "Clos'd with their quivers in sleep's armory," (AS 99) with other poems which demonstrate the frailty of the lover's vision sets up the more positive development of Astrophil's imaginative capacity. In their encounters, Stella's use of "all sweete strategems sweete Arte can show" (AS 36) leaves Astrophil vulnerable, so that "through my long battred eyes,/ Whole armies of thy beauties entred in" (AS 36); his rather heavy-handed pursuit of the military metaphor and excessive repetition of "sweete" imply that Sidney, parodying the Petrarchan mode, allows the reader to see in Astrophil the inadequacies of the conventional lover's self-perception and understanding. Elsewhere, sight has become "Unhappie" and a "Dead glasse" (AS 105) through a series of accidents which, as in sonnet 33, have caused Astrophil to miss the sight of Stella:

> Curst be the page from whome the bad torch fell,
> Curst be the night which did your strife resist,
> Curst be the Cochman which did drive so fast,
> With no worse curse then absence makes me tast.
> (AS 105)

Physical sight, these poems imply, is dependent on a variety of other forces and thus an apt symbol of the lover's vulnerability, whereas at night, "With windowes ope then most my mind doth lie," (AS 99) and imaginative freedom may provoke a creative insight. The same possibility is present in the absence more conventionally mourned by the lover, but which Astrophil recognizes as an opportunity:

> My Orphan sence flies to the inward sight,
> Where memory sets foorth the beames of love.

> That where before hart loved and eyes did see,
> In hart both sight and love now coupled be;
> United powers make each the stronger prove. (AS 88)

Echoes in language and theme make this sonnet powerfully evoke the "copartnering" of lover and lady in the riches she embodies and he enshrines, and suggest his internalizing, as poet, the pursuit of harmonious union.[9]

The apparent paradox of vision in darkness and apart from the object of his eager sight is treated with a vivid immediacy in sonnet 38, as Astrophil is visited by a dream-vision of Stella:

> I start, looke, hearke, but what in closde up sence
> Was held, in opend sense it flies away,
> Leaving me nought but wailing eloquence:
> I, seeing better sights in sight's decay,
> Cald it anew, and wooed sleepe againe:
> But him her host that unkind guest had slaine.

There is humour as well as conviction in this self-portrait and in the presentation of Stella as an "unkind guest" who "slays" her lover's sleep. The rapidly changing rhythm of the sestet's first two lines captures the volatility of the speaker's response, yet the self-conscious commentary on his own "wailing eloquence" and the balanced play on "sight" suggest that Astrophil has a degree of detachment from his predicament. The interplay of imperfect physical sight and imaginative vision thus yields a moment of insight, in which the speaker is fully aware of his own condition and manages, without subduing his own wit, a subtle and controlled compliment to Stella's power.

Sonnet 40 is especially telling of the effects Sidney produces by exploiting a juxtaposition of private moments with a more detached

perspective indebted to Astrophil's sense of himself in a public context. The poem is "framed" by opening and closing lines in which we seem to overhear the private words of the solitary speaker, spoken casually, colloquially, and directly, "in his own person." "As good to write as for to lie and mone," he begins, at once setting a particular context for the sonnet's further development and infusing a conventional expression of the lover's sleeplessness and despair with a surprising force of personality. The lines following, initiated by direct address, imply Astrophil's specific rhetorical purpose of convincing "Stella deare" of her power over him and of persuading her to favour him. Their style contrasts that of the first line: the lover's exclamatory "O" and "alas" merge with an emphatically logical structure which develops the familiar motif of conquest and the personification of virtue, yet the assertion that his mind is "none of the basest" retains some sense of the more direct speaker with whom the sonnet began. In turn, the final three lines continue the logical structure of the conventional complaint and retain, by the "O" which opens the final line, something of its rhetorical tone, but build to an emphatically personal plea which strikes the reader as directly as has Astrophil's opening comment to himself:

> Since then thou hast so farre subdued me,
> That in my heart I offer still to thee,
> O do not let thy Temple be destroyed.

The effect is a complex one. Contrasts in tone and style at once convince the reader of Astrophil's sincerity and remind him of Astrophil's capacity both to appreciate the rhetorical context and to manipulate skillfully those strategies which will best suit his

purposes--here, the tribute to Stella's power, enhanced by imagistic development and the assertion that the mind she has conquered is not one easily won. Yet the effect of the final line, which seems to join the first in framing the poem's midsection by genuine personal feeling, has been produced by the same exclamatory and imagistic means as those used in the intervening lines, in which the reader is made aware of the conventional nature of Astrophil's material; it is not set off syntactically as the first has been, but instead concludes grammatically and logically the argument of lines 2 through 13.

Such ambiguity demonstrates the positive effects of Astrophil's refusal to settle into a fixed relation with the figure of his creator or a fixed rhetorical stance; he retains to the end of the sequence a capacity to surprise the reader with insight into his own situation, occasionally ensuing from what appears to be the conventional expression of the Petrarchan lover. To some extent, Sidney stands apart from the speaker he has created, and this distance allows him at times to undercut Astrophil, as for instance when Astrophil inadvertently reveals an ambitious motive despite his renunciation of the public world and its values. In such poems, as in those minor sequences which present the fictional character of the lover, the reader is permitted to see more than does the speaker, and understanding derives from the more encompassing perspective on the lover's limited awareness--in particular, his limited self-awareness--which the poet invites the reader to share with him. Elsewhere, Astrophil's more detached and ironic awareness of himself as lover parallels Sidney's perspective on the dramatic figure he has created, a parallel strikingly evoked in

sonnet 45's contrast of Stella's response to Astrophil's "disgrace" and her reaction to "a fable, which did show/ Of Lovers never knowne, a grievous case":

> Pitie thereof gate in her breast such place
> That, from that sea deriv'd, teares' spring did flow.
> Alas, if Fancy drawne by imag'd things,
> Though false, yet with free scope more grace doth breed
> Then servant's wracke, where new doubts honor brings;
> Then thinke my deare, that you in me do reed
> Of Lover's ruine some sad Tragedie:
> I am not I, pitie the tale of me.

As in sonnet 40, the complex effect of the poem's final three lines develops from an account very much in the rhetorical mode of the fictional lover: Astrophil's tone to the end of line 11 subtly conveyes some resentment of an apparent injustice (Stella does not pity his sorrow "though thereof the cause her selfe she know") in combination with a predominant grief emphasized by "Alas." Line 12, however, uses the more colloquial and intimate "my deare" to shift from general observations about Stella, referred to in the third person, to direct address and an altogether more confident tone, while his recommendation depends on that detached self-awareness which allows Astrophil the "free scope" of wit.

Yet Astrophil's words at the end of this sonnet also rely on an implied contrast between "the tale of me" and "a fable" marked by its distance from actuality: its lovers are unknown and it may be false. While "I am not I" in the fictive construct he imagines, nevertheless, it remains "the tale of me," and the simultaneous distance and proximity thus evoked define the relation of Sidney and Astrophil over the course of the lover's "tale" in Astrophil and Stella. As Deming argues,

"Astrophel's tale...is not the mirror image of Sidney's, but Sidney's self-reference is involved in the creation of Astrophel," (392) and the creation of a figure who demonstrates varying degrees of awareness, indicative of his shifting stance in relation to his creator and to the reader, results in the impression that the poems of Astrophil and Stella can be considered "as models of self-discovery and self-knowing and as models descriptive of gaining self-knowledge." (383) They not only present a speaker involved in a dynamic process of probing his own nature and the nature of his relation to others, that is, but also demand of the reader an energy equivalent to Astrophil's own in responding sensitively and fully to the intricacies of this process.

To rest instead with an identification of Sidney and Astrophil on biographical grounds, as Lanham recommends we do because of the difficulty of distinguishing between a "real" self and its multiple guises, thus offers consistency at the expense of the best intentions of the active reader, since that very difficulty is a central concern of the sequence. Moreover, to analyze Astrophil as consistently a poet-speaker of the type examined in Chapter 1 would be to over-emphasize those sonnets in which he speaks self-consciously in a competitive social environment and reveals his sensitivity to the usefulness of words and verse as a kind of public "ware," a means of creating and sustaining a particular public image of himself. As an analysis of Diana and The Passionate Centurie of Love demonstrates, a consistently public stance on the part of the speaker means that his primary rhetorical engagement is with the work's larger audience: the circle of courtly wits to whom he refers within the text and,

implicitly, the poems' readers in general. The ostensible subjects of the sequence--its amatory material--serves as the ground of the poet-speaker's invention, an opportunity to demonstrate his wit and poetic skill before an audience appreciative of these qualities, rather than as a felt emotional reality to be communicated.

Astrophil shares with Constable's and Watson's speakers a remarkably vivid social context, and one which, as in Diana and The Passionate Centurie, is so evocative of the historical poet's milieu as to suggest an identification of the speaker with the figure of his creator; this impression is reinforced by biographical allusions over the course of Astrophil and Stella. Yet while his subject gives Astrophil an opportunity to display wit and poetic skill, the element of self-presentation in those poems spoken from a public stance does not lead him to subordinate matter to manner, or to become insensitive to the emotional realities of the experience of love. In fact, the insensitivity with which critics have occasionally charged him--an intermittent refusal to grant Stella her full human reality--derives rather from that immersion in his experience and sense of distance from the lady which is characteristic of the fictional lover, a condition which limits his perspective on the lady and on himself. Self-deceived or simply incapable of perceiving the larger significance of his experience, such a wholly created character has, in the minor sequences, been the source of insight to the reader through the poet's manipulation of his fictional circumstances. In Astrophil and Stella, however, the public realm of the courtly poet and the private world of the Petrarchan lover come into fruitful collision, so that one penetrates the other,

and each is enriched. As he himself recognizes, Astrophil's muse "Tempers her words to trampling horses feet,/ More oft then to a chamber melodie" (AS 84): that is, it is attuned as sensitively to the active world of affairs and public life, in which "the Prince my service tries," (AS 23) or in which Astrophil describes an actual journey in sonnet 105, as to the more solitary imaginative world in which the motif of travel is developed in the allegorical picture of Love, "fled from his native place" to the cold embrace of "these North clymes" (AS 8) or of the sun's riding "In highest way of heav'n." (AS 22).

On the one hand, this interaction infuses with more direct feeling those elements which have led such recent critics as Marotti, McCoy, and Jones and Stallybrass to probe the role which Astrophil and Stella plays as a cultural document: its highlighting of a competitive milieu in which a desire for prestige and consciousness of frustrated ambition turn courtiers to the language and conventions of Petrarchan love poetry as an outlet for their feelings.[10] The genre thus serves as a vehicle for the sublimation and the expression of aspirations otherwise tightly controlled in the public world of the courtier. As noted in Chapter 1, Javitch identifies several of the features of the courtly style, as it moves from life into literature, as wit, flexibility, and artifice, and it is clear that Astrophil and his circle value these features as do Watson's speaker and the implied audience of The Passionate Centurie. There are differences, however, beyond Sidney's superior skill at versification. His speaker is aware, in the first place, that mere verbal ingenuity may "mar" understanding even as it enables the courtly wit to master a situation, and insight as well as successful persuasion,

either of Stella or of his larger audience, is Astrophil's goal over the course of the sequence. Secondly, his flexibility is provoked by response to a variety of audiences and situations, and so implies something of the diversity of human personality as well as calculated ploy to sustain interest and to enhance the value of the "entertainment" he provides. Such a flexible ability to adopt different attitudes and styles as the occasion demands, finally, is closely associated with Astrophil's awareness of the artifice inevitably involved in self-presentation; unlike Watson's or Constable's speakers, Astrophil's language and style repeatedly imply that he has an inner life apart from the public image he projects, and several sonnets invite the reader to consider the complex relation between the "real" self and the public image. This consideration may be shared with Astrophil, as for instance when he perceives himself to be misunderstood by those who observe him, and tacitly insists that there is more to his personality than may appear; it may, however, derive from those poems in which Astrophil inadvertently reveals that no simple contrast between the roles of courtier and lover will suffice to explain the complexities of his character and behaviour, as when he uses terms of public value to celebrate Stella and ostensibly to reject the public world.

On the other hand, the detached self-consciousness and wit which Astrophil displays in his more public stance enable him to treat his performance as lover with more perception than has been the case in those minor sequences which present the fictional character of the lover. Intermittently, that is, Astrophil shares with the figure of his creator a capacity to see his experience from outside and to manipulate

the materials of which it consists, constructing alternatively "some sad Tragedie" (AS 45) or "so sweet Comedie" (AS 51) of imaginative interaction with Stella. Yet he demonstrates in other sonnets the susceptibility and more limited awareness characteristic of the fictional lover. His movement between the two rhetorical poles of proximity to and distance from the historical poet enables Sidney to exploit fully the genre's potentiality as a vehicle for probing the inner life under the impetus of strong feeling. A significant aspect of this examination is the complex relation of sincerity and effective expression, explored in more depth in Astrophil and Stella than in the minor sequences because Astrophil shares Sidney's poetic concern with the communication of truth. Moreover, because sonnets which conduct such an examination play off against others in which Astrophil espouses the more naive view of the fictional lover--that expression of his feelings is the consequence of an internal compulsion associated with his urgent desire and admiration, rather than with the conscious shaping and image-making of the poet--the development of Astrophil and Stella presents the pursuit of love and self-knowledge which Deming describes as integral to the genre's significance for the period:

> the "object" which the love-poet desires to know and to love is himself in the fulness of his being and in the wholeness of his mind. He participates in a symbolically dialectical process of separation of self as object in order to overcome that separation and achieve a union of self with object. (385)

Astrophil's participation in this process is evident in several ways: in poems which treat the self-division brought about, as it is in other lovers, by conflicting feelings, and in his celebration of Stella, especially as she embodies an integrity and rhetorical effectiveness

which the devoted lover feels himself to lack.

Whereas the reader recognizes that the devotion of a fictional lover like the speaker of Licia or Delia represents aspiration towards his own best potentiality, the recognition is indirect; that is, we draw conclusions about his condition that the speaker himself, immersed in his fictional circumstances and distanced from the lady, does not articulate. Astrophil is distinctive in his active "unveiling" of the lady's significance--literally evoked in sonnet 22's description of her singularity among the ladies who meet the sun "with fanne's wel-shading grace,/ From that foe's wounds their tender skinnes to hide." That the value he discovers is equally indebted to Astrophil's "reading" as to Stella's own nature is emphasized in the poem's concluding lines:

> Stella alone with face unarmed marcht,
> Either to do like him, which open shone,
> Or carelesse of the wealth because her owne:
> Yet were the hid and meaner beauties parcht,
> Her daintiest bare went free; the cause was this,
> The Sunne which others burn'd, did her but kisse.

Like a number of other sonnets in the sequence, Astrophil and Stella 22 has multiple effects. In his association of Stella with the sun, Astrophil plays on a conventional motif, although the contrast between her open generosity and others' mean aridity adds depth to the compliment and makes it a particularly graceful one. The insistence on Stella's wealth as "her owne," however, stands in ironic relation to those poems which play on the name "Rich" and depend on the reader's response to the work's metacommunicative features; thus the lover's praise gains force and conviction by its gesture towards a more public context which Astrophil has shown himself capable of evaluating, and which he echoes by the scene set in sonnet 22. Astrophil's discovery of

Stella's meaning to him, then, depends on an integration of his roles as lover and as poet--roles between which he moves dynamically over the course of the sequence, and which occasionally cohere to provide a harmonious vision in which the lady's integrity and power is matched by his own.

Such coherence is intermittent, yet sufficiently frequent to create a sense of the goal towards which the speaker is moving in Astrophil and Stella. The sequence's failure to reach a resolution is, from this perspective, inevitable: if Astrophil's struggle embodies human efforts to achieve self-knowledge in a dialectical process involving both separation from the self and immersion in oneself under the pressure of a single, compelling experience, then no firm conclusion is possible. Our understanding of the process in which Astrophil is engaged is enhanced by biographical allusions and other means of suggesting an identity between speaker and historical poet, which imply behind the scenes of Astrophil's varying relations to himself a parallel set of relations between Sidney and Astrophil: Sidney presents a figure, in other words, who seems at different times to speak directly for him and to share in his encompassing awareness, or to stand apart from him, wholly created and vulnerable to his creator's ironic purposes. As Deming comments, the reader's goal

> is to realize that all the mirrors in the poem are potential windows to the eye of the poet's self...the critical goal is not to see something in the poem but to see whatever it is we are asked to see from within the poem. (398-99)

To achieve this goal, the reader must respond to Astrophil's shifting or ambiguous rhetorical stance, himself moving between the poles of

participation in Astrophil's self-conscious commentary on the action and on his own behaviour, and more detached evaluation of the occasional self-deception to which his more limited perspective in the role of lover makes him susceptible. Astrophil and Stella thus demands of the reader more sensitivity and an altogether more active role than has been the case in any of the minor sequences; it is a demand which is made again, although the stylistic features and tone of the sequences vary significantly, in Spenser's Amoretti.

CHAPTER 6

Although often contrasted to Astrophil and Stella, Spenser's Amoretti nevertheless exploits the tension between the two figures of poet and lover as does Sidney's work. Critical treatments which conclude that Spenser's is exclusively an art concerned to reconcile such oppositions as the sharp conflict of virtue and desire which troubles Astrophil, and which see the speaker's stance as entirely consistent within the Amoretti, have tended to ignore those aspects of the sequence which significantly retard its ostensibly smooth progression. Such recurrent motifs as effort and toil, for instance, while they apply equally to the speaker's activities in writing and wooing, serve to place these activities in competition as well as to coordinate them. The reader is thus made aware not only of the difficulty of the speaker's task, but also of the extent to which its conflicting requirements demand a Janus-like figure, pointing like the New Year of Amoretti 4 in two alternative directions: towards the historical poet from whom he derives, and whose presence in the sequence is implied by such devices as the self-referential sonnets, and towards the wholly created figure of the lover, who submits to the lady "The while her foote she in my necke doth place,/ And tread my life down in the lowly floure." (20)

The effects which the relation between these two figures produces are less often those of irony and ambiguity than they are in Sidney's Astrophil and Stella. Indeed, certain features of the Amoretti seem designed to emphasize the distance between the lover's degree of

awareness and that of the poet, rather than to blur the line between these two rhetorical poles. Spenser occasionally uses a hyperbolic development of conventional motifs, especially those which treat the cruelty of the lady, to stress the limitations of the lover's perspective, his immersion in the immediate experience of love, and his distance from the more encompassing awareness of the poet. Kellogg argues that such sonnets are too embarassing to imagine as derived from Spenser's actual experience, a reading otherwise suggested by the apparent coincidence of the Amoretti's composition with the historical poet's courtship and marriage. Yet the existence of poems which present a speaker "so abjectly enamored that his mistress could despise and disdain him with haughty cruelty for months on end" (Kellogg, 141) must be understood in terms of their relation to others which present the speaker not only as poet, but as author of The Faerie Queene. The distinctive nature of the Amoretti's self-referential sonnets, in other words, draws the reader's attention to the self-presentation of a specific historical figure--at the least, a partial fiction, but not necessarily the mythic character of the poet-lover shaped by literary tradition.[1] It is true, however, as Kellogg points out to distinguish the figure of the poet within the work from the historical Spenser, that it is the public role of this figure which is most emphatically developed, for the Amoretti poet-speaker is associated with a work consciously designed to illuminate certain moral truths and to celebrate an emblem of public value in the figure of Gloriana. The contrast between these self-referential sonnets and those which are spoken by the lover serves to sharpen the reader's understanding of the lover's

experience as changeable and susceptible to a variety of interpretations, while the implied presence of the poet offers a recurrent reminder of the author's capacity to shape such an experience into a coherent work of art. His response shaped by the interaction of these two figures, the reader is thus encouraged to identify with the lover's desire for his experience to yield up an illuminating truth.

