

Student Work

11-1-1970

Romeo and Juliet as a dramatized sonnet

Maxine Elizabeth Crain

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork>

Recommended Citation

Crain, Maxine Elizabeth, "Romeo and Juliet as a dramatized sonnet" (1970). *Student Work*. 3168.
<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork/3168>

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



ROMEO AND JULIET AS A DRAMATIZED SONNET

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of English

and the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Maxine Elizabeth Grain

November, 1970

UMI Number: EP74567

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

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



UMI EP74567

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

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code



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

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

Graduate Committee

Edmund L. Clark, Speech
Name Department

Glen Newkirk, English

Ralph M. Wardle
Chairman

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to thank Dr. Ralph Wardle for his advice, his patience and his ability to make a student feel that the effort has been worthwhile. The most significant thing I learned, as I wrote this paper, was the importance of paying attention to minute details. It was unsatisfactory just to have good ideas. It was aiming at perfection in every aspect of writing that he demanded.

In the Shakespeare Seminar class, he initiated my interest in this topic. In that class he allowed us to take a particular stand on any issue as long as we proved our point of view with lines from the plays. As a result, he proved that knowledge about Shakespeare's genius does not only come from a memorization of lines, characters, and scenes, but it also comes from a critical sifting of one's own ideas, intuitions, and reflections on the plays.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I.	THE RENAISSANCE BACKGROUND OF THE SONNET AND THE LYRICAL MOOD OF ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND	
II.	THE THEMATIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THREE SONNETS USED IN ACT I OF <u>ROMEO AND JULIET</u>	30
	A. The Prologue Sonnet	30
	B. The Sonnet in Dialogue between Romeo and Juliet	56
	C. The Choric-Sonnet Following Act I	65
III.	THE POETIC TREATMENT OF LOVE AND TIME IN THE <u>SONNETS</u> AND ITS RELATION TO THE DRAMATIC TREATMENT OF LOVE AND TIME IN <u>ROMEO AND JULIET</u>	69
IV.	THE DRAMATIC USE OF THE PETRARCHAN SONNET'S THESIS AND ANTITHESIS	110
	CONCLUSION	141
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	148

CHAPTER I

THE RENAISSANCE BACKGROUND OF THE SONNET AND THE LYRICAL MOOD OF ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

In An Apology for Poetry, Sidney repeats the ancient dictum that poesy is an "art of imitation."¹ He continues by explaining that poesy is essentially "a speaking picture" with an end to teach and delight.² This conception of literature was not confined to the study of poetry. The writers of emblem books, common from the medieval allegory writers to the metaphysicals, suggest that painting is even dumb poetry.³ This is not necessarily a confusion of genres, but it says something about the basic premise of this paper. The sonnet tradition and what Shakespeare wrote in his sonnet sequence, particularly Sonnets 1-126, is dramatized in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. It is the molding of ideas, themes, imagery, structure and its resultant tension between form and emotion, distributed throughout the sonnet sequence, into a structured coherent image of man and his world--in character, conflict and in specific plot movement. It is poetic potential actualized. Romeo and Juliet is a speaking sonnet.

In this "dramatic exploration" the reader is continually faced with the essential nature of the lyric and of the drama.

¹Sir Philip Sidney, "An Apology for Poetry," The Portable Elizabethan Reader, ed., Hiram Haydn (New York, 1946), p. 591.

²Sidney, p. 591.

³Rosemary Freeman, English Emblem Books (London, 1967), p. 14.

E. S. Dallas maintains that the drama is second person present time and the lyric is first person singular future.⁴ By generic definition, then, the lyric is subjective and the drama relatively objective. The author of this paper agrees, under the condition that the lyric is understood as expressing the speaker's emotions and feelings, not necessarily the poet's personal emotions. What Stephen Daedalus says in James Joyce's Portrait of the Artist is undoubtedly true:

The lyric poet presents his image (poem) in immediate relation to himself, as opposed to the dramatist, who presents his image (play) in immediate relation to the audience, he himself withdrawing entirely.⁵

However, we do not need to counterpoint each individual sonnet in Shakespeare's sequence with an autobiographical experience in his life. The paradoxical element in the nature of the lyric is that it can be both public and private. Catherine Ing explains that a public lyric is that which makes an "audible utterance," i.e., it "should be communicated to anyone who may hear the singing."⁶ The private lyric reveals

⁴From Poetics: An Essay on Poetry quoted in René Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (New York, 1956), 2nd ed., p. 218.

⁵Quoted in James L. Calderwood and Harold E. Toliver, eds., Forms of Poetry (New Jersey, 1968), p. 8. The point is clearly made by Elder Olson, Tragedy and the Theory of Drama (Detroit, 1961), p. 27: "The action of drama tends to be chiefly interpersonal. It is action, that is, which is not confined to a private sphere, as is so often the case in lyric poetry--it is action in which people act upon each other."

⁶Catherine Ing, Elizabethan Lyrics (London, 1951), p. 15.

a personality much in the sense of the later Romantic's use of the form. "Lyric of the first type is a voice from the invisible, lyric of the second type the speech of a personality."⁷ But in the final analysis, the crux of this paper is not to prove that material once lyrically subjective is now made dramatically objective (although this may be true); but rather it is the enactment of "life in its essence"⁸ in the impersonation of human passions on a stage.

The reader must constantly remember that regardless how clear and complete this paper may prove to be on the basic assumptions, the Sonnets are dramatized in Romeo and Juliet, drama is only complete when it is being performed. Romeo and Juliet only dramatizes the Sonnets when it is performed on the stage. A poem is only a "single art," drama the product of a "complex of arts."⁹ "What happened in Romeo and Juliet is that Shakespeare became a dramatic poet."¹⁰

"In vita di Madonna Laura" . . . "In morte di Madonna Laura," Petrarch begins.¹¹ In life and in death, Petrarch's love for Laura became immortalized in his sonnets on those

⁷Ing. p. 17.

⁸Harold C. Goddard, The Meaning of Shakespeare (Chicago, 1951), p. 128.

⁹Olsen, pp. 12-13.

¹⁰M. C. Bradbook, Shakespeare and Elizabethan Poetry (New York, 1952), p. 117.

¹¹Quoted in Theodor E. Mommsen, Medieval and Renaissance Studies (New York, 1959), p. 89.

themes. The combination of the emotion "love" and the forms and conventions of lyrical verse was not inaugurated with Petrarch; but with his imagination and artistic skill, the sonnet form was molded to express love--in life and in death--in a delicate balance between content and form.

. . . it was especially in the sonnet that his genius found the most adequate mode of expression. Petrarch did not invent the form of the sonnet. It had appeared long before his time and flourished greatly in the school of poets writing in the "dolce stil nuovo," which reached its climax with Dante. He surpassed, however, all his predecessors in the fashion in which he perfected the traditional form and filled it with a content at once more rich and more variegated than ever before.¹²

Along with the themes of the transitoriness of beauty, the pains of absence, the immortality granted by verse, the cruelty and unassailable chastity of the lady that inspired the school of "Petrarchists," Petrarch exhibited a great sense of the musical. In his canzoni is contained some of his most exquisite verse. Although in the sonnet he gained fullness and perfection of expression, the canzoni are significant because, in Italian, sonetto and canzone are derived from the words for "sound" and "song." Mommsen says this fact is immeasurably important because it implies that not only literary talent but also musical talent was necessary to write poetry.¹³

¹²Mommsen, p. 87.

¹³Mommsen, p. 87.

Petrarch's Florentine biographer Filippo Villani says this about Petrarch's musical talent: "He played the lyre admirably. His voice was sonorous and overflowing with charm and sweetness."¹⁴ And Petrarch himself, in his last will specifically refers to his prized possession--"my good lyre."¹⁵

It is a long way from the hills of Avignon and the peak of Mont Ventoux of the early fourteenth century to sixteenth-century Stratford-on-Avon and the bustle and noise of an energetic London. Yet when one reads John Benson's preface to Poems: Written by Wil. Shake-speare. (Gent.; printed 1640) and finds that the printer thought the sonnets "Seren, cleere and eligantly [sic] plaine . . . no intricate or cloudy stufte to puzzell intellect, but perfect eloquence; such as will praise your admiration to his praise;"¹⁶ or if one reads Juliet's wedding song or reads aloud the two-part sonnet between Romeo and Juliet at their first meeting, the musical qualities of metre and tone cannot be ignored. As Catherine Ing states: "Study of the theory and practice of [Elizabethan] lyric poetry will show the proper importance of music and also other elements in the experience of the poets."¹⁷ What draws the centuries, the lyrical nature, the themes together

¹⁴ Quoted in Mommsen, p. 88.

¹⁵ Mommsen, p. 88.

¹⁶ Barbara Hernstein, ed., Discussions of Shakespeare's Sonnets (Boston, 1964), p. 1.

¹⁷ Elizabethan Lyric (London, 1951), p. 24.

is parallel to the phenomenon of the Renaissance itself.

To understand the ebullient lyrical output in England during the 1590's is to understand a prime factor in the Renaissance--the nationalist tendencies embodied in all countries rejuvenated by the Renaissance. And those nationalistic Renaissance tendencies did not escape the genius of William Shakespeare.

