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LOVE, LUST AND LITERATURE

IN THE LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

by

KRISTIN JOHNSON

(Under the Direction of Julia Griffin)

ABSTRACT

I have chosen to focus on several poets of the "long 1590's," since I would argue that together they represent, for the first time, a confluence of literary love traditions that have previously existed independently across multiple centuries, nations and languages. First, I consider Ovid and the influence of the witty, Ovidian elegy love tradition as practiced by Christopher Marlowe and John Donne. Then I will discuss Petrarch and the serious sonnet sequence tradition, the influence of which is evident in the sonnet sequences of Sir Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser. Next, since both the afore-mentioned love traditions are based outside of marriage, I will discuss how the reality of the place for marriage in society in the 1590's and the literary representations of love and marriage create a gap, one that Edmund Spenser bridges with his joint publication of his sonnet sequence, *Amoretti*, with his marriage poem, *Epithalamion*. I aim to show how these traditions developed in England in the same, brief, period of time (the long 1590's) and that they simultaneously flourished, even though they seem to be so different. Finally, I argue that William Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet* exemplifies the convergence of these traditions.

INDEX WORDS: Love in Renaissance literature, Ovid, Elegy, Petrarch, Courtly love, Sonnet sequence, Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser

LOVE, LUST AND LITERATURE

IN THE LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

by

KRISTIN JOHNSON

B.A., Milligan College, 2006

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in Partial

Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

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KRISTIN JOHNSON

Major Professor: Julia Griffin
Committee: Mary Villeponteaux
Robert Costomiris

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I have chosen to focus on several poets of the "long 1590's,"[1] since I would argue that together they represent, for the first time, a confluence of literary love traditions that have previously existed independently across multiple centuries, nations and languages. First, I consider Ovid and the influence of the witty, Ovidian elegy love tradition as practiced by Christopher Marlowe and John Donne. Then I will discuss Petrarch and the serious sonnet sequence tradition, the influence of which is evident in the sonnet sequences of Sir Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser. Next, since both the afore-mentioned love traditions are based outside of marriage, I will discuss how the reality of the place for marriage in society in the 1590's and the literary representations of love and marriage create a gap, one that Edmund Spenser bridges with his joint publication of his sonnet sequence, *Amoretti*, with his marriage poem, *Epithalamion*. I aim to show how these traditions developed in England in the same, brief, period of time (the long 1590's) and that they simultaneously flourished, even though they seem to be so different. Finally, I argue that William Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet* exemplifies the convergence of these traditions.

The first literary love tradition I will examine is the erotic elegy, fathered by Publius Ovidius Naso, more commonly known as Ovid. Writing between 20 and 2 B.C., Ovid wrote numerous poems on love, including the *Amores, Ars Amatoria* (Art of Love), *Remedia Amoris* (Cures for Love), and *Heroides*. In these poems Ovid created a unique approach to love that was witty, satirical and overtly sensuous. In the *Amores*, Ovid wrote love elegy rather than epic,

[1] The term "long 1590's" is used to recognize that some of the poetry studied in the following chapters may have been written in the late 1580's; however, the influence of the poets began in 1590 or later.

claiming his decision was made under the direction of the god of Love. The result was a poem in three books, all of which incorporate a witty, humorous perspective as well as explicit sensuality in the subject and language. The *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris* closely follow the same style by providing rules for the game of love and cures for the problem of love, respectively.

The Ovidian elegy tradition was continued in the end of the sixteenth century by poets such as Christopher Marlowe and John Donne, who translated and emulated Ovid's work. Marlowe wrote *All Ovid's Elegies*, the first translation of the *Amores* into English. Though the exact publication date is unknown, the work is believed to have been completed by 1590 and published as a whole by at least 1597. Furthermore, John Donne wrote several of his own elegies, modeled after those of Ovid and the principles of his elegies, including "Elegie XIX: Going to Bed," a poem about a mistress erotically stripping off her clothes in preparation for consummation. The specific details regarding the publication of Donne's elegies are also unknown; however, most scholars place them with his early poetry written between 1591 and 1601.

In addition to the elegies, Ovid wrote the *Heroides*, a collection of letters from women to their men. Although these poems are in epistle form, they maintain Ovid's satirical, erotic style. These letters were also emulated by both Donne and Marlowe in the 1590's. Donne wrote his own erotic epistle, "From Sapho to Philaenis," which closely resembles Ovid's letters in both wit and sensuality. This letter is also dated with his early poetry, written sometime in the 1590's. Marlowe also utilized Ovid's *Heroides* by choosing one of the sets of letters in the collection and writing his own poem about the two lovers. Among the letters in the *Heroides*, there are three sets which include the man's response to the woman's letter, one of which is the dialogue

between Hero and her lover Leander. Marlowe adopted the story of Hero and Leander and wrote his own poem covering their meeting and falling in love and culminating with their consummation. Like Donne, Marlowe was able to maintain the Ovidian characteristics in his adaptation of Ovid's original letters. Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* was entered in the Stationer's Register in 1593, shortly following his death; it was officially published in 1598.

The second significant literary love tradition that flourished in the 1590's is the sonnet sequence. The idea of the sonnet sequence as known to the poets of the late sixteenth century was the result of several simultaneous influences; however, the tradition originates with Petrarch. He transformed the use of the sonnet when he wrote the *Rime sparse*, a collection of 366 poems, mostly sonnets, that were largely devoted to one subject, a woman he referred to as Laura. Writing in the fourteenth century, Petrarch's notion of love was deeply rooted in the literary tradition of the time, known as the "courtly love" tradition. The idea of "courtly love," as outlined and explained by Andreas Capellanus in *The Art of Courtly Love*, consisted of a strict code of rules to which men were subjected, under the guidance of the object of their love, in order to win the hearts and grace of their ladies and eventually fulfill their sexual desire with consummation. Petrarch's perspective of love, as represented in the *Rime sparse,* maintains the courtly love idea that a devoted male serves his lady; however, Petrarch veers away from the established tradition of a final consummation and instead presents an intense, frustrated love that never finds fulfillment. The first English sonnets were written in the early sixteenth century, but the sonnet sequence was a development of the "long 1590's."

Shortly after the first English poets began to write sonnets modeled on Petrarch, another love tradition, the idea of Platonic love, began to make its way into English literature. In the

Symposium, written sometime after 385 B.C., Plato poses an argument for a tradition of love in which the lover is able to make the connection from the beauty of the object of his love to the general idea of beauty, which in turn should lead the lover toward the idea of a higher good or virtue. The result of this tradition of love is a lover who no longer cares for his earthly desire or the object that spurred that desire, because he is satisfied and fulfilled by his deeper understanding of virtue and beauty. The Platonic tradition grew in popularity due to the re-discovery of Plato's work at the beginning of the European Renaissance. Writers such as Baldassare Castiglione reiterated the Platonic love tradition in *The Book of the Courtier*, published in English in 1561 by Sir Thomas Hoby, creating a revived interest in the elements of the Platonic love tradition. By the time poets of the late sixteenth century began to look at the sonnet sequence tradition of Petrarch, these two traditions had become intertwined and sonnets written near the end of the century contained ideas from both Petrarchan and Platonic traditions.

In the 1590's, several poets published sonnet sequences under the influence of the Petrarchan and Platonic traditions. Sir Philip Sidney is credited with popularizing the sonnet sequence tradition that ran throughout the entire decade of the 1590's. Sidney died in 1586, but his work was published posthumously in the following decade. He wrote his own sonnet sequence, *Astrophil and Stella*, published in both 1591 and 1598, as well as *An Apology for Poetry*, published twice in 1595, in which he defends the validity and purpose of poetry, including the love lyric.

In addition to Sidney, Edmund Spenser wrote a sonnet sequence in the 1590's entitled *Amoretti*, published in 1595. Spenser's collection develops both the Petrarchan and Platonic traditions, as his sonnet sequence is directionally different from his colleagues. While the other

sonneteers embrace Petrarch's frustrated love resulting from an unattainable lady, Spenser follows the Petrarchan code, strictly speaking, but his sequence embraces a more hopeful ending for the lover and alludes to a potential marriage as a result of the courtship described throughout the *Amoretti*. Although his sonnet sequence is in the Petrarchan tradition, it hints at something more.

The *Amoretti* is also not the only place in which a Petrarchan influence can be seen in Spenser's work. He includes a version of Petrarch's sonnet 189 in Book III of *The Faerie Queene,* which was published in 1590 and again in 1596. However, in this version of Petrarch, Spenser fully develops what he only alluded to in the *Amoretti*, the idea of marriage. Britomart, the character whose lament is the embedded version of Petrarch 189, is actually on a journey which, as the reader has already been told, will end successfully in marriage. Furthermore, the *Amoretti* was jointly published in the same volume with the *Epithalamion*, a poem celebrating Spenser's own marriage, in 1595. As a result, what Spenser produced was a story of his own courtship that ended in marriage. While following the Petrarchan tradition of the sonnet sequences, Spenser steps beyond the tradition and changes the circumstances of the lover in the end.

Spenser's incorporation of marriage brings to light the whole issue of marriage and its place in society. All the literary love traditions examined thus far have dealt with love as it exists outside the idea of marriage; Spenser's publication of the *Amoretti* and the *Epithalamion* together connect the two. It also lightly touches on the circumstances of love and marriage in everyday life in the late sixteenth century. Unlike the literary depiction of love in which women have authority over the men who love and serve them, the 1590's maintained a belief that had

been around since before the Reformation, that women should be subject to the will of their husbands, and therefore had absolutely no authority or sway over the men who loved them. Spenser's joint publication of his sonnet sequence and his marriage poem not only connects the Petrarchan world to that of marriage, but also the literary world to the real one.

Furthermore, Spenser also incorporates Platonic ideals into his poetry by making the erotic, earthly desire of humanity an allegory for the love of God for his Church. Living in a time in which a book of the Bible, Song of Solomon, was received as a justification for marriage and an allegory of God's love for mankind, Spenser exhibits the same perspective in his *Epithalamion*. Spenser's argument ultimately combines both traditions as he justifies marriage as a means of dealing with earthly sexuality and desire by claiming the act of marriage is a reflection of God's love for humanity.

Essentially, I would argue that the "long 1590's" serves as a point of confluence, for the first time, for the literary love traditions of Ovid, Petrarch and Plato, while at the same time dealing with how these literary love traditions fit into the idea of marriage. This confluence can be seen in William Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet*, which exemplifies all of these traditions simultaneously. The poetry of the late sixteenth century reflects the poets' interest in translating and emulating the fore-fathers of these traditions as well as adapting the traditions to reflect current ideas about love.

CHAPTER II

THE OVIDIAN ELEGY

It is often said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, and such is certainly the case with the numerous poets inspired by Publius Ovidius Naso, or Ovid. As one of the first known poets to write extensively on the topic of love, Ovid provides a natural starting point for a discussion based on the traditions of love in literature. Ovid breathed life into the form of the love elegy when he revolutionized the tradition by adding elements of witty satire and explicit sensuality, as seen in his amatory works: the *Amores, Ars Amatoria* (Art of Love), *Remedia Amoris* (Cures for Love), and *Heroides*. His amatory works have been imitated repeatedly both in content and style, by countless writers throughout the 2000 year span, especially by Renaissance writers in the 1590's. In particular, Christopher Marlowe, who translated the entire *Amores*, and John Donne, who wrote in the Ovidian elegy form, capitalized on Ovid's work, emulating his subjects and methods.

Ovid shaped the erotic love tradition in literature through his unique, intimate focus on the reality of love in everyday human existence. Harold Isbell, in the introduction to Ovid's *Heroides*, explains that "Ovid sought immortal fame by abandoning the epic style of Virgil and devoting himself to the celebration of human experience. In all his works he explores human emotion, its causes and effects" (vii). Between the *Amores*, the *Ars Amatoria*, the *Remedia Amoris* and the *Heroides*, Ovid wrote extensively about love, approaching the topic from a rational perspective based on the reality of love and the emotions it produced. He focused on the external and wanted to fully immerse himself in the reality of the day to day world of love. In *The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature*, Gilbert Highet

describes Ovid's approach to love as "a cynical intellectual discussion of love-making as a science" (58). To Ovid, the 'art of love,' as he called it, was not a serious, respectable matter. To him, love was a sensuous game. Through his exceptionally carefree attitude toward love Ovid managed to create an outstanding love tradition in literature that continues even today. Highet goes as far as to claim that "Ovid was the master poet of love" (59).

Ovid was able to create his love tradition by completely remodeling the love elegy form to fit his own pursuits in writing. In the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, under "Ovid," S. E. Hinds claims that Ovid, in elegy, "achieved an unparalleled variety of output by exploiting and extending the range of the genre as no poet had done before" (qtd. in Harrison 79). Traditional elegy up to this point, as written by such poets as Gallus, Propertius and Tibullus, described a lover who was so taken with his tremendous passion and love that he was unable to do anything but write love poetry in elegiac couplets. Ovid follows the tradition in his use of the elegiac couplets but leaves significant room for question regarding his status as a heartsick lover. In the *Amores*, he is not writing a love elegy because he is overwhelmed by his love, but rather because he is directly ordered to do so by the god of love, and he also claims not even to be in love. Ovid writes, "I haven't the theme to suit your frivolous metre: / No boyfriend, no girl with a mane of coiffured hair" (I.i.19-20)[I.i.19-20].[2]

There are two primary characteristics of Ovid's love poetry that make him original today. Ovid revolutionized the form of elegy through his love poetry with his extensive use of wit and humor as well as his sensuous attitude toward love, two significant characteristics of what is today considered the Ovidian elegy. Sara Mack, in *Ovid*, explains that "Ovid emphasizes what

[2] Citations within the parentheses reference Peter Green's English translation while citations within brackets indicate the Latin line numbers for what is being quoted.

was present but much less prominent in earlier elegy: its capacity for comedy and satire" (17). Ovid actually begins the *Amores* with a joke. He claims that he sat down to write "epic, with verse-form to match - / Hexameters" (I.i.2-3)[I.i.1-2]. He continues to claim, however, that "Cupid (they say) with a snicker / Lopped off one foot from each alternate line" which turned his hexameters into elegiac couplets, creating a love elegy instead of an epic poem (I.i.3-4)[I.i.2-4]. Richard Tarrant explains that "Amor [the god of love, or Cupid] seems to be playing a mischievous joke rather than directing Ovid to his proper poetic vocation" (17). Comedy played an important role for Ovid in the writing of the love elegies.

Hand-in-hand with Ovid's satirical approach to love is the sensuality in writing. Departing from the style of earlier Roman elegists, Ovid was deeply concerned with sex as the primary topic in his love poetry. In the introduction to *Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Poems and Translations,* Stephen Orgel reflects on Ovid's influence, commenting that sensuality "is precisely the subject of the *Amores*, "lewd love," illicit sexuality" (xiii). In his effort to deal with the external and to focus on the reality of love in day-to-day experiences, Ovid wrote against the elegiac tradition by directly dealing with sex, even about what was considered immoral situations. Ovid's explicit sensuality significantly altered love elegy and created a whole new love tradition in literature.

The *Amores*, divided into three books, also exemplifies Ovidian wit and taste for sensuality in elegy. Concerning the elegy form, Harrison asserts that "the *Amores* are a useful starting-point, both because of their early date and because they look firmly (if with some parodic amusement) to the Ovidian starting-point of 'traditional' love-elegy as earlier established by Gallus, Propertius and Tibullus" (80). The *Amores* are, indeed, a collection of love elegies

dealing with some of the traditional elements such as "the locked-out lover, the slave go-between, the traditional symptoms of love, the rich rival, the witch-bawd, infidelity, the military, political, and poetic alternatives, and even the occasional successful erotic encounter" (Sharrock 150). Ovid seems to be setting out on his journey of transforming the elegy with the *Amores*. As previously mentioned, Ovid actually began Book I of the *Amores* with the claim that he was trying to write an epic, until Cupid himself came down and stole a foot from his second line, changing his epic hexameter verse to an elegiac couplet. In later love poems, such as the *Remedia Amoris*, he claims to continue the erotic elegy tradition. It seems most likely, therefore, that the *Amores* were the start of a career in writing love elegies which would influence writers throughout the centuries, including Christopher Marlowe, who translated all of the *Amores*, and John Donne who emulated the Ovidian elegy form.