At certain points in the Amoretti, the two figures move into closer proximity. Individual sonnets which blur the line between contrasting degrees of awareness provide the reader with ambivalent signals about the speaker's stance, dramatizing the extent to which doubt and uncertainty feature in the experience of love and drawing the reader into the speaker's efforts to achieve a fuller understanding. When such a movement occurs over a group of poems, the implied presence of the poet lends an illusion of reality to the figure of the lover; this effect is particularly pronounced when a closer relation of the two figures produces variations in the tone of the lover's expression. By these means, a sense of living value is contributed to the rhythms of the lover's experience, and his hesitations as well as his hopes assume a significant role in the development of the Amoretti's meaning.

Critical studies of the Amoretti, however, have almost unanimously defined its chief effects as those of harmony and synthesis, and have generally concluded that Spenser's is an art of reconciliation--whether the issues to be reconciled consist of contending attitudes to the pastoral as seductive otium or as a place of illumination (Bernard, 1980); of rivalry between the work's central figures over the possibility of artistic autonomy (J. Miller, 1979); or most commonly,

of the physical and spiritual aspects of love. It is generally agreed that the relationship of the Amoretti's protagonists reflects Spenser's concern to present a love which reconciles the body's demands with the aspirations of the spirit, which dissolves anxiety about tyranny and submission into an ideal reciprocity, and which is consecrated in the Epithalamion, whose speaker is at once poet and bridegroom. The impression of two distinct voices in the Amoretti, however, indicates the different experience which it presents and its different mode of presentation. In the Epithalamion, the value of the protagonists' love has been discovered, and that value is affirmed in the course of the poem by the triumphant Orphic voice of the poet-lover, and by the sacrament of marriage. In the Amoretti, on the other hand, a definition of the value of love is more tentatively approached, and the sequence intensifies the process of discovery in which the reader is engaged by presenting a speaker whose stance shifts between that of the lover--immersed in his experience, and alternatively doubtful of his perceptions or hyperbolic in praise and blame of the lady--and that of the poet whose insights into the lover's experience are anticipatory of its fulfillment. The shifting stance of the Amoretti's speaker is thus a central factor in emphasizing process and discovery over fixed form and meaning.

Those studies which view Spenser's art as primarily harmonious, synthetic, and reconciliatory argue that its stylistic features reflect a smooth narrative and thematic progression over the course of the sequence, a sense of gradual development supported by the Amoretti's calendrical framework and temporal references. Most recently, for

instance, Dasenbrook argues that the shape of the sequence is a primary factor in its critique of Petrarchan norms and exaltation of marriage as an agent of transcendence. Dasenbrook's study is unusual, though, in its argument that the Amoretti has never been properly appreciated and in its close analysis of the way sonnets like 10 and 67 challenge and dissolve Petrarchan topoi. A more apologetic tone to accounts of Spenser's achievement in the Amoretti has often been evident. This attitude is due in large part to the contrast between his melodious style and the more dramatic nature of expression in Sidney's Astrophil and Stella; it is the witty and ironic tendencies of the latter, evident as well in the work of the metaphysical poets, which have most fully engaged modern tastes in poetic style. Hunter argues most fully that Spenser's "poetic genius stood in direct opposition" (134) to the mode for which the Shakespearean sonnet is best adapted: a mode which highlights the figure of the persona by tension, antithesis, and paradox. He claims that this mode is most effective when analytic of received wisdom rather than synthetic of new vision, and so liable to exploit effects of dramatic reversal and opposition, culminating in the couplet's epigrammatic denouement. Although few have argued so strongly as this, the element of decorum evident in the Amoretti's style has seemed, to a number of commentators, a muted virtue by contrast with Sidney's more strikingly dramatic sonnets.

To some extent, then, the occasionally apologetic tone is the consequence of modern preferences for paradox, irony, and ambiguity over those stylistic features which Lever praises in the Amoretti. Acknowledging that Spenser's techniques deliberately weaken the sonnet's

capacity to suggest contrast, opposition, or logical relation, Lever nevertheless directs our attention approvingly to the sequence's apparently effortless poise:

> [Spenser's] interlacing rhyme schemes knit the whole sequence together into a seamless texture of sound, overlapping all verse divisions that correspond with separate links in a chain of logic, and setting up fourteen lines of unhalting, melodious expression. (134-35)

Similarly, Martz interprets such methods as further evidence of the speaker's mature consciousness, and claims that "There is little danger that this discreet lover will ever lose his strong sense of duty and propriety." (165) Yet modern readers may find that "the broad, experienced view of maturity" (164)--if that is the sum of the Amoretti's expression--omits those inconsistencies and tensions which dramatize such a speaker as Sidney's Astrophil and, accustomed to the sharply individualized sense of personality which he conveys, find that Spenser's speaker suffers by comparison. Hunter's analysis reminds us of the extent to which our responses are engaged by the figure of the persona; Astrophil and Stella, he claims, offers

> a series of exercises in self-definition: Stella's role is to act as a mirror reflecting Astrophil's emotional states. The poems describe what it is like to go on being aware of oneself as a man and yet to be in love. Spenser's sequence is far more concerned with the relationship and far less with the individual. The lover's "I" or ego is often completely ignored and even where mentioned is usually absorbed in a pattern which aborts self-definition. (128)

A similar contrast informs Jacqueline Miller's treatment of the related themes of writing and wooing in the two works; unlike Sidney, she claims, Spenser consistently accommodates both sides of the battle--the

speaker's refusal to relinquish the possibility of creative autonomy and his need (both personal and poetic) to acknowledge and conform to requirements set by the lady--by conflating his activity with hers. In consequence, "The issue of poetic independence and superiority," one source of felt tension in Astrophil and Stella, "becomes transformed into an instrument for harmonizing or identifying the poet with his beloved" (549) in the Amoretti.

Such approaches identify harmonious reconciliation, then, as the goal towards which the Amoretti's speaker strives, and the joint publication of the sonnet sequence with the Epithalamion, in 1595, seems to confirm this reading. Yet there is a real danger that by isolating those stylistic features which reflect a thematic concern with accommodation and reciprocity, we may neglect those features which significantly retard the Amoretti's progress, which complicate and enrich the resolution it achieves, and which add depth to the figure of its speaker. From the opening sonnet, ambivalent signals about the speaker's rhetorical stance create multiple effects. Its address to the volume of poems, identified closely with the lover's own "sorrowes," "teares," and "hart" and held by the lady as she reads, offers an emblem of the submissive posture which the lover will strike repeatedly in the course of the Amoretti; his life, as the first quatrain suggests, is entirely "in her hands." This aspect of the poem is reinforced by the couplet's emphatic direction, which excludes any intention to arouse public interest:

> Leaves, lines, and rymes, seeke her to please alone,
> Whom if ye please, I care for other none.

These lines not only confirm the protagonists' relation within the

private realm of love; they also offer the role of privileged listener to the reader who, while he may recognize the implicit limitations of the lover's stance and perspective, is nevertheless drawn by this role into sympathetic identification with him.

At the same time, the sonnet's address to the completed work may imply the simultaneous presence of a conscious artist. To the poet, the experience related in the sequence stands in the past, and the final couplet serves the rhetorical purpose of establishing a sense of collusion with the work's larger audience of general readers. Both poet and reader are thus joined in sophisticated awareness of one of the genre's central conventions: that personal expression, intended by the fictional lover only for the lady, is offered to be overheard. Yet this implication does not overwhelm the tone of the sonnet's personal plea; nor, on the other hand, does the figure of the poet disappear from the sequence at this point, as it has done in several of the minor sequences which begin similarly, leaving the single voice of the lover to speak in isolated hope and despair. Instead, the figure of the poet--distinct from the historical poet himself, although evoked by allusions to his life and work as well as by indications of a more encompassing perspective on the lover's preoccupations--will reappear at certain points to inform and enrich our understanding of the lover's experience.

Most importantly, perhaps, the figure of the poet serves to enlarge the reader's perspective on the lover's experience without undercutting the impression that is created of the lover's vivid personality and of an engaging experience which the reader, like the lover, hopes will yield up significant meaning. This is so in part because the poet

himself is clearly a partial embodiment of the sequence's creator--closer to his angle of vision than is the more limited lover, but nevertheless the product of certain consistent choices in self-presentation, and to that extent himself a partial fiction. The potential for these two figures to move more closely together is also anticipated by early evidence of the lover's capacity to shift his stance and address an audience more various than those which the minor sequences' lovers have been willing to engage. The opening sonnets, for instance, introduce the lover's own unquiet thoughts, the lady and her features, the public world, and the personified figure of Love as objects of a dramatic mode of address recurrent in the Amoretti. Incidentally, such sonnets offer a counterpoint to the narrative impulse of so many of the sequence's poems, and thus offset to some extent its sense of gradual progression. They demonstrate, moreover, the speaker's capacity to handle varying degrees of proximity to any audience, as he shifts for instance from the formal distance of sonnet 2--"Witnesse the world how worthy [the lady is] to be prayzed"--to the more direct and colloquial tone of sonnet 5's frontal attack--"Rudely thou wrongest my deare harts desire,/ In finding fault with her too portly pride."

The audience of Amoretti 10 is of particular significance, introducing as it does a note of playful self-parody into the early stages of the work and implying, in the speaker's capacity to achieve a more detached perspective, the possibility of a merging of the two figures of lover and poet. The speaker's complaint against the "Unrighteous Lord of Love," (10) with its exaggerated description of "The huge massacres which her eyes do make,/ And humbled harts brings

captive unto thee," (10) complicates Amoretti 8's denial that the conventional Petrarchan analogies are suitable to this lover's situation, and to his lady:

> Thrugh your bright beams do not the blinded guest
> Shoot out his darts to base affections wound;
> But angels come, to lead fraile mindes to rest
> In chast desires, on heavenly beauty bound.

The personification of love and the hyperbolic development of conventional motifs in Amoretti 10 suggest the lover's susceptibility to an experience which comes to him from outside, as a kind of violence over which he has little control. The questions of law, license, and vengeance raised in the first two quatrains, however, are more wittily managed in the third; the self-consciousness of the speaker's rhetorical strategy implies a fuller understanding and may hint at controlled self-parody in the poem's verbal extravagance. The imaginative figure of Love takes on in sonnet 10 something of the poet's capacity to attract and direct public attention through his writing, and the speaker pleads with him to act upon this capacity:

> But her hard hart doe thou a little shake,
> And that high look, with which she doth comptroll
> All this worlds pride, bow to a baser make,
> And al her faults in thy black booke enroll. (10)

Ostensibly, it is the figure of Love whose stance shifts over the course of Amoretti 10, but his flexibility brings about a broadening of the speaker's perspective: originally accused as "Unrighteous" in the suffering he inflicts through the lady, Love is also paired with the speaker as joint victim of the lady, who "scorn[s] both thee and me," so that the possibility of his exacting a "mightie vengeance" implies the lover's similar capacity to shape the experience of which he initially

complains. The implication is reinforced by his role in the speculative action with which the poem ends:

> That I may laugh at her in equall sort
> As she doth laugh at me, and makes my pain her sport.

Yet the note of gleeful revenge is muted in the couplet to concentrate on the present actuality which has inspired the desire for revenge. The speaker's voice, moreover, gains conviction from a variety of techniques: the lines' striking verbal simplicity and directness; the lingering effect of the long final line, which reinforces a sense of the lover's pain; and the contrast to his demonstrated capacity to pursue alternative rhetorical paths and to gain some degree of understanding. The reader is returned, that is, to the vivid immediacy of the lover's experience, highlighted by the poem's suggestions that it is within his power imaginatively to seize control of the situation.

Such manipulations of tone and stance are a central factor in provoking from the sequence's reader a multiple response: the lover retreats from a witty, consciously rhetorical stance to the expression of a simpler, apparently more immediate and direct emotion, even as the reader's attention is drawn to the possibilities of self-conscious play as a means of understanding and controlling his situation. We remain uncertain, in Amoretti 10, of the extent to which the speaker recognizes his own imaginative power, tacitly embodied in his personification of love, to shape the experience in which he is immersed. The poem's final retreat both suggests a limited understanding of this power and prepares for the discovery of a meaning more profound than the revenge-ploy here anticipated, for in the Amoretti an ideal reciprocity, rather than a more aggressive "victory" in the battle of the sexes, is the goal of the

lover's efforts. Most significantly, the infusion of a more detached perspective has lent conviction to the personal feeling expressed in the poems' final lines, a pattern which will be replayed in the course of the sequence as the figure of the lover becomes a vivid and plausible character by means of his relation with the self-conscious poet. The opening sonnets' variety of audiences, and the shifts in the speaker's stance which such a diversity produces, thus alert the reader to the flexible role he is required to fill. These sonnets tacitly provide a series of instructions (like those to the lady in Amoretti 4) to "Prepare your selfe new love[s] to entertaine,"[2] and to recognize and respond to the different degrees of awareness which characterize the lover and the poet.

The Amoretti's lover is intensely focused on the appearance of the lady, either in actuality or in his thoughts, and this focus is conveyed in part by frequent verbs of vision. Yet the visionary motif, common to Spenser's earlier collections of sonnets (Visions of the Worlds Vanitie, The Visions of Bellay, and The Visions of Petrarch), is used there as a means of stressing the speaker's didactic concerns and intepretive role. In the Amoretti, on the other hand, the motif is more subtly embedded in the poems' grammatical and syntactical structures to particularize the situation described and to stress the lover's immersion in his experience. Demonstrative pronouns and constructions employing "such" are surprisingly frequent. Occasionally, they emphasize the immediacy of the lover's present state by contrast to an ideal distant in time or space: Amoretti 44, for instance, balances the strife of "those renoumed peres of Greece," stilled by the power of Orpheus, against

"this continuall cruell civill warre" which the lover is unable to still within himself, while a number of poems depend on the implicit contrast between "this world" and the supralunary realm. Elsewhere, a repetition of demonstrative pronouns focuses attention on "that proud port...that same lofty countenance" (13) of the lady, or on a concluding self-definition that the lover has arrived at by means of analogical reasoning: "That ship, that tree, and that same beast am I." (56) A similar pattern is evident in his use of "such," more often repeated within a single sonnet in the first two dozen than in the later poems, and frequently cooperating with alliteration: "Yet lowly still vouchsafe to looke on me;/ Such lowlinesse shall make you lofty be." (13) A fairly straightforward technique, this use of demonstrative forms emphasizes the lover's immersion in the present experience and the limitation of his perspective to a focus on the lady; it counteracts any impression that the speaker has in such sonnets distanced himself from the experience of love and is self-consciously playing with its features.

The emphatic tone created by demonstrative forms, however, does not strike the single note of the lover's expression; the quieter and more introspective voice of certain sonnets creates a tone of striking conviction which adds depth to the figure of the lover. Sonnets 31, 32, and 34, pivoting around the self-referential Amoretti 33, demonstrate the effect of an interrelation of these tones and their enhancement by the implied presence of the poet. The first two rely heavily on emphatic constructions using "so," "such," and "all," on demonstrative pronouns, and on comparative and superlative forms (such as "the greater

scath," "the hardest vron," and "more harde then yron") to emphasize the intensity of the lover's experience and his inability to shape it to his desires. Amoretti 34, in turn, develops the ship-metaphor as common to the conventions of love-poetry as is sonnet 31's comparison of the lady to ferocious beasts or sonnet 32's comparison of their relation to that of the smith and his material. Yet its techniques and tone are quite different:

> Lyke as a ship, that through the ocean wyde
> By conduct of some star doth make her way,
> Whenas a storme hath dimd her trusty guyde,
> Out of her course doth wander far astray;
> So I, whose star, that wont with her bright ray
> Me to direct, with cloudes is overcast,
> Doe wander now in darknesse and dismay,
> Through hidden perils round about me plast.
> Yet hope I well, that when this storme is past,
> My Helice, the lodestar of my lyfe,
> Will shine again, and looke on me at last,
> With lovely light to cleare my cloudy grief.
> Till then I wander carefull comfortlesse,
> In secret sorrow and sad pensiveness.

In the first place, to begin with a similitude is a comparatively rare procedure in the Amoretti, in which analogies are more often generated by an initial statement of the speaker's or the lady's state. Only two other sonnets begin with a simile: Amoretti 67 ("Lyke as a huntsman") and the final poem in the sequence ("Lyke as a culver"). Although the moods of these three sonnets vary from a hopeful resignation to wonder at the lady's self-beguilement and to solitary despair, respectively, each gains strength from a quiet, reflective tone which owes something to the poem's opening, suggesting as it does a degree of forethought unusual in the lover's reaction.

Secondly, sonnet 34's simple articles and possessive pronouns provide a striking change from the emphatic forms of sonnets 31 and 32.

Instead of the verbal intensification of their descriptions--"her hold so great," "my so hot desyre," "her hart frosen cold," and "so hard a hart"--Amoretti 34 sets a scene whose generality is conveyed by the use of indefinite articles, and which evokes nevertheless a sense of homely familiarity with "her trusty guyde." The natural scene and the human particulars are brought together by means of fluid parallels between the scene's physical components and the poem's emotional categories: the lover wanders "in darknesse and despaire" and hopes for an illumination of "my cloudy griefe." The scene itself is evocative of the settings and situations which recur in The Faerie Queene, an echo which stresses the sonnet's link to Amoretti 33, as if it provides something of a stylistic response to Lodowick's prodding there. Yet neither a public context nor an expanded understanding implies that the figure of the poet speaks in sonnet 34, whose development moves from the outer world to the inner and, in that movement, emphasizes a contemplative strain similar to that of Delia's speaker. The conventionality of the dominant motif, the poem's exact divisions, and its smooth alliteration, increased towards the end, create a tone of resolved acceptance, while the expression of a hopeful anticipation in the third quatrain is muted in the somewhat melancholy couplet. In aesthetic terms, it is as if the poet-speaker of Amoretti 33 has loaned to the lover of sonnet 34 something of the vivid impression of the fictional reality created in The Faerie Queene, without undermining the sincerity of that lover's expression.