Shakespeare's lyricism is revealed by the songs which adorn his plays, and his sonnets are among the first in the English language. He expresses more fully than any other writer the nationalist tendencies of the Renaissance.¹⁸

Behind the comparatively simple lilting rhythm and imagery in the verse of the Elizabethan lyricist looms a larger informing principle, i.e., the Renaissance and its catalyst, the humanist. The Italians called this movement Rinascimento or rebirth of the classical languages and literatures. Paralleling the idea that Greek and Roman culture was the true culture was the "connoted dislike"¹⁹ for the culture of the Middle Ages. And in the thought and literature of the period this "dislike" was often turned to direct hostility.

In a brief discussion of humanism in relation to the swelling tide of the Renaissance, one is often confronted by the old logic-twister, i.e., which came first, the chicken or the egg? And of course whatever argument one uses is of no

¹⁸Henry S. Lucas, The Renaissance and the Reformation (New York, 1934), 2nd ed., p. 440.

¹⁹Lucas, p. 207.

consequence in the light of their primal indivisible relationship to one another. Humanism was both the creative agent and the offspring of the Renaissance. Cicero, in On the Orator, prescribed a curriculum for future leaders of the Roman state and its society. A young man could prepare for this position by studying literature, philosophy, rhetoric, history, and law. "We are all called men," wrote Cicero, "but only those of us are human (humani) who have been civilized by the studies proper to culture."²⁰ And that "culture" which referred to that of the ancient Romans and Greeks was called humanitas.²¹

The manifesto for humanism was Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola's Oration on the Dignity of Man (1486). In this oration, the theme of man's godlike splendor asserted itself over and over. Egon Freidell says that "man regenerate is the primary meaning of the Renaissance: the rebirth of man in the likeness of God."²² Mirandola, rebelling against the idea of the Middle Ages that man was wretched and foul and ever prostrate before an angry God, boldly declared that man was only a little lower than the angels. These highest beings were from the moment of creation destined to be unchanging servants of God:

²⁰Quoted in Lucas, p. 209.

²¹Lucas, p. 209.

²²Quoted in Mirandola, Oration on the Dignity of Man, trans., A. Robert Caponigri (Chicago, 1956), p. xiii.

But man, at the moment of his creation, God bestowed seeds pregnant with all possibilities, the germs of every form of life. Whichever of these a man shall cultivate, the same will mature and bear fruit in him. If vegetable, he will become a plant; if sensual, he will become brutish; if rational, he will reveal himself a heavenly being; if intellectual, he will be an angel and the son of God.²³

The knowledge, nature, and destiny of mankind was not fixed; but rather it rested with the power of self-determination.²⁴

The idea that man might take pride in his ability to aspire to the higher natures and to improve or ennoble human nature, was the essence of humanism. Man, in free will, could look out on the horizon of his world and say, "I am a man, therefore I can discover the secrets in all that lies before me." It was not a dethronement of God, but rather an aspiration toward God and a development of his innate capacities.²⁵

Man was at his ⁿpinacle, and the literary Renaissance that accompanied the "Renaissances" of political ideas and institutions, of systems of law, of philosophies, religious ideals and institutions, and visual arts expressed this idea. And not only did the literature itself express the idea of the greatness of man's being, but also the sheer fact of that literature's existence and excellence proved that man was indeed capable of great things.

This phenomenon known as the Renaissance in historical

²³Mirandola, p. 8.

²⁴Bradbook, p. 11.

²⁵Mirandola, p. xvi.

time must be further defined in order to understand the transmission of learning from one culture to another. In the use of the word Renaissance or "rebirth," there is a suggestion that one culture is either dead or dying. Toynbee suggests that three types of encounters between past and present are appropriate.²⁶ One is the relationship between a dead civilization and its infant successor, i.e., appparentation-and-affiliation.²⁷ The second past/present encounter involves the phenomenon of archaism, i.e., "a reversion to an earlier phase in the development of society to which the archaizers themselves belong."²⁸ However, the society that is in reality entering a Renaissance is that society which as a "grown-up civilization" encounters the "ghost" of its long-dead parent.²⁹

A society entering on a Renaissance, on the other hand, is perhaps more likely than not to call up the ghost of its parent as that parent was when he had reached the same stage of development as the offspring has now reached.³⁰ . . . In other words, a Western Christendom could not entertain an Hellenic ghost, or guest, until its own house was fit to receive the visitor. The Hellenic library was physically present all the time, but it could not be effectively opened until the Westerner was competent to read its contents.³¹

²⁶Arnold J. Toynbee, A Study of History (New York & London, 1957), Abridgement of Vols. VII-X by D. C. Somervell, p. 242.

²⁷Toynbee, p. 242.

²⁸Toynbee, p. 242.

²⁹Toynbee, p. 242.

³⁰Toynbee, p. 242.

³¹Toynbee, p. 252.

The high peak of God's creation on earth was man, thought the humanists; and with that belief and a growing confidence in their literary competence, a literary Renaissance sprung forth.

The father of the sonnet tradition, Francesco Petrarch (1304-1374), was one of the first to energize his work with the new spirit of humanism. Near Avignon, he turned from the study of law to a study of Cicero's orations and Vergil's verse. During the Holy Week of 1327, an event occurred which mightily influenced Renaissance love lyrics. He saw the lady Laura.³² "Laura, illustrious by her own virtues and long celebrated in my poems, first appeared to my eyes in the earliest period of my manhood, on the sixth day of April, Anno Domini 1327, in the church of St. Claire, at the morning hour."³³ And the ardor of his spirit transformed itself into poetry and more particularly the sonnet form. Although this type of verse was not original with Petrarch, he raised the art form to perfection. The sonnet form in which he worked was that of the fourteen rhyming lines divided into two parts, the octave and the sestet. The first four lines of the octave stated a major premise or basic informing thought. The second four lines of the octave elaborated on or offered a variation on the theme of the first four lines. The first half of the sestet turns on a reflective note, and in the second half it

³²Lucas, p. 210.

³³Quoted in Mommsen, pp. 89-90.

ends in an emotion--possibly "hope, despair, resolution, consolation, or some other such emotion."³⁴

His third sonnet is typical of this type of structure. He is describing his meeting with Laura:

Twas on the blessed morning when the sun
In pity to our Maker hid his light,
Thank unawares, the captive I was won,
Lady, of your bright eyes which chained me quite;
That seem'd to me no time against the blows
Of love to make defence, to frame relief:
Secure and unsuspecting, thus my woes
Date their commencement from the common grief;
Love found me feeble then and defenceless all,
Open the way and easy to my heart
Through eyes, where since my sorrows ebb and flow:
But therein was, methinks his triumph small,
On me, in that weak state, to strike his dart,
Yet hide from you so strong his very bow.³⁵

The Renaissance had not only raised "man" to a high potential, but also woman's position was raised.

But one of the effects of the Renaissance was to raise the position of women, as that in Shakespeare's comedies the heroines (Portia, Viola, Rosalinda) are more than equal to the men. In England, . . . the presence of a female sovereign and one who was the focus of patriotism and the object of flattery and adoration, assisted the general trend.³⁶

And since in both Petrarch's lyrics and Elizabethan lyrics the poetry was in reality love poetry, woman's position was significant. Just as the humanists of the Renaissance were breaking out of the world of the Middle Ages culturally and politically, love poetry also moved from the religious

³⁴Lucas, p. 211.

³⁵F. N. Lucas, ed., The Sonnets, Triumphs, and Other Poems of Petrarch (London, 1909), pp. 3-4.

³⁶Kenneth Muir, Elizabethan Love Lyrics (Freeport, New York, 1969), p. 9.

positions of courtly love to the expression of "flesh and blood" substance of human passion.

Dante, in The Divine Comedy, deserted by the great Vergil, was guided to "divine wisdom and Christian revelation" by the lady Beatrice. The idealization of this woman is very typical of the posturing found in courtly love. Like the Blessed Virgin, woman could guide man to the eternal, and therefore she should be placed on a pedestal for worship. Dante states reverently:

I saw the lady, who first appeared to me veiled
beneath the angelic festival, directing her eyes to
me on this side the stream.
Albeit the veil which fell from her head crowned
with Minerva's leaves, did not let her appear
manifest, Queenlike, in bearing yet stern . . .
(Canto xxv 64-78)³⁷

The medieval woman was subservient in her feudal society, but the courtly love poets raised her to the earthly counterpart of ideal love. According to Lucas, Petrarch moved woman's position from that of the "ideal guide" to more of a flesh and blood woman, although compared to Elizabethan sonneteers this may not seem so.³⁸

Petrarch sensed the conflicts in the position of a courtly lover, i.e., he felt lust for the woman (profane love) yet he must treat her as inaccessible (holy love). This type of tension is clearly visible in Romeo and Juliet (I.v.94-110) in which a prayer for a kiss is balanced by religious imagery.

³⁷Quoted in Henry Lucas, p. 151.

³⁸Henry Lucas, p. 212.