As Ovid's love poetry was sensual in nature, he openly discussed the sexual aspects of love. Alison Sharrock, in her article, "Ovid and the Discourses of Love: The Amatory Works," writes that "Ovid's amatory works put private life on display" (151). His *Ars Amatoria,* a "how-to" guide for dealing with sexual success, and *Remedia Amoris,* a set of instructions for ending a sexual affair, are two poems which deal directly with the sexual aspect of relationships. In the *Ars Amatoria* Ovid actually instructs young lovers how to woo and win a girl, or girls, whenever they please. His instructions are based on the assumption that the young lover's ultimate goal is simply to fulfill his sexual desire and to get the woman to bed. Sara Mack states that the *Ars Amatoria* "is a handbook full of technical knowledge to inform us of all we need to know in order to pursue…love as the art of seduction" (23). An older form of elegy did incorporate public guidance, in which poets attempted to teach young members of society; however, those

instructive elegies were predominately moral advice about how to behave. Ovid "parodies an archaic function of elegy" by writing "civic instruction" but he is clearly not concerned with morality (Harrison 83). Instead of focusing on morals, Ovid concentrates on sex.

He continues his erotic fascination in the *Remedia Amoris*, a possible answer to the *Ars Amatoria*, in which he instructs how to break off a sexual engagement when one is no longer interested. Despite the fact that he is not here instructing how to have several mistresses, he is not pushing morals either. For example, one of his cures for getting over a woman is to sleep with another one. He claims, "my advice / Is to get in some other girl first, slake your prime voluptuous / Urges on her" (402-04)[403-04]. Ovid has not lost his sensuality even as he writes about how to get over love. In fact, Ovid begins the *Remedia Amoris* claiming that this poem "will not reweave / Or unravel past work" (12-13)[12]. He promises Cupid, "I've always been a lover, and if you should ask / What I'm up to now – I'm in love" (8-9)[7-8]. Ovid has not lost his taste for sensuous poetry. Harrison points out that in this promise "we also find the equation familiar in traditional love-elegy between being a lover and writing elegy:…he is pointing not to his emotional biography but to his continuing commitment to erotic elegy in this poem" (84). Together the two poems clearly exemplify the sensual nature of Ovid's poetry.

Throughout the love poetry, Ovid often praises himself for his contributions to the elegy form. In *Remedia Amoris* Ovid claims, "What the epic owes to Virgil, / Elegy likewise owes – and admits it – to me" (395-96)[395-96]. In the *Amores* he proclaims that he is looking for "Undying world-wide remembrance" (I.xv.9)[I.xv.7-8]. He ends Book I by asserting that he will also be remembered for his contribution to elegy. He writes, "Though flint itself will perish, poetry lives - / …So when the final flames have devoured my body, I shall / Survive, and my

better part live on" (I.xv.32, 41-42)[I.xv.31-32, 41-42]. Ovid has lived on through his poetry, in particular his love poetry, for his wit, satire, and sensuality in love elegies. Mack describes how "Ovid's originality…lies in his shattering the conventions of the genre so that no one could write elegy in the style of Tibullus and Propertius again" (17). The *Ars Amatoria*, *Remedia Amoris, Amores* and even the *Heroides* all significantly influenced the way in which later poets would utilize the elegy form.

Ovid eventually met with success and popularity for his use of wit and sensuality in elegy; however, he initially found himself in trouble for the explicit sexuality of his work. The immediate reaction to Ovid seems to have been shock at its scandalousness. While not much is known regarding his exile in 8 A.D., Ovid managed to offend Emperor Augustus enough to never be permitted to return from exile. It has been speculated by scholars for centuries that the explicit sexuality of this poetry was a major factor in his exile from Rome. Gareth Williams, in his article "Ovid's Exile Poetry: *Tristia, Epistulae ex Ponto* and *Ibis*," claims that Ovid was banished for his "risqué *Ars Amatoria*" which was "fatally out of step with official tastes" (233). Whether the erotic material alone was enough to banish Ovid or not, it is clear that the scandalous love poetry played a part in his banishment.

Despite his contemporaries' reactions, Ovid's place in the history of the elegy is unparalleled. He is the link between the original form of the serious, heart-sick lover and the humorous, erotic love affair format as it existed in the English Renaissance of the 1590's. Ovid retained the original idea of his predecessors, understanding the importance of writing about erotic love. His entire amatory collection is devoted to this idea. However, Ovid thought the subject matter was funny and sexual, leading to his development of the extremely witty,

unusually sensuous elegy that was so crucially reiterated in the 1590's. The love elegy, essentially, is what he both gets from his predecessors as well as gives to his successors.

To understand fully Ovid's influence on love traditions in literature, it is important to know a little history of Ovid's texts throughout the centuries. Ovid's love poetry was produced approximately between 20 and 2 B.C. Despite almost a 1400 year gap, Ovid's works remained influential in the middle ages, as we see in the work of medieval writers including Giovanni Boccaccio, Geoffrey Chaucer, Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, who incorporated Ovid's stories, style and principles in some of their most important work. Writers such as these were exposed to Ovid both in school and through other writers. Ovid's texts were used as schoolbooks in the middle ages. Edward Rand, in *Ovid and His Influence*, explains that "Ovid's works were taken into the schools; they were regarded as an essential element in a liberal education" (113). However, in an effort to validate the use of such scandalous material in the classroom, scholars and educators argued that morals and ethics were of primary concern in Ovid, as attested in the commentaries surrounding Ovid's texts. In an essay titled "Ovid in the Middle Ages: Authority and Poetry," Jeremy Dimmick explains that the effort to moralize Ovid's poetry was a "strategy…by schoolmasters seeking to justify his presence in the curriculum" (268). Being well acquainted with Ovid's life, medieval scholars recognized the fact that the attitude toward love, as represented for example in the *Ars Amatoria*, contained enough immoral content to contribute to his banishment. However, they also recognized Ovid's talent and originality as a poet, and therefore sought to validate teaching his controversial material in the classroom. Scholars claimed that Ovid described unethical behavior in a

satirically positive way in order to describe how *not* to behave. They argued that Ovid was extremely sarcastic and satirical because he was joking about unethical ways of loving.

Although Ovid's contemporaries viewed his love poetry as explicit and scandalous and the scholars of the middle ages viewed Ovid as a poet of morality, Ovid's style managed to outlive their criticism and misunderstanding and significantly influence writers over a thousand years later. Christopher Marlowe wrote a collection entitled *All Ovid's Elegies,* which was a complete translation of the *Amores*. The compilation was completed, but never published, during Marlowe's lifetime. Instead his translations were published posthumously by publishers who most likely knew Marlowe from his circulated (but not published) story of *Hero and Leander*. Stephen Orgel points out that Marlowe's rendition was "the first translation of the *Amores* not only into English but into any modern language" (ix). It is also commonly observed that *All Ovid's Elegies* was the only translation of the *Amores* in English until 1683 when an unknown source produced another publication, which meant that Marlowe's translation was the premier version for the Renaissance audience.

Orgel argues that Marlowe's accomplishment of translating the entirety of the *Amores* was a "step in the creation of a poetic career consciously modeled on Ovid" (xii). Evidence from Marlowe's translations and his poetry suggests validity to Orgel's argument considering the light, yet erotic, overtones in Marlowe's poetry. Even after his death, Marlowe was thought of as "the erotic classicist" (Orgel ix). He was deeply concerned with the sensuality in the realm of Ovid's elegies and the possibilities of bringing that eroticism to English Renaissance literature. Unlike writers before him, or for that matter, his contemporaries, Marlowe opted to concentrate on the sensuous Ovid of the love poems instead of the adventurous Ovid of the *Metamorphoses*.

Orgel explains that "what Marlowe undertook was the domestication of the erotic Ovid in the wake of the many previous generations' mythographic Ovid" (xi). Marlowe even took Ovid's erotics one step further. He boldly translated and embellished the adulterous and promiscuous situations in the *Amores*, maintaining Ovid's candid language in the English translations. Marlowe opted to embrace the sensuality of the Ovidian elegy as he translated the *Amores* and produced the first of its kind in English.

In addition to maintaining the sexual undercurrent in the elegies, Marlowe also preserved Ovid's use of wit and humor in his translations. Orgel claims that "Marlowe's Ovidian elegies are more than translations. They undertake, with remarkable energy and ingenuity, the adaptation of a quintessentially classical mode to the uses of English poetry" (ix). Marlowe turned Ovid into a domesticated style of English poetry by translating the Latin elegiac couplet, a hexameter first line and pentameter second line, into the English form developed by Chaucer, rhyming pentameter. Consider the *Amores* I.V in which Corinna comes to the poet's bed in the middle of his afternoon nap. Ovid compares Corinna's visit to Assyrian Queen Semiramis on the way to her bridal bed or to Lais, a prostitute, with one of her many lovers, a comical, and sexual, exaggeration of the two interpretations. Marlowe relays Ovid's wit and humor, translating the text to describe how Corinna was "Resembling fair Semiramis going to bed, / or Lais of a thousand wooers sped" (I.v.11-12)[I.v.11-12]. Marlowe was able to keep Ovid's satirical and sexual comparison of a queen and a prostitute while writing in rhyming pentameter. More importantly, Marlowe preserved the emphasis on sex in his translation. The point of elegy I.V is that Corinna is going to bed with the poet lover. The entire elegy is a description of a sensual union.

Although he did not translate Ovid's poetry, John Donne did follow in the footsteps of Ovid and Marlowe in his style of writing. Donne wrote several elegies based on the characteristics that Ovid established in his love poetry. Herbert Grierson, in the introduction to his edition of *Donne: Poetical Works*, explains that in Donne's elegies "the tone is set…by Ovid" (xx). Orgel also sees Marlowe's influence, as he writes that "Donne's elegies are full of a sense of Marlowe's language" (x). Between Ovid's style and Marlowe's language, Donne's love elegies fall directly in line with the Ovidian elegy tradition. He follows the traditional values of the Ovidian love elegy with the use of sharp wit and the concentration on sensuality. Grierson partly attributes Donne's sense of humor and his openness to sexuality to a rebellion from the "teachers of his youth" who "had endeavoured to impose the temper of the Catholic revival on a mind and temperament that were those of the Italian Renaissance or at least frankly sensuous and daringly witty" (xvi). Donne's choice to write in the Ovidian tradition of love is a direct revolt against the educational guidance of his youth.

Orgel suggests Donne's writing clearly reflects a Marlovian writing style in which he was very particular about language usage and word choice. A good example can be seen in "Elegie XIX: Going to Bed." This poem is clearly an Ovidian elegy as it is about the woman erotically stripping her clothes throughout the poem and the aim is to get the woman to bed. Donne's careful attention to language usage is exemplified in this poem as, repeatedly, his word choices leave room for ambiguity in the poem's interpretation. About halfway into the poem, the woman has removed her gown and is down to simply her slip when the poet writes,

> In such white robes, heaven's Angels us'd to be,
>
> Receavd by men;…

> …and though
>
> Ill spirits walk in white, we easly know,
>
> By this these Angels from an evil sprite,
>
> Those set our hairs, and these our flesh upright (19-24).

The poem reveals that both angels and evil spirits wear white. Donne claims that the bad spirits make your hair stand on end but the good spirits make your flesh stand on end, referencing an erection. He continues to claim that the woman must be an angel or a good spirit because she has caused his flesh to stand upright. Donne is playing with the implications of whiteness and innocence. The irony and ambiguity lie within the text, since the things Donne says are good are not traditionally associated with innocence. In addition to the witty language, this excerpt provides an example of the sensuality of this elegy.

Near the end of the elegy, the poet tells his lady to shed her final bits of clothing. According to Grierson's text, which follows the first printed edition of this poem,[3] Donne writes, "cast all, yea, this white lynnen hence, / There is no pennance due to innocence" (45-46). Before analyzing the sentence structure, it is important to understand Donne's choice of the words "white lynnen." In Donne's society, white linen was a public sign for adultery. Women caught in the act of adultery were forced to walk around town in a white gown and face utter humiliation for their sin. It was their penance to do so. On the other hand, white linen has the connotation of an angel or something innocent. Again, the word 'white' implies both good and bad. Donne has taken a sensuous Ovidian situation and incorporated other factors such as angels, bodies, and souls (about which he often wrote). He hints at the dilemma of whether the woman in the white

[3] This poem was not in the first edition of Donne's poems, which was printed in 1633. This poem was first printed in 1669, in the second edition.

linen is innocent or penitent. When he writes "There is no pennance due to innocence," Donne is claiming that his lady has no need to be penitent because she is innocent. The idea that a woman having an affair is innocent alludes to the possibility of the innocence of sex outside of marriage. This adds to the ambiguity of the poem as, again, what the poem claims as innocent is not traditionally regarded as so.

However, in many manuscripts of this poem, that same line reads "cast all, yea, this white lynnen hence, / There is no pennance, much less innocence" (45-46)[4]. The change in line 46 drastically alters the position of the woman in question. This woman is not innocent or penitent. The ultimate dilemma in the elegy, therefore, is whether this woman is innocent or not. In keeping with the double tradition of good and bad within the poem, it is unclear as to which one—good or bad—she is. Either ending creates a reading of the poem that makes sense as a whole, emphasizing the ambiguity that runs throughout the poem. The entire poem, therefore, presents a tension between full sexual enjoyment and a sense of naughtiness, sharpened by the extraordinary theological bits. This intricate word choice and sentence structure elaborates the "passionate play of wit" that Donne articulately uses throughout his elegies (Grierson xviii). He is able to keep the focus on the act of love, but he leaves the question hanging of whether it is a glorious celebration of love or a sensuous celebration of love. The point of this elegy is to vividly portray the sensual reality of the sexual union between the poet lover and his lady. Donne has continued the Ovidian tradition of "poems of seduction and illicit love" (Grierson xviii). "Elegie XIX" is one of many elegies that exaggerate the place of sexual antics in love relationships.

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[4] Some manuscripts read "Here is no pennance…" instead of "There is no pennance…" in line 46. Since this distinction does not alter the meaning of the poem as drastically, I will only be addressing the change between "due to" and "much less."

Another important work of Ovid that has yet to be considered in this chapter is his collection of letters, the *Heroides*, written in elegy form and also part of his amatory repertoire. The *Heroides* consists of fifteen single letters written from the perspective of women in epic mythology to the men who have left them (for various reasons). There are also three double letters, or sets of letters in which there is correspondence: a letter from the male and female; these are between Paris and Helen, Leander and Hero, and Acontius and Cydippe. The *Heroides* have been held until now for separate examination due to the uniqueness and originality in the use of the elegy form. Mack emphasizes that it was purely "Ovid's innovation to create a whole collection of elegiac letters, and on a single theme at that: a woman who has lost her man" (18-19). As previously discussed, Ovid contributed greatly to the style of the love elegy through humor and sensuality; however, with the *Heroides*, Ovid gave elegy a completely new framework.

Ovid was careful to maintain some of the original characteristics of the love elegy while inventing his dynamically different function for the poem. Primary features of traditional love elegies include a voice of lamentation from the poet lover and the use of figurative arguments for love. Harrison explains that the predominant characteristics of the single *Heroides*, as found in traditional elegies, are that they "give a (purely lamenting) voice to the (powerless) abandoned woman…" and "an element of rhetorical persuasion" (82). Aside from fashioning the elegies into actual letters written from the women's perspectives, Ovid's originality includes his use of the *women* as his voice. Previously in love elegy, the poet lover's voice was male, a man expressing the weight of his passion and love. Mack points out that when "epic and tragedy

portray heroes, usually male, as the stars of their stories, in the *Heroides* Ovid lets the underdogs speak" (19). It was Ovid's conception to allow the ladies to speak their point of view.