Put simply, shifts in the speaker's stance between the two roles of poet and lover create in the Amoretti a greater range of expression than

has been recognized, and are a central feature of its successful evocation of the lover's experience. Evidence of the speaker's capacity to shift his stance has more far-reaching implications, as well, for an interpretation of the sequence. The Easter-sonnet's address to the "Most glorious Lord of life," (68) for instance, has generally been regarded as the climax of the Amoretti's efforts to reconcile physical and spiritual aspects of courtship. It anticipates, according to this interpretation, "The happy purchase of my glorious spoile,/ Gotten at last with labor and long toyle." (69) Yet the poem's instructive mode creates a distance between its speaker and the experience of love, suggesting that his rhetorical stance is that of the poet, mindful of his larger audience and a framework of values external to the private sphere of love; the distance is not entirely overcome by the couplet's application of the lessons of captivity and redemption--"So let us love, deare love, lyke as we ought:/ Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught." (68) Moreover, a note of doubt and hesitation persists in the sonnets following, to suggest that the poet's resolution of the lover's difficulties is not complete: Amoretti 72 presents the heaven-bound soul weighed down "with thoght of earthly things," while "false forged lyes," (85) anger, and separation prevent the lover's reaching, within this work, "the happy shore" which has seemed "Fayre soyle...from far." (63)[3]

To note such tension is to swerve from two related critical tendencies: the emphasis on the Amoretti's smooth progression to reconciliation, and treatment of its speaker's stance as entirely consistent within the sequence. Both earlier studies, which identify

the speaker with the figure of Spenser himself, and later considerations of him as a fictional character, occasionally reveal the strain of attempting to fit Spenser's speaker into a single role. The most obvious instance is Lever's need to perform drastic surgery on the Amoretti according to his conception of the poet's personality; arguing that the sequence represents an unsuccessful effort to blend two incompatible collections of sonnets, he removes 18 poems which clash with what he takes to be the Amoretti's dominant tone of mature consciousness. The assumption that the sequence offers a fictionalized account of Spenser's actual courtship of Elizabeth Boyle should make it an ideal subject for Lever's approach, preferring as he does a combination of coherent narrative progression with the personal expression for which he believes the sonnet was designed. Indeed, he argues that, once Spenser had purged love of its romantic illusions in The Faerie Queene, "personal experience, subject always to the necessary moral qualifications, was directly voiced" (95) in his work. Yet the nature of that experience becomes, finally, an excuse for the way its final sonnets disturb the Amoretti's progression towards the celebratory Epithalamion; Lever speculates that, like the introduction of the Blatant Beast in the final cantos of The Faerie Queene, the sonnets "relate to some actual occurrence in Spenser's life which, at the cost of impairing the unity of the sequence, he felt obliged to mention." (128)[4]

It is worth noting of Lever's explanation that, when a personal grievance is explicitly identified as the occasion for a poem, as in Virgils Gnat, the need for obscurity itself becomes a poetic subject

rather than simply a mode of commentary on issues that cannot openly be discussed. David Miller points out that the poem's dedicatory sonnet uses a private code to complain without complaining; "Published, it flaunts the act of concealment as a sign of lost countenance[,]...adjusting the relationship with Leicester publicly" ("Spenser's Vocation, Spenser's Career," 212) and thereby exerting pressure on the thematic concerns of Virgils Gnat itself. The speaker's description of himself as "Wrong'd, yet not daring to expresse my paine,/ To you (great Lord) the causer of my care," both conceals and discloses in an ambiguous gesture complicated by a set of teasing directives to the reader: he advises "any Oedipus unware" who may discern the nature of his riddle to "rest pleased with his owne insight,/ Ne further seeke to glose upon the text." (Virgils Gnat, dedicatory sonnet) Miller argues that the sonnet, with its impeded speech, dramatizes the patron's role in sponsoring the poetic voice; only because of this dramatization, he claims, do we read the poem itself as treating the theme of uncertainty as to the poet's "place." The self-conscious and functional reference to personal circumstances in this work, then, suggests how unlikely are the final sonnets of the Amoretti to constitute a forced and artistically flawed allusion to events in Spenser's own life.

Critics like Dunlop, McNeir, and Martz resolve Lever's difficulties with the sequence by assuming that the Amoretti's speaker shares a self-conscious, more encompassing awareness with his creator. The assumption of a closer identification of speaker and poet underlies their dissolution of tensions which might otherwise arise from the

"cruel fair" sonnets Lever would omit, in which the speaker slips into the character of the submissive lover, and from the impression that personal experience has proven intractable to coherent fictional shaping at the conclusion of the Amoretti. Dunlop establishes for the work a temporal framework based on dates in the secular and liturgical calendars for the year 1594; with this basis for an argument that the sequence records the poet's own personal experience, he claims that the two roles of lover and poet cooperate to produce a single, sophisticated speaker who stands in close proximity to the figure of his creator:

> The lover and the poet are of course the same person. However, at different times one or the other of these roles takes precedence. In the sonnets that comment on his situation he is the narrator, the poet...In sonnets that show action, such as plaints or pleadings, he abandons the stance of narrator and plays the role of lover, demonstrating rather than narrating. (163)

Martz similarly argues that the extreme postures of those sonnets Lever would eliminate are evidence of the speaker's self-confident handling of conventional materials, as a reflection of that mature consciousness he shares with the lady. Anticipated in sonnet 14's "Playnts, prayers, vowes, ruth, sorrow, and dismay," the variety of stances assumed are presented as playful maneuvers in a familiar game. Drawing our attention to "the essence of mirth and comedy" in a number of the Amoretti poems, Martz centres his interpretation on sonnet 54, which

> indicates the complete recognition of the lover that he is deliberately playing many parts, staging "all the pageants" in an ancient festival of courtship, adopting all the masks that may catch his lady's eye and prove his devotion. (162)

Finally, Martz regards the "minor-key" ending of the Amoretti as a strength, not a weakness. It signals, he argues, the speaker's capacity

to entertain those threats which might impair a lesser love: "by bringing his joy within a harsher context of worldly reality," Spenser prepares for the Epithalamion's "triumphant accommodation with the world." (152)

To focus on elements of self-dramatization in the sequence increases rather than lessens the possibility of an ambivalent stance. Instead of implying consistently a self-confident handling of the materials provided by his own experience, as Dunlop and Martz argue, such dramatic terms as those which proliferate in sonnet 54 may indicate an ambiguous relation between the speaker's pose and his emotional state. In this way, references to the theatre and acting may become a provocative and unsettling motif, rather than evidence of a self-conscious speaker's performance in the role of lover. Amoretti 54 opens, for instance, by identifying its setting as "this worlds theatre," and the designation suggests that all behaviour--not merely that which is shaped to woo a reluctant lady--may be a form of acting. As in two earlier sonnets, in which the confident assertion "Witnesse the world how worthy to be prayzed" (3) must be followed by a more aggressive tactic ("Rudely thou wrongest..." in Amoretti 5), the audience resists the performance; the lady

> Delights not in my merth, nor rues my smart:
> But when I laugh, she mockes, and when I cry,
> She laughs, and hardens evermore her hart. (54)

In the broader context, then, the sequence creates some sense of a dramatic setting but does not assign to its speaker the role of star performer or self-confident manager of effects.

Within Amoretti 54, moreover, language and syntax hint at

discrepancies between the nature of the occasion, the speaker's inner state, and his outward presentation of this state. The process of "Dysguysing diversly my troubled wits" seems straightforward, but the second quatrain is more ambiguous in the logical relations it establishes:

> Sometimes I joye, when glad occasion fits
> And maske in myrth lyke to a comedy;
> Soone after, when my joy to sorrow flits,
> I waile, and make my woes a tragedy.

Especially in its close conjunction with the notion of disguise in line 4, the word "maske" suggests an appearance of joy at odds with, and thus concealing, the speaker's inward state; the appearance seems to derive then, not from a genuine emotion but in response to an occasion for which joy is appropriate. It is in this sense that Spenser has used the words to describe Britomart: she speaks to Amoret in a confusing way "for to hide her fained sex the better/ And maske her wounded mind." (FQ. IV. i. 7) In contrast, however, the very appropriateness of joy to a glad occasion and line 7's identification of the emotion as "my joy" imply, as does the conversion of "my woes" into a "tragedy," the artful intensification of feeling into the "masks" of drama. This is the sense which the phrase connotes in The Teares of the Muses as Thalia, contrasting comedy's former power with its present defacement, laments "The painted theatres.../...In which I late was wont to raine as queene,/ And maske in myrth with graces well beseene." (lines 177, 179-80) Instead of the actual theatre of this work, however, the Amoretti's context is the metaphorical theatre of the world, and the similitude "lyke to a comedy" may emphasize the distance between performance and actual feeling. Ultimately, despite evidence of his

self-conscious awareness, sonnet 54 raises questions about the degree of the speaker's self-control and the extent to which the "pageants" he enacts can be understood as modes of detached playfulness.

Thus various elements of the Amoretti indicate that an identification of its speaker with the figure of his creator may not be entirely consistent throughout the sequence. While Spenser does not exploit verbal ambiguity as extensively as does Sidney, Amoretti 54 is only one of several instances in which the speaker's language implies an inability fully to comprehend his situation from the detached perspective available to the poet. Certain critical studies have posited a greater distance between the two figures of lover and historical poet, analyzing the Amoretti as the expression of a wholly created character who serves Spenser's allegorical intentions. Kellogg, for instance, first argues that the conventions of erotic poetry serve Spenser "Not as a record of his actual experience, not as a fictional representation of Colin's typical experience, but primarily as the imaging-forth of an ideal experience." (145) Like Dasenbrook, Kellogg focuses on the originality of Spenser's recombination of conventional materials, so that they form a vehicle for his unique synthesis of spirit, flesh, and imagination. In this process, he claims:

> the personal world of the poet was absorbed into the fictional world of his own and of others' invention which surrounds his poems. This extra-textual world mediates between the speaker or narrator of a Renaissance fiction and the "real" man who stands behind the work as author. (143-44)

Pursuing a similar path, Cummings treats the Amoretti as an extended metaphor in which the two protagonists become exempla of Man and Woman. While the operation of this metaphor does not appear on the surface, he

argues,

> it may explain that surface, which looks like the conscious imitation of a poetic tradition on Spenser's part, with all its ready-made conceits and other sonnet-sequence paraphenalia. Spenser is once again in the background, allowing a fictional poet to pour forth fictional metaphors, and making him do so with such nuances and within such a structural arrangement that the conventional metaphors suggest and interpret man's realities and the fictional poet-man becomes a speaker for all men. (164-65)

In his analysis of this operation, though, Cummings can only account for Spenser's ability to make familiar motifs serve such far-reaching purposes by the assertion that, "carefully handled[,] they are more than empty repetitions of conventional metaphors." (166) How the appearance of a "conscious imitation" is illuminated by suggestive nuance remains undefined. Similarly, Cummings fails to explain how the sequence's central figures are "humanized out of literary cliches." (168)

A further problem with this approach lies in the nature of our response to the Amoretti's self-referential sonnets. Kalil's study of the sequence's persona, for instance, founders on the analysis of sonnets 33, 74, and 80; insistent that the mask assumed is consistent over the course of the Amoretti, she can protest only that it is "very thin" (25) in these places. These three poems are not alone in inviting at least a temporary identification of speaker and poet: in others, too, the figures appear in close proximity. In Amoretti 84, the speaker is impelled by his desire to correct the vision of those who, because they "cannot deeme of worthy things/ When I doe praise her, say I doe but flatter." While the sonnet develops a contrast between public and private spheres which emphasizes the value of the lover's experience, the metaphor of writing leads to a public vindication of the

speaker's vision:

> Deepe in the closet of my parts entyre,
> Her worth is written with a golden quill:
> That me with heavenly furie doth inspire,
> And my glad mouth with her sweet prayses fill:
> Which when as Fame in her shrill trump shal thunder,
> Let the world choose to envy or to wonder.

Isolated in this way, the leap from the deeply closeted sense of worth to the trumpeting of Fame is a breath-taking one. The inscribed closet echoes the earlier "temple fair...built within my mind/ In which her glorious ymage placed is," (22) but while the lover there rested content with the private preservation of "thy deerest relicks," (22) Amoretti 84 telescopes the passage of time--for the generalities of the couplet may suggest the Final Judgment--and amplifies its spatial terms rapidly by increasingly expansive and dramatic action. The lines' quickening pace encourages the reader to ignore breaks implied by punctuation or the loose logical connections implied by "That" and "Which," so that the sonnet's resolution seems an inevitable one. Yet the triumphant note of line 14 is dependent on the skilful management of poetic effect, and an earlier metaphor has drawn the reader's attention to the contrasting visions of the lady as a kind of artistic competition: as the cuckoo's "witlesse note...clatter[s]" in comparison to the mavis' song, so too does the poet-speaker master public opinion in an expansive motion confirmed by the trumpeting of fame.

In this late sonnet, poetic skill and public fame grow coherently from experience in love, at least in the speaker's confident expectation. Elsewhere in the sequence, however, signals derived from reminders of the poet's presence in his work are mixed. The conjunction of these reminders with evidence of the existence of a fictional lover,

in fact, is a central factor in presenting the experience of love so that it takes on something of the larger significance for which critics like Kellogg and Cummings argue, without becoming fixed in the instructive mode of a poet-speaker who directs his words to the sequence's larger audience. A group of sonnets shortly preceding the Easter sonnet, Amoretti 68, helps to illuminate this process. Sonnet 59, for instance, opens with an invocatory "Thrise happie she" which owes as much to a formula of praise which Spenser uses elsewhere as to the poem's fictional circumstances, a debate over the lady's self-assurance. The introductory phrase is emphasized, in the first place, by its disjunction with the sonnet's pattern of development according to paired terms and a dominant duality. Framed by the itensifiers "so well assured/...and setled so in hart" (lines 1-2) and by the superlatives "Most happy.../...most happy," (lines 13-14) lines 3 through 12 pursue a bifurcated path in which "Neither/ne" or equivalent terms predominate. Secondly, instead of initiating a logical pattern, the phrase seems to echo Spenser's celebration in other works of the mythic power of poetic creation and expression, and thus to associate the speaker's voice with the poet's more encompassing perspective.

One instance follows Spenser's description of Sidney, in The Ruines of Time, as a Christ-like figure who offers "His body, as a spotles sacrifice." (line 298) In this context, it suggests a parallel between such redemptive power and the transformative capacity of Orpheus' song:

> Yet will I sing; but who can better sing,
> Than thou thy selfe, thine own selfes valiance,
> That, whilest thou livedst, made the forests ring,
> And fields resound, and flockes to leape and daunce,
> And shepheards leave their lambes unto mischaunce,
> To runne thy shrill Arcadian pipe to heare:

> O happie were thy dayes, thrice happie were!
> (lines 323-29)

The nostalgic vision vividly prefigures the role to be played by the poet-lover of the Epithalamion, but such a confident integration of roles as typifies the speaker there belongs in The Ruines of Time to the apotheosized Sidney, not to the eulogizing speaker. Similarly, in the fictional circumstances of the Amoretti, it is the lady to whom not only the poetic power but as well the integrity of the Ruines' Orphic poet is assigned: "the stay of her owne stedfast might" (59) secures her course like that of a "steddy ship," (59) while the lover in his storm-tossed bark can only hope for such coherence in the anticipatory sonnet 63--"Most happy he that can at last atchyve/ The joyous safety of so sweet a rest."[5]

The competitive context of Amoretti 58 and 59, created by debate over the lady's self-assurance, is thus resolved by a reference to her power, which relegates the speaker to the dependent role of lover: "Most happy she that most assured doth rest;/ But he most happy who such one loves best." (59) The debate suggests, though, that his happiness is dependent not simply on the lady's response, but as well on his correct understanding of her, a motif which has recurred from the beginning of the Amoretti and which is a significant factor in adding depth to the figure of the fictional lover. Unlike the lover of Fletcher's Licia, who in a similar dependent relation can only beg the lady to reveal her light to him, the Amoretti's lover--in addition to his hopes that "My Helice, the lodestar of my life,/ Will shine again" (34)--probes his intimation of her value in a sonnet whose invocatory phrase reminds the reader of Spenser's own poetic voice in other works,

of a power which transcends the dichotomies of the lover's situation, and of an external framework of values which will confirm the lover's intimation. His experience, in other words, is validated by the implied presence of the poet in his work, without the imposition on that experience of a predetermined meaning which would deny the felt reality of its expressed contraries by too easily resolving them.

The question of perception and understanding is raised again in sonnet 63's emphasis on the lover's tentative vision of delight and fulfillment: "the happy shore" on which he hopes soon to arrive "Fayre soyle...seemes from afar, and fraught with store/ Of all that deare and daynty is alyve." This sonnet, like 58 and 59 in their attempts to understand the nature of the lady's self-assurance, is on the one hand deeply embedded in the sequence's fictional circumstances. Its central metaphor of the ship on turbulent seas is a conventional means of describing the lover's experience of courtship, and the sense typically conveyed of his immersion in a situation beyond his control is here stressed by contrast to the lady's "steddy ship." (59) Moreover, its reminder that the copious abundance of the harbor now in sight <u>appears</u> fair from a distance retains the tentative note which is a consequence of the lover's limited perspective. At the same time, the retrospective evaluations of sonnets 60 and 62 create a kind of summation which lends conviction to <u>Amoretti</u> 63's conclusion. The earlier sonnets review time "wasted in long languishment" (60) and predicate a lightening of "the glooming world" on the present "shew of morning mild," (62) so that the fictional lover's experience seems to add confidence to his restatement of what has become, in this sequence, a familiar assertion:

> ...least delight sufficeth to deprive
> Remembrance of all paines which him opprest.
> All paines are nothing in respect of this,
> All sorrowes short that gaine eternall blisse. (63)

The couplet's Petrarchan echo reminds the reader of the conventionality of the lover's hopes to convert pain into the joy of achieving the lady's love; tested by the need to suffer "all paines" and "All sorrowes" for "least delight," the lover is traditionally regarded as proving his worth by such forbearance.

This group of sonnets, like Amoretti 31 through 34, illustrates the way in which the implied presence of the poet validates the experience of the lover. Sonnet 60's identification of "al those fourty yeares [which] my love outwent" establishes a parallel between the speaker's age and that of the historical poet, although the poem's juxtaposition of this detail with the reminder that "by that count which lovers books invent,/ The spheare of Cupid fourty yeares containes" should alert the reader that this implied presence, too, is at least a partial fiction. The identification of speaker and poet cooperates with the reference to "lovers books," nevertheless, to recall specifically the inventive and shaping powers of the work's creator always implicit in the presentation of the fictional lover. In this context, the "eternall blisse" (63) which is the sum of the lover's hopes takes on additional connotations derived from a theological framework which promises that all men "May live for ever in felicitie." (68) While the lover hopes that the lady will yield to his pleas, in other words, the poet-speaker has a more encompassing perspective on "The spheare of Cupid" (significantly compared in Amoretti 60 to the "three score yeares" of Mars' sphere rather than presented as the sole focus of the speaker's attention) and

implicitly on the relation of its limited temporal framework to the "eternall blisse" (63) which can be granted only by the "Most glorious Lord of Lyfe." (68) The conjunction of the two rhetorical stances simultaneously defines the limits of the lover's perspective and confirms that, immersed as he is in the private sphere of love, the lover has yet touched on a truth about the nature of human love more enduring than the conferring of the lady's favours on a worthy suitor.

The group of sonnets which runs from 58 to 63 thus provides two kinds of signals to readers of the sequence. We are made aware, that is, of the created character of the lover, dependent on the lady and immersed in his fictional circumstances, and of the implied presence in his work of the poet, at whose direction the lover and his experiences yield an illuminating truth which expands beyond the private realm of love. The plausibility of the lover, in turn, focuses attention on discovery and process rather than on fixed form and meaning. Such sonnets as Amoretti 61 may articulate a doctrine which informs the lover's efforts, but cannot substitute for the vivid evocation of his longings and uncertainties in poems spoken from a narrower focus:

> The glorious image of the Makers beautie,
> My soverayne saynt, the idoll of my thought,
> Dare not henceforth, above the bounds of dewtie,
> T'accuse of pride, or rashly blame for ought.
> For being, as she is, divinely wrought,
> And of the brood of angels hevenly borne,
> And with the crew of blessed saynts upbrought,
> Each of which did her with theyre guifts adorne,
> The bud of joy, the blossome of the morne,
> The beame of light, whom mortal eyes admyre,
> What reason is it then but she should scorne
> Base thinges, that to her love too bold aspire?
> Such heavenly formes ought rather worshipt be,
> Then dare be lov'd by men of meane degree. (61)

This poem provides that vision of human beauty as reflection of the

divine which is the subject of Spenser's Fowre Hymnes. It shares with those poems, moreover, a detached perspective on the subject, so that its mode of presentation stands in contrast to proposals of similar interpretations in the earlier sonnets; there, the lover's interpretation of the lady's value is frequently balanced against his doubts about the validity of his perception--it may be, he considers, that "I a new Pandora see" rather than an emblem of "the Makers art" (24)--or about his power to articulate such an ennobling vision: "the glorious pourtraict of that angels face/.../Cannot expressed be by any art." (17) Informed without reservation by a Platonic reading of the lady's significance, Amoretti 61 exhibits no hesitation in asserting either her worthy qualities or the speaker's capacity to understand and communicate them.