In a typical Petrarchan conceit, love and religion are linked:

If I profane with my unwortheiest hand
This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this,
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.
(I.v.95-97)³⁹

Petrarch was essentially working with love poetry that had developed under the spiritual discipline found in Christianity. There was a definite analogy between courtly love and Christian love, only the former was secular and erotic.⁴⁰ For example, the sudden spiritual awakening paralleled the devotion to love's demands in which the god of love becomes "lord." And the binding of the convert to the will of God paralleled the binding of the lovers in which the need to continually supplicate for grace and mercy existed.⁴¹ Frye continues the parallels by suggesting that the Madonna and child have their counterparts in Venus and Cupid. Venus thus signifies the complementary area of light, form, desirability, beauty and objective proportion in relationship to Eros, who is heat, energy, desire, love and subjective emotion.⁴²

Petrarchan love was more than a cover-up for natural

³⁹Quotations from Romeo and Juliet in this paper are from William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet A New Variorum Edition, ed., Horace Howard Furness (Philadelphia, 1871), 15th ed.

⁴⁰Northrop Frye, "How True a Twain," The Riddle of Shakespeare's Sonnets (New York, 1962), p. 31.

⁴¹Frye, p. 31.

⁴²Frye, p. 32.

feelings, and it was more than a vault for storing images.

It was a need to control the strongest of natural feelings.⁴³

Love was for the Renaissance poet a kind of creative yoga, an imaginative discipline in which he watched the strongest possible feelings swirling around sexual excitement, jealousy, obsession, melancholy, as he was snubbed, inspired, teased, ennobled, forsaken or made blissful by his mistress.⁴⁴

Calderwood agrees that the source of the poet's emotion was "Cupid and the Lady's resistance both more or less beyond his control and both part of an accepted public manner in writing love verse."⁴⁵

On a superficial basis, the regular themes of the sonneteers were the character and exploits of Cupid, the methods by which the lady enslaved her lover, and in turn the lover's melancholy, sleeplessness, wasting and pangs of absence. The tension between holy love and profane love always existed as a larger looming factor in love poetry.

Castiglione, in the gentleman's handbook The Courtier (1528) described the qualities of the courtier much as Cicero had described the qualities of the rising young Roman statesman. Like Cicero's work, it set a model for behavior; and it also drew together the love poetry of the Middle Ages and the love poetry being written in the court of Henry VIII.

⁴³Bradbook, p. 23.

⁴⁴Frye, p. 30.

⁴⁵Calderwood, p. 44.

"Castiglione's book was popular in England and, in the comparative calm of the Elizabethan settlement, it furnished a model of behaviour for the fashionable lover."⁴⁶

The true courtier was to respond to beauty as the first step toward the development of his finest qualities. For the Renaissance poet, the end of art was action; and so, the poet had to mesh the two. But, there were two problems in the artist's perception of beauty. One, how could one respond to beauty, and yet surmount "Circe's charm"? Second, how could one achieve the ideal which the poet saw in beauty or capture it, because what he envisioned only lasted for a brief temporal moment? The first problem was solved by the poet's attempt to couch the idea of beauty in physical terms: Bradbook says that "hence, cultivation of the arts and the clear embodiment of the heavenly Idea of Beauty in the most persuasive physical terms became his duty."⁴⁷

The second problem was solved in such works as Spenser's Visions and Shakespeare's Sonnets in which the poet transformed the beauty he saw into an "artifice of eternity."⁴⁸ And of course this theme will be dominant in this discussion of the Sonnets in relationship to Romeo and Juliet. In both the Sonnets and Romeo and Juliet there is the response to beauty in physical terms, but only in the play can the art of

⁴⁶Muir, p. 9.

⁴⁷Bradbook, p. 24.

⁴⁸Bradbook, p. 24.

the Sonnets come to fruition in physical action.

Castiglione's passage praising love provided the age with much of its beliefs about that emotion:

Love is "a certain coveting to enjoy beauty" and because longing cannot proceed but by knowledge, beauty is known either to sense (which we share with beasts) by election or choice, which is proper to man or by understanding, which is shared by the angels, and issues in the will. Beauty is "an influence of the heavenly bountifulness, the which for all is stretcheth over all things that can be created . . . yet when it finds out a face well proportioned . . . there into it distilleth itself and appeareth most well favoured and decketh out and lyghtenth the subject where it shyneth with a marveyulous grace and glistering." Of the three kinds of love, Heavenly love is of the understanding alone. "Thus the Soule, kindled in the most holy fire of love, fleeth to couple herself with nature of Angelles, and not only clean forsaketh sense, but hath no more need of the discourse of reason, for being changed into an Angell, she understandeth all things . . . without anie veile or cloude she seeth the meine sea of the pure heavenly bewtye and receiveth it unto her, and enjoyeth that sovereigne happinesse, that cannot be comprehended of the senses."⁴⁹

And when Shakespeare took up the treatment of "love" it was with this type of background but with his particular stamp.

Just as the mind of Petrarch was akin and receptive to the mind of the ancient Romans, so the era of the 1590's revived an exuberance of spirit as the revival of the classics revived a high spirit for the early humanists. Both the "ghost" and the "invocator of that ghost" were ready to receive one another. And just as a school of Petrarchists arose after his death, the lyrical outburst, inaugurated by such men

⁴⁹Quoted in Bradbook, p. 22.

as Wyatt and Surrey, gave rise to a sonnet vogue during the latter third of the sixteenth century. Albert Baugh says "both Wyatt and Surrey found their chief inspiration in the work of Italian poets. Both were innovators in the true spirit of the Renaissance."⁵⁰

In 1593, when lyrical verse was at its prime in Elizabethan England, Gabriel Harvey said in Pierces Supererogation "all the noblest Italian, French, and Spanish poets have in their several veins Petrarchized, and it is no dishonour for the daintiest or divinest muse to be his scholar, whom the amiablest invention and beautifullest elocution acknowledge their master."⁵¹

The epic Africa by Petrarch, although distinctly inspired by Vergil's Aeneid, was not the Aeneid, obviously. Africa was molded by the temper of Petrarch's own age and by the way he interpreted Vergil from afar. So it was with the Elizabethan use of the sonnet. J. W. Lever suggests that "the [sonnet] tradition reaches back to a European, especially an Italian past; but it was adapted and transformed by distinctively English attitudes, the resulting tension supplying the main dynamic of development."⁵²

Chaucerian lyrics and other medieval lyrics cannot be

⁵⁰ Albert C. Baugh and Geo. Wm. McClelland, eds., English Literature (New York, 1954), p. 213.

⁵¹ Quoted in Mommsen, p. 74.

⁵² J. W. Lever, The Elizabethan Love Sonnet (London, 1966), 2nd ed., p. vi.

ignored as an influence on the Elizabethan lyric. The court of Henry VIII was not indifferent to the combination of music and poetry. The courtiers, trained for a life at court, fashioned themselves after Castiglione's pattern. In his advice were these suggestions: ". . . the courtier should be . . . able to read Greek and Latin, to play a musical instrument, to sing, to draw, to appreciate painting, and to write verse and prose when the occasion arose."⁵³

Riding on this tide of lyrics native to England as well as on the tide of humanism, the sonnet form came to England through Thomas Wyatt. Thus, it made an insignificant court pastime into a significant literary development.

Sir Thomas Wyatt, by profession a diplomat, found a spirit akin to his own in the achievements of the great French and Italian Renaissance poets. From his direct translations and adaptations of Petrarch, the sonnet, terza rima, and rondeau forms were inaugurated in England. But as Muir asserts, Wyatt was more important for "his fusion of foreign influence and native forms of Italian conventions of love with individual feeling."⁵⁴ He had to work within the medieval lyric tradition of his own Anglo-Saxon background, and as a result he worked from a lyrical background that did not deify woman. Courtship was comparatively simple and most lyrics

⁵³From The Courtier (1528) trans. Sir Thomas Hoby (1561) and quoted in Muir, p. 9. According to Muir, Henry VIII composed both music and words for a few songs, and Cornish, a court composer, was actually "good" according to critics.

⁵⁴Muir, p. 11.

about love regarded love as a rather frail object--a temporary summer--in the face of eternal death.⁵⁵ Another strong tradition in which he worked was that of a didactic or moralizing effect by literature. The temporality of spring and summer was ever stressed. No flower, birdsong, or summer day could possibly last; and so content became the "shaping factor" in his work. Lever says:

While infusing the Petrarchan medium with his own vigorous personality, he laid the foundations of a new verse form, built upon three quatrains of decasyllables and a final couplet, and of a revived English metric based, like Chaucer's on five feet of iambs while allowing a modified freedom of stress. Form and content . . . interpenetrated closely . . . it was rational rather than imaginative, empirical rather than transcendental⁵⁶

In 1557, Richard Tottel, a London printer, published a miscellany entitled Songes and Sonnets.⁵⁷ The title page featured the poems of the earl of Surrey although it did include some of Wyatt's works. Like Wyatt before him, Surrey had an English cast of mind that rejected the Italian transcendental view of nature. In the sonnet that begins "Love that doth raine," Surrey innovated as far as the rhyme scheme, so that in an end rhyme analysis the results were abab, cdcd, efef, gg.