What makes the *Heroides* even more fascinating is the addition of the double letters, thought to be added to the collection later. Ovid allows both male and female sides of the relationship have a voice, further emphasizing the idea of the figurative argument. It is as if the argument posed by the poet lover is answered by another elegy. The "letters from male heroes paired with replies from heroines," Harrison argues, allows the "opportunity for rhetorical and even legalistic debate" (83). The women's voices in these three letters are actually their responses to the poet lover's original plaint.

Ovid's technique of making women speak was imitated in a poem, generally assumed to have been written by John Donne, entitled "Sapho to Philaenis." Although it does not claim to be specifically a letter, the elegy is clearly a written address of some kind and it is from the perspective of a woman. Not only is the elegy representing a woman's voice, but it is an extremely erotic poem about her desire for Philaenis. Ovid's sensuality is maintained as the poet-lover writes, "why shouldst thou than / Admit the tillage of a harsh rough man? / Men leave behinde them that which their sin showes" (37-39). The "tillage" clearly references sexual intercourse with a man, which Sapho is arguing against because of the possibility of pregnancy (that which is left behind by a man and showing his sin). She goes on to argue instead, that "betweene us all sweetness may be had" therefore, "Why should they not alike in all parts touch? / Hand to strange hand, lippe to lippe none denies; / Why should they brest to brest, or thighs to thighs? (43, 48-50). The language of this elegy is sensuous as Sapho begins to describe her desire for a lesbian relationship with Philaenis, claiming that like "parts" should touch. She even

goes as far as to say, "That touching my selfe, all seemes done to thee" (52). Not only is Donne exploiting the sexuality of this relationship in the elegy, but he is even hinting at the eroticism of self pleasure. Donne is emulating Ovid's erotic letters from women in the *Heroides* with this elegy that is clearly a sensuous, written address in the person of a woman.

The use of the female, erotic voice forms the basis of the *Heroides* letters. To begin with, the letters are written from women to the men they have loved both physically and emotionally. In addition, several of the letters are indirectly dealing with the effects and causes of the sexual unions. Of the letters themselves, the most celebrated of them was the Hero and Leander exchange, Letters XVIII: Leander to Hero and XIX: Hero to Leander, which are more openly erotic than any of the letters thus far in the collection. Paying specific attention to Leander's letter, Isbell explains that "the eroticism of this letter emphasizes the youthful sexuality of Leander" who is "a very young man for whom the experience of sexuality is almost overpowering" (179). Leander is fixated on his encounter with Hero, exclaiming,

> I cannot count the joys I found in that night.
> How little time we had for the theft
> of that first love, and how much more care we took
> that time not pass us in idle waste. [107-110]

His sexual interaction with her changed him as a being. He was thereafter compelled by his uncontrollably desire deep within to be with her again. He even considers the effect this passion is having on his senses when he wonders, "Perhaps I am foolish and / do not understand what will happen; / perhaps my foolish love will cause me to go" [189-90]. The erotic encounter between the two of them created the desire that is at the heart of Leander's letter to Hero.

Hero's letter, on the other hand, does not magnify the erotic aspect of her love for Leander, but it does demonstrate Ovid's sense of wit and humor. The entire letter is a paradoxical mixture: Hero's begging Leander to be careful of the sea while at the same time telling him that if he truly loves her, he will swim across it to see her. For example, she complains about his absence stating, "I whisper about you to my old nurse, as / I wonder why you have stayed away / or I look out over the sea and I scold" [19-22]. Then in the next breath she warns him against recklessness saying, "If you are always so reckless with / good luck, I fear that I in misery will / one day shed tears for such great courage" [87-88]. She continually begs him to risk all to swim across the waters to reunite their love and at the same time warns him not to listen to her urgings because it is dangerous. Hero writes, "I do not want to convince / you to come to me as I urge… / …But finally / you must come to me" [187,190]. The irony, and sense of humor, in Hero's dual commands exemplifies Ovid's humor in his language choices.

The story of Hero and Leander is a popular one, re-written, referenced, or alluded to by numerous writers including Musaeus (Byzantine poet), Sir Walter Ralegh, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, John Donne and above all Christopher Marlowe who narrated the love story in about 800 lines of poetry later divided into two sestiads. What is considered to be the first edition was published in 1598 – five years following Marlowe's murder in June of 1593.[5] It is evident through the text that Marlowe exploited Ovid's *Heroides* letters of Hero and Leander in his creation of *Hero and Leander* in much the same way he developed the sensuality of Ovid's love elegies when he translated them. In an introduction to *Marlowe's Poems*, editor L.C. Martin explains that "in the narrative verse of Marlowe…the writing is largely conditioned and

[5] The 1598 edition included a title page saying, "HERO | and | LEANDER. By Christopher Marloe …1598." However, the September 28, 1593 Stationer's Register has an entry stating, "a booke intituled HERO *and* LEANDER beinge an amorous poem devised by CHRISTOPHER MARLOW" (Case I).

controlled by classical example, most obviously by that of Ovid" (4). Marlowe's use of Ovidian principles in turn contributed greatly to the Renaissance vision and use of love elegies. He was able to intently magnify the human experience of love and sex while at the same time wittily controlling his use of language. Martin continues to explain that in the case of Marlowe,

> It seems clear enough that Ovid himself, with his untrammeled appreciation and direct sensuous description of amorous adventure, his command for decorative phrase, and his capacity for crisp sententious reflection, played no small part in determining the bent of mind which produced *Hero and Leander*. (4-5)

Marlowe was as careful with *Hero and Leander* as he was with his elegy translations to preserve the original Ovidian creations while at the same time adding something new to the form.

Though the poem as we have it is short, *Hero and Leander* is still one of Marlowe's greatest accomplishments. The narration consists of only two sestiads beginning with the meeting of Hero and Leander and ending with the consummation of their love. Whether Marlowe's original intent was to end the poem at this point or if it was unfinished is unknown. Orgel encompasses all the major emphases of the poem when he calls it "a passionate, tragic, comic fragment of an erotic epic" (xiv). Comedy certainly finds its place in Marlowe's narrative. He emphasizes the irony between Hero and Leander's meeting and their final consummation. Leander first spied Hero, a virgin, offering a prayer to Venus, the goddess of love. Though Hero is a promised virgin, Leander argues with her, claiming:

> Yet for her sake whom you have vowed to serve,
> Abandon fruitless cold virginity,
> The gentle queen of love's sole enemy.

Then shall you most resemble Venus' nun,

When Venus' sweet rites are performed and done. (I.316-20)

The irony lies in Leander's argument to get Hero into bed. He convinces Hero that to be a true worshiper of Venus she should have sex, and perform love's "rites." At the same time, the description of Hero as "Venus' nun" is ironic because chastity does not work for a follower of Venus. The use of 'Venus,' goddess from a classical poem, and 'nun,' a clearly non classical word, shows the domestication of Hero as a priestess. Marlowe adapts the priestess Hero to sixteenth-century England by claiming she is a nun, an emblem of chastity. It further sharpens the contrast between the idea of chastity and truly being a priestess for Venus the goddess of love. This passage certainly highlights the erotic basis of the entire poem, but more importantly it illustrates Marlowe's sense of humor in language.

Marlowe's narration of the two lovers' encounter is just as sensuous as Ovid's letters represent. The entire narrative is about, and culminates at, an intense insight into the sexual encounter between Hero and Leander. Orgel argues that Marlowe's version of *Hero and Leander* "tempts the Renaissance reader with his deepest desires" (xv). It directly confronts the subject of sex, more than any of Marlowe's contemporaries had done thus far. Marlowe's edition was one of the most sexually explicit poems in English, as Orgel suggests, until well after Marlowe's death due to its "overt sexuality" and how it was "emotionally very daring" (xv). The entirety of the two sestiads is a slow and steady march towards the physical culmination of love. The sensuality is played out through the thoughts and dialogue of the characters as well as their playful, flirtatious games.

Marlowe was able to capitalize on the sensuality of the Hero and Leander story through his language. Several passages within the text either refer directly to sex or the word choices have significant sexual undertones. In the beginning of Sestiad II Leander finds Hero's home to attempt to sleep with her. Marlowe claims that "to her tower he got by stealth. / Wide open stood the door" (18-19). The image of the tower often symbolizes a woman's body. The ultimate goal of a pursuing lover is to gain access to the tower. When Leander gets to Hero, her door is wide open, indicating that she has a desire for the sexual encounter ensuing. Marlowe continues in that passage to claim that Hero was already waiting for Leander and often she "mused he did not come. / At last he came. /…He asked, she gave, and nothing was denied" (22-23, 25). Marlowe is explaining that Leander finally came to the tower to see Hero; however, the language usage implies a sexual climax. Line 25 seems to emphasize the possibility of an orgasm when it states that "nothing was denied." The point is that before Hero and Leander physically have sex, it is all in the language. Marlowe fills up the entire Sestiad II with the erotic linguistic foreplay leading up to the consummation.

Despite the several indirectly sensuous passages within the text, the erotic focus is summed up in the ending. Unlike Ovid who presented his characters as two separated lovers, Marlowe's narration concludes with what has been the primary emphasis of the entire text: sex. Marlowe's version ends with Hero and Leander, in bed, the morning after they consummated their love. The poem does not continue past Sestiad II. It is unknown as to whether Marlowe intended to end the poem at this point or if it was simply unfinished. However, in effect, this ending works to make sense with the rest of the poem. If the poem was actually finished, then it concludes with a bed scene, bringing the ending of the poem to sex and completing a poem that

is entirely about the sexual relationship of Hero and Leander. Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* combines the *Heroides* and the elegy tradition. He writes, "And her all naked to his sight displayed, / Whence his admiring eyes more pleasure too / Than Dis on heaps of gold fixing his look" (II.324-26). For Marlowe, the point of the Hero and Leander story is the sexual encounter. Like Ovid, he is not interested in marriage but in the description of sensual courtship and consummation. Marlowe was able to reshape a well known mythology into a clever, humorous, sensuous narration based on Ovidian influences.

Ovid's influence is evident throughout the works of Christopher Marlowe and John Donne as they capitalized on the Ovidian elegy to introduce new styles to Renaissance poetry. The love elegy tradition, as it stands today, is indebted to Ovid for his ability to mold a once very serious poem into the witty, satirical, sensuous poem that it was to Marlowe and Donne and that it is still today. Ovid's *Amores, Ars Amatoria, Remedia Amoris,* and *Heroides* all stand as important examples of the Ovidian elegy tradition that was so important to writers of the 1590's.

CHAPTER III

THE PETRARCHAN SONNET

In addition to Ovid's satirical attitude towards love, another literary love tradition was flourishing in the 1590's, a tradition that differed from Ovid in almost every way. Thriving at the same time as the love elegy form, full of Ovidian sensuality and witticism, was a contrasting form of poetry: the sonnet, which centered on a more serious aspect of love. Petrarch, a fourteenth-century sonneteer, provides a good starting point to a study of the sonnet since his work added so much to the sonnet style, especially in the minds of the sonneteers of the 1590's, that his is by far the greatest single influence. His best-known work is *Rime sparse*.

Petrarch's *Rime sparse* gave the poetic world an entirely new concept. His sonnet sequence, consisting of 366 poems, was the first collection of poetry that was completely and seriously devoted to a single subject or person. Nevertheless, it was rooted in an earlier, medieval tradition very different from the Ovidian one: the tradition of "courtly love." Petrarch altered the convention profoundly by taking away the final consummation: his is a love that is endlessly frustrated. The Petrarchan tradition makes its effect on sixteenth-century sonneteers together with another tradition: that of Platonic love. This chapter will consider these influences together and their effect on the love poetry of the 1590's.

Both the Petrarchan and Platonic vogues were introduced to English poets by the mid sixteenth century thanks to Sir Thomas Wyatt, who directly translated sonnets from the *Rime sparse*, and Baldassare Castiglione, who repeated Plato's argument in *The Book of the Courtier*. The sonnet tradition also experienced a brief stint in France where poets, eager to produce a Renaissance of their own culture and language, returned to Petrarch for guidance. Eventually,

the sonnet sequence tradition returned to the English poets in full force at the end of the sixteenth century, evidenced in the multiple sonnet sequences published throughout the 1590's by writers such as Sir Philip Sidney, Samuel Daniel, Michael Drayton and Edmund Spenser. Petrarch, as the name behind the sonnet, was emulated by numerous writers across national borders and multiple centuries.

The Courtly Love Tradition

Since the amatory sonnet sequence began with Petrarch, and several underlying concepts within the sonnets are rooted in traditional, literary perceptions of love in his time, it is important to understand the literary culture from which he was writing. It was through this literary background, the tradition of courtly love, that Petrarch was first introduced to English poetry. The medieval development of "courtly love" was a system of rules regarding proper behavior between lovers. These particular attitudes toward love have their origins in French literature of the twelfth century with writers like Andreas Capellanus who laid down the primary principles when he wrote *De amore*, or "About Love," translated today as *The Art of Courtly Love*. The concept became popular with fourteenth-century writers like Giovanni Boccaccio and, in English literature, with Geoffrey Chaucer.

In *The Art of Courtly Love,* Capellanus, through instructions, exemplary dialogues between men and women of various social status, and lists of rules, establishes the fundamentals of courtly love, emphasizing the important tenets of the system. One of the characteristics of courtly love is the idea of love at first sight and Capellanus explains that love enters the heart and body through the eyes, insisting "this inborn suffering [love] comes, therefore, from seeing and meditating" (29). In his list of thirty-one rules for love, supposedly set down by "the King of

Love himself," rule sixteen states, "When a lover suddenly catches sight of his beloved his heart palpitates" (184-85). The literary courtly love tradition held that a man was struck with the arrows of Love when he first spied the woman his heart desired. From that moment forward, the lover entered into complete devotion and obedience to the lady. Rule thirty on Capellanus' list states, "A true lover is constantly and without intermission possessed by the thought of his beloved" (186). It was not just in thought that a lover was in servitude, his devotion also required physical acts of service, such as performing public acts of goodwill and being generous with money and service to those in need. Courtly love insisted that the state of being in love called for complete and absolute commitment of service to the lady, as well as to Love.

Despite the fact that the lover was in complete submission to his lady, he was not to broadcast the love publicly. Courtly love intensified already serious affairs by an element of secrecy. In addition to the list of thirty-one rules for love, Capellanus also wrote a list of twelve "chief rules in love," of which rule six states, "Thou shalt not have many who know of the affair" (81). He enforces the seriousness of the matter in his longer list when rule thirteen gravely states, "When made public love rarely endures" (185). The idea behind courtly love was that love should be shared only between the lover, the lady, and possibly one intermediary.

The secrecy helped to emphasize an already intense love structure. Between that and the complete devotion of the lover, the literary tradition of courtly love revealed it to be extreme and intense—quite the opposite of Ovid's witty and humorous elegy tradition but highly influential on Petrarch and his attitude toward love in the sonnet sequence. In *The Art of Courtly Love*, Capellanus writes, "a true lover would rather be deprived of all his money and of everything that the human mind can imagine as indispensable to life rather than be without love, either hoped for

or attained" (30). Rule fourteen emphasizes the intensity even further: "The easy attainment of love makes it of little value; difficulty of attainment makes it prized" (185). The lover's process to gaining love was demanding and full of chores while the effects of love were physically demanding and emotionally wearing. The result was a lover who found himself completely immersed in the intensity of the system of love in which his source of delight was simultaneously his source of strife.