Yet the moral imperatives which this sonnet provides, the consequence of a more detached perspective on the lover's dilemma, would leave the lover in a static position. There is some ambivalence in the initial rhetorical stance: it is not clear whether the first quatrain conveys the familiar sense of an opportunity for the lover to defend his lady from public misinterpretation or whether it will offer a corrective to his own frustration. As the poem develops, however, its more abstract and emblematic portrait establishes the speaker's distance from his subject, and the sonnet closes by offering that distance--a posture of worshipful understanding--as a moral corrective to the baseness of bold aspiration. This distance can be measured by contrast to Amoretti 5, otherwise similar to sonnet 61 in its dramatic context and in the nature of its speaker's defense. Here too an attack is launched on

those who are envious, critical, or bold enough to gaze at the lady "loosely," with "rash eies." Unlike sonnet 61, however, action is not reserved to those who dare aspire to her love while the lady is "bound" in the static series of epithets in lines 1 and 2, 9 and 10. Instead, the lover imagines the lady herself an active participant in Amoretti 5's metaphoric battle:

> Such pride is praise, such portlinesse is honor,
> That boldned innocence beares in hir eies,
> And her faire countenance, like a goodly banner,
> Spreds in defiaunce of all enemies.

While the portrait is emblematic, active verbs and a striking similitude bring it to vivid life, confirming the expansive movement of this quatrain's first line, whose second phrase repeats but verbally amplifies the monosyllabic equation of the first. As well, the lover's description of the lady's "Thretning" looks draws a parallel between her posture and his defensive stance, and thus reinforces the sense of his worthiness implied in the lover's response to "the world unworthy." This development underlies the couplet's tacit self-assertion, as a final heroic motion makes the lover's efforts to gain her love a demonstration of his worth: "Was never in this world ought worthy tride,/ Without some spark of such self-pleasing pride." The indefinite logical relation of line 14's prepositional phrase, in fact, applies the quality of pride equally to the lady herself and to the lover's trial in the course of the sequence.

Sonnet 5 thus places the two figures of lover and lady in imaginative proximity by an active and dexterous treatment of the motif of battle and its heroic context: what is "close implide" in the lady's looks, the inevitable focus of the lover's attention, becomes a

convincing force within the poem. Such an attempt is never made in Amoretti 61, which concludes with a contrast of love and worship rather than of unworthy and worthy love. Its poet-speaker offers a proper appreciation of "Such heavenly formes" (61) as the lady represents rather than the simple adoration of the submissive lover, but while her personal qualities have been dramatized elsewhere in the sequence by the lover's occasionally contradictory efforts to understand, Amoretti 61 uses descriptive details with conventional associations to stress her moral significance alone. The poet-speaker's more encompassing awareness, then, although it offers a coherent reading of the lady and disposes of the lover's doubts, in so doing imposes "the bounds of dewtie" (61) on his relation to the lady, destroying the vitality of their interaction and restricting the lover's capacity to achieve the state of reciprocal love which is his goal.

The lover's doubts centre on the difficulty of distinguishing between "the treason of those smyling lookes," "flattring smyles [which] weake harts do...guyde/...and tempte to theyr decay," (47) on the one hand, and "the trew fayre, that is the gentle wit/ And virtuous mind" or "true beautie: that doth argue you divine," (79) on the other. The significance of this difficulty is evident in the fact that a recurrent note of doubt persists until the end of the Amoretti, well past sonnet 61's more detached statement of the morally correct stance and perspective. The speaker ends by distinguishing his own vision of "The idaea playne,/ Through contemplation of my purest part" (88) from that of "others who gaze upon theyr shadowes vayne," (88) but the sonnet also implies that "th'onely image of that heavenly ray" (88) may be

insufficient to sustain him in the absence of the lady. The first quatrain's ambiguous diction, moreover, dramatizes the pervasiveness of his doubts:

> Since I have lackt the comfort of that light,
> The which was wont to lead my thoughts astray,
> I wander as in darknesse of the night,
> Affrayd of every dangers least dismay. (88)

While the images of light and darkness create, as they do throughout the Amoretti, a contrast between the visionary illumination provided by love and the blindness of error, the same motif of misguided direction is applied both to the speaker's present state, "wandring here and there all desolate," as in Amoretti 89 as well, and to the past effect of "that light" provided by the lady, which led his thoughts "astray." His present fear and dismay, in other words, have infected even the lover's vision of a time for which he is nostalgic and regretful, and the effect is to intensify the felt reality of his emotional entrapment. In the second and third quatrains, the lover's attempt to interpret her absence as a means of focusing his attention on "the idea playne" dominates, but the final metaphor of sustenance--with the light of an inward idea "I doe.../...feed my love-affamisht hart" (88)--initiates a startling reversal:

> But with such brightnesse whylest I fill my mind,
> I starve my body, and mine eyes goe blynd. (88)

In one respect a muted version of Astrophil's "But ah! Desire still cries, give me some food," the couplet seriously tests the adequacy of an idealized vision against the reality of the lover's need. Suddenly, the metaphoric light and food to which he has clung are exposed as metaphors, and the exposure implies the intractability of actual

experience to Platonic treatment. Thus sonnet 88 ultimately leaves in tense juxtaposition the desire to derive meaning from the lady's absence and an immersion in the emotional quality of the lover's deprivation.

There is a dual progression in the Amoretti: in narrative terms, lover and lady approach a state of reciprocal love which is illuminated by the development of understanding, in thematic terms, of such ideal reciprocity. Yet the sequence's retention of significant moments of doubt and the sense of irresolution at its conclusion imply that, instead of developing smoothly to the Epithalamion's celebration, the Amoretti pivots around the climactic Easter sonnet, to suggest that an illuminating vision of harmonious, ideal love can inform but not entirely control an experience firmly rooted in the actual world. As this pivoting effect unfolds, the motif of striving and effort is replaced by the motif of comfort and rest, evoked equally by the lover's imaginative presentation of an idealized haven or by his consciousness of the absence of such peaceful and satisfying qualities. Significantly, too, he increasingly treats "this verse, vowd to eternity," as a means of creating an "immortal moniment" (79) to the harmonious reconciliation now envisioned, though not yet attained; the merged role of poet-lover offers increasingly the confirmation of this harmony which will be celebrated in the Epithalamion. Instead of presenting the alternatives of honour or shame to the lady, as he does in Amoretti 7, the lover promises that his heart will learn to sing her praises, "That it hereafter may you not repent,/ Him lodging in your bosome to have lent," (73) Even here, however, the promise is qualified; conditional on her agreement to "Gently encage, that he may

be your thrall," (73) it is as much a matter of hope as of self-confident determination, a sense of what "Perhaps he there may learne." (73, italics added)

The process by which the Amoretti's protagonists are "humanized out of literary cliches," (Cummings, 168) then, is dependent on the felt reality of the lover's experience counterpointed by the poet-speaker's impulse to transform that experience into a meaningful and coherent pattern and to present its meaning in an instructive mode. One of the ways in which this process is emphasized is by a conscious extension of either role, which creates a more dynamic contrast between the sequence's two modes of expression. The exaggeration which is occasionally evident in the lover's presentation of himself and his situation, a matter of language and convention, draws attention to the artful proceedings of the sequence's creator; the way in which the hyperbolic impulse is developed in several of these sonnets conveys the impression that the lover reveals himself, at the hands of a detached creator, as failing to perceive the implications of his words. The plaintive appeal against the lady's cruelty, for instance, is a familiar motif in the genre. The Amoretti's lover presents his lady, however, as "More cruell and more salvage wylde,/ Then either lyon or lyonesse." (20) In Amoretti 10, hyperbolic description of "huge massacres which her eyes do make" is made to seem deliberately self-parodic by the speaker's manipulation of the motifs of justice and vengeance, a strategy which suggests a degree of more detached control. Elsewhere, however, pictorical imagery between an almost bizarre concentration on the vehicle of the metaphor, as when the lover concludes of the lady's

relation to beasts of prey that

> ...my proud one doth worke the greater scath
> Through sweet allurement of her lovely hew,
> That she the better may in bloody bath
> Of such poore thralls her cruell hands embrew. (20)

If there is a humorous note in this picture, it is generated at the expense of the speaker, here limited to the role and perspective of the lover. He seems to perceive, that is, not the incongruity of his own verbal expansion of the metaphor, but only the discrepancy between the lady's alluring appearance and destructive behaviour. In consequence, Amoretti 20 ends with an anticlimactic note, summing up the series of contrasts which the poem has developed but offering only the simplest of plaintive comments on the lady: "did she know how ill these two accord,/ Such cruelty she would have soone abhord." (20) The slightly self-pitying tone of the couplet is striking in contrast to the conviction with which Amoretti 10 returns from detachment to an expression of powerful feelings.

The same technique is used in sonnet 56 to emphasize the presence of a speaker as much restricted by the nature of his response as imprisoned by love. It treats, as has Amoretti 20, the paradoxical relation of the lady's appearance and her conduct, developing this relation in three quatrains made closely parallel through repetition and natural imagery:

> Fayre be ye sure, but cruell and unkind,
> As is a tygre, that with greediness
> Hunts after bloud, when he by chance doth find
> A feeble beast, doth felly him oppresse.
> Fayre be ye sure, but proud and pitilesse...(56)

The sonnet's balanced structure yields no further insight as it turns to storm and rock as symbols of the lady's pitiless obstinacy; instead the

tripartite division controls the couplet as a means of fixing first the nature of the lover's state and finally the action of the lady: "That ship, that tree, and that same beast am I,/ Whom ye doe wreck, doe ruine, and destroy." (56) Amoretti 47, otherwise similar to 20 and 56 as it luxuriates in details of the lady's destructive powers, nevertheless implies further understanding of the lover's susceptibility to ruin at her hands. The recognition achieved in this poem is limited in a different respect, as its speaker generalizes on the lady's fatal appeal and the response of those who fall prey to her "mighty charm" (47):

> ...she kills with cruell pryde,
> And feeds at pleasure on the wretched prey.
> Yet even whilest her bloody hands them slay,
> Her eyes looke lovely, and upon them smyle,
> That they take pleasure in her cruell play,
> And, dying, doe them selves of payne beguyle. (47)

While the observations seem to grow tacitly from his own experience in love, the abstract "they" serves to detach the speaker from the experience he observes. Furthermore, the poem's imagery conveys a sense of deepening wonder: in the movement from the second to the third quatrain, the metaphor of fishing gradually fades, to be replaced by the notion of beguilement and the emphatic invocation of "O mighty charm!" To the suggestion of personal appeal is added a sense of the lady's mystical power, and the poem's concluding phrases accordingly define the spell she casts by its paradoxical effects--men are made to "love their bane,/ And thinck they dy with pleasure, live with payne." The ambivalent relation between sensate experience and conscious thought is left unresolved. Even from a more detached perspective, then, the lover is unable to move from an awareness of self-beguilement to any change in

his consciousness of simultaneous pain and pleasure.

Reminders of the poet's presence in his work, on the other hand, derive not only from evocations of his more encompassing perspective but also from allusions which identify the historical poet as author of specific literary works. Spenser's self-referential techniques thus differ sharply from those of Sidney. Astrophil and Stella, by alluding more generally to his contemporaries' approval of the speaker's verse, creates the sense of a social milieu in which poetry-writing (like jousting and diplomacy, activities which also play a role in Sidney's sequence) is but one reflection of the speaker's identity as a well-rounded, accomplished man. Spenser's relation to the courtly milieu and its "most sacred empresse, my dear dred" (33) is altogether more reverential; the sense of his work as a duty owed implies a sense of poetic vocation, also evident in his other works, which Helgerson argues distinguishes Spenser from his contemporaries. A central feature of this distinction, he points out in "The New Poet Presents Himself," is that Spenser alone applied, to a serious investigation of his vocation, the Petrarchan paradigm of the poet as a youth culpably distracted from the real business of life.[6] The impact of this application is striking in The Shepheardes Calendar, which plays out as a central theme the contention of love and poetry in the figure of Colin Clout. The appearance of the paradigm in the Amoretti creates a vivid sense of self-division, as the speaker claims the need of "another wit" or "another living brest" (33) if personal and professional paths are to be jointly pursued.

Sonnet 33's self-reference associates the speaker emphatically with

dedication to the completed work; it opens with the admission that "Great wrong I doe, I can it not deny" in failing to complete his proposed work. It is perhaps additionally significant, in this respect, that the Amoretti's first sonnet has drawn the reader's attention to the completed sequence as a physical object; Sidney's speaker, on the contrary, is initially presented as engaged in the process of creation, for it is the act of verse-writing in competitive relation to other courtiers, rather than a formal body of work, which conveys the sense of the poet's presence in Astrophil and Stella. Colloquial and witty in tone, dramatic in its sense of a particular occasion and implied listener, sonnet 33 yet constructs a careful, logical refutation of Lodowick's chiding. The speaker argues that writing The Faerie Queene is "Sufficient work for one mans simple head,/ All were it, like the rest, but rudely writ," and that his present submission to the experience of love leaves him no time or energy to complete that work. Equally important are his self-presentation and his diction, which subtly undercut the appeal which Lodowick has presumably made. The plainspoken opening admission implies that he is a simple man, and thus initiates a sense of personality that lends itself to the argument following: the speaker is vulnerable to the pangs of love and captive in the present moment, "tost with a troublous fit." (33) Simultaneously, the work whose neglect is "Great wrong" emerges as "so taedious toyle" in contrast to the vivid perturbations of love. The slightly derogatory tone of his description of his labour has been anticipated when he weighs the impact on a reading public of "her Queene of Faery,/ That mote enlarge her living prayses, dead": the grammatical

arrangement of the final clause emphasizes the idea that the public role of the poet is to amplify an already determined value and to preserve, against the assaults of time, the historical reputation of a public figure. While the "immortal moniment" (79) later vowed to the lady suggests a similar attempt to make permanent his celebration of her virtues, the "living" nature of the lover's praises more usually conveys their participation in the immediate experience of love and the discovery, rather than the eternizing, of its value. Implying this contrast, sonnet 33 dramatizes the strain between personal and immediate concerns, on the one hand, and the sense of public responsibility which identifies the speaker with the figure of his creator, on the other.

Sonnet 80 as well contrasts the lover's desire to luxuriate in his present state--"in pleasant mew/ To sport my muse, and sing my loves sweet praise"--with the poet's dedication to a work distinguished by its carefully planned structure. Martz argues that this poem casts a humorous and self-conscious light on Amoretti 33, by revealing that the speaker has been working all the time in a harmonious reconciliation of the two areas of his experience. The public mode does seem to dominate in sonnet 80: the speaker is wittily identified with his work, half-completed now that six books are compiled, by describing himself as "half-fordonne," while the opportunity to "gather to myselfe new breath awhile" appears to fit the enjoyment of love into a coherent plan for accomplishing his poetic vocation. Yet the second quatrain's image of imprisonment suggests an altogether more arduous transition from one role to another, and seems to echo the lover's sense of captivity in an experience which he cannot control:

> Then, as a steed refreshed after toyle,
> Out of my prison I will breake anew:
> And stoutly will that second worke assoyle,
> With strong endevor and attention dew. (80)

Moreover, the sonnet's final lines hold in tense relation the subordination of the lady to "the Faery Queene" and her role in inspiring the speaker to his "living prayses"; the couplet seems almost an afterthought by means of which he remainds himself of the hierarchy of genres and its implications in evaluating the two sources of his inspiration:

> The contemplation of...[the lady's]...heavenly hew
> My spirit to an higher pitch will rayse.
> But let her prayses yet be low and meane,
> Fit for the handmayd of the Faery Queene. (80)

The contrasting terms "higher" and "low," "heavenly" and "meane," emphasize the opposition between a sense of progressive development and a pre-established form; between value discovered by the workings of contemplation and a sportive muse, on the one hand, and value assigned by public consensus, on the other. Shortly before, the speaker has handled this competition by identifying the Queen as the second of his three Elizabeths; she has been praised for "honour and large richesse to me lent," (74) while the lady has been granted an emphatic final place and the role of sole inspiration: "By whom my spirit out of dust was raysed,/ To speake her prayse and glory excellent." (74) At this point, the reader is less aware of any conflict between the two poles of value represented than of the harmonious reconciliation of effects, so that the speaker can proclaim that he has been made "three times thrise happy." (74) Nevertheless, his assessment of the lady--"Of all alive most worthy to be praysed" (74)--clearly contradicts the poet-speaker's

later sense of her place in the pantheon of public praise.

The contradiction is complicated by vows to immortalize the sonnet-lady in his verse. While they suggest something of the public context and the sense of permanent form evoked in the poet's dedication of epic achievement, these vows maintain a connection to the fluid and ever-changing materials of the lover's private experience. Unlike the "famous warriors of the anticke world," who record their deeds in "trophees...in stately wize," (69) the Amoretti's lover tries unsuccessfully to write "her name upon the strand," (75) an action immediatedly cancelled by the waves and tide. This sonnet is unusual in setting so concrete a scene and in quoting the lady's own words, so that it reflects from the beginning the attempt to capture a vivid immediacy, ephemeral as the name erased by time's passage. Although it ends with the promise of immortality through his verse, then, the primary effect of Amoretti 75 seems rather to be to provoke a lively dialogue between the sequence's two protagonists. Sonnet 48's dramatic address to the "Innocent paper," sacrificed by the lady "unto the greedy fyre," produces something of the same effect; imaged as facing the fate of a heretic or traitor, "constrayned/ To utter forth the anguish of his hart" by and to one who will not listen to his plea, the paper clearly offers the lover an opportunity for humorous and lively self-dramatization rather than for immortalizing his love.

Finally, the debate between the lover and his "stubborne damzell" (29) over the meaning of her wearing a laurel leaf, in Amoretti 28 and 29, creates from this emblem of poetic power an extended scene of rapid transformations, both in poetic development of the myth of Daphne and in

the alternative interpretations the two protagonists propose. The lover offers the myth, in sonnet 28, as a warning against pride and scorn: the revenge taken by the gods is to transform Daphne into a living but inactive laurel tree. By implication, the almost-divine power of poetry to metamorphose and immortalize its subjects has yet a chilling quality of permanence and death-like stillness. The implicit limitation adds force to the lover's appeal to the lady, in the couplet, to "fly no more, fayre love, from Phebus chace,/ But in your brest his leafe and love embrace." (28)

The implication is reinforced, moreover, by sonnet 28's veiled allusion (in its play on Laura/laurel) to Petrarch's Canzoniere and the Italian sonneteer's apotheosis of the dead mistress as a means of reconciling the lover's dilemma. The Amoretti lover instead, in another sonnet which quotes the lady's own words and presents him as a plainspoken man offering a "simple meaning," (29) sets even this persuasive strategy against her more successful ploy, making the question of meaning a fluid and open-ended matter:

> The bay (quoth she) is of the victours borne,
> Yielded them by the vanquisht as theyr meeds,
> And they therewith doe poetes heads adorne,
> To sing the glory of their famous deedes. (29)

Not surprisingly, given the dialectical development of these paired sonnets, the lady's "depraved" interpretation does not go unchallenged, but the final six lines of Amoretti 29 encompass rather than deny the validity of her conquest:

> ...sith she will the conquest challeng needs,
> Let her accept me as her faithfull thrall,
> That her great triumph, which my skill exceeds,
> I may in trump of fame blaze over all.
> Then would I decke her head with glorious bayes,
> And fill the world with her victorious prayse.