⁵⁵Lever, p. 10.

⁵⁶Lever, p. 26.

⁵⁷Baugh, p. 213. Catherine Ing (p. 14) ballasts her argument about the Elizabethan concern with prosody and lyrical verse in general by stating that in the Miscellany there are seventeen metrical forms not used before Tottel's publication.

The effect was to permit logical exposition, with its necessary contrasts and appositions, while strictly controlling its development within the limits of three balanced quatrains and ending with a summary in the last two lines.⁵⁸

In such a technical experiment, Surrey could express contrasted situations in which the lover could react, or he could present a balanced antithesis followed by a positive or epigrammatic statement. Eventually, he learned that the traditional love themes were not necessarily the ultimate themes for the sonnet, e.g., he wrote a tribute to Wyatt and to a fellow military comrade who saved his life. Lever suggests:

Such themes introduced a new type of sonnet content which derived its strength not from intensity of subjective feeling, nor from imaginative range, but from Surrey's capacity to set forth clearly and boldly the experiences of man in the social sphere.⁵⁹

Surrey did the most to establish the Elizabethan sonnet as a poem of three quatrains and a rhyming couplet.⁶⁰

Both of these ideas are extremely important in this discussion of the dramatization of the sonnets in Romeo and Juliet. On a peripheral basis, understanding the structural scheme and the content variations is relevant to the understanding of some of the sonnets in Shakespeare's sequence as well as understanding the use of the sonnet in Romeo and

⁵⁸Lever, p. 46.

⁵⁹Lever, p. 48.

⁶⁰A. C. Ward, Illustrated History of English Literature I Chaucer to Shakespeare (New York, 1964), p. 111.

Juliet (the sonnets at the beginning of Act I and Act II). And, as will be shown later, the entire tragedy exists much like a sonnet in structure.

With the forty anthologized poems in Tottel's Miscellany going through ten editions before the end of the century,⁶¹ it is obvious that the work's presentation of the first sonnets printed in English was going to have a great effect on this eve of the lyrical 1590's. In France around 1575, Ronsard, DuBellay, and Desportes were writing their French adaptations of the Italian sonnets. In Premières Oeuvres (1573) some three hundred sonnets were written to three influential ladies in England.⁶² The English poet to carry on from the French tradition was Thomas Watson in A Passionate Centurie of Love or The Hekatompathia (1582), an eighteen-line poem with three stanzas of six lines. Then in 1593, he wrote the Teares of Fancie or Love Disdained, a collection of sonnets in the Elizabethan form.⁶³ Following this vogue were the writers Henry Constable in Diana, The praises of his Mistress, In certaine sweet Sonnets (1592); Samuel Daniel in his sonnet sequence Delia (1592);⁶⁴ Barnabe Barnes in his

⁶¹Muir, p. 12.

⁶²Oscar Campbell, ed., The Sonnet Songs and Poems of Shakespeare (New York, 1964), p. 12.

⁶³Ward, p. 130.

⁶⁴Cf. Daniel's famous line "Short is the glory of the blushing rose. . . ." or his conventional use of the terms "sable night, sable hair" to the ideas and conventional use of the images in both the Sonnets and Romeo and Juliet.

sonnets and lyrics published in Parthenophil and Parthenope (1593) or A Divine Centurie of Spirituall Sonnets (1595); and Michael Drayton in the sonnet sequence Idea (1593). Richard Barnfield is unique in that some of his poems attributed to Shakespeare appear in editions of the latter's works such as The Passionate Pilgrim (1599).⁶⁵

To connect the Tudor and Elizabethan poets, there were Gascoigne's Sundrie Flowers in 1572 (thirty-three sonnets, thirty of which adapted Surrey's form) and A Gorgious [sic] Gallery of Gallant Inventions in 1578.⁶⁶

In the Arcadia (probably written during the 1580's), Sidney basically follows Wyatt and Surrey in his use of traditional English attitudes and current English vocabulary.⁶⁷ But by the time of Astrophel and Stella (1597), Sidney had written the true sonnet sequence that was to influence the whole sonnet vogue at that time. Sidney has often been dubbed by literary critics⁶⁸ an "English Petrarchan," because he followed many of Petrarch's conventions. But Lever retorts with the idea that the sonnet was of all the Renaissance forms, the most personal and the most heavily indebted to

⁶⁵Ward, pp. 132-133.

⁶⁶Lever, p. 51.

⁶⁷Lever, p. 53.

⁶⁸See the works of Emil Koepfel (1890), Sidney Lee Elizabethan Sonnets; Janet C. Scott Elizabethan Sonnets (1904), and L. C. John The Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences (1938).

conventions. Calderwood agrees by stating that conventions were used for points of departure to release emotion rather than maps alone.⁶⁹ Theodore Spencer's essay on Sidney makes the point definitely clear:

In the sixteenth century, this saving loss of personality, this discovery of self through submission to an "other," could be accomplished to a considerable extent through convention. Convention is to the poet in an age of belief what the persona is to the poet in an age of bewilderment. By submission to either the poet acquires authority; he feels that he is speaking for, is representing, something more important than himself--or, in the case of the persona, he is at least representing something different from his own naked and relatively insignificant ego; in both cases he has taken the first step toward universality.⁷⁰

Although the sonnet sequence was written to Penelope Rich, the experiences that Sidney had as a lover fit into many of the Petrarchan themes and conventions, e.g., the famous voyage down the Thames compared to Laura's voyage down the Rhone. The striking difference between Petrarch and Sidney's women is that the former's is a "revelation" and the latter's is a mere "heroine."⁷¹ The different views are reflected in the type of imagery used. Petrarch was immediately concerned with a transcendental vision, and he used the sun metaphor to capture this vision.⁷²

⁶⁹Calderwood, p. 44.

⁷⁰Theodore Spencer, "The Poetry of Sir Philip Sidney," English Literary History (December, 1945), XII(4), pp. 266-7. This idea is especially important in Shakespeare's rejection of the sonnet conventions in Romeo and Juliet.

⁷¹Lever, p. 60.

⁷²In relation to the discussion of Astrophel and Stella (LXXI) and Sonetto in Vita CCX.

Laura is likened to the sun, which, in the Ptolemaic system, has both natural and spiritual properties: it is matter, but matter in the purest form: it shines with heavenly light, but it is accessible to the vision of every mortal.⁷³

In opposition, Sidney was mainly concerned with the sun as representative of the "light of reason in Stella's eyes."⁷⁴

Petrarch saw Laura as a sun, Sidney saw Stella as a product of nature and a potential for the edification of society. Lever says that "the English poet's major concern is with virtue and beauty as aspects of character; with their effects upon society; and lastly with his own subjective response."⁷⁵

Riding the crest of the sonnet vogue, the Ameretti sequence by Spenser (written to Elizabeth Boyle) was published in 1595.⁷⁶ Lever concludes his discussion of the Amoretti sequence by suggesting that ". . . Spenser's sequence, despite its many intrinsic merits, was to exercise virtually no influence upon the subsequent development of the sonnet in England."⁷⁷

Where, then, do Spenser's sonnets contribute to the

⁷³Lever, p. 60.

⁷⁴Lever, p. 60.

⁷⁵Lever, p. 60.

⁷⁶It is interesting to note that Amoretti first appeared in an octavo volume published by William Ponsonby which also contained Epithalamion and four untitled epigrams inserted between the poems, Lever, p. 96.

⁷⁷Lever, p. 137.

present discussion? Spenser carries on with the scale of themes found in courtly love.⁷⁸ In the high phase on this scale, love was a spiritual education which could eventually lead the lover to the eternal, i.e., Dante and Beatrice. Cardinal Bembo's speech on amor rationale which ends the fourth book of Castiglione's Il Cortegiano is typical of this high phase. In Bembo's speech there is an attempt to recreate for the sixteenth century the attitude of the Neoplatonists towards sexual love.⁷⁹ Spenser's hymns to heavenly love and beauty as well as earthly love were as palinodes to the courtly love hymns to Eros and Venus. The Amoretti sequence moves to the theme of the "middle scale," i.e., the mistress may be a potential for a wife.⁸⁰ The court poets always had to acknowledge the fact that their "earthly love" would move with finality to the tomb. "Earthly love" might have its counterpart in heaven, but the physical frustration was always more dominant in the works of Petrarch than the spiritual fulfillment after which the courtly love poets earnestly sought.⁸¹ Spenser solved this dilemma by terminating his romances with marriage.

Marriage for the Elizabethan was not merely a social convention, still less a "private affair;" primarily it was a sacrament, the outward and visible sign of

⁷⁸Frye, p. 33.

⁷⁹Lever, p. 103.

⁸⁰Frye, p. 34.

⁸¹Frye, p. 34.

an inward and spiritual grace. It bridged the gulf between the ideal and the actual; it reunited spirit to sense and was at once symbol and reality.⁸²

One can readily see that Romeo and Juliet's marriage thus becomes a part of the sonnet potential and not just a dramatic device to precipitate the tragedy. It was an Elizabethan ad hoc solution to a courtly love tradition.