Another fundamental aspect of courtly love, tied into the element of secrecy, is the fact that the system did include consummation but was not concerned with marriage. In actuality, the idea of courtly love was that this form of an intense, devoted, secret love affair could not exist within the boundaries of marriage. Marriage was, for the most part, thought to be intended for economic and social reasons, leaving very little room for love. The tradition of courtly love maintained that a lover, having been struck by the god of Love himself, had no control over the situation and was not intended to pursue his love to the point of marriage. Instead, a lover was pricked by love at the sight of a woman and was henceforth trapped by this demanding system, with his ultimate goal being the attainment of his love and the consummation of his desires. By his repeated emphasis on the matter of secrecy Capellanus clearly indicates that marriage had no place in the system of courtly love. Clearly, marriage is a matter of public knowledge. Capellanus also states in rule one that "Marriage is no real excuse for not loving," indicating that being married is not a legitimate reason not to have a love affair as defined by the system of courtly love. Therefore, the love affair would need to exist beyond the boundaries of marriage itself. Courtly love aimed for consummation, but never marriage.

An excellent example of the tradition of courtly love can be found in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. It was written in English, most likely between 1380 and 1385, and provides one of the first English stories of courtly love. The story of the two lovers, Troilus, Prince of Troy, and Criseyde, a widow of Troy, during the time of the Trojan War, was a popular one having been retold by several writers throughout the Middle Ages. The story originates around the twelfth century with an explosion of courtly love literature and a European interest in the story of the tragedy of Troilus, a young man who spurned love and laughed at those who had fallen victim to Love's arrows. That is, of course, until the day he sees Criseyde on her way to a temple and falls instantly in love with her. Their courtship is full of typical courtly love elements including love at first sight, absolute devotion and loyalty, secrecy (with the exception of the mediator Pandarus), and mental and physical turmoil for Troilus. They eventually reach consummation, which they maintain over a period of three years in secret before disaster strikes: Criseyde is chosen to be sent as a prisoner to the Greeks in exchange for soldiers they had captured. In Book IV, Troilus finds himself with no options and no hope. He cannot violate her wishes, and she prefers going to the Greek side over publically stating her reason for staying, which is her affair with Troilus; he cannot simply choose another lover. Both of these dilemmas stem from his absolute devotion to Criseyde. There is no reason given within the text as to why the two lovers cannot marry; however, Troilus claims not to have the option of eloping, because Criseyde won't agree to it, and he cannot tell anyone of his problem because the affair must remain a secret. He is completely trapped by a code of devotion, loyalty and secrecy that does not involve marriage. Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* is clearly written in the courtly love tradition.

As Troilus reflects on his new-found love, he expresses his emotions in a song (Book I.400-420). He is confused by the apparent contradictions he feels:

> If love be good, from whennes cometh my woo?
>
> If it be wikke, a wonder thynketh me,
>
> When every torment and adversite
>
> That cometh of hym may to me savory thinke,
>
> For ay thurst I, the more that ich it drynke. (I.402-06)

Troilus's song belongs to his courtly courtship; but it also represents a significant moment in English poetry. In this song, Chaucer translated a Petrarchan sonnet into English for the first time. He was translating sonnet 132 from the *Rime sparse*. Although the song is structurally different from Petrarch's sonnet, it is nevertheless a direct translation of the poem as he transforms a fourteen line sonnet into a twenty-one line song composed of three stanzas of seven lines each. He is careful to maintain the intense, paradoxical style characteristic of Petrarch in the *Rime sparse*. Petrarch's sonnet also questions the feeling of love saying, "If it is good, whence comes this bitter mortal effect? If it is evil, why is each torment so sweet?" (270) By converting Petrarch into the courtly love tradition, Chaucer changes it.

This specific poem, 132, that Chaucer opted to translate contains an example of extremity in a violent dichotomy between cold and hot. In 132, Petrarch ends his sonnet exclaiming, "I shiver in midsummer, burn in winter" (270). Chaucer changes the words slightly but keeps the same concept when he writes, "For hote of cold, for cold of hote, I dye" (420). He is able to use Petrarch's extreme feelings to support Troilus' love for Criseyde even though his position on love is within the courtly love tradition. Chaucer stayed close to the original language in his

translation; however, the use of a Petrarchan love sonnet in a story within the courtly love tradition changed the poem's attitude toward love. It is almost symbolic, therefore, that he changed it from the sonnet form into a song. Since the form of the sonnet belonged to Petrarch and his world of love, which was similar to, but also outside of the world of courtly love, it is easy to see how Chaucer, through *Troilus and Criseyde*, forms a bridge between the courtly love tradition and the English Petrarchan tradition. In fact, the Petrarchan tradition enters English poetry through the courtly love tradition.

Petrarch and his Influence

Petrarch wrote, "Modern writers should emulate the bees, who do not merely return what they have taken from the flowers, but render this into marvellous compounds of wax and honey" (qtd. in Lever 3). In other words, writers should not settle with imitating poetry that already existed but to utilize the literary traditions at their disposal to create something new. That is, in fact, what Petrarch did when he adapted principles of the courtly love tradition and added them to his revolutionized idea of the sonnet, changing its place and purpose in literary tradition.

Although the sonnet form existed before Petrarch, English sonneteers of 1590's viewed him as the originator of the sonnet due to the way in which he developed it. J.W. Lever, in *The Elizabethan Love Sonnet*, establishes that "Petrarch so impregnated the Italian sonnet with his genius that its essential qualities could never afterwards be dissociated with his work: which is equivalent to saying that his genius so expressed the outlook of his nation that no fundamental change was required" (vii). Petrarch's *Rime sparse,* as the title suggests, is a collection of 366 "scattered rhymes," or poems, ranging in form and subject matter, including sonnets, canzones, madrigals and ballads which address issues of love, religion and politics. However, of the 366

poems that make up the *Rime sparse*, 314 of them are sonnets, most of which focus on the object of his love, a woman he calls Laura.[6] As a result, Petrarch was the originator of the idea of the sonnet sequence, largely devoted to one topic or person. In the introduction to *Petrarch's Lyric Poems*, Robert Durling points out that "one of Petrarch's greatest originalities lies in the idea of the collection itself" (9). Essentially, Petrarch created what is today known as the sonnet sequence. The *Rime sparse* led to the invention of a sub-genre of the sonnet: a collection of sonnets intensely focused on one person. Gordon Braden, in *Petrarchan Love and the Continental Renaissance*, explains that the "central, indeed obsessive, theme of the vernacular poetry … unpredictably proves his most vigorous legacy" (14). For writers in Renaissance England, in particular the poets of the 1580's and 90's such as Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser, the sonnet was attached to Petrarch's name as they imitated his idea of the amatory sonnet sequence. Lever discusses the full impact of Petrarch's collection of poems, explaining that "variations on its themes were to be sounded by almost every poet in every country which had cultural ties with Italy" (7).

Petrarch's *Rime sparse* was unified by what Braden terms his "consuming, unending desire for one woman" (14). In the poems, his attitude toward love and means of dealing with desire are based on the tradition of love and the place for sonnets in Petrarch's time, the mid-fourteenth century. In *Petrarch and the English Sonnet Sequences,* Thomas Roche explains that the sonnet tradition, as exemplified by Petrarch, featured "the proud youth hit by Cupid's arrow,

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[6] Petrarch's collection includes poems about Laura both while she was living and after she died. As a result, critics today "divide" the *Rime sparse* into two sections: *in vita* and *in morte* (beginning at poem 264), which separate the poems which deal with Laura when she was still alive from the poems which address Laura after her death. Since none of the sonneteers of the 1590's deal with the issue of the woman dying, they do not follow Petrarch's tradition of addressing Laura even after her death. Therefore, I have chosen to focus only on the poems within the *in vita* section.

the disdainful lady, the fires of love burning unquenchably in the marrow, [and] the lover-poet singing in despair of curing himself" (10-11). Durling expands on Roche's statement when he describes the tradition of love in the 1300's, containing principles similar to the courtly love tradition, such as

> love at first sight, obsessive yearning and lovesickness, frustration, love as parallel to feudal service; the lady as ideally beautiful, ideally virtuous, miraculous, beloved in Heaven, and destined to early death; love as virtue, love as idolatry, love as sensuality; the god of love with his arrows, fires, whips, chains; [and] war within the self—hope, fear, joy, sorrow. (9)

Petrarch, like his contemporaries, dealt with all these traditional elements within the *Rime sparse.* However, Petrarch handled these tenets more seriously than the other poets; at least any other poet influential on the English poetic tradition of the 1590's.[7]

Like Ovid, Petrarch viewed love as a very important issue that needed to be dealt with in writing. However, he never thought love was even remotely humorous and consummation was not a possibility. Instead, his sonnets present short bursts of romantic vision and deep-seated emotion that never, even after 314 sonnets, find relief from the pressure of being in love. His intensity and extremeness is evident in sonnets 132 and 134, both of which describe his state of being in metaphors composed of polar opposites. Together, these sonnets are known as the "Icy Fire" sonnets, a term derived from one of the examples used in both sonnets, and the basis for the title of Leonard Forster's *The Icy Fire: Five Studies in European Petrarchism*. Forster calls them "two of the most influential sonnets in the *Canzoniere* [or *Rime sparse*]" (4). His claim is

[7] I recognize that Dante addressed issues such as love and desire in a serious manner as well; however, Dante's *Vita Nuova* was not translated into English until after the vogue of sonnet sequences, and therefore, did not have an impact on the sonneteers of the 1590's in the way Petrarch did.

based on the way both sonnets illustrate Petrarch's powerful, complex, conflicting emotions. Sonnet 132 questions, "If it is good, whence comes this bitter mortal effect? If it is evil, why is each torment so sweet?" and laments "O living death, O delightful harm…Amid such contrary winds I find myself at sea in a frail bark, without a tiller" (270).[8] The poem ends with a drastic statement, emphasizing the previous laments: "I shiver in midsummer, burn in winter" (270). Likewise, in sonnet 134 Petrarch writes, "Peace I do not find, and I have no wish to make war; and I fear and hope, and burn and am of ice; and I fly above the heavens and lie on the ground; and I grasp nothing and embrace all the world" (272). Consider not only that elements such as living death, delightful harm, fear and hope or fire and ice are contradictory, but also that all the elements listed above are exceptionally severe. Both poems emphasize the happy and unhappy parts behind the feelings of love and portray the concentrated passion involved. In addition, they both present similar images, particularly of the icy fire emblem. There is nothing comic or humorous about Petrarch's love-sick state; instead, the repeated use of oxymora provides insight into the seriousness of his feelings. The very fact that there are two icy fire sonnets indicates Petrarch's desire to communicate the dichotomy involved in being in love.

Petrarch uses another metaphor in sonnet 189, in which he uses the voyage of a ship to symbolize a lover's journey. This metaphor also portrays the seriousness of his condition as he writes, "My ship laden with forgetfulness passes through a harsh sea, at midnight, in winter, between Scylla and Charybdis" (334). Petrarch feels as if he is suffering under intense, extreme conditions as he works his way through love. However, the sonnet also examines the frustrated struggle of the journey itself. He continues, "Each oar is manned by a ready, cruel thought that

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[8] The citations for Petrarch's poems are page numbers from Robert M. Durling's English translation, *Petrarch's Lyric Poems: The* Rime sparse *and Other Lyrics*, which translates the rhyming quatrains into prose stanzas.

seems to scorn the tempest and the end; a wet, changeless wind of sighs, hopes, and desires breaks the sail; a rain of weeping, a mist of disdain wet and loosen the already weary ropes…so that I begin to despair of the port" (334). In the poem, the ship endures a wearisome battle in which one disaster happens after another. Likewise the speaker is experiencing a frustrating struggle in love, throughout which, no matter how far he sails, he cannot reach port. In other words, he would never be able to consummate his love for Laura or find a release for his desire. This sonnet highlights the Petrarchan tradition of lamenting the love and feelings that create a frustrated, almost defeated state of being.

The frustrated state of the poet-lover derives from the inability to find any release from the pressure of love. Petrarch's sonnet collection never approaches consummation. For reasons unknown to scholars, it is very clear throughout the sonnet sequence that, even while she is alive, Petrarch cannot have Laura. She is unattainable, as presented metaphorically in sonnet 190, in which Petrarch compares her to "a white doe on the green grass" (336). Regarding the doe, he writes, "'Let no one touch me,' she bore written with diamonds and topazes around her lovely neck. 'It has pleased my Caesar to make me free," (336). Who "Caesar" is supposed to symbolize has been debated by scholars for centuries; however, regardless of who he is, the point of the reference is to show that she still cannot be touched. In this sonnet, Petrarch compares himself to the "miser who as he seeks treasure sweetens his trouble with delight" (336). As he falls more in love with her, he is inevitably increasing his own frustration and love-sickness due to the impossibility of having her.

The fact that Laura is clearly unattainable has a slightly more positive aspect for Petrarch's situation in that while he cannot have her, he can learn from her. This Platonic view

of love is represented in sonnet 248 of the *Rime sparse*. Petrarch lifts Laura onto a pedestal since she is able to depict to the world an image of virtue. He begins the poem claiming, "Whoever wishes to see all that Nature and Heaven can do among us, let him come gaze on her, for she alone is a sun…for the blind world, which does not care for virtue" (410). In this sonnet Petrarch is implying that Laura, his object of love, can lead him to virtue since her physical beauty is an outward symbol of her inner virtue. He continues, "He will see…every virtue, every beauty, every regal habit, joined together in one body with marvelous tempering" (410). Though Laura cannot be physically attained, she still represents a kind of love that can give something non-physical to Petrarch by drawing him upward towards virtue.

Petrarch's sonnets range from intensely focusing on his earthly desire for Laura to examining the possibility that love and desire might lead him to something more than materialistic pleasures. He addresses this tension in the *Secretum (The Secret)*, a Latin prose work composed of a thorough self-examination in which he discusses such issues in an imagined dialogue with Saint Augustine, while in the company of Truth. Saint Augustine argues, "It was from Heaven your soul came forth…[b]ut in its contact with the flesh, wherein it is imprisoned, it has lost much of its first splendor. Have no doubt of this in your mind. And not only is it so, but by reason of the length of time it has in a manner fallen asleep; and, if one may so express it, forgotten its own beginning and its heavenly Creator" (Petrarch online). Essentially, desire is born when the soul is entrapped in the body and, eventually, the soul gives in to the body and its desires. Saint Augustine tells Petrarch that his "weak Spirit is crushed so that it has not strength to judge what it should first attack or to discern what to cherish, what to destroy, what to repel…" (Petrarch online).

Saint Augustine claims that the desires of the body weaken the will of the soul to such an extent that the soul is no longer able to meditate on death, and likewise a transcended existence beyond death, and instead resorts to focusing on the earthly desires. He concludes his reproach by explaining that, as a result of this process, "there comes to pass that inward discord…and that worrying torment of a mind angry with itself; when it loathes its own defilements, yet cleanses them not away; sees the crooked paths, yet does not forsake them; dreads the impending danger, yet stirs not a step to avoid it" (Petrarch online). It is the "inward discord" that is portrayed throughout the sonnet sequence.

Petrarch recognizes his desire is something that needs to be repented, and yet he continues, at times, to yield to that desire. As a result, the sonnet sequence, from beginning to end, retains the tension between ideas of transcended love and sexual love, which is why he is reproached by Saint Augustine at the end of the *Secretum*. He continually wrestles with the disconnect between Christian love and sexual frustration. It is the presence of this "inward discord" that separates Petrarch from Dante, who, after purification of his desires, was able to follow Beatrice to Paradise. Furthermore, it is the paradox of Christian love and sexual desire that sonneteers of the 1590's recognized and it is the problem at the heart of this tension with which they identified.