What is striking about this conclusion is not the speaker's posture: loverlike, he accepts a submissive relation to the lady and, in a gesture frequently paired with this subservience in the conventions of the genre, acknowledges the inadequacy of his poetic powers to praise her. Rather, it is the passage's emphatic sense of action, similar to that of Amoretti 84's vow, which distinguishes the lover's quite conventional declaration. Its vibrant force derives from the energetic verbs of action and abundance, from its contrast to the motif of permanent stillness in the sonnet preceding, and from the poem's demonstration of the lover's capacity to shift his argument in response to the lady's reaction.

The distinctive nature of the Amoretti's self-referential sonnets thus contributes to those poems in which we hear the lover speak a quality of vivid immediacy and dramatic action. In particular, the association of the poet-speaker with a public world of fixed value and carefully compiled works heightens the reader's sensitivity to the doubts and ambiguities of the lover's experience, and confers value on his "living prayses" as they create a sense of volatile personal interaction within the fairly static relationship which the sequence defines. The overwhelming impression left by the lady is her stasis or unchanging nature--a convention of the genre which provokes the lover's varied efforts to move her to relent, and which is thus the essential inspiration to expression. As we have seen in the minor sequences, however, her obduracy may provide a measure of the lover's restless and futile motion, or the recognition that "this obduracy was the fruit of her superior virtue and wisdom" (Valency, 176) may instead fix the lover

in the position of awed reverence advised at the end of Amoretti 61: "Such heavenly formes ought rather worshipt be/ Then dare be lov'd by men of meane degree." In the Amoretti, on the other hand, while the broader perspective of the poet-speaker makes us aware of limitations to the lover's understanding, his eagerness to learn is highlighted by contrast to the "taedious toyle" of public responsibility, and the essential vitality of his search for meaning emphasized by a more distanced and instructive mode.

As a consequence of its exploitation of shifts in the speaker's stance, the Amoretti's treatment of the conventional motifs of captivity and poetic power is significantly modified. In attributing value to the immediate and ever-changing experience of the lover, Spenser allows for insight to be generated from within love's "golden snare," (37) and for the expression of that understanding to achieve poetic effectiveness. As we have seen, the experience of love is presented in the self-referential sonnets as simultaneously a period of refreshment and "my prison"; the presentation is coloured by description of work on The Faerie Queene as "so long a race" (80) and "so taedious toyle" (30) and yet as having the potential to "enlarge" (33) and "breake" (80) the poet-speaker from captivity. On the other hand, the lover does not share this more detached perspective on a desirable rhythm between private and public realms, between pleasure and duty; early images of "cruell bands" (12) convey a sense that, perceiving himself to be powerless in relation to the lady, the lover reveals his imprisonment in the immediate situation and in the conventional lover's dilemma. Yet Amoretti 65, which reassures the lady about "Sweet...bands...which love

doth tye,/ Without constraynt or dread of any ill," suggests that by sympathetically imagining those doubts which might explain her reluctance, the lover can perceive how love transforms the feared loss of liberty into an ideal reciprocity, so that "When loosing one, two liberties ye gaine." His development of this idea in the lines following depends on a transformation of such earlier motifs as song and warfare, feeding and illness:

> The gentle bird feeles no captivity
> Within her cage, but singes and feeds her fill.
> There Pride dare not approach, nor Discord spill
> The league twixt them that loyal love hath bound:
> But simple Truth and mutuall Good Will
> Seeks with sweet peace to salve each others wound:
> There Fayth doth fearlesse dwell in brasen towre,
> And spotlesse Pleasure builds her sacred bowre. (65)

Significantly, the poem's echoes of earlier motifs tie its development to the lover's thoughts and preoccupations, reinforcing a sense of his fictional plausibility; his insight into the possibilities of reciprocal love grow from his experience, reactions, and continuous love for the lady, rather than from a more detached or ironic perspective on his own situation.

This emphasis on process, a result of the dynamic established between the two speakers, operates as an important balance to the final allegorical picture, with its personified abstractions in an implicitly heroic setting. The picture takes on something of the quality of <u>The Faerie Queene</u>'s settings, but even its one static detail uses diction which conveys a sense of temporarily-poised action: the word "brasen," meaning both "of brass" and "bold," draws the reader's attention simultaneously to the permanence of Faith's dwelling, as a physical structure, and to an underlying sense of activity implicit in its

"fearlessly" dwelling there. Some action is denied, as Pride and Discord are held at bay, but there is an energetic quality to the picture far removed from the articulation of a static moral formula. While the lover speaks of a "simple Truth," then, the sonnet's development, diction, and imagery emphasize the more complex search needed to arrive at that truth, and the effort needed to sustain it.

An increasingly explicit variation on the theme of captivity which "sweet...in time shall prove" (71) is provided by the motif of needlework and weaving. Early in the Amoretti, the motif implies the cycle of futility in which the lover is caught. An allusion to Penelope, for instance, provides the framework within which the lover describes his own restless efforts to capture the lady's attention and her love:

> Penelope, for her Ulisses sake,
> Deviz'd a web her wooers to deceave,
> In which the worke that she all day did make,
> The same at night she did againe unreave.
> Such subtile craft my damzell doth conceave,
> Th'importune suit of my desire to shonne:
> For all that I in many dayes do weave
> In one short houre I find by her undonne.
> So when I thinke to end that I begonne,
> I must begin and never bring to end:
> For with one looke she spils that long I sponne,
> And with one worde my whole years work doth rend.
> Such labour like the spyders web I fynd,
> Whose fruitlesse worke is broken with least wynd.
> (23)

According to Jacqueline Miller in "Love Doth Hold My Hand," this sonnet provides another instance of the speaker's frequent conflation of his activity with that of the lady; each takes on certain characteristics associated with Penelope, while the ambiguous reference of "Such labour," she argues, "capitalize[s] on the ambiguity and confusion of

roles." (551) Ultimately, however, the repeated beginning and undoing of his art, by engaging the lady in their relationship and hence recalling Penelope's preservation of her relationship with Ulysses, is a strategic maneuver which "proclaim[s] the poet's victory":

> His "fruitlesse worke" functions to engage and entrap the lady; indeed, while it is similar to the flimsy spider's web in that it is so often broken, it can also perform the spider-like activity of subtly entangling and ensnaring precisely because it is so often broken. (551-52)

Yet this conclusion seems premature, and to be based on the reader's understanding of the activity as reconciliatory rather than the speaker's: it represents, in other words, a sense of potential in the situation which the lover defines as merely futile. The activity is futile, in particular, as it is measured against the standard of accomplishment which the Amoretti associates with the poet's role, the "whole years work" which represents a solid compilation over a period of time. The lover's experience, on the other hand, is vulnerable to brief and ephemeral actions: in "one short houre" may emerge the "one looke," "one worde," or "least wynd" which undercuts his attempts to establish a more permanent relationship. This contrast between his hopes and the lady's power implies throughout the sonnet--despite the reader's recognition of the value of his efforts--that the lover indeed sees his labour as merely "fruitlesse." He is thus characterized as having but a limited understanding of the central interaction; the repetition of "end...begonne/ ...begin...end" in lines 9 and 10 serves to emphasize both the reversal effected by the lady and the constraint imposed on the lover, the latter sense heightened by the more rapid reversal and tighter alliterative patterns in each of lines 11 and 12.

Yet as the lover's static captivity in love's painful dichotomies is transformed into a vision of ideal interdependence in love, so a change in the motif of needlework signals a development of the lover's understanding of his relation to the lady. While sonnet 23 presents this relation as competitive and yet static in its irresolution, Amoretti 71 uses the lady's "drawen work" as a metaphor for the harmonious poise which may be achieved within a relation that yet retains the vitality of actual experience:

> I joy to see how, in your drawen work,
> Your selfe unto the bee ye doe compare,
> And me unto the spyder, that doth lurke
> In close awayt to capture her unware.
> Right so your selfe were caught in cunning snare
> Of a desire foe, and thralled to his love:
> In whose streight bands ye now captived are
> So firmely, that ye never may remove.
> But as your worke is woven all about
> With woodbynd flowers and fragrant eglantine,
> So sweet your prison you in time shall prove,
> With many deare delights bedecked fyne:
> And all thenceforth eternal peace shall see
> Betweene the spyder and the gentle bee.[7]

In contrast to the ambivalent attributions of Amoretti 23, the lady is here the sole artist; no debate comparable to that of sonnets 28 and 29 is provoked by the lover's interpretation of her work as providing emblems for their relationship. The reason for the absence of tension between the protagonists may be found in the nature of his interpretation: the lover tacitly acknowledges that her work is itself a means of "capturing" the spider, which is presented lurking in eternal anticipation rather than devouring and triumphant. The further weaving and bedecking, in turn, signify her active role in a continuing process which makes captivity "sweet"; they provide an imagistic counterpoint

to "streight bands," while the description as a whole demonstrates her craftsmanlike transformation of "a cunning snare" into a vision of "many deare delights." Finally, that the lover here watches the lady at work fully immerses the sonnet in the present, reinforcing its association of the protagonists with the watchful spider and the industrious bee and stressing the coherence of life and art.

Amoretti 71 achieves its graceful poise, significantly, by admitting the forces of time and change; its effect thus cooperates with the carpe diem theme introduced in the sonnet preceding to emphasize the immediacy of the lover's experience. In Amoretti 70, the lover creates a scene of natural delight, in which a personified Spring, "In whose rich cote-armour richly are displayed/ All sorts of flowers," is sent as messenger to the lady, "carelesse layd,/ Yet in her winters bowre." (70) The message he bears modifies the sequence's preoccupation, to this point, with long labour in anticipation of future joys:

> Tell her the joyous time will not be stayd,
> Unlesse she doe him by the forelock take:
> ...
> Make haste therefore, sweet love, whilest it is prime;
> For none can call againe the passed time. (70)

Amoretti 72, in turn, focuses initially on the ambivalence of such an immersion in the present: that the lover's aspiring spirit "is weighd down with thoght of earthly things,/ And clogd with burden of mortality" implies that the sequence has not--as indeed it cannot, if the lover's experience is to remain evocative of an actual relationship--been purged of conflicting forces by the power of the Easter sonnet or the allegorical treatment of the lady in sonnet 61. The poem's diction--its

contrast of "the purest sky" to "sweet pleasures bayt," for instance--retains the negative implications of a fall from spirituality into the temptations of the flesh, but its final lines imply instead a reconciliation of alternative heavens in the present moment:

> ...my fraile fancy, fed with full delight,
> Doth bath in blisse, and mantleth most at ease;
> Ne thinks of other heaven, but how it might
> Her harts desire with most contentment please.
> Hart need not wishe none other happinesse,
> But here on earth to have such heavens blisse.

The repetition of "most" and the alliteration of lines 9 and 10 thus place the force of amplitude against the moral weight of "fraile fancy" and "desire," while the repetition of "other" sustains the reader's awareness that two alternatives are being measured. The final line, however, brings the alternatives together by its equation of the lover's experience "on earth" with "such heavens blisse": the ultimate effect is to imply that the lover has made the best accommodation possible, an effect reinforced by the couplet's near-rhyme.

The accommodation has been made possible, in the first place, by the lover's accepting the value of the immediate and ever-changing experience in which he is immersed; what further understanding he gains, in other words, is generated from within love's "golden snare" (37) rather than by shifting his stance to a more detached perspective on the situation. The process of his discovery, nevertheless, is emphasized by its relation to those poems in which the more distanced voice of the poet-speaker is heard; such poems articulate a doctrine of love which informs the lover's experience yet provide, by the static nature of their instructive mode, a measure of the vitality which characterizes his efforts and mode of expression. Between the two

extremes of the poet-speaker obligated by his public responsibility and the fictional lover immersed in the private realm, secondly, emerges the potential for poetic expression appropriate to the experience of love which is reflected in the artful beauty of Amoretti 71. In this development, the Amoretti modifies the treatment of artistic power conventional to the fictional lovers of the minor sequences. It does so, most significantly, without its speaker removing himself from the experience of love; the modification, that is, does not reduce the experience to raw materials for the poet to shape into a work which demonstrates his wit and ingenuity, as has been the case in the minor sequences presented by a poet-speaker. Instead, effective expression emerges from within the lover's immediate experience.

Several sonnets rely on the speaker's presentation of the lady's artistic power--a feature, as we have seen, of Amoretti 23--to emphasize his lover-like limitations. Her teaching capacity to "frame my thoughts and fashion me within," (8) for instance, is associated with the power to "calme the storme that passion did begin" (8) echoed in Amoretti 38's reference to the sweet and alluring music of Arion. The imagistic links between these poems and others in which the lover describes his situation as storm-tossed, or reflects on the darkness of "the world where your love shined never," (8) stresses the coherence of the fictional experience, and his complaints of his own powerlessness ally the Amoretti's speaker with the fictional lovers of the minor sequences:

> ...my rude musicke, which was wont to please
> Some dainty eares, cannot, with any skill,
> The dreadfull tempest of her wrath appease,
> Nor move the dolphin from her stubborne will. (38)

The relation thus established is a familiar one: herself static in

resistance to the lover's pleas, the lady has yet a moving power over others by which the lover discovers his own persuasive powers to be inadequate.

Ironically, however, it is in the acknowledgement of his own artistic difficulties and limitations that the lover produces his most winning effects. He stresses till the end of the Amoretti his humble stance, presenting himself as "so meane a one," whose "so lowly state" is a "disparagement" (66) to the lady's honour, much as Amoretti 82 focuses on "your owne mishap.../ That are so much by so meane love embased." In the latter poem, the lady's creative power is again stressed, as she assumes an imaginative role akin to that of Britomart in The Faerie Queene:

> ...ye mote invent
> Some hevenly wit, whose verse could have enchased
> Your glorious name in golden moniment.

Significantly, the poem occurs shortly after Amoretti 80's allusion to the poet-speaker's epic work. The effect already noted in sonnets 33 and 34, that the illusion of fictional reality created in The Faerie Queene is conveyed to the sequence's lover, is duplicated at this later stage and reminds the reader that the historical poet is responsible for the improvement in the lover's fortunes. At the same time, the concentration on the lady which has distinguished the lover from the poet-speaker results in a vision of mutual creation:

> ...since ye deignd so goodly to relent
> To me your thrall, in whom is little worth,
> That little that I am shall all be spent
> In setting your immortal prayses forth:
> Whose lofty argument, uplifting me,
> Shall lift you up into an high degree. (82)

Instead of regarding immersion in love as a prison to be escaped for

achievement in a more public mode or as a relaxation from toil on an epic creation, in other words, the lover triumphantly asserts the possibility of reciprocal creation in the generous giving which he has discovered within the experience: each participates in a process that is simultaneously an illumination of the loved one, as in Britomart's vision, and a self-creation. The emphasis on process and creation as opposed to fixed status is amplified by the sonnet's echo of the lover's earlier promise that his lady will receive "much greater glory.../ Then had ye sorted with a princes pere." (66)

Moreover, those sonnets which present the lover attempting to find apt objects of comparison to the lady's physical features--engaged in the poetic process of granting her "greater glory"--emphasize a gradual discovery of truth illuminated by the lover's recognition that his efforts are only partial, and can never achieve a fixed form. Amoretti 7, for instance, never answers the question posed by its opening quatrain:

> Fayre eyes, the myrrour of my mazed hart,
> What wondrous vertue is contaynd in you,
> The which both lyfe and death forth from you dart
> Into the object of your mighty view?

When in sonnet 9 the conclusion is reached that "to the Makers selfe they likest be," the moral vision of the lady's beauty as reflection of the divine cannot be sustained; the juxtaposition with Amoretti 10's description of "huge massacres which her eyes do make" stresses the inadequacy of such an intepretation to define the lover's more diverse reactions. In Amoretti 17's direct acknowledgement of difficulties in "painting" her beauties, however, his inability to sustain a distanced awe creates an ironic and effective victory for the lover's more limited

perspectives:

> The glorious pourtraict of that angels face,
> Made to amaze weake mens confused skill,
> And this worlds worthlesse glory to embase,
> What pen, what pencill, can expresse her fill?
> For though he colours could devize at will,
> And eke his learned hand at pleasure guide,
> Least, trembling, it his workmanship should spill,
> Yet many wondrous things there are beside.
> The sweet eye-glaunces, that like arrowes glide,
> The charming smiles, that rob sence from the hart,
> The lovely pleasaunce, and the lofty pride,
> Cannot expressed be by any art.
> A greater craftsmans hand thereto doth neede,
> That can expresse the life of things indeed.

The sonnet's central paradox creates a tension which is felt in every part: that face which "Cannot expressed be by any art" is an important a subject as is the lover's difficulty in expressing its value and effect. The opening metaphor tacitly acknowledges the work of "A greater craftsman" who has fashioned the lady for particular purposes, yet the "many wondrous things...beside" the accomplished portrait, which are the subject of the third quatrain, divert the reader's attention from the superior, divine craftsman and his completed work to the experience which the lover is presently undergoing, and which he presents as a harmonious equation of fluid action and inner qualities. Measured by the static portrait with which he begins, then, the lover's temporary distraction by the mobile qualities of the lady's face successfully expresses "the life of things indeed."

Spenser's presentation of what has generally been regarded as the sequence's climax, Amoretti 68, is similarly informed by the dramatic contrast of two speakers which emerges in the relation of sonnets 67 and 68. The Easter-sonnet itself, which treats the Resurrection as "the lesson [of love] which the Lord us taught," repeatedly diverts attention

to events preceding and following: only by the Crucifixion and "having harrowed hell" is Christ's "triumph over death and sin" possible, ensuring that mankind "May live for ever in felicity." It offers, then, a theological still point of illumination informed by its broader context of pain, doubt, and an anticipation of eternal felicity. The poem's diction, similarly, invites the reader to understand the transformed motifs of captivity and purchase both by means of their Biblical significance and by comparison to earlier sonnets, while its argument that the protagonists "With love may one another entertayne" looks forward from the vantage point informed by the lover's earlier offering of "new love to entertaine" (4) or his search for "a truce, and terms to entertaine." (12) Like the lover, the poet-speaker describes a mutual effort, but the sonnet is dominated by its address to and celebration of the "Most glorious Lord of life." (68) As a result, the persuasive motive evident in the couplet's turn to the lady--"So let us love, deare love, lyke as we ought" (68)--conveys primarily the sense of a moral imperative sustained by an external framework of values. The personal realm of the lovers, that is, is subordinated to "the lesson" which should inform all human life, and the poem's instructive mode emphasizes the poet-speaker's invitation to the reader to consider thoughtfully the interaction of divine and human realms.

The reciprocity which the lover has so long desired, in fact, receives its most evocative treatment not in the Easter sonnet but in Amoretti 67, immediately preceding.[8] As we have seen, the distinctive nature of its opening similitude alone has an impact on our reading of the poem, and its effect is not muted by the familiarity of the central

hunting motif. As Dasenbrook points out, Spenser's poem echoes earlier versions by Petrarch, Tasso, and Wyatt; "he seems close to Wyatt in that he transforms Petrarch in a realistic and more personal direction," (43) yet the sonnet's conclusion resembles Tasso in its description of the lady's capture:

> Lyke as a huntsman, after weary chace,
> Seeing the game from him escapt away,
> Sits downe to rest him in some shady place,
> With panting hounds beguiled of their pray:
> So, after long pursuit and vaine assay,
> When I all weary had the chace forsooke,
> The gentle deare returnd the self-same way,
> Thinking to quench her thirst at the next brooke.
> There she, beholding me with mylder looke,
> Sought not to fly, but fearlesse still did bide:
> Till I in hand her yet halfe trembling tooke,
> And with her owne goodwill hir fyrmely tyde.
> Strange thing, me seemd, to see a beast so wyld,
> So goodly wonne, with her owne will beguyld.