The third phase in the scale of themes is the "lower phase" or the phase in which Shakespeare's genius found the sonnet form. In this phase, concrete human relations were treated. The full circle had completed itself. Plato influenced the first phases as courtly love poets tried to reconcile earthly and heavenly love, and Ovid influenced the lowest phase. Ovidian Romances became a "liberating force whose combination of sensuous richness, with certain classic simplicity and solidity, presented Shakespeare with his first great poetic opportunity."⁸³

During the 1590's, the "sonnet was often considered pure eloquence itself."⁸⁴ It was a vogue. According to Bradbook, the theme of love was that of the age. "There never was a period in which more love-poetry appeared. The sonnet sequences, many of them written earlier no doubt, were pouring from the press"⁸⁵

⁸²Lever, p. 95.

⁸³Bradbook, p. 73.

⁸⁴Edward Hubler, "Shakespeare's Sonnets and the Commentators," Riddle of Shakespeare's Sonnets (New York, 1962), p. 5.

⁸⁵Bradbook, p. 120.

The lyrical nature of the age expressed itself in music much as Petrarch's lyrical spirit had years before. Madrigals and airs sounded all over England. The use of songs was common in plays such as Lyly's Endimion, and Shakespeare also used songs in The Tempest, As You Like it, Love's Labour's Lost, Twelfth Night.⁸⁶

Not only is every song perfect of its kind, but, with few exceptions, they could not be transferred from one play to another without spoiling their effect. It is sometimes possible to absorb the peculiar tone and atmosphere of a play from the songs alone.⁸⁷

Poetry was not forced to music, but rather, like a marriage, "it seemed to be an ideal match."⁸⁸

. . . English poets of the Elizabethan age were writing in an isle full of noises, sounds and sweet airs. When they linked their art to music, they linked it to an art germane to itself in kind, and a kindly fruit of their native earth.⁸⁹

Now, if it is true that Shakespeare began to compose the sonnets during the years 1593-1594, then Shakespeare was swimming with the stream as far as the sonnet vogue was concerned. After twenty pages devoted to a minute analysis of the dating of the sonnets by various critics Hyder Rollins says:

⁸⁶Consult Richmond Noble, Shakespeare's Use of Song (Oxford, 1923).

⁸⁷Muir, p. 34.

⁸⁸Ward, p. 141.

⁸⁹Ing, p. 107.

From the foregoing discussion it will be seen that two conjecturers place the initial date of composition in 1582, two or three in 1585, and that the earliest date of completion is set by two in 1588. An average of the guesses indicates that Shakespeare began writing about the middle of 1593 and laid aside his pen about June, 1599. Perhaps such an average is as reliable a way as has yet been found of "settling" the vexed problem--⁹⁰

Harrison argues that Romeo and Juliet was composed in 1594 or 1595:

The Tragedy Of Romeo and Juliet was probably written in 1594-1595 The style is unmistakably early, and the play was written when Shakespeare was still an admirer of Marlowe. References to Romeo and Juliet begin early, the first occurring in 1595.⁹¹

The majority of the critics' analyses in the Variorum Edition agree that this is an early play of the 1590's.⁹²

Then, it is easy to place both the sonnets and Romeo and Juliet in an age of great lyrical pieces, and in turn to conclude that they are related to one another by their lyrical nature, by their common treatment of love, and by their single composer.

In order to appreciate Elizabethan and Jacobean literature one must consider the close relationship between diverse works and diverse writers; between writers and their own works in relation to the spirit of the age which served as a priming charge for the release of personal genius.⁹³

⁹⁰William Shakespeare, The Sonnets A New Variorum Edition, ed., Hyder Edward Rollins (Philadelphia, 1944), II, p. 73.

⁹¹G. B. Harrison, ed., Shakespeare the Complete Works (New York, 1952), p. 468.

⁹²William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet A New Variorum Edition, ed., Horace Howard Furness (Philadelphia, 1899) 15th ed., pp. 408-415.

⁹³Ward, p. 105.

I suggest that not only are the two works related to one another for the above reasons, but that the Sonnets are actually dramatized in Romeo and Juliet.

CHAPTER II

THE THEMATIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THREE SONNETS USED IN ACT I OF ROMEO AND JULIET

In Romeo and Juliet, three formal sonnets occur as distinct parts of the play. At the beginning of Act I and at the conclusion of Act I, there is a choric-sonnet. During Act I as Romeo and Juliet first encounter one another, another sonnet is molded from their dialogue (I.v.91-104). From a purist's standpoint, the two choric sonnets are not "dramatic" in the sense that we have been talking about, i.e., the dramatization of sonnet thoughts, themes, images in Romeo and Juliet. It must be admitted, however, that they do influence the reading of the drama; and since they were composed in sonnet form, they cannot be ignored here. Sonnets and the sonnet tradition are inherently associated with this play, and thus it is striking that Shakespeare should actually use three sonnets in this composition.¹

A. The Prologue Sonnet

According to H. B. Charlton, the purpose of the prologue was to encourage the audience to see the drama from the "right point of view." The "right point of view," Charlton continues,

¹In the collation of textual notes furnished by Horace Furness, ed., Romeo and Juliet, A New Variorum Edition (Philadelphia, 1871), 15th ed., p. 3, 85, Ulrich states that both of these choric sonnets most likely did not come from "Shakespeare's pen" because "it [sonnet after Act I] is so empty, prosaic, and barren, and so wholly pointless that in my opinion it is impossible that it could ever have flowed from Shakespeare's pen." In opposition I feel that their very position in the play, all in Act I, tells us something about the rejection of the formal pattern for the presentation of valid feeling. Also, both of the choric sonnets are in a major way tied up with the themes of the play.

was necessary to expound because Shakespeare had chosen tragic heroes that were fictional but not surrounded by pomp and historical significance.² Although we may never know Shakespeare's actual "point of view" as the critics argue over the centuries about the true meaning of phrases such as "star-cross'd lovers," the basic groundwork is laid in this first choric-sonnet concerning the future action and conclusion reached in the actual dramatization. Harold Wilson agrees in this statement:

The tragic conception of Romeo and Juliet is simply stated for us in the opening sonnet-prologue. By thus announcing his theme and describing the central action, Shakespeare prepares us for the method he will follow throughout the play. We are to watch a sequence of events as they move towards the catastrophe in the full knowledge that they are tragic, that the tragic culmination is somehow inevitable The tragic effect is to be one of anticipation and its realization.³

As discussed in the opening chapter, Sidney's sonnets were concerned with "an empirical approach to love in terms of its psychological and moral effects" and with the sphere of social conduct.⁴ Inglis says in English Poetry that ". . . the poets at this time were concerned to find the public significance in the private event" ⁵ So, it is

²H. B. Charlton, "Shakespeare's Experimental Tragedy," Twentieth Century Interpretations of Romeo and Juliet, ed., Douglas Cole (Englewood Cliffs, 1970), p. 51.

³Harold S. Wilson, On the Design of Shakespearian Tragedy (Canada, 1957), p. 3.

⁴Lever, p. 62.

⁵Fred Inglis, English Poetry 1550-1660 (London, 1965), p. 26.

not unusual that Shakespeare's sonnet-prologue and even his sonnet sequence should be concerned with the effect of the private life on the public life and the effect of love on a social plane.

Two households, both alike in dignity,
 In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
 From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
 Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
 From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
 A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;
 Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
 Do with their death bury their parents' strife.
 The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,
 And the continuance of their parents' rage,
 Which, but their children's end, nought could remove
 Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;
 The which if you with patient ears attend,
 What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.⁶

Before directly analyzing the prologue itself it would be wise to see if Shakespeare's Sonnets offer any illuminating facts on the problem of the private life in relation to the public life. From the Sonnets, we learn that there are two ways of viewing the private life in relation to the public life. One, the private life is essentially superior to the public life because in that private life dwells "our love."⁷

⁶ All quotations in this chapter from Romeo and Juliet are from A New Variorum Edition, ed., Horace Howard Furness (Philadelphia, 1871).

⁷ F. W. Bateson, "Elementary, My Dear Watson! A Caveat for Literary Detectives," Discussions of Shakespeare's Sonnets, ed., Barbara Hernstein (Boston, 1964), p. 23, suggests that Sonnet 107 asserts the superiority of the private life over the public life. The first quatrain shows the private world and true love surviving doom; the second quatrain exhibits the public world; and the third quatrain issues a connection between the public and the private world; and the couplet finally asserts the private life's superiority:

And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
 When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

That this is true cannot be denied; but this is the province of another chapter. The second meaning gleaned from the Sonnets is that there is the possibility that what exists in private, under the surface, is not all it is supposed to be--that it is even rotten--and as a result it is corrupting the outer surface. For example, in Sonnet 69 this problem is clearly seen as the poet expresses the idea that the young friend has a deficiency of inner beauty compared with his obvious physical beauty. Sonnet 69 is not the sole evidence of the poet's concern between physical appearance and moral disparity, but Sonnets 53-54, 70, and 90-96 also take up these themes.