The Platonic Tradition

This dimension of Petrarch connects with another major trend in literary love traditions that played an important role on the English sonnet sequence writers: the idea of love leading the lover upward toward a vision of perfect beauty and virtue. Originating with Plato, this literary tradition of love preceded Petrarch and the courtly love tradition since Plato's *Symposium* was

written sometime after 385 B.C. However, despite the fact that the work itself preceded Petrarch's *Rime sparse*, the *Symposium's* influence came much later. The beginning of the Renaissance in Europe was marked with a re-discovery of Plato and a renewed interest in his perception of love as debated in the *Symposium*. This idea, especially as popularized by Baldassare Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*, created another literary love tradition that varied from Petrarch regarding the purpose of love. Although Plato and Castiglione shared Petrarch's seriousness regarding love, they argued that the purpose of love was to draw the lover toward a higher, heavenly idea of beauty and virtue, eventually leading him to a better understanding of God. Petrarch's perspective on love attracted the lover to the virtuous qualities of his lady, the object of his desire, whereas Plato's depiction of love draws the lover away from earthly desires by using the object to redirect the lover toward heavenly desires. The Platonic tradition teaches that man can successfully transcend his earthly desire and find complete satisfaction and fulfillment in the elevated idea of love and beauty. While the Petrarchan tradition recognizes the value in transcending, as evident in the *Secretum* and some of the sonnets in the *Rime sparse*, it does not teach that humanity is capable of doing so. Petrarch is trying to transcend his desire for Laura; however, he is never able to fully get there.

In the *Symposium*, Plato presents his attitude toward love through a debate at a dinner party in the house of Agathon (a male playwright). All of the guests, in turn, present their opinions on what love is. Though the Symposium as a whole presents several ideas on the topic of love, two of the presentations are particularly relevant to the study of this chapter: the speech of Aristophanes and the grand speech of Socrates that dominates the discussion. Aristophanes begins with a story of the origin of humans, explaining that there were originally three sexes,

male, female and androgynous, all of which consisted of pairs of people who were joined at the navel creating what was called "circle people," or people who had four legs, four arms and one head with two faces per body. Circle people moved by rolling around in a cartwheel fashion which made them fast and strong. Their agility caused them to attempt to climb to the heavens and overthrow the gods, who were infuriated at their human foolishness. As a result, Zeus cut each circle person in half creating two individual people. Female circle people became two females, male circle people became two males, and androgynous circle people produced one male and one female from each original person. Aristophanes tells the story of the plight of humans to argue that within the soul of each person is an intense longing for his/her original whole being. He explains, "Man's original body having been thus cut in two, each half yearned for the half from which it had been severed" (61). In other words, the feeling of love is every person's longing desire to find each individual's soul mate.

Socrates, in a similar fashion, also argues that love is imperfect and is searching for a way to perfection. However, instead of claiming the imperfection is because people are missing half of their souls, he argues that it is because the love an individual experiences is not beautiful or good and, therefore, it is continually seeking out how to become beautiful and find a form of what is good. He explains, "It isn't merely probable but absolutely certain that one desires what one lacks, or rather that one does not desire what one does not lack" (76). He tells the story of a conversation he had with Diotima, a legendary priestess and his tutor. Diotima, through a detailed stair-step pattern, explains that what love is ultimately looking for is a non-earthly goodness or a heavenly idea of beauty and virtue.

Diotima first points out that the lover is the one who experiences the feelings of love while the loved is the object of the love, or the beautiful, good thing that the lover desires (83). The first step toward virtue is to contemplate the physical beauty of the object of desire, leading the lover to fall in love with one beautiful person. From there, the lover "will observe that physical beauty in any person is closely akin to physical beauty in any other," therefore, "it is great folly not to acknowledge that the beauty exhibited in all bodies is one and the same" (92). This realization leads the lover to contemplate all physical beauty as one, lessoning his passion for any one beautiful object. At this point, the lover must make a transition from physical beauty and realize that beauty of the soul is far better than physical beauty. As he has done once before, the lover must now recognize that all inner beauty is the same, creating one, general inner beauty. He also has reached the point in which physical beauty is meaningless. At this point, "by gazing upon the vast ocean of beauty to which his attention is now turned, [he] may bring forth in the abundance of his love of wisdom many beautiful and magnificent sentiments and ideas" (93). Essentially, the inner beauty as a whole includes beauty of knowledge, leading the lover to realize beautiful ideas. Once he has reached this understanding, he has come to fully grasp what love is and "he will see it is absolute, existing alone with itself, unique, eternal, and all other beautiful things as partaking of it" (94). The whole process is ascension toward a higher understanding of absolute beauty by using earthly examples that are reflecting a greater beauty in order to guide the mind forward. Plato expresses the seriousness of love that is evident in the sonnet sequences of the 1590's through his idea of a soul mate and his purpose for love. However, Platonic love transcends the original love object altogether. This idea of love becomes such a universal concept that it is supposed to no longer be about the lover or his original love

object, but about something else all together. In a variation from Petrarch, the seriousness of love is found through attaching the meaning of love to ideas of virtue, beauty and a higher understanding of good, not a woman.

Through a very similar method, Baldassare Castiglione also argued that the purpose of love was to lead the lover through beauty toward virtue and he identified the idea of virtue with a greater good in his famous metaphor of the ladder of love. Written in Italian in 1528, *The Book of the Courtier* was translated into English in 1561 by Sir Thomas Hoby. The text is an extended dialogue between men and women in the court of the Duke of Urbino, sometime between 1504 and 1508, and describes the good qualities of an ideal courtier. Book IV, mostly dominated by a speech by Peter Bembo, represents a Christianized and heterosexualized version of Socrates' speech in Plato's *Symposium*. According to Bembo, love is a yearning of the soul after beauty—which is eventually identified with an eternal good. Written just after the courtly love tradition, *The Book of the Courtier* ties in with medieval and post-medieval love poetry due to its Christian and heterosexual focus. However, the text also falls in line with Troubadour poetry considering the aim of Bembo's speech is to lift an individual out of the concentration on erotic, sexual love.

Bembo's argument begins the same way Socrates began his, by explaining that love lacks beauty and goodness and is therefore a desire for those things. However, he adds in, "knowledge goe evermore before coveting," meaning that knowledge knows what is good but does not have it, so it is knowledge that continually seeks what is good (303). He explains that there are three means by which man can know something: by sense, by reason and by understanding. Sense fuels appetite which causes desire for things only known to the senses, a trait mankind shares with the animal kingdom. Reason is man's ability to choose, a characteristic of humans alone.

Understanding provides man with human will, is used to communicate between men and angels, and fuels a desire for spiritual things. He argues that "man of nature indowed with reason, placed (as it were) in the middle betweene these two extremities, may through his choice, inclining to sense, or reaching to understanding, come nigh to the coveting sometime of the one, sometime of the other part" (304).

In light of this position of mankind, Bembo turns to beauty. Like Socrates, he argues that beauty is a reflection of a greater goodness, similar to the way the rays of the sun reflect its light off other objects. When a man sees a beautiful woman, he is attracted to her by his physical sense of sight, but her beauty penetrates through his eyes into his soul. This is the critical point in which the man must choose between giving in to sensual desire or moving forward toward spiritual desire. Bembo warns, "When the soul…suffer her selfe to be guided with the judgment of sense, she falleth into most deepe errours, and judgeth the bodie in which beauty is discerned to be the principall thereof: whereupon to enjoy it she reckoneth it necessarie to joine as inwardly as she can, with that bodie, which is false" (304). Young men, he claims, are more apt to give into this desire and think that sex is the solution. However, older men, who are more prone to listen to reason, which allows them to possess and understand beauty in its fullness, are more capable of knowing what is good (since beauty is good). It is through this choice that men are "keeping aloofe from this sensuall coveting as fro the lowest step of the stayres, by the which a man may ascend to true love" (307).

Here, Bembo takes a moment in his process of love to explain the connection between beauty and goodness. He argues that beauty "is a holy thing" because it "commeth of God, and is like a circle, the goodnesse whereof is the Center" (308-09). It is impossible to have beauty

and not goodness. Therefore, when the body is beautiful it is a direct reflection of the inner beauty of the soul. With the choice to move away from sensual desire and toward higher understanding coupled with the awareness of the ties between beauty and goodness, the lover is now ready to "enter into the holy way of love, with the guide of reason" (313). Similar to the courtly love tradition, the lover who is ready to move forward must "obey, please, and honour with all reverence his woman, and recken her more deare to him than his owne life, and preferre all her commodities and pleasures before his owne" (313-14). However, the courtier's final aim is not simply consummation, as indicated in the final line of that statement, "and love no lesse in her the beautie of minde, than of the bodie" (314).

Again, just like Socrates, Bembo illustrates that a lover in this position is ready to move from the love of one beauty to the understanding of beauty as a whole. The lover "shall gather in his thought by litle and litle so many ornaments, that meddling all beautie together, he shal make an universall conceite, and bring the multitude of them to the unitie of one alone, that is generally spred over all the nature of man" (318). This is the final stage of love in which the lover is aware of a universal intellectual beauty. The lover's soul, at this point, is able to look inward to the "angelic beauty" of its own. Being aware of this form of beauty, the soul is captivated with it and is "beside her selfe, for coveting to couple her self with it, having found (to her weening) the footsteps of God" (319). The soul is now able to leave the earthly confines of sense and reason and join the "angelic nature" of the heavens through a supreme understanding of heavenly beauty and good. Bembo finally argues that this beauty found by the soul is "unseperable from ye high bountie" (320). His ladder of love, therefore, claims that the love incited by the sight of a woman causes a man to desire her. From the moment of desire, the right

choice to move up the ladder is to deny sensual desire and look to understanding to know beauty and goodness. Following this path will lead the courtier up the ladder to a final, supreme beauty and goodness, identified as coming from God.

Plato and Castiglione represent an entirely new outlook behind the purpose of love in their ideas regarding human love as a stairway that must be climbed to lead to a greater good or virtue. At the same time, however, they maintain elements similar to the courtly love and Petrarch sonnet traditions through the seriousness and intensity involved with love. They are also equally influential on the sonneteers of the late sixteenth century in England.

The Sonnet Makes its Way to England

As a result, while the sonnet made its way into English poetry it carried hints of the courtly love and Platonic traditions, but was more aligned with Petrarch's influence which deviated slightly from the courtly love tradition. It shifted slightly away from the ultra-demanding, completely devoted, fully consummated love scheme of courtly love while maintaining the highly emotional aspect and veering more to a frustrated love that never finds release and is loudly lamented. And in regard to Plato's depiction of love, the English sonnet valued the idea of virtue as embodied by the woman but maintained the physical love for her, never committing to the idea of moving beyond earthly desires. In *The Elizabethan Love Sonnet*, J.W. Lever asserts that for the sonnet, "the tradition reaches back to a European, especially an Italian past; but it was adapted and transformed by distinctively English attitudes" (vi). Petrarch formed the basis of the Elizabethan sonnet since it was his poetry that was first translated into English and his example, the *Rime sparse,* that provided the idea for the sonnet and the sonnet sequence for English poets. Several of the poems from that collection were translated and

emulated by Sir Thomas Wyatt, between 1528 and his death in 1542, through which he introduced the sonnet to English poetry when they were published posthumously in 1557. In 1589, George Puttenham referred to Wyatt in *The Art of English Poesie* (1589) as one of "the chief lanternes of light to all others that have since employed their pennes upon English Poesie" (qtd. in Heale 1).

Wyatt created an English form of the sonnet through his experiments with the foreign idea of the poem. Wyatt came into contact with literature of the Italian Renaissance through his several expeditions as a foreign ambassador under King Henry VIII. In *Greater English Poets*, A. W. Crawford explains that Wyatt "wrote thirty-one sonnets, twenty of which have been traced to Italian sources. Seventeen of these are translated or adapted from Petrarch" (725). Although Petrarch served as a clear starting point, Wyatt altered the form of the sonnet both in style and content. Lever points out that, for the most part, Wyatt's poems "follow their originals; but there are subtle differences here too, and one difference which is obvious. Every sonnet has a couplet ending: a device which was rare, though not quite unprecedented, in the Italian sonnet, and which certainly did not appear in any of the models Wyatt chose" (16). Petrarch's sonnets consisted of an octave and a sestet, with a clear break in the poem between the two sections. Instead of a sestet of two stanzas, rhyming *CDE CDE*, Wyatt divided the sestet into a quatrain and a rhyming couplet in the last two lines (*CDDC EE*), essentially moving the break in the sonnet to the end, between lines twelve and thirteen, and creating what is today known as the Shakespearean sonnet form. As a result, Wyatt's sonnet form tends to have a snappier, more epigrammatic feel to the ending in which he essentially sums up the entire poem in two lines.

The couplet ending has since become a clear trademark of the sonnets from English Renaissance poetry.

In addition to introducing the rhyming couplet to English sonneteers, Wyatt deviated from Petrarch by presenting a rather different attitude toward love in his translations. Wyatt's sonnets maintain the concept of an intense, frustrated love; however, unlike Petrarch, the poems are focused more on the poet lover himself and the lamentations get louder as they draw attention to the lover instead of the lady. The change is evident even in some of Wyatt's closest translations, such as his sonnet 26, a version of Petrarch's sonnet 134, one of the icy fire poems. Petrarch's sonnet ends with the poet lover's complaint, "I feed on pain, weeping I laugh; equally displeasing to me are death and life," and an address to his lady, "In this state am I, Lady, on account of you" (272). Wyatt maintains a close translation of the lover's complaint, "I fede me in sorrowe and laugh in all my pain; / Likewise displeaseth me boeth deth and lyffe" (12-13). When read in the context of the poem; however, Wyatt separates "Likewise displeaseth me…" from "I fede me in sorrowe…" by placing the second half of the complaint in the final rhyming couplet. There is a break after line twelve and the rhyming couplet then reads, "Likewise dispeaseth me boeth deth and lyffe; / And my delite is causer of this stryff" (13-14). His is linking the ideas of death and life with his personal strife by setting it off by the syntax. Instead of addressing the lady, as Petrarch does, Wyatt turns inward to address his own personal struggle. Despite the fact that Petrarch is in distress from his frustrated love, he still ends his final sentence with an address to Laura and his last word is "you," which forces the attention of the poem to her. Instead of mentioning his lady, Wyatt speaks of "my delite" and the last word of his translation is "stryff," which brings the attention of the sonnet to himself and his own pain.

Wyatt's sonnets magnify the position of the lover and the hardship he endures much more than Petrarch ever did.

A similar situation can be seen in Wyatt's sonnet seven, an adaptation of Petrarch's sonnet 190, where Petrarch compares Laura to a white doe. Petrarch's first quatrain is entirely a description of the beautiful doe, creating a complete focus on his lady. Wyatt, on the other hand, spends the entire quatrain writing about the lover, his tiredness, and the trouble he is experiencing trying to follow the doe. Wyatt claims he will quit following the doe because of the difficulty: "But as for me, helas, I may no more: / The vayne travaill hath weried me so sore, / I ame of them that farthest cometh behinde" (1-4). Instead of glorifying the doe (his lady), Wyatt complains about the disagreeableness of following her, making much of the weariness of the lover. Petrarch is enticed by her beauty, stating "Her look was so sweet and proud that to follow her I left every task" (336). He is seeking the doe because it is sweeter and it adds to his delight. However, Wyatt is tired of following her and wants to quit.

Wyatt also alters the purpose of following the doe. While Petrarch follows her because he is enraptured by her, Wyatt turns the pursuit into a hunt. His very first line states, "Who so list to hounte…" (1). Where Petrarch longs for the doe, Wyatt hunts her, which changes the position of the lover from a devoted, servant of love to an aggressive pursuer. He is also domesticating the poem by using the sport of hunting which was a great aristocratic activity of the time. A further example of Wyatt's domestication of this sonnet can be seen when he writes, "Sithens in a nett I seke to hold the wynde" (8). This line is not in Petrarch's sonnet and it is a real English proverb, "The wind cannot be caught in a net." Wyatt is using a foreign model but creating an English version of the sonnet.