Several devices may be isolated to account for the evocative force of this poem. In the first place, its emphasis on the lover's weariness grows naturally from the sequence's development to this point, immersing this sonnet--despite the opening simile's suggestion of some forethought--convincingly in the lover's experience. Similarly, the poem's five participles operate despite its narrative mode to convey a sense of active poise appropriate to the significance of this climactic moment; in this respect it creates a mood similar to that of Amoretti 71's description of the lady's "drawen work," interpreted as an emblem of the same moment. The larger harmony of the lover's and the lady's artistic treatment of conquest is embodied within Amoretti 67 as well: both are surprised by the other's presence as they seek relief from the wearying chase, and both are "mylder" in aspect, having abandoned the antagonistic stances produced by the battle of the sexes. Accordingly,

some ambivalence draws the two figures together in the third quatrain with the detail "yet halfe trembling," which may apply to the hesitation of the "fearlesse" yet "gentle deare" or to that of the huntsman-lover, himself "beguyld" by the strangeness of her acquiescence. Interestingly, the adjective echoes the lover's description of the "trembling" (17) of one who would try to capture the lady's beauty in painting or in verse.

Amoretti 67 and 68 thus set in dramatic contrast qualities of unexpected discovery and more detached understanding. The Easter sonnet defines mutual love as obedience to a moral imperative--"So let us love, deare love, lyke as we ought:/ Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught"--while the quiet triumph which emerges in Amoretti 67 results from the abandonment of strenuous efforts and the relaxation of stubborn resistance. The earlier of the two poems gains from its immersion in the immediate experience a depth of personal conviction which Amoretti 68, with its more distanced perspective on the lovers' place in a larger moral scheme, does not. While the Easter sonnet's external framework of values contributes to our understanding of the preceding poem, in a sense validating the lover's sense of a mysterious wonder, the contrast in style and stance also implies that love's vivid perturbations need not interfere with insight and poetic expression. Reversing earlier moments in which the lover's "thoughts astonishment" or sense of being "ravisht...with fancies wonderment" (3) stop his pen, Amoretti 67 provides a dramatic climax to the fictional action of the sequence as Amoretti 68 does its treatment of love's significance as participation in the divine.

The implied presence of the poet in his work at this point reminds the reader that he is, as the lover has earlier described the lady, "th'author of my blisse" (22); the historical poet, that is, manipulates the Amoretti's fictional circumstances so that the lady relents and the lover achieves his desire for reciprocal love. Earlier in the sequence, the lover asks "if in your hardned brest ye hide/ A close intent at last to shew me grace," (25) as if requesting some guarantee that the experience in which he is immersed will be shaped into a coherent narrative with a satisfactory conclusion. He does not receive the assurance, for such understanding would shift his stance to the more encompassing perspective of the poet-speaker, able in sonnets like Amoretti 61 and 68 to articulate a confident interpretation of the lady's beauty as reflection of divine truth. From his more distanced and instructive perspective, the poet-speaker offers the reader a fuller understanding of the lover's situation and the positive quality of his longing than he himself can sustain, yet validates the lover's intimations of the potential inherent in his situation. At the same time, the static nature of the poet-speaker's interpretation highlights the vivid immediacy of the lover's feelings, so that what emerges from within the experience of love gains a life-like vitality. The very feature which prevents the lover from assuming a more detached perspective on his situation--his concentration on the lady's presence and her physical reality--is also responsible for his occasional insight into the doubts and hesitations she shares with him, setting up a sympathetic reciprocity which makes plausible the climactic moment described in sonnets 67 and 71. It is responsible as well for the

poetic effectiveness of sonnets like Amoretti 17, despite the lover's complaints about his artistic incapacity; the appropriateness of expression of feeling there emerges like the lover's unexpected discovery of the lady's acquiescence.

Shifts in the speaker's stance recur to the end of the Amoretti, for the two-fold causes of desolation in the final sonnets derive from the public and private realms, and produce two quite different types of response. Sonnet 86's attack on "Venomous toungs" addresses a perversion of language in public intercourse, in the prestige-conscious world evoked in the self-referential sonnets 33 and 80: "poysoned words," "spitefull speeches," and "false forged lyes" represent the world's intrusion into the private realm of the sequence's protagonists. The poem's tone is dramatic in a series of accusations, yet control is exerted in the opening allusion to the Furies and in the self-confident strategy outlined in the final lines:

> The spearkes whereof let kindle thine own fyre,
> And catching hold on thine own wicked hed,
> Consume thee quite, that didst with guile conspire
> In my sweet peace such breaches to have bred.
> Shame be thy meed, and mischiefe thy reward,
> Due to thy self, that it for me prepard.

Consequently, a sense of satisfaction at the verbally-effected reversal dominates the poem's emotional content, as "sweet peace" is grammatically subordinated to the implied listener's conspiracy and the prospect of revenge. As in Amoretti 10's self-conscious strategy, it is rhetorical victory which seems of primary concern to the poet-speaker.

The shift in stance which occurs in the couplet of Amoretti 10 recurs in the movement from sonnet 86 to 87, and it is partly in relation to the public mode of Amoretti 86 that the final three sonnets

gain their impact. Repetition in the opening phrases--"Since I did leave" (87) and "Since I have lackt" (88)--implies the lover's single-minded focus on the lady's absence, a concentration on the experience in which he is immersed which prevents the self-conscious planning of strategy or the self-confident tone of Amoretti 86 from developing. The lover has returned to an earlier state of doubt and anticipation, as he questions the sufficiency of "the idaea playne" (88) and "the time with expectation spend[s]" (87). Stylistic devices in both poems stress the limitations imposed on his perspective; the repetition of "day/night" and "night/light" contrasts both embodies his sense of loss and marks the fixity of thought caused by the sequence's fictional circumstances. As we have seen, the couplet closing Amoretti 88 is particularly effective as it juxtaposes the adjustment of human love to divine intentions with the reality of the lover's need, and the sonnets together insist on the human actuality of the situation: that is, the harmonious reconciliation achieved in Amoretti 67 and 68 is not a permanent state, "enchased/...in golden moniment," (82) but a tenuous poise subject to the flux and uncertainties of life.

The Amoretti closes with a poem which, like the opening sonnet, evokes the simultaneous presence of poet and lover. We have already seen that its similitude in the first quatrain balances a sense of forethought with a quiet and emotionally convincing tone, to suggest a depth of feeling again reached in relation to the poet-speaker's self-confident tone and playfulness with the materials of experience. The lover presents himself as

> ...the culver on the bared bough [who]
> Sits mourning for the absence of her mate,

> And in her songs sends many a wishful vow
> For his returne, that seemes to linger late.

The identification with the female culver is an odd one for the male lover, and may echo the action of Amoretti 67 in that the usual sexual dynamics of courtship--which dichotomize the aggressively pursuing man and the resistant lady--have been abandoned. The lover experiences doubt at the end of the sequence, but the discovery of reciprocal love which has occurred continues to cast light on his emotional state. At the same time, the simile echoes that which Euterpe has used to describe herself and her sister Muses, "All comfortlesse upon the bared bow,/ Like wofull culvers." (Teares of the Muses, lines 246-47) The central argument of her speech, that "Ignorance," "fed with Furies milde," (lines 250, 261) has trampled "The sacred springs of horsefoot Helicon," (line 271) indirectly associates the personal desolation of sonnet 89 with the protest against a perversion of speech in Amoretti 86. Its imagery may also explain the poet-speaker's hopeful anticipation of his action "as a steed refreshed after toyle," (80) breaking from the imprisonment of sonneteering, which has also provided a period of relaxation, to epic achievement.

The final sonnet thus provides, as has the first, a set of mixed signals to the reader; the figure of the poet seems to regret the unresolved quality of the narrative and the loss of inspiration, while the poem's tone and the image of the solitary bird convey a plausible sense of the desolate lover. The ambivalence is appropriate to the absence of a formal conclusion to the Amoretti, and as its open-endedness may set a preparatory stage for the Epithalamion, so the disappointment which is shared by poet-speaker and lover may anticipate

their merging in the figure of the marriage-hymn's poet-lover. The implied relation of the two works has been a factor in strikingly different evaluations of the Amoretti and its conclusion: Martz, for instance, notes suggestions that the lady's absence is merely temporary to argue that the unresolved action of the sequence is designed to provoke expectations of the Epithalamion, while Hunter argues that the mode of the marriage-hymn, by reflecting an habitual strength of Spenser's work, provides insight into the weaknesses of the sonnet sequence. Spenser's strength, he argues, is the capacity to throw an imaginative colouring over the facts of real life, so that they offer a sense of sacramental occasion, and the built-in structure and significance of the wedding-day ritual allows him fully to exploit this capacity; the courtship of the Amoretti, on the other hand, is less obviously of such significance and is hence more difficult to sacramentalize.

Yet the Amoretti constitutes not a failed attempt to confer meaning on a series of events which do not easily lend themselves to transcendant significance, nor must it be read in anticipation of the Epithalamion to be fully appreciated. Instead, the unresolved quality of its conclusion sustains to the end the Amoretti's emphasis on the volatile interaction of its two protagonists, despite the static nature of the relationship determined by generic conventions. In the final sonnets, those conventions refuse a formal confirmation of the reciprocal love which the lover believes himself to have discovered, and the contention of sustaining idea and troubling desire which he consequently feels reinforces the sense that a rhythm of insight and

doubt is inevitable to the experience of human love. The final sonnet's ambiguity of stance and its suggestion that the lover and poet-speaker share a feeling of loss and regret, moreover, validate the lover's insights into his experience, stressing the Amoretti's effective demonstration of discovery from within the experience of love rather than imposition of meaning from without.

The poet-speaker has been identified in the Amoretti's opening sonnet with the physical object of the completed work; this identification is confirmed in the self-referential sonnets 33 and 80, which reinforce as well the direction of the poet-speaker's words to a larger audience. It is due to this audience, concerned with reputation, that the lady's status relative to that of "the Faery Queene" (80) "that most sacred empresse," (33) becomes an issue. Making the adjustment which concludes Amoretti 80, in fact, Spenser's poet-speaker assumes a stance similar to that of Constable's in Diana; each lady is a "handmayd" (80) to one whose social status is superior, and the articulation of this relation implies the poet-speaker's concern with the prestige his work may gain him in a broader circle of readers. The epithets parallel the social hierarchy and the hierarchy of the genres, and the poet-speaker's displaying an appropriate respect for this framework of values--external to the private sphere of the lover--is a significant factor in justifying his apparent dereliction of public duty. In this context, those poems in which he assumes an instructive stance, offering from a more detached perspective Platonic or Christian interpretations of the lover's experience, suggest a subtle defense of his subject matter in the Amoretti. Yet the poet-speaker, having

completed "those six books" (80) of his "long...race" (80) to compose his epic work, does not resolve the sequence's fictional action, although his presence in the work is implied in its final poems. The ultimate effect of the shift in stance from sonnet 86 to those following and of the ambivalence of the final poem, then, is to suggest that the poet-speaker has been "won over" to the vitality of the lover's fictional world and to the value of its central focus on the lady, objecting to the intrusion into that world of a public context in which concern with prestige leads to the "accursed hyre" of those who defame the lover with "false forged lyes." (86)

An examination of the rhetorical stance of the speakers in Astrophil and Stella and in the Amoretti thus allows us to appreciate more fully the degree of skill which makes them enduring works. Significantly, such an examination also allows us to consider Sidney and Spenser together, despite the contrasts between their accomplishments, and to appreciate the extent to which both provoke from the reader a more active response than is the case with the minor sequences. Whether the speaker's stance is ambiguous in an individual poem or whether it shifts from that of the poet-speaker to that of the fictional lover from one sonnet to another, the reader must become engaged with the text in order to understand the varying degrees of awareness involved and to follow the corresponding shifts in the speaker's relation to the sequence's larger audience. Astrophil and Stella and the Amoretti, then, are similar in their exploitation of the full range of relations between poet and speaker available to the Elizabethan sonneteer, and this similarity is central to their status as major works in the genre.

An approach to the sonnet sequence by means of the rhetorical stance of its speaker confirms the superiority of Sidney's Astrophil and Stella and of Spenser's Amoretti to minor works in the genre. At the same time, defining the minor sequences' limitations as a consequence of their speakers' fixed stance allows us to recognize the skill with which certain minor sonneteers employ and manage the figures of poet-speaker and of fictional lover. These works serve an historical function insofar as they demonstrate two alternative rhetorical models, the poles of expression between which Sidney and Spenser move so effectively and provocatively. They display, moreover, certain features which may help

to account for the popularity of sonneteering in England during the 1580s and 1590s.

Watson's Passionate Centurie of Love and Constable's Diana imply throughout the courtly context in which poems of appeal to a virtuous and all-powerful figure have a striking social and political relevance, as their poet-speakers, distanced from the immediate experience of love, exploit the conventional materials of its literary treatment for the purposes of effective self-presentation and compliment. Smith's Chloris and Lodge's Phillis illustrate the similarity of the sonnet sequence's situation and motifs with those of another popular genre, the pastoral; their treatment of the themes of love and expression, highlighted by the interconnection of these two sets of conventions, is shaped by concern with the plausibility and consistency of the fictional character of the lover. The same coherence of character, style, and theme is evident as well in Fletcher's Licia and in Barnes' Parthenophil and Parthenophe, minor sequences which demonstrate the diversity of tone and attitudes to love which is available even within the restrictions imposed on expression by the lover's fixed stance.

The development in such minor sequences as these of a distinctive speaking voice and implied personality is particularly interesting in the light of frequent observations that a new consciousness of the individual self emerges in the Renaissance. Daniel's Delia most vividly, of the minor sequences, displays the impact of such consciousness, as the inward state of a thoughtful and isolated lover is effectively revealed and developed by his creator. As a result, Delia produces the most distinctive speaking voice of those which are heard in

minor sequences presenting the fictional character of the lover. In Greville's Caelica, on the other hand, the potential of the poet-speaker's role is realized in more depth than in The Passionate Centurie or in Diana: the encompassing perspective which invites an identification of the speaker with his creator, and his distance from the immediate experience of love, allow him to present a coherent analysis of those human susceptibilities which the experience illustrates. Concern with effective self-presentation--a feature he shares with the poet-speakers of Watson and Constable--is put by Greville's poet-speaker to serious moral and philosophical purposes.

Even these two sonnet sequences, nevertheless, share the limitations imposed by the fixed rhetorical stance of the speaker in the minor works. Only in Astrophil and Stella and in the Amoretti are the poet's and the lover's roles equally significant, as the speaker in each moves between the poles of proximity to and distance from the historical poet who has created him. In consequence, the public context and the private realm interpenetrate to provoke a complex and occasionally ambiguous response on the part of the speaker, and a vivid rendering of the experience of love is brought into fruitful conjunction with an awareness of self-presentation to the world, in person and in verse, and with a serious treatment of aesthetic, philosophical, and moral issues. The flexibility of the speaker's stance may highlight the process of self-scrutiny, as Astrophil's witty and often skeptical treatment of the self's multiple guises plays provocatively against the lover's single-minded devotion, to dramatize the difficulties of perception and self-knowledge. It may illuminate, in the Amoretti, the process of

discovering meaning and a coherent self from within a reciprocal love, conferring value on the immediacy of the lover's experience and on his efforts to render his reactions in effective verse. The speaker's flexible stance thus plays a central role in Sidney's and Spenser's capacity to realize more fully than have minor sonneteers the potentialities of the genre, its conventional situation and its concern with expression. Animated by the simultaneous impression of the poet's presence within his work and of his power to shape it from without, Astrophil and Stella and the Amoretti have an enduring interest for the active reader each demands.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER 1

[1] Although his Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961) deals exclusively with prose fiction, Booth's identification of various reasons for the failure of a literary work is nevertheless relevant to our understanding of The Passionate Centurie's weaknesses. The most obvious failure occurs, he claims, when there is a gross disparity between the author's claims to brilliance and the shoddiness of his presented story, a disparity emphasized in Watson's work by signals that the sequence's "story" matters to the poet-speaker only as a means to demonstrate his virtuosity. A related problem is the interference of an independent interest in style with the work's other effects, and this criterion Booth shares with Lever; both would criticize a work like The Passionate Centurie for the way in which its manner rivals its ostensible matter. The trouble arises, Booth adds, not from the author's presence in his work but from his repeatedly giving himself away as not caring sufficiently about what he does. It is clear that Watson's concern with self-display is "sincere", but his distance from the amatory material of the sequence, and assumption that his readers will share his attitude towards it, means that we are asked to judge The Passionate Centurie according to norms we cannot accept. Booth's final point, then, has to do with the character of the implied author, who must be interesting, appropriate to his context, and reliable as a guide both to the world of the work in which he appears and to the moral truths of the world outside that work. In each of these respects we can sense the weakness of the poet-speaker of The

Passionate Centurie.

[2] Thomson notes a similar tendency in her comparison of Watson's translation of Petrarch's Rime 132 (in Passion 5) to Chaucer's reconstruction of the same poem in three stanzas of rhyme royal in Troilus and Criseyde. Watson, she points out, is the more accurate translator, but his very adherence to the conventional literary treatments of love imposes certain limits on expression:

> His habitual interest in the 'familiar trueths' of the laws of love led him to seek and find them everywhere, and this produces further that un-Petrarchan tendency towards the abstract and general already incipient in the 'Canticus Troili.' His note on sonnet CXXXII draws attention to the representative lover: it expresses 'certaine contrarieties, whiche are incident to him that loveth extreemelye.' The passion itself soon deserts the subject of the poet-lover's own 'hurtes' to dwell, unlike the original, on those of 'many men.' Later, probably in order to stretch the sonnet to his own eighteen-line unit, Watson adds two lines. And these embody a piece of proverbial triteness quite out of tune with Petrarch's subjectivity, and even Troilus's. (160)

Such effects undercut the prose commentator's occasional focus on the subject of the poem in such a way as to imply that the experience of love is the poet's own: "And this the Author expresseth here in his owne person" (Gloss, 50). Elsewhere, this contrast derives somewhat comically from within the gloss itself, as when the commentator's assertion that the poet presents in sonnet 52 a "rehearsall of some particular hurts which he susteineth in the pursute of his love" is followed by an analysis of his self-conscious and detached arrangement of the lines of verse:

> Moreover it is to be noted, that the first letters of all the verses in his Passion being joyned together

> as they stand, do conteine this posie agreeable to his meaning, Amor me pungit & urit.

[3] The stance is so close, in fact, that both Ferry and Doyno assume Watson to have written the commentary to the poems. We should note, however, the author of the prose gloss is capable of criticizing as well as praising the poet's techniques. Eventually wearying of the virtuosity which is likely to tire the modern reader much sooner, for instance, he notes that sonnet 41 "is framed upon a somewhat too tedious or too much affected continuation of that figure in Rhetorique whiche ... of the Latines [is called] Reduplicatio." While the safest course is to assume two distinct writers, the significant point remains the general harmony of their attitudes to the subject of love, their common criteria of excellence in the sonnet, and their similar rhetorical stances.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER 2

[1] The attitude of Sir John of Bordeaux, which opens Lodge's Rosalynde, illustrates this attitude and the style in which it is most often expressed. Sir John's association of particular moral values with contrasting images of height and lowliness is, like his emphasis on a mean between two extremes, characteristic of the genre:

> Climbe not my sonnes; aspiring pride is a vapour that ascendeth hie, but turneth to smoake....Fortune lookes ever upward, and envie aspireth to restle with dignitie. Take heed my sonnes, the meane is sweetest medolie....
>
> Be valiant my sonnes, for cowardice is the enemie to honour; but not too rash, for that is an extreame. Fortitude is the meane, and that is limitted within bondes, and prescribed with circumstance. (2-3)

The imagery of such works consistently supports such advice: characters are warned repeatedly that cedars are storm-tossed while low bushes survive unharmed, that those who gaze at the sun and stars (conventional analogies in both pastoral and courtly love traditions for the lady and her eyes) fall blind and stumble on stones. Occasionally, in a vein which suggests the connection between the golden mean of fortitude and classical stoicism, the fate of Icarus is invoked.