In Sonnets 53-54, a Neo-Platonic idea is expressed: matter is but a reflection of the eternal Idea in the mind of God:

What is your substance, whereof are you made
That millions of strange shadows on you tend
Since every one hath, every one, one shade,
And you, but one, can every shadow lend.⁸

The emphasis on the loved one's exceptional beauty as a shadow of the eternal is important here, because it also stresses the idea that one endowed with such beauty is often unusually tempted. As a result, fierce loyalty and constancy are necessary to keep that beauty. The use of the terms "shadow" and "substance" are important in this Platonic sonnet because

⁸All quotes from the Sonnets in my paper are from The Sonnets, A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare, ed., Hyder Edward Rollins (Philadelphia, 1944), I.

in their use is found an inherent disparity--a disparity significant to the problem between inner beauty and the physical appearance of beauty. A. E. Taylor in his study on Plato says "in Plato's Symposium the difference between the Idea of Beauty, which is sole and absolute, and all other beauties is put in terms of the disparity between substance and shadow"⁹

Coleridge also further illustrated this problem in Aids to Reflection by suggesting that "substance signifies essence of the nature of a thing, quod stat subtus, that which stands beneath, and (as it were) supports, the appearance"¹⁰

Sonnet 54 carries on this theme with the addition that external beauty is not only a pattern of the eternal, but it must be enhanced with truth, constancy, loyalty, and fidelity. True beauty must be adorned with virtue.

The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
 For that sweet odor which doth in it live.
 The canker blooms have full as deep a dye
 As the perfum'd tincture of the roses,
 Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly
 When summer's breath their masked buds discloses.
 But for their virtue only is their show,
 They live unwooded and unrespected fade,
 Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so,
 Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odors¹¹ made.
 And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
 When that shall vade [sic] , by verse distills your
 truth.

⁹A. E. Taylor, Plato: The Man and His Work, quoted in Hilton Landry, Interpretations in Shakespeare's Sonnets (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963), p. 48.

¹⁰Quoted in Landry, p. 28.

¹¹According to Landry (p. 36) the use of "odor" in the Sonnets signifies an essence, essential part, or moral reality underlying a reputation. Compare Sonnet 5 (ll. 13-14) and Sonnet 69.

The use of the "fair" rose in its outward appearance and the use of the word "fairer" in relation to the roses's sweet odors is significant when we consider that in the Prologue, Verona is called "fair." (It is ironic also that Capulet calls the city "fair" in I.ii.35 because he is one-half responsible for its not being "fair.") But then the writer continues that what may seem "fair" to the eye is not in reality so, because there is civil strife brewing underneath. On a character level, Romeo and Juliet are the true "roses"¹²

¹²In the play are various references to the lovers as buds and flowers. When we first hear of Romeo by his father, Montague says:

But to himself so secret and so close,
So far from sounding and discovery,
As is the bud bit with an envious worm
Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to the air,
Or dedicate his beauty to the sun. (I.i.142-146)

Capulet tells Paris of Juliet:

Let two more summers wither in their pride
Ere we may think her ripe to be a bride. (I.ii.10-11)

The Nurse tells Juliet of Romeo:

He is not the flower of courtesy but I'll warrant
him as gentle as a lamb. (II.v.42-43)

(Hunter says in the Variorum, p. 146, "The apparent want of coherence between 'the flower of courtesy' and 'as gentle as a lamb' is not charged to the Nurse's want of proper concatenation in her stock of ideas, the name of one of the flowers, the Flower Genue, being in her mind.)

Romeo and Juliet's love is referred to as:

This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.
(II.ii.121-122)

As Juliet prepares to take the potion, the Friar tells her:

The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade.

distilled into truth after death, whereas the "canker blooms" that die only to themselves are represented by the other deaths in the play; i.e., those of Mercutio, Tybalt, Paris, and Lady Montague. These latter characters' deaths undoubtedly aid in the dramatic action; and Mercutio's death is especially pivotal in the plot as well as in the establishment of new feelings about love in the remainder of the play; but still harmony for the families is only brought through the deaths of the true "roses." The youths join the natural order of things so that harmony can be restored. Ribner says that "by Romeo's and Juliet's deaths social order is restored"

Capulet laments the "death" of Juliet by calling her "the sweetest flower of all the field," (IV.v.29) and then he speaks of Juliet as if she were married to death:

Flower as she was, deflowered by him. (IV.v.37)

When Romeo approaches Juliet's grave this flower image functions as a dramatic metaphor as Romeo utters:

Death, that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath,
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty
(V.iii.92-93)

The idea of distillation is complete as a flower. Only pure beauty remains in her death: "moral reality" is aligned perfectly with beauty.

Walter Kaufman, Tragedy and Philosophy (New York, 1968), p. 285, quotes Hegel on Juliet as a flower:

In "Hegel on Shakespeare" Hegel says of Juliet's death that it is much like Hamlet's, i.e., death lurks from the beginning. The external accident is in accord with the true inner nature of these beautiful characters This tender blossom [Juliet] does not find the ground on which she has been planted agreeable, and nothing remains to us but to lament the sad evanescence of such beautiful love, which, like a tender rose in the valley of this accidental world, is broken by rough winds and thunderstorms and the infirm calculations of noble, benevolent prudence.

in a rebirth of love. Harmony results."¹³ This is definitely true in the play, and it is anticipated in the sonnet-prologue.

Sonnets 69 and 70 also take up this theme again while adding new insights. The last three lines of Sonnet 69 suggest that the fair flower is becoming tainted with weeds:

To thy fair flower add the rank smell of weeds.
But why thy odor matcheth not thy show,
The soil is this, that thou dost common grow.

The "flower" image here is not in reference to the young lovers as illustrated in the paragraphs above, but rather once again the idea of the corrupt "fair" one is that of a city and two families. The first quatrains in this sonnet have presented the outward view or the world's view of the disparity between the friend's outward beauty in the light of his inward corruption. The couplet then states the "basis of marked discrepancy."¹⁴ Throughout this sonnet there is the marked sense of a moral blemish, spot or stain pushing from the inner to the outer surfaces. The poet's use of terms and images clearly makes this evident, as Landry points out that ". . . by language of thoughts [the poet] perceives his moral defects and to fair flowers of his appearance add the foul odor of common weeds."¹⁵

In line 12, the use of the word "rank" signifies the moral

¹³Irving Ribner, Patterns in Shakespearian Tragedy (London, 1960), p. 27.

¹⁴Landry, p. 29.

¹⁵Landry, p. 35.

disgust felt by the poet.¹⁶ The use of "common" could have a wide range of pejorative meanings ranging from just "stale and vulgar company" as seen in I Henry IV (III.ii.41) to promiscuous sexual relations as seen in Sonnet 137:

Why should my heart think that a several plot
Which my heart knows the wide world's common place?
(1.9-10)

Landry takes "common" to mean being promiscuous in one's sexual relations as based on the opposition of appearance and reality and its corresponding imagery in Sonnet 54 and 93-96 and on the moral implications of "rank" and "weed" in Sonnet 69.12-14.¹⁷

Tucker also takes this position:

. . . Though he possessed the odour, he makes it
"common" by being too free with his society; compare
Sonnet 102.12 "Sweets grown common lose their dear
delight" "Weeds" are the type of commonness, "flowers"
of choiceness.¹⁸

Brooke has suggested that Romeo and Juliet is one of Shakespeare's bawdiest plays.¹⁹ But it is significant that the servants, who are also infected with the canker of this feud, come immediately in the first scene bursting with sexual puns; and by the close of the scene, they merge the two images

¹⁶ Compare this use of "rank" to the use in Sonnet 121.12. "Rank" also signifies moral disgust in other Shakespearean contexts as Othello III.iii.232 and in Hamlet III.ii.268, iii.36, 152.

¹⁷ Landry, p. 38.

¹⁸ Quoted in Landry, p. 37.

¹⁹ Nicholas Brooke, Shakespeare's Early Tragedies (London, 1968), p. 88.

of the quarrel and sex together: "My naked weapon is out" (I.i.34). They fulfill dramatically the sense of the word "common" as used in the sonnets.

In Sonnet 70, there is further addition to this theme of appearance and reality. A connection is made between youth and "prime" in relation to the possibility that youth can overcome this canker.²⁰ There is a warning here for youth to be virtuous now in order to survive the test of slander, for slander's target is always anyone beautiful.²¹ "For slander's mark was ever yet the fair; / The ornament of beauty is suspect" (70.2-3). It is up to youth to survive the evil of this world until tested virtue is achieved with the passing of time. In Sonnet 70, it is a Protestant and Senecan ideal urged in lines 5-6 and fulfilled in lines 9-10 to the extent it can be fulfilled in non-dramatic poetry. In Romeo and Juliet, this poetic potential is realized as these youths bury their parents' strife through their love and death. Love becomes a healing virtue in this case.