One more significant departure from Petrarch's original sonnet lies in the sign the doe is wearing around her neck. The sign in Petrarch's sonnet is written with diamonds and topazes, which, according to Robert Durling in *Petrarch's Lyric Poems*, are traditional "emblems of steadfastness and chastity, respectively" (336). The sign reads, "'Let no one touch me…It has pleased my Caesar to set me free'" (336). Wyatt includes the sign around her neck but his is only composed with diamonds, and therefore removes the characteristic of chastity from the image of his lady. In addition, his sign reads, "'Noli me tangere for Cesars I ame" (13). Unlike Petrarch's doe, who is free and presents an image of chastity and virtue, Wyatt's doe is the property of someone else, which allows for the possibility of the woman being unchaste. It is generally assumed that the Caesar in Wyatt's poem is King Henry VIII himself while the doe is Anne Boleyn, with whom Wyatt is thought to have courted until she married the King. Petrarch creates the idea of a woman who cannot be obtained because of her goodness and virtue; while Wyatt is introducing Petrarchan principles to English poetry, he does not translate that idea. Instead, he creates a slightly different love tradition in which the lover is constantly complaining about his pain and strife as a result of the unavailability of his lady.

Beginning around the same time as Wyatt and extending even farther into the 1580's, the sonnet experienced a short vogue in France, in which French poets produced a flourish of sonnets under the direct influence of Petrarch. In *Elizabethan Sonnets*, Sidney Lee explains that "the French sonneteers idealized beauty, alike in its yielding and wayward moods, in strict imitation of their Italian masters" (xxiv). Clémont Marot, court poet to Francis I, is credited with having written the first Petrarchan sonnet in French, based on a sonnet written in 1529. He also directly translated at least six of Petrarch's sonnets.

Although Marot, like Wyatt, introduced the Petrarchan sonnet to his own language, two of his successors, Pierre de Ronsard and Joachim du Bellay, gained longer lasting fame in the sonnet tradition through their extensive use of the form. Ronsard and du Bellay were both poets of the second half of the sixteenth century; they followed Marot's example and turned to Petrarch for guidance. Their respect for Petrarch is well expressed by Lee who writes, "There is probably no sonnet of Petrarch, and a few of the popular sonnets of his Italian followers, which were not more or less exactly and…independently reproduced a dozen times or more in French verse during the later years of the sixteenth century" (xxv-xxvi). Ronsard wrote almost a 1000 sonnets, most of which were amatory in nature, including his best-known collection *Sonnets pour Hélène* in 1578. Du Bellay also wrote several love sonnets, and, according to the *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance*, he also wrote "*L'Olive* (1549), the first French sonnet sequence" which was "heavily influenced by Petrarch" (135). Both poets were repeatedly imitated by English sonneteers of the late sixteenth century.

In addition to writing Petrarchan sonnets, both poets were members of a group, founded by Ronsard around 1556, who called themselves *La Pléiade.* The group consisted of seven French poets who sought to emulate their prominent predecessors and "adopted the sonnet as the characteristic instrument of their school" (Lee xxii). Their manifesto was written by du Bellay, also in 1549, in *La Défense et illustration de la langue Française (Defense and Illustration of the French Language*). According the *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance*, the group's "principal aims…involved the reform of French poetry and the French language through imitation of the linguistic and stylistic techniques of classical antiquity and the Italian Renaissance, notably…the

sonnets of Petrarch" (325). The ideals of the Petrarchan tradition were kept alive by these French poets as they sought to enrich their own language and poetry.

The Sonnet in 1590's England

The sonnet, through the influence of Wyatt and the French sonneteers, made its way back into English poetry for its major vogue in popularity in the 1590's. There were many additional influences on the sonneteers who opted to pursue the Petrarchan sonnet tradition, all of which were well represented in English by the end of the sixteenth century. Lever explains the situation eloquently: "Practised by generations of writers for over two hundred years,…reconstituted in French by Ronsard and his fellows of the *Pléiade*, …and known in England since the time of Wyatt, the sonnet carried a vast accretion of concepts, images, and traditional phraseology" (143). While poets predominantly followed Petrarch's example, they found it difficult to maintain the quiet, servant-like stance he popularized. His subdued lamentations became outright complaining, as evidenced in Wyatt, when the English poets pick up the sonnet tradition. By then, the tradition consisted of maintaining the frustrated, exalted love position while staying in tension with the spiritual and passive aspect, but primarily turning towards the plight of the suffering lover.

It is interesting to note that this rage for sonnet sequences coincided with the interest in Ovidian elegies, despite their extreme differences in nature. The elegy tradition is not religiously affiliated, is focused on consummation and the erotic, and presents love as a humorous game. The sonnet tradition, on the other hand, is Christian, concerned with the frustrated state of the lover, absolutely serious and entirely built on the struggle behind love. Sir Philip Sidney, Samuel Daniel, Michael Drayton, and Edmund Spenser all counter the work of other English

poets of the 1590's, such as John Donne and Christopher Marlowe, with their sonnet sequences *Astrophil and Stella, Delia, Idea*, and *Amoretti*, respectively—all published in the 1590's.

Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* is the first English sonnet sequence following the amatory or Petrarchan tradition. In terms of influence, he might be considered a poet of the 1590's, despite his death in 1586, because two of his major works regarding poetry were not published until then. The first piece, the sonnet sequence, was published in 1591 and again in 1598. His second significant contribution to English poetics is an essay defending the art of poetry, published twice in 1595 under two separate titles: *An Apology for Poetry* and *The Defense of Poesy*. According to Peter Herman, "both works constituted major watersheds in the history of English Renaissance literature" as the *Apology* has taken "on the status of classic" and *Astrophil and Stella* "is often credited with starting the craze for writing sonnets and sonnet sequences that persisted throughout the 1590's" (33). As a result, the two great works may be considered together and the sonnet sequence read in the light of what Sidney says about poetry in the *Apology*.

In the *Apology*, Sidney argues that the key to writing good poetry is to master the art of concealing art. A consistent theme throughout his defense is the importance of sounding convincing as the lover declares his true love. Sidney writes,

> But truly many of such writings as come under the banner of unresistable love, if I were a mistress, would never persuade me they were in love, so coldly they apply fiery speeches, as men that had rather read lover's writings, and so caught up certain swelling phrases, which hang together like a man that once told me that the wind was at northwest by south because he would be sure to name winds

> enough, than that in truth they feel those passions, which easily, as I think, may be bewrayed by that same forcibleness…of the writer. (119)

He is actually claiming that a poet should not write like Petrarch in order to avoid the danger of sounding like his love is something from the books and not a spontaneous, genuine feeling. A closer examination of Sidney's language in this excerpt reveals a twisted use of the Petrarchan idea of the icy fire dichotomy when he writes, "how coldly they apply fiery speeches" (119). It seems as if Sidney's pun on the icy fire trope is meant to make a joke of something Petrarch considered very serious. Stating his argument using Petrarchan ideology, Sidney is practically joking about Petrarch's methods. He emphasizes his point further in sonnet 15:

> You that do dictionary's method bring
> Into your rhymes, running in rattling rows;
> You that poor Petrarch's long-deceasèd woes
> With new-born sighs and denizened wit do sing;
> You take wrong ways, those far-fet helps be such,
> As do bewray a want of inward touch,
> And sure at length stolen goods do come to light. (5-11)

Sidney is emphasizing that when a poet writes in the styles of others instead of from his heart, his lines sound scripted and false and he reveals a lack of poetic talent. He also warns that if a poet does emulate the "stolen goods," he will eventually be caught and revealed as a false lover. The irony is that Sidney's reasoning is framed as a sonnet, a form popularized by Petrarch, and this sonnet is part of an amatory sonnet sequence, a concept original to Petrarch. Herman

explains that "the progenitor of Sidney's sequence is Petrarch's collection" (40). Essentially, his anti-Petrarchan statement is, in and of itself, emulating Petrarch.

Sonnet 15 is not the only place in which Sidney emulates Petrarch, either. Sidney's sonnet 71 is based on Petrarch's sonnet 248, in which both poets address the issue of beauty and virtue. Petrarch hints at the Platonic idea of love when he writes, "Whoever wishes to see all that Nature and Heaven can do among us, let him come gaze on her, for she alone is a sun…for the blind world, which does not care for virtue" (410). In other words, Laura is a beacon of virtue and through looking at her one may be re-directed to virtue. Sidney's description of his lady is very similar:

> Who will in fairest book of Nature know
>
> How Virtue may best lodged in beauty be,
>
> Let him but learn of Love to read in thee,
>
> Stella, those fair lines, which true goodness show.
>
> There shall he find all vices' overthrow,
>
> …
>
> Thyself, dost strive all minds that way to move,
>
> Who mark in thee what is in thee most fair.
>
> So while thy beauty draws the heart to love,
>
> As fast thy Virtue bends that love to good…. (1-5, 10-13)

Stella is also a representation of virtue. Sidney claims that while her beauty causes men to love her, at the same time her virtue, which is fairer than her beauty, turns men's love to something good. Like Petrarch, Sidney recognizes the lady's beauty as an index of her virtue, and so the

lover moves away from physical desire. However, Sidney drastically departs from Petrarch in the last line of the sonnet, exclaiming "'But, ah,' Desire still cries, 'give me some food'" (14). Petrarch's selfless praise of Laura's beauty and virtue comes crashing down around Sidney who, like Wyatt, is more concerned with the lover's physical satisfaction. Stella's embodiment of virtue is irrelevant considering the poet lover still cannot satisfy or sublimate his desire for her.

Sidney's sonnet 15 is recognizably based on Petrarch and the entire sonnet sequence is emulative of Petrarch's *Rime sparse* with several of the characteristically English changes. Similar to Petrarch's, the whole sequence of *Astrophil and Stella* is about hopeless love: he continually aspires to love her despite the fact that she repeatedly says no. It is understood that Sidney's woman, similar to Wyatt's, belongs to someone else. Stella is thought to be Penelope Devereux, with whom a marriage to Sidney was proposed and debated for a few years, but eventually discarded. A few years later, both Penelope and Sidney were married to other people. Sidney's sonnets continually focus on his state as a rejected lover who deals with conflicting emotions and desires.

Recently after the work of Sidney, and capitalizing on the influence of the Platonic ideas and the French sonneteers, Samuel Daniel and Michael Drayton published sonnet sequences as well. Samuel Daniel produced his sonnet sequence called *Delia*. According to Lee, Daniel "may be reckoned Sidney's first successor on the throne of Elizabethan sonneteers" (lii). In fact, twenty-eight of Daniel's sonnets were printed at the end of the first, illegal publication of *Astrophil and Stella* in 1591. Daniel's reaction to the illegal printing was to self-publish his own collection, called *Delia*, consisting of fifty-five sonnets, in 1592. Not long after Daniel's sequence, Michael Drayton, another avid sonneteer, published his own collection in 1594 titled

Idea's Mirrour. In the two sonnet sequences, Daniel and Drayton are inter-mingling the Petrarchan and Platonic ideas of love, as clearly evidenced in the titles of their sonnet sequences. The word "Delia" is actually an English spelling of the word "Délie," which is a French anagram for "L'Idée," meaning "idea." Since both poets are writing in the form of the sonnet sequence with the concentration on a "woman," they are clearly indebted ultimately to Petrarch. Lee explains that Daniel's "Delia is a mere shadow of a shadow—a mere embodiment of what Petrarch wrote of Laura" and Drayton's title "symbolizes the Platonic ίδέ*a* of beauty" (lix, lxxxviii). For both of the poets, the "woman" of their sonnet sequences is something more than a physical object of the earthly world. They still present the idea of unattainable ladies, but they do so with a somewhat Platonist ideal. These lovers are destined to experience the exhausting, frustrating love of Petrarch since they do not manage to make it up the Platonic ladder.

Edmund Spenser follows both Petrarch and Sidney in the tradition of sonnet sequences with his collection called *Amoretti*, which translates as "little loves" or "little cupids." He abides by several of the conventional ideas within the sonnet tradition, including the struggle between frustration and desire; however, Spenser's collection drastically departs from the norm in one major aspect: his sonnets include a feeling of hope and introduce a small possibility that he may, in fact, get the girl. As with Wyatt and Sidney, some biographical information is pertinent to the reading of the sonnets. In 1594, Spenser married Elizabeth Boyle, after courting her for several years. *Amoretti* was published one year later, in 1595, together with his *Epithalamion*, a marriage poem written for his own wedding. Together, these two works represent Spenser's courtship and marriage. In *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, Hugh Maclean explains, "What most sets *Amoretti* apart…is its redirecting of desire away from an unobtainable mistress to a woman the

poet can marry and whose own erotic nature can be aroused without dishonor" 638). Spenser wrote about being in love with a woman whom he was courting and whom he had every intention of marrying. This makes him different from Petrarch, Wyatt, and Sidney.

Spenser's happier state of being in love is clearly evident when he directly translates Petrarch, for example, in sonnet 34, a version of Petrarch's sonnet 189 which uses the metaphor of the ship. As Petrarch compares his struggle through love to a ship on stormy seas, the conditions continually worsen and he ends the poem in despair. The ship "passes through a harsh sea, at midnight, in winter, between Scylla and Charbydis" while "each oar is manned by a ready, cruel thought" and "a rain of weeping, a mist of disdain wet and loosen the already weary ropes" (334). When his guiding light (her eyes—"two usual sweet stars") finally goes out, he concludes his miserable state with, "I begin to despair of the port" (334). In Spenser's version the poet is in a very similar state: he is "lyke a ship" who was being led "by conduct of some star" when "a storme hath dimd her trusty guyde" (1-3). Both poets are following the guidance of an image above them, an unreachable source that watches while they suffer below. However, at the turn between the octave and the sestet, Spenser departs from his source by changing the direction of the poem. Line nine in Petrarch's sonnet continues with the lamentation, reading "a rain of weeping," whereas the same place in Spenser's poem reads, "yet hope I well" (334, 9). Spenser's rendition lacks the feeling of complete despair as the poet continually hopes "that when this storme is past / My Helice the lodestar of my life / Will shine again, and looke on me at last, / With lovely light to cleare my cloudy grief" (9-12). While Spenser acknowledges that his current state is one of frustration and unfulfilled desire, he is confident that there is an end to the storm and his condition will improve.

This idea of hope and a happy ending is also evident in sonnet 67, a translation of another poem from the *Rime sparse,* sonnet 190. Here Spenser plays with the metaphor of the lady as a deer who is being followed. In the same manner as Wyatt, Spenser departs from Petrarch and turns his pursuit into a hunt. His poem begins by stating the position of the poet is, "Lyke as a huntsman after a weary chace" (1). In all three, Petrarch, Wyatt, and Spenser, the lady is a deer who is sought after by the poet who endures a long and wearying pursuit. As previously discussed, in Petrarch's poem the deer cannot be caught because she has been set free by Caesar and in Wyatt the deer is untouchable because she belongs to Caesar. Spenser, however, departs from both endings and the poet/hunter in his version actually gets the deer in the end. His poet still experiences want and defeat, since he has unsuccessfully chased the deer to the point of exhaustion and therefore needs to sit by a river to rest. However, at this point, the deer comes back to the poet and allows him to catch her. Spenser writes,

> The gentle deare returnd the selfe-same way,
> Thinking to quench her thirst at the next brooke.
> There she beholding me with mylder looke,
> Sought not to fly, but feareless still did bide:
> Till I in hand her yet halfe trembling tooke,
> And with her owne goodwill hir fyrmely tyde. (7-12)

Spenser ends his sonnet with the poet's successful capture of the deer by "her owne goodwill." Though this sonnet fits the tradition of the frustrated Petarchan love and even emulates his style, as well as follows the characteristics of Renaissance sonneteers, it clearly steps beyond the full scope of previous writers and ends in a fashion that has yet to be seen in the sonnet sequences.