Two additional features of Sir John's advice are worth noting for their relevance to the Petrarchan convention: his view of aspiration as leading not toward a transcendent ideal but towards disintegration ("turneth to smoake") or combat ("to restle with dignitie"), and his emphasis on the restrictions imposed even on such a virtue as valour. These features of the typically pastoral attitude can provoke a desire to retreat even from the high estate to which one is assigned by

Fortune, as in the imprisoned Bellaria's lament over the birth of her daughter, in Greene's Pandosto:

> Better thou hadst been born a beggar, then a Prince,
> so shouldest thou have bridled Fortune with want,
> where now shee sporteth herselfe with thy plentie.
> Ah happy life, where poore thoughts, and meane
> desires live in secure content, not fearing Fortune
> because too low for Fortune. (249)

[2] Thomas Cain similarly argues that the figure of Orpheus--the musician who charms, controls, and transforms the world, uniting by his parentage the powers of Apollo to teach widely and of Calliope to delight--offers the ambitious Renaissance poet an apt symbol of himself as artist. He attributes to the Renaissance humanists the achievement of "bring[ing] Orpheus to his full development as prototype of the compellingly articulate man, the glorified orator or poet...[and as]...a convenient culture-hero triumphantly symbolizing the goals of their rhetorical program." (25) In the minor sequences, when such Orphic powers are discussed at all, they are consistently attributed to the woman. The lover, on the other hand, speaks out of his compulsion to express his feelings, rather than from confidence in his capacity to compel others.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER 3

[1] One further exception to the fictional self-sufficiency of the sequence may be posed by Licia 22. Berry points out that it alludes to Fletcher's own trip to Russia (from June 1588 to the fall of 1589), and concludes from this allusion that it is addressed to Fletcher's daughter Judith, baptized 1 August 1591. He adds that a further topical reference lies in the possibility that Fletcher's father travelled to Persia, but notes that no public records offer corroborative evidence. Nevertheless, as this chapter will argue (page 152), Fletcher's use of this personal material is coherent with his presentation of the fictional lover and cooperates in particular with thematic treatment of identity. Travel to remote and exotic lands provides a striking backdrop to the lover's treatment of Licia's personal integrity, a value discovered in the private realm of love which then informs the world of public events, not the reverse.

[2] The satiric and erotic modes of expression in Parthenophil and Parthenophe argue against an identification of Parthenophe with an actual woman of Barnes' acquaintance, certainly with a lady of the family to which the work is dedicated. Such a real-life figure is likely the subject of the opening and closing sonnets, but the complimentary mode of Parthenophil and Parthenophe is indirect, as is that of Fletcher's Licia. The narrative development of the three-part work further emphasizes this point. As Doyno comments,

> Parthenophil, in the concluding triple sestina, casts a magical spell on Parthenophe and physically

> consummates his love. It seems, of course, unlikely that even the most indulgent Elizabethan noblewoman would feel complimented by the narration of coitus. Nor is it easy to imagine that other members of the Percy family would think that a poem about sexual intercourse with their relative had graced the family reputation. (xxiii)

The complimentary intention thus resides in the creation of the work per se, as a means of paying tribute to a noble family. As noted, play on the Percy names serves as a reminder of this underlying purpose, but its effect is incidental to the common currency of the verb "pearse" (as in Astrophel's description of Cupid's arrow which "pierc'd my heart" in sonnet 20, or in Wyatt's declaration that "My song may perse her hert as sone" Egerton Manuscript, 66), appropriate to the fictional lover's sense of having been struck and transfixed by the lady's gaze.

Finally, as Doyno points out, when Barnes draws on the traditional motif of the lady's coat of arms, in sonnet 90, he neglects the possibility which Sidney exploits in Astrophel and Stella, of developing a recognizable coat of arms and thus communicating a sense of the lady's historical reality. Instead, he constructs an icon of Parthenophe's face, playing effectively on the central witticism that her "arms" are her face and eyes, but achieving that effect within a limited scope that confirms his dependence on her.

[3] Sonnet 94, for instance, demonstrates a characteristic weakness of Barnes' verse in its confusing treatment of the theme, the relation of eye and heart. Doyno points out that the compliment to Parthenophe in the final couplet fails to clarify the obscurity of the rest:

> the tendency to pile one metaphor on top of another, or, if more favorable terms are desired, the prolific poetic imagination, lessens the importance and

> prohibits the full development of each metaphor. This inability to control subject matter and the extravagance in handling metaphor are weaknesses which occur in many of Barnes' poems. (174)

[4] These sonnets, it should be noted, do contain certain biographical details; the comment that "now mine age had thrise seven winters ronne" in sonnet 33, for instance, parallels Parthenophil's with his creator's likely age at the time of composition. (Eccles notes that "Barnes' date of birth has commonly been given as 1569; but he was baptized on March 6, 1570-71" [167] while Parthenophil and Parthenophe, composed in 1591-92, appeared in about May of 1593.) Similarly, the speaker's memory of a time when he stole Cupid's bow and arrows to shoot at "shrew'd gyrles, and at boyes in other places," and his question following--"How many boyes and gyrles, wish't mine embraces?"--may allude to homosexual tendencies in the work's creator at which Eccles hints: "Whether or not Barnabe Barnes was that mysterious being, the Rival Poet, it is clear that he was one of the rivals for Southampton's favor." (167).

Yet in either case, it seems, the relevance of these details to Barnes' fictional narrative is as significant as a possible identification of speaker and poet. Parthenophil's youth is appropriate to the conventional figure of the lover, and while his contrasts between past and present experience reveal a consciousness of captivity, that consciousness does not allow him to shape his experience into a significant pattern beyond the houses of the Zodiac, applied to the story of his past. The "shrew'd gyrles, and...boyes" who wish his embraces do so when Parthenophil, again in a fanciful re-creation of the past, has assumed the guise of Cupid--the mythological figure who

controls the game of love popular with the younger Parthenophil's contemporaries, and for whose embrace (as participation in the experience of love) they long.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER 4

[1] Sweetness and refinement, purity of language and dignity of sentiment are the features of Daniel's verse traditionally extolled. Grosart catalogues references to and appraisals of Daniel in the critical introduction to his edition of the complete works, and the survey demonstrates a general agreement with Crow on the absence of strong feeling in Delia. Minto, for instance, comments in Characteristics of the English Poets from Chaucer to Shirley:

> He was no master of strong passions: he never felt them, and he could not paint them...But he is most exquisite and delicate in pencilling "tender passions, motions soft and grave." Without being strikingly original, Daniel has a way and a vein of his own. He fills his mind with ideas and forms from extraneous sources, and with quietly operating plasticity reshapes them in accordance with the bent of his own modes of thought and feeling...The sonnets of Delia have all Daniel's smoothness and felicity of phrase, and are pervaded by exceedingly sweet and soft sentiment. Though they rouse no strong feelings, they may be dwelt upon by a sympathetic reader with lively enjoyment.

Saintsbury is similarly personal in his critique: "He is decidedly wanting in strength, and despite Delia, can hardly be said to have a spark of passion." Grosart, on the other hand, claims to discover in Delia a genuine record of "the lights and shadows of real passion," and cites the sequence as one of seven reasons for granting to Daniel a high place among Elizabethan and Jacobean poets. He particularly objects to Minto's judgment, and attacks in return:

> He shows slender knowledge of the emotion--the passion--the genuine feeling that informed the blood and warmed the imagination of Daniel. It is to me simply astounding how any man could read "Delia" without recognizing the lava-tide of emotion that beat in his now "disdained" and now "favored" heart.

What is most interesting about this debate, besides the unstated assumption that the voice speaking and the emotions communicated are those of Daniel himself, is the acceptance, as in Crow's introductory comments, of the quality of emotion as the essential standard of judgment.

[2] The fact that the 1592 edition of the sonnets informs us that the speaker's faith "was with blood and thre yeares witnes signed" and that the edition of 1601 adds only two years to the period of witness, suggests that while the poet may make alterations which correspond loosely to the passage of time, it is futile to use details from the sonnets to locate events in his life, where internal evidence does not otherwise suggest an identification of poet and speaker.

[3] Ferry's comments on the use of the word "feeling" in the Renaissance, which she illustrates by reference to his sonnet (identified as Delia 35, from an earlier edition of the sequence) and to the second sonnet of Astrophil and Stella, reinforce the impression of a predominant inwardness in Delia, of the lover's particular concern with sincerity, and of Daniel's generally unambiguous presentation of his speaker's stance. The word is usually used as an adjective, she notes, and rarely conveys the sense of the modern "feelings" as an equivalent to emotions themselves:

> When characterizing human attributes, as in a line from Daniel's Delia 35, "In feeling hearts, that can conceive these lines," it referred to the capacity for experiencing emotions. Signifying the quality of something nonhuman, feeling meant vivid or lively, for example when Sidney in Sonnet 2 calls Astrophil's art "a feeling skill," meaning a technique capable of stirring the reader. (12).

As this chapter will demonstrate, Delia's speaker shows little concern with technical aspects of his expression which might produce an impact on the reader; his primary audience is Delia herself, and when a larger audience is considered, the lover assumes that the emotions sincerely reflected in his verse--evocative of his condition and proof of the lady's virtuous power--will suffice to affect those sympathetic to his experience.

[4] The stylistic critique, incidentally, is appropriate to Daniel's own concerns as a poet: Miller notes his deletion of archaisms such as "for that" or "whilst that" in revisions to Delia, and cites as the principle behind such changes Sidney's criticism in the Defence of the practise of

> feigning strange or unusual wordes, as if it were to make our verse seeme an other kind of speach out of the course of our usuall practise, displacing our wordes, or investing new, onely upon a singularitie. (cited in Miller, 63)

One change in Delia, however, adds rather than deletes an unusual word; the revision from "my lives light thus wholy darkned is" to "my lives light wholy indarkned is" can be justified not on the basis of poetic principle, but by its intensification of the sequence's predominant inwardness.

[5] It is difficult to accept Miller's evaluation of Daniels' revisions to this sonnet; he claims that the new couplet is "stilted and trite" and argues that the poem as a whole

> has become quieter in imagery and in movement; in fact, so quiet is the sonnet that the original remorse which infused it is gone. But the changes are not major, most of them being dictated by the elimination of weak rhymes. It is significant, moreover, that Daniel revised within the framework of

> moreover, that Daniel revised within the framework of his basic image and his original situation. He polished rather than recreated. (68)

While Miller's work on certain patterns in the revisions is helpful, that he pays little attention to rhetorical stance limits the value of his analysis. Neither the intensification of the lover's self-blame nor those revisions which increase instances of direct address to Delia are noted.

[6] Most critical studies are in agreement on Caelica's tonal unity and the sense of a steady evolution in the ideas treated and attitudes assumed, subjects which receive more attention than Litt's assumption that the sequence is generated by a "real" love affair, which is burning itself out about halfway through the work and is reflected in the slow transition to sonnet 84. From the beginning of Caelica, as Croll notes, "The sonnets in which...the speaker...speaks the language of natural passion are very few, and the far commoner mood is that in which he renounces earthly love and Caelica altogether," (20) while the middle section develops themes which provide for (though they do not yet directly provoke) the expression of religious ideas. An interesting perspective is provided by Marotti's analysis of Caelica's two-part structure: while he agrees with critics who see Greville as uncomfortable with love poetry, so that the shift in subject matter is in part due to temperamental affinities with more philosophical verse, he relies on Levy's description of Greville as "a self-serving and unprincipled politician" (443) to argue against the usual account of "a deepening spiritual commitment that may have taken the form of a conversion experience." (Marotti, 420) Instead, he maintains, while the

earlier Caelica poems are generated by "the coterie circumstances of sociopolitically encoded love poetry," (418) this technique of mediating between the courtier-poet's private needs and the social order was abandoned when the different circumstances of James I's reign led to a devaluation of love poetry as a cultural medium:

> What happened was that the social circumstances for the production and consumption of literary texts altered. Instead of a Queen who recognized the reality of ambition, manipulated it, and allowed it to be expressed in the language of love, there was a king on the English throne, a man whose earlier sonnets to his wife were perfunctory performances and who misread the ambitious designs of many of his courtiers as love and affection for his person. The author of a treatise on witchcraft and of a scathingly antifeminist poem, James I was inclined to regard women as creatures on whom to project the worst male vices and weaknesses. He preferred also religious and philosophical mystifications of human relationships to fictions of amorous and ambitious yearnings. (421)

As throughout his analysis of the sonnet sequence's relation to the social order, Marotti's suggestion that Greville adapts his subject matter to suit a different milieu offers valuable insights into the mixed motives which determine the nature of individual works in the genre. His interest in the cultural currency of Caelica's different subjects, however, sharpens the distinction between the sequence's two parts in a way which is not justified by the text, and results in too harsh a judgment on the shift effected in sonnet 84, as does Rebholz's conclusion that Caelica evolves into a series of anti-love poems. Caelica is neither anti-love nor anti-feminist: what concerns the speaker is the susceptibility of human love to lust and inconstancy, and if the female figures he presents are more commonly changeable, the male lover is consistently prone to self-deception. Ultimately, moreover,

the anatomy of "the various fallacies that result from...[the Petrarchan lover's]...pretension to find the ideal in the real" (Waswo, 60) expands coherently in the final section of Caelica to include more general issues in what has been a consistent moral analysis, and the result is to parallel the various types of human fallacy.

[7] Waswo points out that the identification of a mythical golden age with the Christian paradise was a medieval commonplace. He adds of the relation of classical to Christian teaching that, for Greville, virtue resides in a giving up of the self to God, a spiritual abdication which no heathen philosophy can accomplish, although a philosophy which trains man first to renounce the things of this world may indeed be useful. The sestet of Caelica 86, advising that man can either "endure" or "forsake" his temporal ills, is cited to point out the relevance of this approach to the sequence.

[8] Larson, for instance, argues that

> the mature Greville could hardly have agreed with Sidney that the poet creates a world that never existed, a world filled with things "better than Nature bringeth forth." Greville's world is always profoundly real, always filled with the deficiencies of human nature as he found it. (110)

[9] The poem which seems most emphatically to draw questions of poetic method to the reader's attention, Caelica 80, is by general agreement a rather difficult one. Its central contrast, claims MacLean, suggests the distinction between poets like Sidney and Greville's own, less gifted type:

> Clear spirits, which in images set forth
> The ways of Nature by fine imitation,

> Are oft forc'd to hyperboles of worth,
> As oft again to monstrous declination;
> So that their heads must lin'd be, like the sky,
> For all opinion's arts to traffic by.
>
> Dull spirits again, which love all constant grounds,
> As comely veils for their unactiveness,
> Are oft forc'd to contract, or stretch their bounds,
> As active power spreads her beams more, or less:
> For though In Nature's wane these guests come forth;
> Can place, or stamp make current aught but worth?

The love of "all constant grounds" is equated in MacLean's analysis with captivity "to the trueth of a foolish world," and the sense of uneven personal capacity conveyed by lines 10 and 11 is certainly appropriate to the humility of Greville's poet-speaker. Yet both types of "spirits," as the word "again" implies, confront the difficulties of communicating enduring truths (an alternative reading of "all constant grounds") to a human audience implicitly considered throughout the poem. Imitation of "The ways of Nature," moreover, corresponds to Caelica's analysis of innate human susceptibilities, and Waswo's The Fatal Mirror argues that the "sense of declination" (a phrase used in Greville's Treatise of Humane Learning) defines the sum of human knowledge as an awareness of man's corruption from his prelapsarian state. In a sense, then, lines 3 and 4 parallel lines 10 and 11 in meaning as in syntax, suggesting that Caelica 80 is more centrally concerned with flawed human perception--in poet and in audience--than with different poetic rhetorics.

[10] Much of Waswo's analysis of Caelica's early sonnets is concerned, for instance, to demonstrate Greville's tendency

> to use the rhetorical patterns of the ornate style either to illustrate his general concepts, or to

> modify in audacious and subtle ways the very attitudes towards experience that the style itself implies. (44)

He focuses on the speaker's ironic use of conventional images, as in the eclipsed sun of Caelica 5, and his ironic word-plays such as the repetition of "graces" and "graced" in Caelica 6, which "is deliberately set up in opposition to the inward bondage being described." (49-50) Such analysis emphasizes the way in which style indicates from the beginning the poet-speaker's encompassing awareness, his clear understanding of the lover's dilemmas, and his grasp on a moral framework in which these dilemmas are ultimately subsumed.

[11] Caelica 60 is more closely allied to conventional treatments of this motif. Responding to the woman's charge that "I do obscurely live," especially since such solitary seclusion gives rise to rumours of misogyny or a proud reserve, the speaker sets himself emphatically apart from the world of fame and honour, reinterpreting these values in an assertion of inwardness which suggests the predominant qualities of Delia's lover:

> I feel within, what men without me blame:
> ...
> Knowledge and fame in open hearts do live,
> Honour is pure heart's homage unto these,
> Affection all men unto beauty give,
> And by that law enjoined are to please:
> The world in two I have divided fit;
> Myself to you, and all the rest to it.

The poet-speaker's closer alliance on this point to the fictional lovers of such sequences as Chloris and Phillis, than to Watson's or Constable's poet-speaker, is not surprising; while his rhetorical strategies are generally chosen to persuade the work's larger audience

of his words' validity, the intention is moral illumination rather than the display of personal qualities which might win him public renown. Thus he shares with the fictional lovers a rejection of worldly ambition, and reinterprets their solitude as an opportunity for moral regeneration.

[12] Waswo, noting "the highly formalized language and rhetoric of the whole poem [which] lends great contrasting force to the simple and direct statement that concludes it," (50-51) does find a vindictive element in Caelica 8, but concedes that it is "much milder" (51) than the tone of Donne's similar attacks on the Petrarchan lover's servile pose. His analysis, moreover, implies throughout the speaker's greater interest in "genuine analysis of the experience from which...[self-pity]...arises" (51) than in the lamentations it traditionally produces or in the rhetorical advantage which might be gained by developing the threat of time's revenge.

[13] Waswo's analysis, which incorporates the lines from the Warwick MS most often omitted in editions of Caelica, stresses the impulse to power which the dream-vision dramatizes. As he points out:

> The whole fantasy is facilitated by the idealizing vision of cosmic harmony, but Greville makes the carnal motive clear by the language he employs and the myths he chooses, all of which project delusions of sexual grandeur, in conquest, expression, or possession...What begins as pure eroticism shades, as the very heavens blush with passion, into more generalized, though still sexually derived, hallucinations of power. (69)

This development is clearer in the longer version of Caelica 56, yet the poem is more successful, I think, in the form in which it is usually

presented; the omission of two dozen lines makes the structure of the poem as a whole agree with the brevity and quick pace of its individual lines, stylistic features which add to its humorous impact.