Sonnet 94 continues this disparity between appearance and reality with the idea that rotten lilies smell worse than healthy foul-smelling weeds. Sonnet 94 also brings out the

²⁰ "So thou be good, slander doth but approve
Thy worth the greater, being woo'd of time;
For canker vice the sweetest buds doth love,
And thou present'st a pure unstained prime." (5-8)

²¹ Gordon Ross Smith, "The Balance of Themes" in Romeo and Juliet, Essays on Shakespeare, ed., G. R. Smith (Pennsylvania, 1965), p. 51, says that "Romeo is the only man in Shakespeare's plays who ever gets the epithet of 'beautiful.'"

word "dignity" in line 12 which has a connection with "dignity" as it is used in the prologue.

The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
 Though to itself it only live and die,
 But if that flower with base infection meet,
 The basest weed outbraves his dignity;
 For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;
 Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

The prologue states that in Verona are "Two households, both alike in dignity." Like the flower's place in the world during the summer, the two households contain the possibility of being "effortlessly attractive."²² The Capulets and the Montagues have been endowed respectively with a beautiful daughter and son. They have a place in society; they are known by the Prince of the City; and Capulet is in the process of arranging a marriage for his daughter with Paris, a young nobleman and kinsman to the Prince.

Morris Bishop says of the responsibility of the higher classes that "the Nobles were at the top of man's secular hierarchy, but if their position was privileged, it also burdened them with responsibilities and restrictions greater than those of the lower classes."²³

If man was not responsible in his position or if he didn't realize the maximum of his potential, he could descend to the lower levels of existence--even to a bestial status.²⁴ Man's

²² Landry, p. 25.

²³ Morris Bishop, The Horizon Book of the Middle Ages, ed., Norman Kotker (New York, 1968), p. 328.

²⁴ See Chapter I, p. 8 of this paper.

dignity could be lost and even the "weeds" below him existed more truthfully for they were made to smell foul. The Prince takes up this theme in I.i.75-96 in which he calls the two families "beasts." He continues:

By thee, Old Capulet and Montague,
 Have thrice disturb'd the quiet of our streets,
 And made Verona's ancient citizens
 Cast by their grave beseeching ornaments,
 To wield old partisans, in hands as old,
 Canker'd with peace, to part your canker'd hate.
 (I.i.83-88)

The Capulets and Montagues will neither take their responsibility to end the strife nor take responsibility in making wise use of their "talents."²⁵ The two households appear in "dignity" but they are "outbraved" of that dignity by the basest of weeds. The two households do not have that "sweet odor" emanating from within which would suggest a moral wholesomeness and an essential excellence. It is significant that immediately following the prologue, the servants, the low class in society, should be seen "brawling" and feuding on the streets of Verona. Sonnet 94 suggested that when the flower meets with base infection then even the lowest weeds are more acceptable for they are what nature designed them to be. The servant class is more appropriate for a feud than a noble household. After many bawdy sexual puns and low jesting between the servants from both houses, Old Capulet and Montague come on the scene. Capulet appears in his gown calling for a

²⁵The parable of the "talents" in relation to Romeo and Juliet in relation to their respective households is discussed in Chapter III of this paper.

sword, but Lady Capulet restrains him by suggesting that he needs only a crutch. Montague meets the same feminine restraint by his wife. We see that the basest of weeds have "outbraved" the dignity that was rightfully the property of the "sweet flower," but instead it has been choked by a rotten, festering infection.

In the sonnets discussed, Shakespeare has said that the substance can mirror an eternal shadow. Beauty of physical appearance is a touchstone to the eternal beauty existing on a higher level. This belief also worked for the medieval and Renaissance Elizabethan mind on a civic and social scale. Indeed, the entire universe operated on this principle. The Sonnets, like the derivation of the theory of continuity during the Middle Ages, begin with the notion that "the Platonic Idea is the expression of the simple thought that every rightly formed conception has its solid basis in objective reality."²⁶ The Platonic principle of plenitude came next, because to the philosopher it was necessary to ask why all of the mundane things and the trivial should exist when God in himself was perfect and all-sufficing. Plato came to this conclusion:

A self-sufficient being who is eternally at the goal, whose perfection is beyond all possibility of enhancement or diminution, could not be "envious" of anything not itself. Its reality could be no impediment to the reality, in their own way, of beings other than it alike in existence and in kind and in

²⁶ Quoted in A. O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being (New York, 1960), p. 36.

excellence; on the contrary, unless it were somehow productive of them, it would lack a positive element of perfection.²⁷

A. O. Lovejoy continues this explanation: "The concept of Self-Sufficing Perfection, by a bold logical inversion, was--without losing any of its original implications--converted into the concept of a Self-Transcending Fecundity."²⁸

From the Platonic concept of plenitude, then, the concept of continuity naturally arose:

The result was the conception of the plan and structure of the world which, through the Middle Ages and down to the late eighteenth century, many philosophers, most men of science, and indeed, most educated men, were to accept without question--the conception of the universe as a "Great Chain of Being," composed of an immense, or--by the strict but seldom rigorously applied logic of the principle of continuity--of an infinite, number of links ranging in hierarchical order from the meagerest kind of existence, which barely escape non-existence through 'every possible' grade up to the ens perfectissimum--or, in a somewhat more orthodox version, to the highest possible kind of creature, between which and the Absolute Being the disparity was assumed to be infinite--²⁹

The king on earth, then, was the mirror for God himself and controlled his Kingdom much as God controlled the Universe. On a smaller scale, the family echoed this same pattern with the father as the leader. All worked together in this "chain of being," and all worked harmoniously. However when one "link" stepped or acted out of order, then chaos and destruction reigned havoc. Bishop agrees:

²⁷Lovejoy, p. 49.

²⁸Lovejoy, p. 49.

²⁹Lovejoy, p. 59.

To transgress against the chain of being, to seek through pride to raise oneself above the appointed level--as did Satan, Adam and Eve, and the rebellious peasant who envied his master's wealth or position--was to sin against both God and nature.³⁰

What held this universe together was love. The Middle Ages and the Renaissance held the concept that the all-pervading love of God governed the universe and sexual love was a manifestation of that love. Paul Siegel says:

The philosophy of plenitude and the idea of the Scale of Being demanded not only that all possibilities--from the highest to the lowest--be realized, but that when once realized in the various elements and species of the created universe, they be maintained by the creature's constant exercise of the reproductive, the generative power with which they had been endowed by Nature acting as the deputy of the Eternal Being³¹

This entire idea then is bound up in the sonnet-prologue to the play. "Civil blood makes civil hands unclean." If there is havoc and disharmony within, on a private level, then it can be well expected that such disharmony will reveal itself on the higher levels of city and state. Mutiny of this sort can only be dissolved by love; but as we shall see later the type of love that Romeo and Juliet create is "death mark'd." With their love, harmony is achieved once again. In the Sonnets, virtue and inner goodness conquer slander and evil corruption. In Romeo and Juliet, love conquers hate and strife. Both stem from the same nature of God; He was the

³⁰Bishop, p. 322.

³¹Paul N. Siegel, "Christianity and the Religion of Love in Romeo and Juliet," Shakespeare Quarterly, XII (Autumn, 1961), p. 383.

Idea of the Good and also the Idea of Goodness. Lovejoy explains that "The one was an apotheosis of unity, self-sufficiency, and quietude, the other of diversity, self-transcendence and fecundity."³²

The Prologue is setting the stage so that when we see the two lovers at the brilliantly lighted Capulet feast, we are aware that this is only an appearance of "fair" Verona.

The next problem involved in the Prologue is the matter of the "greater power" at work in the lives and actions of the young lovers. Lines 5-6 seemingly tell of a supernatural force at work:

From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;

Within the sonnet tradition, there was also a history of the use of astrology in sonnet writing. ". . . the art of astrology produced a theme for the conceit-hungry sonneteers."³³ In Astrophel and Stella, Sidney employs a type of astrological sonnet in his Sonnet 26. He expresses the idea that only fools doubt astrology for ". . . bodies high raigne on the low." The stars in Stella's face alone gave the poet assurance that astrology could hold sway over men. In Barnes' Parthenophil and Parthenope, a series of twelve sonnets is used to lead a lady through the signs of the zodiac. In Alexander's Aurora, Fletcher's Licia, and Constable's Diana,

³²Lovejoy, p. 82.

³³Don Cameron Allen, The Star-Crossed Renaissance (Durham, North Carolina, 1941), p. 158.

another type of astrological sonnet is used. This type of sonnet lists the:

powers of all the planets and tells of their influence on the sonneteer's beloved; the theme may have been suggested by Sidney's sonnet, but it has a neoclassical provenience, and we may find the motif elsewhere in Renaissance literature, for example, in John Lyly's The Woman in the Moon.³⁴

Whether Elizabethans sincerely believed in the actions of the stars over the actions of men is a point of dispute for many authors. After an exhaustive study of astrology in the English Renaissance, Allen comes to this conclusion:

The philosophy of the literary men of the English Renaissance was in many ways the philosophy of the moderate astrologers. The stars, according to the poets and dramatists, had an irresistible force which is joined to the powers of fortune and cannot be overcome.³⁵

On the other hand, Warren Smith claims that the Elizabethans had definitely rejected the use of judicial astrology; and his article is quite convincing. He clearly states his purpose:

I intended to demonstrate that both Church and State, in accordance with tradition, condemned the doctrine as sacrilegious and treasonable, that evidently Queen Elizabeth and certainly King James rejected it, and that not only was Shakespeare conversant with the most important contemporary pronouncements but also, wherever he is not appropriating the occult purely for dramatic effectiveness, his work in whole evinces either indifference or hostility towards judicial astrology.³⁶

³⁴Allen, p. 159.