It is evident from the work of these English sonneteers that the sonnet was a second literary tradition of love flourishing in the late sixteenth century, highly popular and widely practiced. Poets of the 1590's were able to make use of the Petrarchan sonnet sequence, rooted in the courtly love tradition, and play with Petrarch's ideas and principles to reflect current ideas about love. Through the primary influence of Petrarch, together with the influences of the French sonneteers and the Platonic love tradition, the sonnet was modified and re-worked by poets to create the vigorous sonnet tradition of the 1590's.

CHAPTER IV

MARRIAGE AS A SOLUTION

Petrarch's influence can also be seen in the great epic venture of the 1590's, Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. Books I-III were published in 1590 with a dedication to Queen Elizabeth and re-published in 1596, together with three more books. In Book III.iv.6-10, Petrarch's sonnet 189 is carried over and dramatized, while maintaining the same element of hope as displayed in *Amoretti* 34. Stanza six explains the predicament of Britomart: a young woman, in knightly disguise, absolutely in love with another knight, Arthegall, whom she cannot find despite her continuous searching: "With such selfe-pleasing thoughts her wound she fed," as she was "Following the guidance of her blinded guest" (III.iv.6.1, 8). Spenser is expressing the painful pleasure dichotomy, made so popular by Petrarch, which is the result of following the god of Love ("her blinded guest"). Her pleasure only feeds her pain in that her desire for Arthegall increases the despair found in her inability to have him. She finds herself by the water's edge where she takes a moment to rest and laments; her lament is an embedded version of *Rime sparse* 189. It is interesting to note that the poet lover or speaker of the lament in this case is female, an unusual twist considering the complaining lover has always been male. The change puts Britomart in a unique position. She is, simultaneously, a knight, a lady, and a lamenting lover.

Spenser closely follows Petrarch's example as Britomart addresses the "sea of sorrow, and tempestuous griefe" in which her "feeble barke" is "Far from the hopéd haven of reliefe" (III.iv.8.1-3). She begs the storm to cease, claiming that her ship:

> Cannot endure, but needs it must be wrackt
> On the rough rocks, or on the sandy shallowes,

The whiles that love it steres, and fortune rowes;

Love my lewd Pilot hath a restless mind

And fortune Boteswaine no assurance knows,

But saile withouten stares gainst tide and wind:

How can they other do, sith both are bold and blind? (III.iv.9.3-9)

For Britomart, both of her guides—love and fortune—are blind since they are sailing without the light of stars. She has reached her point of despair. However, similar to the ending of *Amoretti* 34, Britomart's lament to the storm ends on a positive note, with a small hint of hope for the future. She states, "At last blow up some gentle gale of ease, / The which may bring my ship, ere it be rent, / Unto the gladsome port of her intent" (III.iv.10.3-5). Britomart understands that despite the storm in which she currently finds herself, the day will come when her journey through the storm is over and she will be free of her despair.

While Petrarch continuously represented his situation as a journey through love, in *The Faerie Queene*, this sonnet is actually delivered by a character who is on a physical journey, one the reader knows will end well. When she asks the winds to carry her "Unto the gladsome port of her intent," she is referring to her prophesied destiny. The enchanter Merlin had already told her that her "intent," or destiny, was to marry Arthegall and create a dynasty by begetting a lineage that would become a nation. In Book III.iii.24 Merlin explains:

It was not, Britomart, thy wandring eye,

Glauncing unwares in charméd looking glas,

But the streight course of heavenly destiny,

Led with eternall providence, that has

Guided thy glaunce, to bring his will to pas:

Ne is thy fate, ne is thy fortune ill,

To love the prowest knight, that ever was.

Therefore submit thy wayes unto his will,

And do by all dew meanes thy destiny fulfill. (1-9)

Merlin is telling Britomart that it was not her own doing, but rather the work of the heavens that brought her heart to love Arthegall. He comforts her by claiming that she does not have an "ill" destiny, but rather a glorious one to which she should fully submit. Her marriage, as well as the importance of a consummated ending, is explained at the beginning of Book III Canto iii as Love is:

Making her seeke an unknowne Paramoure,

From the worlds end, through many a bitter stowre:

From whose two loynes thou afterwards did rayse

Most famous fruits of matrimoniall bowre,

Which through the earth have spred their living prayse (4-8)

Britomart's journey is not about private erotic fulfillment. Instead, her journey will end in marriage, a marriage that will birth a nation. It is also interesting to note that Britomart's version of Petrarch's sonnet 189 is spread across multiple stanzas. In this respect, Spenser echoes Chaucer when he translated a Petrarchan sonnet into three stanzas of a song. In both situations, a Petrarchan sonnet is changed: Chaucer makes his poem fit a story of consummated "courtly love," while Spenser is making it part of a story which will end in marriage and dynasty.

In this excerpt from *The Faerie Queene*, as well as the whole of the *Amoretti*, Spenser uses Petrarchan views but does something new and different with them by adding the element of marriage. All the literary love traditions studied thus far have been concerned with circumstances outside of marriage. But, the *Amoretti* were actually published with the *Epithalamion*, a poem about marriage: this will be the subject of the remainder of this chapter, covering both its place in literature and in English society in the 1590's.

Contrary to the way love is represented in the literary love traditions of the Renaissance, in real life women were never in positions of power and men were never servants to love or to their ladies. Society had shown quite the opposite for several centuries. Instead of an unreachable woman who has power over the man who adores her, reality consists of a woman who is at the mercy of a man, who is ultimately in control of her. The only exception to the rule was Queen Elizabeth, who inherited her position of authority. The disconnect between reality and literary representations is a result of the immoral Ovidian tradition and the unrealistic expectations of both the Petrarchan and Platonic love traditions. Each of these traditions left men in either an immoral or unsatisfied state of love. Christianity posed marriage as the answer to Christian men who resolved to follow the rules of morality, but found themselves unable to reach the top of the ladder of love and unwilling to resume the position of a frustrated, unconsummated devotion to love. The Church's resolution for marriage is rooted in the teachings of St. Paul found in the Geneva Bible, the translation in general use in the late sixteenth century. In 1 Corinthians 7, St. Paul explains:

> It were good for a man not to touche a woman. Nevertheles, the avoide fornication, let everie man have his wife, and let everie woman have her owne

> housband. …Therefore I say unto the unmarried, and unto the widowes, it is good for them if they abide even as I do [remain unmarried]. But if they can not absteine, let them[9] marrie: for it is better to marie thé to burne. (1-2, 8-9)

Essentially, from the Christianized point of view, chastity and a commitment to virginity are highly valued and recommended; however, such abstinence is probably not plausible. In recognition of the difficulties and frustration in remaining chaste, the Church offers the solution of marriage.

Since before the Reformation, the roles of men and women in marriage have been perceived in a very specific way, and England in the 1590's continued the tradition in which men were considered authoritative and superior while women were considered the "weaker" sex and subordinate in the relationship. In *Women in Early Modern England, 1500-1700*, Jacqueline Eales explains, "The belief that women had to be kept in check by male authority was almost universally accepted and was reinforced by the teachings of the Church both before and after the Reformation" (24). In keeping with society's rules, women's role was that of complete submission to the wills of their husbands. Under these circumstances, a good and virtuous woman was one who obeyed her husband without complaint. Eales claims, "Women who internalized religious prescriptions and were obedient to the male head of their household were seen as role models for duty and piety" (23-4).

Women were constantly reminded of their role in society and the position they should accept through tracts and sermons that circulated in the sixteenth century. In 1859, Oxford University Press published *The Two Books of Homilies: Appointed to be Read in Churches*, a

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[9] While the printing convention for the Geneva Bible traditionally omitted some ending consonants, I am silently expanding the final letters in all of the quotes I use.

compilation of all the homilies that were read in Church, including one on marriage, "An Homilee of the State of Matrimonie," which was originally published in 1572 and attributed to John Jewel. This homily addresses the duties of men and women within a marriage. For husbands, the instructions are based on St. Peter who writes, "ye housbands, dwel with them as men of knowledge, giving honour unto the woman, as unto the weaker vessel" (1 Peter 3:7). The homily argues that men "ought to be the leader and author of love…for the woman is a weak creature, not enduced with like strength and constancy of mind" (503). Furthermore, women are urged "to do their duty" by submitting themselves fully to their husbands. In 1 Peter 3:1, St. Peter tells the women, "let the wives be subject to their housbands" and in the letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul writes, "Wives, submit your selves unto your housbands, as unto the Lord. For the housband is the wives head, even as Christ is the head of the Church, & the same is the saviour of his bodie" (3:22-23). The homily encourages women to follow these commandments, explaining:

> as for their husbands, them must they obey, and cease from commanding, and perform subjection. For this surely doth nourish concord very much: when the wife is ready at hand, at her husband's commandment, when she will apply herself to his will, when she endeavoureth herself to seek his contentation and to do him pleasure, when she will eschew all things that might offend him. (504)

According to this rather grim depiction, women were expected to constantly be at the beck and call of their men. This picture is the reverse of the courtly love or Petrarchan traditions.

In addition to absolute commitment and service, women were also expected to endure the wrath of their husbands without complaint, even if it entailed physical beating. The marriage

homily acknowledges that even though men will be tempted to beat their wives, their duty was to not treat them cruelly. However, it also states that if women are beaten, it is according to the will of God. It argues that if a woman cannot endure an abusive husband she will not receive a reward in heaven. The homily argues, "If thou canst suffer an extreme husband, thou shalt have a great reward therefore. But if thou lovest him only because he is gentle and courteous, what reward will God give thee therefore? … I exhort the women that they would patiently bear the sharpness of their husbands" (507-08). Women were expected to be silent and obedient in any situation. It is evident that there was a disconnect between the reality of women's role in marriage and in society and what how women were presented through literature. Despite the veneration of women in literature, social structures did not work like that.

Spenser, in the 1590's, introduced his own outlook on love by publishing his Petrarchan sonnet sequence, the *Amoretti,* together with his *Epithalamion*, a poem celebrating his own marriage. The epithalamion tradition, made popular by poets such as Sappho and Catullus, is a classical tradition in which the poet celebrates someone else's wedding. So for Spenser to write it for his own wedding day is similar to the styles of both Ovid and Petrarch who established their love traditions in the first person. He is able to add a small element of personal touch to the tradition by writing his own marriage poem. Hugh Maclean points out how "Spenser is remarkably innovative…in simultaneously playing the roles of bridegroom, poet, and master of ceremonies, an accumulation of functions that may add to the poem's tonality of celebratory triumph" (640).

Not only was the poem written for Spenser's own wedding: the symbolism found in the structure of the poem, according to A. Kent Hieatt in *Short Time's Endless Monument*, points to

numerical symbolism for the day on which Spenser got married, June 11, 1594, the summer solstice and the longest day of the year. In stanza fifteen of the *Epithalamion*, Spenser reveals that his wedding day is on the summer solstice saying, "But for this time it ill ordainéd was, / To chose the longest day in all the year, / And shortest night" (270-72). Hieatt points out that according to The *Kalender of Sheperdes,* for the year in which Spenser got married and the latitude of his location, Spenser's wedding day would have had 16 ¼ hours of daylight and 7 ¾ hours of night time (10-11). Likewise, Hieatt continues, the twenty-four stanzas of the poem are divided into the same amounts through a series of positive and negative statements. He argues, "up to stanza 17, in which night falls, the refrains are positive, on the general pattern, "The woods shall to me answer and my Eccho ring." From stanza 17 down to the envoy, the refrains are negative, on the general pattern, "The woods no more shal answere, nor your echo ring" (10). Hieatt also adds that at exactly 16 ¼ of the way through the poem, Spenser writes, "Now night is come" (300). Spenser not only wrote the *Epithalamion* for his own wedding, but quite extraordinarily incorporated his wedding day into the structure of the poem.

Spenser's *Epithalamion* was published together with his sonnet sequence *Amoretti*. William Allan Oram, in *Edmund Spenser,* explains how the "volume was made to appear a single unified work with a separate page for each sonnet of the *Amoretti* and each stanza of the *Epithalamion*" (177). Publishing these two poetic pieces in this way sets Spenser apart from Petrarch and Sidney, who both published their sonnet sequences with songs, a form of lamentation or complaint. Spenser produced something totally different when he paired his sonnet sequence with the *Epithalamion*, a poem about love and celebration. Oram points out that "sonnet sequences and epithalamia contrast markedly. The former consists of a lover's intensely

subjective, fragmentary, and at times self-contradictory utterances, while the latter creates a ceremonious, even ritualistic, image of a public rite" (177). Spenser alters both traditions by pairing them together.

The joining of these two poems symbolizes a movement between worlds, from the literal to the real. The sonnet sequence represents the Petrarchan literary love tradition in which the lady is exalted and praised while the frustrated lover is servant-like before her. A marriage poem, on the other hand, represents the role-reversal that was more like reality in English society at the time. Oram explains how "the lady especially is moved to yield to the lover's persuasions and accept him, while the lover now confronts the new challenges of acceptance and marriage soon to come" (182). This is particularly evident in sonnet 67, previously examined as a translation of one of Petrarch's sonnets, which compares the lady to a deer the lover is hunting. Spenser's sonnet differs from any of the other sonneteers in that it ends with the capture of the deer. Although Spenser is clear that the lady consents, she is, nevertheless, tied. Spenser writes,

> There she beholding me with mylder looke,
> Sought not to fly, but feareless still did bide:
> Till I in hand her yet halfe trembling tooke,
> And with her owne goodwill hir fyrmely tyde. (9-12)

There are two major components which represent the role-reversal between the literary traditions and the reality of Renaissance society. First, it is by "her owne goodwill" that the deer is caught, symbolizing submission of the woman to the man. And second, the deer is caught and "fyrmely tyde," alluding to the act of marriage. For Spenser, the result of a marriage poem at the end of

the sonnet sequence is that the woman has now submitted to the man, who has authority over her as her husband in marriage.

The printing of these two poems together also allows the *Epithalamion* to answer the problems with love as posed in the *Amoretti* by the Petrarchan love tradition. The problem for English Renaissance Protestants is the question of how to find spiritual peace with the complications derived from love. If men cannot take the Platonic route and give up sexual desire for higher knowledge and virtue, and yet they also cannot remain in the frustrated Petrarchan tradition without the overwhelming temptation to live immorally, their only solution is marriage. As a result of the Reformation, by the 1590's, the Chruch had developed a new perspective and emphasis on marriage. The Protestant church, for the first time, allowed clergy to marry and placed a significantly lower emphasis on virginity as the purest form of chastity or virtue. Since humanity is unable to transcend desire, they must, instead, harmonize it, moving marriage up the scale of importance. Chastity, in Renaissance England and for Spenser, meant sexual virtue not sexual purity, emphasizing virginity until marriage and then marriage with offspring. Essentially, marriage allowed for virtuous sex, a concept Spenser was alluding to in his joint publication. Maclean explains that

> the lovers created by Petrarch, Du Bellay, Desportes, and the others finally cannot reconcile love for God with sexual longing for the women they love. Sidney put the matter well in his seventy-first sonnet: his reason tells him that the lady's goodness inspires a love of virtue—"But ah, Desire still cries, 'Give me some food.'" Spenser's lover can hope to satisfy that hunger through a legitimate and earthly consummation of his passion…. (639)

Spenser represents this Protestant view of marriage as the answer to the problem of love by placing the *Epithalamion* as the answer to *Amoretti*. He is emphasizing that human desire and sexuality are good things, within the boundaries of marriage and virtuous sex. In the twelfth stanza of the *Epithalamion*, Spenser tells, "Of her ye virgins learne obedience," as the bride heads toward the alter to "The sacred ceremonies there partake, / The which do endless matrimony make" (212, 216-17). He is urging virgins toward marriage in order to obey God by living within the rules of sexuality. The marriage homily confirms this idea claiming that marriage is "instituted of God, to the intent that man and woman should live lawfully…to bring forth fruit and to avoid fornication" (500). The first and third reasons stated here provide a means of dealing with human sexuality in a way in which God approves.