[14] Waswo considers Greville's emphasis on Cupid's childishness a means of sharpening his criticism, so that Caelica 12 "develops his mischievous ingratitude into conscious spite," (56) sonnet 13 depicts him "as incipient libertine" in order to complete a "cynical devaluation" (57) of love, and the development of the sequence stresses increasingly the malevolent aspects of Cupid's involvement in human affairs:

> The consciously spiteful chld and the light god of cuckoldry are already on the way to becoming in later Caelica sonnets the deliberate deceiver (27), the jealous fool (20), or the frankly cynical libertine (28, 31) who is loftily amused by man's passionate sufferings over infidelity. (58)

Only in the farewell to Cupid of Caelica 84 does Waswo discover an effect of irony "at the poet's expense" (108) which this chapter argues is inherent in Greville's presentation of the child-god throughout the sequence. This analysis differs from Waswo's in emphasizing the function Cupid serves in dramatizing frailty that is inevitable in the human condition, and that is treated with a broadly sympathetic as well as a critical attitude.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER 5

[1] An interesting parallel to Marotti's argument is found in Hager's analysis of the relation between Sidney's presentation of himself in his life and writings and the popular image of Sidney, "a fictive achievement of the Renaissance mode...fulfilling a synthetic ideal of varied accomplishment." (12) The motive he discerns underlying this fabrication, a "factual distortion caused not only by convention of genre but also by specific rhetorical purposes," (3) is the desire to promote the position of the Leicester faction in international politics and to provide an ideal of chivalric heroism and courtesy, and thus to uphold a celebratory notion of Elizabeth's court. Hager argues that, instead of accepting this image-making at second hand, we must recognize a figure more complex, "the image of a man who saw his own life as a kind of irony" (9) and whose deprecatory references to his life and work demonstrate a tendency to reflexive or corrective irony rather than serving as manifestations of rhetorical humility, or sprezzatura:

> He creates the special effect of surprising us into going back and reevaluating aspects of what are conventionally understood to be solemn affairs. His characteristic mode of thought in his own life as well as in his art seems to be a criticism of weaknesses in our conventional understandings or constructions of experience. (10)

This mode of thought is similar to that which we frequently encounter in Astrophil and Stella; the speaker's self-deprecating ironies are at least intermittently suggestive of his identity with Sidney himself, and the effect of such irony, as Hager defines it--to provoke repeated adjustments, reevaluations, and ultimately an indeterminacy of

meaning--characterizes the reader's ever-shifting reaction to the central characters and action of the sequence.

[2] As noted in Chapter 4, Ferry contrasts Sidney's use of the phrase "a feeling skill" in sonnet 2, meaning "vivid or lively...a technique capable of stirring the reader," (12) to Daniel's use of the adjective in Delia 35, in which it characterizes hearts capable of experiencing emotions. Astrophil is, of course, concerned with the depth and sincerity of his feelings for the lady, and with the expression of these feelings, as is the speaker of Daniel's sequence, but at various points in Astrophil and Stella he both articulates and mocks the simple process of creation, similar to that on which Daniel's lover depends, and which he defines in sonnet 74:

> How falles it then, that with so smooth an ease
> My thoughts I speake, and what I speake doth flow
> In verse, and that my verse best wits doth please?
> ...
> My lips are sweet, inspired with Stella's kisse.

Interestingly, Astrophil's lines here take on something of the stylistic features of Daniel's most effective sonnets, their enjambement and assonance reinforcing the sense of the smooth flow of which he speaks. Nevertheless, their context--the assertion that Astrophil is distinct from other poets, a "Poore Layman" but at the same time "no pick-purse of another's wit," and the inclusion of others' questions--implies that conscious self-presentation operates even when Astrophil expresses the attitude to writing of the fictional character of the lover.

Sincerity is correspondingly a more complex issue in Astrophil and Stella than it is in Delia, and in those sonnets where Astrophil's rhetorical stance invites an identification with the figure of his

creator, Astrophil lacks the faith expressed in Delia 35 that a simple reflection of the lover's emotions in his verse will move an audience sympathetically disposed to his experience. One of the factors which generates this doubt is the emphatic presence within the sequence of that larger social circle which Astrophil, unlike Daniel's speaker, cannot entirely reject, and which guarantees him as often a critical as a sympathetic hearing. The dialogue of sonnet 74--"Guesse we the cause: 'What, is it thus?' Fie no:/ 'Or so?' Much lesse: 'How then?'"--suggests an audience eager for intrigue rather than evidence of sincere, strong feeling, and they are elsewhere provoked with "poysonous care" (AS 104) or with speculative curiosity (AS 23 and 27) to probe the secret behind his distracted behaviour. When the subject of his verse is approved, Astrophil argues that it is because "best wits think it wit...[Stella]...to admire," (AS 80) and although he objects to "this Flatterie" (AS 80) the poem nevertheless conveys a sense that his choice of mistress and verse in praise of her gains Astrophil credit in a circle appreciative of aesthetic discernment and intellectual power. The public context in which Astrophil is placed, and of which he is frequently mindful, thus complicates any attempt to understand him as a fictional lover like the one Daniel has created in Delia.

[3] Lanham argues similarly that we misinterpret Sidney as "modern" because we have been "schooled on fertile tensions," (105) and are hence predisposed to discover such tensions even where they have not been intended by the author. The very fact that Lanham's analysis of the sequence, in direct contrast to Roche's, identifies Astrophil with Sidney in a bid for the favours of Penelope Devereux may illustrate the

weakness of definitive statements about the author's intentions on which both critics rely. Wallace's survey of contemporary responses to Renaissance works, moreover, offers a convincing counterbalance to claims that the modern reader must adopt one consistent perspective on the work--that Sidney chooses either to teach his larger audience of readers or to persuade his immediate audience, the lady--if he is to approximate the experience of Astrophil and Stella's original readers.

[4] Alone of the critics who have examined Astrophil and Stella--and he admits his singularity in this regard--Lanham regards the sequence as "an illegitimate type to begin with, applied poetry," (108) which he finally dismisses as operating "in the begging mode." (115) Sharply critical of the scope of Sidney's achievement, Lanham

> does not find the heart into which Sidney looked one of any extraordinary richness. His themes are few, his scale hardly vast...If love is largely desire, the personality in which it wreaks such havoc is very largely a conventional one. The dramatic power of the sequence, in fact, seems to come from precisely this simplified confrontation between desire and convention...There is little deep thinking. (102)

Lanham seems guilty here of evaluating Sidney's work by standards more appropriate to Daniel's Delia, standards which Delia's speaker invites but which lead Lanham to underestimate Astrophil's efforts to probe and to consider from a variety of angles the nature of his experience. His changing perception of the situation, imaginative efforts to understand more clearly, awareness of how others envision him and of how he presents himself to them: these are interrelated elements of Astrophil's personality as significant as the emotional capacity of his heart. At the same time, this chapter will argue, shifts in Astrophil's

rhetorical stance are capable of infusing into his words of love and desire a surprising depth of feeling; in so doing, they create a sense of the "reality" of his feelings not achieved in those minor sequences which present a fictional lover immersed in his experience.

[5] Elsewhere in the sequence, Cupid is made a companion to Astrophil through Stella's tyranny and banishment; he is described as "now a scholler...,/ To such a schoole-mistresse, whose lessons new/ Thou needs must misse." (AS 46) Together with the earlier depiction of Love as "the quaking boy" (AS 8) whose wings are burnt and whose freedom is curtailed in the captive heat of Astrophil's heart, and with sonnet 11's account of his playfulness, the personification suggests that one consequence of the conventional lover's dependence on the lady is a childishness that demands guidance, a suggestion reinforced in a sonnet which sets Cupid in his traditional relationship with Venus as "still a boy, and oft a wanton.../ School'd onely by his mother's tender eye." (AS 73)

The effect parallels the implication contained in those sonnets which present the fictional lover's attitude to expression, that the conventional view of his words flowing directly from the inspiration of the lady's beauty diverts attention from the lover's responsibility for his words. In Astrophil and Stella, this attitude is juxtaposed with an awareness that others do indeed judge the speaker by his words, and the juxtaposition, a consequence of Astrophil's shifting rhetorical stance, produces the sequence's probing analysis into the difficulties of communicating.

[6] Much the same process has occurred in sonnet 44, as Astrophil attempts to discover why his words fail to move Stella to the "pitty" and "grace" which he so fervently desires:

> I much do guesse, yet find no truth save this,
> That when the breath of my complaints doth tuch
> Those daintie dores unto the Court of blisse,
> The heav'nly nature of that place is such,
> That once come there, the sobs of mine annoyes
> Are metamorphosd straight to tunes of joyes.

As in sonnet 58, the reader's attention is here drawn not only to Astrophil's confession of his rhetorical inefficacy (significantly lamented with the lover's characteristic amplification--"Her heart, sweete heart"--and the exclamatory "Alas"), but as well to his metaphoric treatment of Stella's ears. While the poem directly asserts Stella's powers, that is, it increasingly demonstrates those of the speaker himself, and sonnet 44 concludes with a degree of tension between the delightful poetic picture he has painted and the confession of failure. Art may be unable to remedy the situation as the lover would hope, but it provides the poet-lover with a means of contributing to its metamorphosis into a more easily acceptable relation. A similar treatment, in turn, will allow Astrophil to convert Stella's experience of embarrassment, in AS 103, into a "faire disgrace." (See pages 327 to 328.)

[7] Astrophil's vocabulary here echoes that of Watson's speaker, in his justification of The Passionate Centurie as a worthwhile "toye." The parallel suggests that AS 18 similarly offers a self-conscious commentary on the nature of the work as a whole, provoked by its speaker's awareness of his audience's response to the work.

[8] In addition, in keeping with the military metaphor so often favoured by the conventional lover to describe his "assault" on the lady, Astrophil calls Stella's heart "a Citadell,/ So fortified with wit, stor'd with disdaine,/ That to win it, is all the skill and paine." (AS 12) Ferry notes that Renaissance writers do not commonly use the singular word "paine" to meane a strenuous effort, but that Sidney is here exploiting both possibilities. The effect is to emphasize, even as the word suggests the lover's sufferings, the artistic challenge her integrity poses to the poet.

[9] Weiner interprets Astrophil's welcoming of night and darkness in such sonnets as AS 99 and 100 as symptomatic of the lover's state of distorted perception. He argues that light and the creatures of light--"birds,...and that sweete aire, which is/ Morne's messenger, with rose enameld skies" (AS 99)--have become hateful to Astrophil, who rejects them out of feelings of envy and shame. Overall, he argues,

> Astrophil has lived in a world of metaphor for so long that it has finally become, for him, a reality. That he has permitted it to do so is, perhaps, the full extent of his tragedy. (21)

This chapter argues instead that Astrophil's intermittent consciousness of the mind's image-making capacity allows him to take the opportunity for free imaginative play and to use it as a means of discovery. The process does not lead to a resolution of his situation, but it implies a capacity for insight which contradicts Weiner's assertion that Astrophil moves towards destruction by following an intense but misguided loyalty.

[10] To McCoy, the restriction of Sidney's focus to the absorbing experience of love gives a clarifying force to those major thematic

concerns which he claims Astrophil and Stella shares with Sidney's other works. Although the politics of the sequence are exclusively sexual, he argues, the "insurgence of desire" and its "assaults on...[the lover's]...integrity" (74) provide an apt metaphor for the "conflict with authority, a clash between individual impulse and social order, between freedom and submission" (26) which Sidney treats elsewhere. McCoy's analysis offers a number of valuable insights into the nature and operation of this conflict: he notes, for instance, that in asking for Stella's "Lieftenancy" in sonnet 107, Astrophil seeks "a compromise between dominance and defeat." (109) Yet his treatment of the speaker is not entirely consistent with the attention McCoy draws to those concerns which he shares with the historical poet. His study assumes throughout that Astrophil is a fictional character, his contradictory feelings of self-assertion and self-denial simply leaving him vulnerable to Sidney's ironic treatment rather than establishing a sense of identity with the creator whose career, as McCoy outlines it in the introductory chapter to his study, poses a similar conflict between the acceptance of courtly subservience and a desire for personal heroism. In turn, the witty effects of Astrophil and Stella and its sophisticated development of specifically poetic concerns is attributed to Sidney, with no account of his relation to the ostensibly fictional voice in which we hear such wit and sophistication.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER 6

1 David Miller begins his study of Spenser's self-presentation, in "Spenser's Vocation, Spenser's Career," by pointing out that "A poet is a maker, but his role as poet is one of the things he makes." (197) He argues that the dynamics of Spenser's self-presentation reveal a tension "between an ideal of the poet's cultural role and rhetorical strategies by which the ideal is advocated, ... generated by his dual commitment to a poetics of vision and one of persuasion." (198-99) Miller considers this tension primarily in terms of Spenser's engagement with contemporary history, but his article is particularly useful in its analysis of those recurrent moments in Spenser's work in which he

> creates the rhetorical effect of suddenly breaking through the fiction to speak in his own voice. Yet his "own" voice is never merely personal--it is that of The Poet, implicitly dramatizing his vocational claims on the audience. What he claims is "countenance": a place of regard and a role to perform in the sharing of a community. (215)

The argument seems particularly relevant to the nature of the self-referential sonnets in the Amoretti, which establish a sense of the poet's presence in the work by means of allusions to his composition of The Faerie Queene.

What is further striking, in the Amoretti, is the extent to which the effect of the poet's voice breaking through is duplicated in the more obviously fictional expression of the lover. In sonnet 43, for instance, a blunt and colloquial protest interrupts the conventional treatment of compulsion and futility to create a vivid sense of personal expression:

Shall I then silent be, or shall I speake?
And if I speake, her wrath renew I chall:
And if I silent be, my hart will breake,
Or choked be with overflowing gall.
What tyranny is this, both my hart to thrall
And eke my toung with proud restraint to tie;
That neither I may speake or thinke at all,
But like a stupid stocke in silence die!

While the first quatrain sets out alternatives in a series of formal contrasts which develop the pattern of the opening line, which are coordinated with line divisions, and which expand (through the balanced "will breake,/ Or choked be") to fill the four-line unit, the near-rhyme "speake/breake" anticipates the tenser form of the second. Unlike the expansion of lines 1 through 4, the parallel of lines 5 and 6 and the alternatives of line 7 are expressed in an increasingly compact form, which thus tightens syntactically to embody a sense of the lover's constraint. The emotional outburst which ends the quatrain is thus psychologically plausible, and the dynamics of the octave, in combination with the emphatic alliteration of line 8, emphasize the blunt strength of the lover's feelings as they break through the confinement of the conventional motifs.

[2] Spenser uses the word "entertaine" in several ways throughout the course of his work. Dodge lists these, in the Glossary to his edition of the works, as "to maintaine," "to treat (well or ill)," "to engage the attention of, hence, to hoodwink," "to receive, welcome, accept," "to encounter," and "to take, enter upon." (830) It is thus a flexible verb in that its different uses connote varying degrees of activity or passivity on the part of one who is invited to "entertain" certain ideas, experiences, or persons--whether the person thus invited be lady

or reader.

Sonnet 4's invitation to an active and positive response on the part of the audience, rather than a simple receptivity, echoes the printer's prefatory remarks to Spenser's collection of Complaints, "praying you gentlie to accept of these, and graciouslie to entertaine the 'new poete'." (57) According to Grossart, these requests form a plausible address not wholly to be trusted, and may have been devised as a blind by the poet himself. Spenser thus assumes here (or is cast into) a particular role to which the reader is invited to attune his responses, as is the case in Amoretti 4's simultaneous address to the lady and to the work's larger audience.

The more specific conjunction of "love" and "entertaine" appears several times in The Faerie Queene. Paridell, for instance, is presented as one who has a wide experience of the various ways "love to entertaine" (III.ix.29), while Marinell's mother warns him "The love of woman not to entertaine." (III.iv.26) These two instances suggest something of the range of meaning over which the word "love," like "entertaine," extends: in the first place it connotes a kind of performance which has little to do with personal conviction, while in the second it identifies a deeply engaging emotional experience. The increasing intensity of the experience the Amoretti presents, in turn, may be gauged to some extent by the change in the reader's response from sonnet 4's "new love to entertaine" to the theologically and emotionally charged appearance of the terms in sonnet 68:

> ...Christ's love we weighing worthily,
> May likewise love thee for the same againe;
> And for thy sake, that all lyke deare didst buy,
> With love may one another entertaine.

[3] Edwards points out that there is an unresolved tension between the Platonic impulse evident in a number of the sonnets and the more contradictory motion of Amoretti 72: he judges the couplet's attempt to resolve the inherent tension "unconvincing, perhaps deliberately tongue-in-cheek." (74)

[4] Valency draws an even closer parallel: the Blatant Beast, he argues, "is obviously none other than the enemy of true lovers in allegorical shape," (172) and like the threatening forces which come between the lovers at the end of the Amoretti, indebted to the conventional figure of the losengier in troubadour verse. Unlike Lever's, then, his parallel draws attention away from Spenser's actual experience to the context of his works' literary tradition, yet Valency's account of the losengier's role in the literature of courtly love raises two points relevant to the interaction of fiction and actual experience in the Amoretti. On the one hand, he claims, the losengier was "never individualized," but instead "represented in the most general way the undifferentiated mass of inimical forces which the lover felt to be arrayed against him." (172) On the other hand, he seems "the least fictive" of the dramatis personae involved; the sense of his reality is supported by "the very full body of literature in dispraise of court life ... which ... affords us clear glimpses of the self-seekers who elbowed each other in every court," (172) using either flattery or defamation to promote their own interests.

[5] The phrase occurs as well in the concluding stanzas of An Hymne of Heavenly Beautie, whose concluding stanzas establish the proper response

of a poetic "novice" (line 225) to human exemplars of "that immortal light" (line 169):

> Enough is me t'admyre so heavenlie thing,
> And being thus with her huge love possest,
> In th'only wonder of her selfe to rest.
>
> But who so may, thrise happie man him hold
> Of all on earth, whom God so much doth grace,
> And lets his owne Beloved to behold. (lines 236-41)

As in The Ruines of Time, the phrase "thrise happie" evokes a state of grace not achieved by the poet-speaker, yet in neither case does the implied relation provoke a note of personal yearning like that struck in Amoretti 63's description of "Most happy he that can at last atchyve/ The joyous safety of so sweete a rest." Instead, the two poems share with Amoretti 61 a cooler and more reflective tone based on the poet's distance from his subject, and his primary concern to instruct a more general audience.

[6] Marotti too distinguishes between the two poets in the relation which their works bear to the courtly context of the sonnet sequence. Spenser, he argues, was freer to exploit the advantages of print to advertise his status and win patronage, since unlike Sidney, his social status wouldn't have been harmed by the "stigma of print." Accordingly, Spenser could use the publication of his poems as yet another occasion to claim "laureateship," to proclaim his artistic authority in a world that consistently denied his economic and political ambitions. Such an explanation would account for differences in the nature of the self-referential sonnets in Astrophil and Stella and the Amoretti.

[7] Bernard points out of this sonnet that "Traditionally the spider and

the bee are not so much actors in a predatory struggle as types (normally antithetical) of the artist," (429) and that Amoretti 71 emphasizes their collaboration in fashioning a paradise of harmless delights. He sees the speaker's adaptation of the mythological trope as evoking an attitude traditionally associated with the pastoral:

> The beloved is subtly invited to share in the sport and play--the art--whereby lovers embellish their boundedness, converting a prison to a garden ... The invitation ... invokes the larger theme ... of a more spacious freedom attained in a sensual prison of love. (429)

[8] Bernard also notes the close connection of Amoretti 67 and 68, arguing that in the former, "Spenser renews somewhat the original Petrarchan visionary ambience by implying a Christ-like self-sacrifice in the deer's submission to captivity." (427) Pointing to the speaker's own surprise, he argues that the captor-hunter senses in his prey's submission an almost supernatural "goodwill," and that this hint of a sacred pattern is strengthened by Amoretti 67's relation to the Easter sonnet immediately following.

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