In the *Epithalamion*, Spenser also touches on the second reason stated in that excerpt from the homily, "to bring forth fruit." Childbearing played a significant role in the purpose and function of marriage during Spenser's time. The homily even expands on this idea claiming that marriage "is also ordained that the church of God and his kingdom might by this kind of life be conserved and enlarged…in that God giveth children" (500). As the *Epithalamion* draws to a close, stanzas twenty-one through twenty-three all have invocations to various gods to bless the marriage by producing children. Stanza twenty-one prays, "Encline thy will t'effect our wishfull vow, / And the chast wombe informe with timely seed" (385-86). Spenser is praying for pregnancy and in stanza twenty-two he asks for children from "glad Genuis," god of childbirth and generations, to "bring forth the fruitfull progeny, / Send us the timely fruit of this same night" (398, 403-04). Furthermore, in stanza twenty-three he calls to "ye high heavens," praying,

Poure out your blessing on us plenteously,

And happy influence upon us raine,

That we may raise a large posterity,

Which from the earth, which they may long possesse,

With lasting happiness… (415-19)

Spenser echoes a long-standing belief, and one that was prevalent in England in the 1590's, that childbearing was a fundamental part of marriage. For Spenser, human love could exist eternally by producing children and passing love through generations.

Although the final publication ends with an emphasis on marriage, Spenser is able to incorporate several Petrarchan and Platonic ideals. In *The Yale Edition of the Short Poems of Edmund Spenser,* William Oram explains that "the shifts in mood of the lover, …his preoccupation with his own emotions, [and] the corresponding radical limitation of the lady's role…all are Petrarchan. Yet…he manages to integrate the love of his lady with the love of God" (587). At times the attitude of the poem is clearly Petrarchan, in particular regarding the language. Spenser repeatedly calls for "prayses" of his lady, hinting at the traditionally Petrarchan concept of praising his love through detailed descriptions. He begins the poem in stanza one with the notion of praising his woman saying, "Helpe me mine owne loves prayses to resound" (14). From there, he asks the handmaids of Venus to sing to his bride as they would to Venus (stanza 6, 108), promises to sing her sovereign praises (stanza 7, 127), commands the watching public to "advaunce her laud" (stanza 8, 145), and so on throughout the rest of the poem. In stanza thirteen he goes as far as to claim,

That even th'Angels which continually,

About the sacred Altare doe remaine,

Forget their service and about her fly,

Ofte peeping in her face that seemes more fayre,

The more they on it stare. (229-33)

Essentially, his bride deserves so much praise even the angels forget to do their jobs in order to stare at her beautiful face and praise her.

In addition, Spenser occasionally pauses throughout the procession of the day to describe his lady, a technique which also closely resembles the Petrarchan style. Consider stanza ten in which Spenser writes,

So fayre a creature in your towne before,

So sweet, so lovely, and so mild as she,

Adornd with beautyes grace and vertues store,

Her goodly eyes lyke Saphyres shining bright,

Her forehead yvory white,

Her cheeks lyke apples which the sun hath rudded,

Her lips lyke cherryes charming men to byte…. (168-74)

The detailed description of his lady's beauty shows a lover who is in complete wonder because of that beauty. The tone suggests Petrarchan influence.

At the same time Spenser hints at the Platonic style as well in passages within the poem and in his view on the overarching theme of love. As the Platonic tradition suggests, understanding that outer beauty is merely a reflection of inner beauty is the first step toward a higher understanding of good. In stanza eleven, Spenser writes, "But if ye saw that which no

eyes can see, / The inward beauty of her lively spright, / Garnisht with heavenly guifts of high degree" (185-87). Spenser is able to recognize the inner beauty of his bride and connect that beauty to heavenly ideals.

While recognizing the importance of inner beauty and working around the Protestant belief that marriage was the God-ordained answer to sexual frustration, Spenser's collection of the *Amoretti* and the *Epithalamion* resembles the Platonic tradition as he argues that human, sexual love is merely a reflection of God's infinite love for mankind. The last two lines of sonnet 68 in the *Amoretti* neatly summarizes this argument as Spenser writes, "So let us love, deare love, lyke as we ought, / Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught" (13-14). The lover proposes marriage in order to love as they "ought," according to Protestant ideology, and emphasizes that their marriage will mirror the Lord's love as they live out his lesson. Oram points out that "there is no absolute division between love that involves the body and the love of God: the latter is simply a purer form of the "lesson" to be learned by all the faithful. Human love participates in the divine, as its distant reflection" (190). While Spenser is alluding to a Platonic idea, he changes the tradition slightly by justifying the erotic, human love that the lover initially feels. His justification lies in the *Epithalamion*, or the necessity of marriage. Unlike the Platonic tradition that leads away from sexual love, Spenser Christianizes the ideas, proposing that human sexuality is good because it is humanity's way of reflecting the love he has learned from God.

A further example of Spenser's Christianization of erotic love can be found in a brief comparison of the *Epithalamion* to the book Song of Solomon, or Song of Songs, in the Bible.

Traditionally, the Song of Solomon was received as an allegory, portraying God's love for his people. The introduction to the book in the Geneva Bible reads:

> In this Song, Salomón by most swete and comfortable allegories and parables describeth the perfite love of Jesus Christ, the true Salomón and King of peace, and the faithful soule or his Church, which he hathe sanctified and appointed to be his spouse, holy, caste and without reprehension. So that here is declared the singular love of the bridegrome toward the bride…. (280)

Certainly parallels can be drawn between this passage and the groom's first person poem to his bride in the *Epithalamion*. Oram suggests that "no other English sonnet sequence suggests such a deep connection between the Christian and the erotic, and it is not surprising that both the *Amoretti* and the *Epithalamion* frequently echo the Song of Songs, whose sensuality was sanctified by its interpretation as the dialogue between Christ and the church" (190).

Beyond the basic principles of sexuality and the groom's commitment to his bride, the poem also resembles specific passages in Song of Solomon as well. In stanza five of the *Epithalamion*, Spenser calls to his bride, "Wake, now my love, awake" (74). In the Song of Solomon, the bride exclaims, "My lover said to me, "Rise up my darling! Come away with me" (2:10). In addition, Spenser reflects the Petrarchan convention of praising his lady by describing his bride in a blazon. In stanza ten he writes, "Her brest like to a bowle of creame uncrudded, / Her paps lyke lyllies budded, / Her snowie necke lyke to a marble towre" (175-77). This excerpt closely resembles the Song of Solomon tradition of praise as seen in chapter 7, which reads: "Thy belly is as an heape of wheat compassed about with lilies. Thy two breastes are as two yong roes that are twines. Thy necke is like a towre of ivorie" (2b-4). Both traditions of praise,

the Petrarchan and the Song of Solomon traditions, though so different in origin, can easily be blended for a poet of the 1590's. Writing the *Epithalamion*, with its resemblances to Song of Soloman, at a time in which that book of the Bible was received as an allegory of the love between God and his Church, Spenser is able to further promote his idea of marriage as a reflection of God's love, and therefore the idea that sexuality, within the confines of marriage, is good and holy.

While the reality of love and the roles of men and women sharply differs from the literary representations of them, Spenser goes some way towards bridging the gap between the two with his joint publication of *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion*. He addresses, for the first time within these major literary love traditions, the issue of marriage and its connection to love. In addition, he is able to justify the erotic desire of man by allegorizing that love to the love of God for his Church and placing it within the confines of marriage.

CHAPTER V

EPILOGUE

A study of these very different poets whose work was influential in the 1590's reveals how together, they present a confluence of literary love traditions, some of which date as far

back as almost 400 B.C. The sensuous and humorous Ovidian elegy tradition, emulated by Christopher Marlowe and John Donne, the serious Petrarchan sonnet sequence tradition together with the elevated Platonic tradition, exemplified by Sir Philip Sidney, Samuel Daniel, Michael Drayton and Edmund Spenser, and the reality of love and marriage as explored by Edmund Spenser simultaneously thrive at the end of the sixteenth century. The "long 1590's" is, for the first time, a confluence of all these traditions.

In light of my argument throughout the last three chapters, as a final note I would like to consider William Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet*, as an example of the confluence of these literary love traditions in the 1590's. Scholars estimate the date of the play between 1594 and 1596, which places the play right in the middle of the decade I have been examining. Furthermore, the play, at different points, exemplifies both Ovidian and Petrarchan traditions and deals with the issue of marriage as well.

The Ovidian tradition can be seen in two different characters in the play, Benvolio and Mercutio. In Act I.i, Benvolio is comforting Romeo over his love-sickness for Rosaline and he prescribes an Ovidian cure for Romeo's problem. He tells Romeo that he should, "Forget to think of her," and explains that the way to do that is "By giving liberty unto thine eyes: / Examine other beauties" (I.i.225, 227-28). He repeats his solution in the next scene as well, "Go thither, and with unattainted eye / Compare her face with some that I shall show, / And I will make thee think thy swan a crow" (I.ii.87-89). Benvolio is urging Romeo to forget Rosaline by finding another woman who is just as beautiful. This advice directly reflects Ovid, who lists the same solution in the *Remedia Amores*, as a cure for love-sickness.

In addition to Benvolio's Ovidian cures for the problem of love, Mercutio emulates Ovid's style by turning Romeo's love into a joke, full of satire, wit and sensuality. In Act II.i, Romeo has gone missing and Benvolio and Mercutio are calling out for him. Mercutio jokes about conjuring up Romeo by speaking of Rosaline. He says:

> I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes,
>
> By her high forehead and her scarlet lip,
>
> By her fine foot, straight leg, and quivering thigh,
>
> And the demesnes that there adjacent lie
>
> That in thy likeness thou appear to us. (II.i.18-22)

Mercutio is teasing Romeo for being in love by making it a joke, expressing his wit and satire very similarly to Ovid. Furthermore, Mercutio also adds another major Ovidian characteristic, sensuality, when he refers to the "demesnes," or region parallel to the thighs. Benvolio warns that Mercutio's satirical and sensual speech might anger Romeo, which only spurs Mercutio to keep going. The sensuality is even further implied in his response: "Twould anger him / To raise a spirit in his mistress' circle / Of some strange nature, letting it there stand / Till she had laid it and conjured it down" (II.i.24-27). The sexual references are clear: "to raise a spirit" alludes to an erection and "in his mistress' circle" indicates sexual intercourse as the "circle" refers to Rosaline's sexual organ. He carries his allusion through the whole process of sex, from beginning, "letting it there stand," to end, "Till she had laid it and conjured it down," where she has brought the man to sexual satisfaction. Mercutio is also suggesting that another man, other than Romeo, is sleeping with Rosaline by the use of "strange," meaning belonging to someone

else. The direct sensuality and witty, satirical attitude toward love exhibited here by Mercutio is a reflection of Ovid and the satire and wit expressed in his many works on love.

While Benvolio and Mercutio exhibit an Ovidian influence, Romeo continually presents the Petrarchan tradition, in his love for both Rosaline and Juliet. He begins the play as a Petrarchan lover, constantly dreaming about his lady but never coming close to attaining her. In the very first scene he expresses his problem to Benvolio claiming to be, "Out of her favor where I am in love" (I.i.168). He continues to complain about his desperate, hopeless situation throughout Act I scenes i, ii, and iv. Almost every time Romeo speaks throughout these scenes, his speech reflects a Petrarchan attitude toward love. Consider Act I.iv, in which Romeo claims,

> I am too sore empiercèd with his [Cupid's] shaft
> To soar with his light feathers, and so bound
> I cannot bound a pitch above the dull woe.
> Under love's heavy burden do I sink. (I.iv.19-22)

While Romeo's overall attitude reflects the Petrarchan tradition, one specific speech in Act I.i directly resembles Petrarch's icy fire dichotomy. Romeo claims:

> Why, then, O brawling love, O loving hate,
> O anything of nothing first create,
> O heavy lightness, serious vanity,
> Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms,
> Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health….(I.i.176-80)

Not only does Romeo imitate Petrarch by employing the use of violent extremes to indicate his conflicted state of love and pain, but he uses the "cold fire," an oxymoron made famous by Petrarch, as one of his examples. Romeo is a Petrarchan lover.

When Romeo sees Juliet he forgets his love for Rosaline but he still speaks Petrarchan language through the use of a sonnet. Romeo and Juliet's first dialogue together is a sonnet, which they speak to each other. The sonnet reads:

ROMEO. If I profane with my unworthiest hand
This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this:
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with tender kiss.
JULIET. Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
Which mannerly devotion shows in this;
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.
ROMEO. Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?
JULIET. Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.
ROMEO. Oh, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do.
They pray; grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.
JULIET. Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.
ROMEO. Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take. (I.v.94-107)

This interaction is set apart from the surrounding text as a sonnet by the cross-rhyming quatrains. When Romeo and Juliet begin their dialogue, there is a sudden use of rhyming in unit form with

the Shakespearean sonnet rhyming pattern *ABAB CDCD EFEF GG*. While the sonnet implies the Petrarchan tradition, the situation is changed slightly at this point since Juliet has a speaking part in the sonnet and it is not entirely an address to her. The rhyming pattern separates the three quatrains, of which Romeo speaks the first, Juliet speaks the second, and they share the third (three lines belong to Romeo and one line belongs to Juliet). The final couplet is split evenly with each of them having a full line. The fact that she speaks shows that she will not be the traditional Petrarchan lady, unattainable and addressed in vain. The structure of the poem, with the quatrains divided between the two lovers and the ending with equal speaking parts for both, suggests a move from the Petrarchan lamentation of the poet-lover to an expression of a mutual relationship. Her part in the sonnet indicates her response to Romeo and a shared love interest.

Since the love is mutual between Romeo and Juliet, they move away from the Petrachan tradition and hint at the courtly love tradition in two ways. First, the very fact that Juliet accepts Romeo's love and returns the favor reflects the ideals of the tradition of consummated love. Unlike the Petrarchan conception, courtly love consists of the lover eventually getting his lady. Second, as children of parents with deadly rivals, their situation is impossible, similar to the courtly love predicaments. Juliet explains the impossibility when she exclaims,

> My only love sprung from my only hate!
> Too early seen unknown, and known too late!
> Prodigious birth of love it is to me
> That I must love a loathèd enemy. (I.v.139-42)

The extreme, impossible love situation in which Romeo and Juliet find themselves is similar to the unreality of the courtly love tradition.

Unlike courtly loves tradition however, Romeo and Juliet are determined to solve their impossible situation with marriage. In Act II Romeo is explaining the situation to Friar Laurence, claiming that they love each other, "As mine [heart] on hers, so hers is set on mine" and asks, "That thou consent to marry us today" (II.iii.59,64). Friar Laurence agrees to perform the ceremony and the two young lovers are married soon afterwards.

Even though the play ends tragically with the deaths of both Romeo and Juliet, the influence of the various traditions is still evident in the characters, style and plot. The Ovidian tradition is exemplified by Benvolio and Mercutio who treat love as a joke while they continuously mock Romeo and satirically incorporate sensuality. Simultaneously, Romeo portrays the Petrarchan tradition, as a star-crossed lover who deals with the painful pleasure of loving a woman he cannot have. The Petrarchan influence is carried over into his love for Juliet, as they speak a sonnet together when they first meet; however, the mutual affection hints more towards the courtly love tradition. Lastly, their decision for marriage attempts to solve the problems of the Ovidian, Petrarchan and courtly love traditions. Produced in the middle of the 1590's, *Romeo and Juliet* provides an epitome of the various literary love traditions of the decade.

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