³⁵Allen, p. 169.

³⁶Warren A. Smith, "The Elizabethan Rejection of Judicial Astrology and Shakespeare's Practice," SQ (1958), IX, p. 160.

Many critics of the play have seen it as some demonstration of the malignant power of fate, or even just sheer misfortune.³⁷ Of course this then implies that the lovers are in no way responsible for the plight they share. It seems to me one way to resolve this conflict is to return to the Sonnets for illumination on the "stars" and their relation to the actions of men.

Shakespeare's sonnet sequence has one particular sonnet, Sonnet 14, devoted to the subject of astronomy:

Not from the stars do I my judgement pluck;
 And yet methinks I have astronomy,
 But not to tell of good or evil luck,
 Of plagues, of dearths, or seasons' quality;
 Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell,
 Pointing to each his thunder, rain and wind,
 Or say with princes if it shall go well,
 By oft predict that I in heaven find;
 But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive
 And constant stars, in them I read such art
 As 'truth and beauty shall together thrive,
 If from thyself to store thou wouldst convert':
 Or else of thee this I prognosticate:
 'Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date.'

Sonnet 15 continues in line 4 with the idea that the stars "in secret influence" comment on the show of man. And again

³⁷Compare the writings of these authors among others who share the opinion that the play is a drama of fate and fate alone: F. S. Boas, Shakespeare and his Predecessors (New York, 1896), p. 214; Allardyce Nicoll, British Drama (New York, 1925), pp. 170-171; E. K. Chambers, Shakespeare: A Survey (London, 1929), pp. 70-71; Elmer Edgar Stoll, Shakespeare's Young Lovers (Oxford University Press, 1937), pp. 4-5; George Lyman Kittredge, ed., Sixteen Plays of Shakespeare (New York, 1948), p. 674; H. B. Charlton, Shakespearean Tragedy (Cambridge University Press, 1952), p. 51; J. Dover Wilson and Ian Duthie, eds., Romeo and Juliet (Cambridge University Press, 1955), pp. xxiii-xxiv; H. S. Wilson, On the Design of Shakespearean Tragedy (Toronto, 1957), pp. 19-37; Johnstone Parr, Tamburlaine's Malady and Other Essays on Astrology in Elizabethan Drama (University of Alabama Press, 1953), pp. 57-69.

fortune and the stars are linked in Sonnet 25:

Let those who are in favour with their stars
Of public honour and proud titles boast,
Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars,
Unlook'd for joy in that I honour most. . (1-4)

In Sonnet 14 the stars were connected with the eyes of the beloved, and in the latter two sonnets the stars were married to fortune. From these sonnets, we can derive two meanings for the reading of the uses of astrological signs in Romeo and Juliet. In Sonnet 14, the poet is concerned with the possibility that a child could in some way blunt time for the friend. If the friend does not procreate, then truth and beauty will be lost forever. This is a certainty. This perishable quality of truth and beauty is a definite prediction. Why? Because the youth and the poet are in a completely self-sufficient, self-sustaining relationship. Knowledge is not derived from the traditional source of knowledge--the stars--but rather it is derived from the loved one's eyes--the only constant stars. It is as though the eternal stars exist no longer as eternal truth, but rather truth resides in the love relationship. By using the conceit of stars to represent the eternal, as decreed by the astrologers of the time, in conflict with the "stars" in the eyes of the beloved, an obviously temporal organ, the poet makes what was once eternal a human self-sufficient experience. This is an essential Petrarch conceit, and I suggest it was not only strongly influenced by medieval physiology but it was also influenced by the humanistic philosophy surrounding Petrarch's work. Man

could himself be a matter for self-concentration and a bounty unto himself. Through the eyes the lovers exchange souls and create their own world with the eye/star image becoming their focal point for existence rather than the stars in the heavens. Krieger explains the Petrarchan use of the eye image:

The Petrarchan lover, of course, spiritualizes this appropriation, the form of the beloved residing in his heart. How can the beloved find proof that she exists in her lover? By looking into the eyes of the poet, seeing in them her image as in a distorted mirror. But what she sees is not a mere reflection; the conceit, rather, must fancifully maintain that in looking into the eyes she sees through a window to the poet's heart in which her form is lodged. The mirror has become window; reflection which seems to return one upon oneself suddenly is transformed to transparence which opens outward into the soul of the lover.³⁸

Thus, the lovers can perceive the very essence of the lover through the eyes. As Sonnet 14 explains, there is a type of "astronomy" at work here, but it is not the type that the world accepts. That Romeo and Juliet use this conceit of eyes and stars cannot be denied. In Act II.ii.15-20, Romeo is speaking in a soliloquy below Juliet's window. (It is significant that he is below in speaking these lines because it gives more import to the idea that she is in reality a "heavenly body.") He says:

Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do intreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
As daylight doth a lamp

³⁸Murray Krieger, A Window to Criticism (Princeton, 1964), pp. 80-81.

The actual dramatic metaphor that the lovers have become "stars" for each other is found in Juliet's epithalamium:

Come, gentle night, come, loving, black brow'd night,
Give me my Romeo; and when he shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night
And pay no worship to the garish sun.-- (III.ii.20+25)

The sun, symbol of a day's passing and mortal time, is rejected for the eternal stars which themselves no longer retain their destined place but rather exist in the person of Romeo and Juliet. Joseph Chang says that "Shakespeare creates conflict between time and eternity by using the symbolic import of sun and stars, one as the measure of time and the other as the symbol of timelessness. It is by the self-created rays of love that our young heroes can attain a stellar constancy."³⁹

In this sense, we could read line 6 of the Prologue in a new way. Star-cross'd need not mean predestined by fortune or fate, or even the overlying providence of God, but rather it could mean that these lovers have exchanged the eternal with that of the temporal as they are bound in the human experience of love. They are self-sustaining; they have created their own world. They are each other's souls.⁴⁰ They have created

³⁹Joseph S. M. J. Chang, "The Language of Paradox in Romeo and Juliet," Shakespeare Studies III, ed., J. Leeds Barroll, (Cincinnati, 1967), p. 35.

⁴⁰In II.ii.164, Romeo says to Juliet: "It is my soul that calls upon my name"

In III.v.25, Romeo says to Juliet: "How is't, my soul?"

In II.ii.113, Juliet tells Romeo not to swear by the inconstant moon but by "thy gracious self./ Which is the god of my idolatry."

for themselves a world that concentrates on both this world and the other world, i.e., the two conflicting major strains in Plato and the Platonic tradition.

By this-worldliness, I mean essentially what A.O. Lovejoy took to be Plato's meaning of the word:

To be concerned about will happen to you after death, or let your thought dwell much upon the joys which you hope will then await you, may obviously be the most extreme form of this-worldliness; and it essentially is such if that life is conceived, not as profoundly different in kind from this, but only as more of much the same sort of thing, a prolongation of the mode of being which we know in the world of change and sense and plurality and social fellowship, with merely the omission of the trivial or painful features of terrestrial existence, the heightening of its finer pleasures, the compensation of some of earth's frustrations.⁴¹

The "other-world" then stems from a type of contemptus mundi in which "both the genuinely 'real' and the truly good are radically antithetic in their essential characteristics to anything to be found in man's natural life. . . ."⁴²

Lovejoy explains his interpretation of the theory "other-world":

And--the theme is of the tritest--the joys of the natural life are evanescent and delusive, as age if not youth discovers. But the human will, as conceived by the otherworldly philosophers, not only

Goddard, p. 135 says:

Shakespeare knows where the stars are--"both heaven and hell and earth are located within the human soul." As a result, "Romeo is the skillless soldier" who ignites the disaster by just being.

⁴¹Lovejoy, p. 24.

⁴²Lovejoy, p. 25.

seeks but is capable of finding some final, fixed, immutable, intrinsic, perfectly satisfying good, as the human reason seeks, and can find, some stable, definitive, coherent, self-contained and self-explanatory object or objects of contemplation.⁴³

With love as their pilot, with the stars or each other's eyes as their reckoning point,⁴⁴ they look upon death from the vantage point of their world: Death will eliminate their obstacles in this world, and simultaneously Death will allow them to find lover's paradise forever.⁴⁵ Without carrying the analogy too far, they act much like Christ's plea in the Garden of Gethsemane: "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of this world." (St. John 17:15-16) Much like the mission of Christ, they defeat time through death and through an intense life on earth they prove that time does not matter. What matters is a commitment to the values threatened by death.

The second meaning we can derive from the sonnets as far as the meaning of "star" is concerned is the idea that man must operate within time, and the eternal "star" as it comments on his action ever reminds him of his destiny--death. By

⁴³Lovejoy, pp. 25-26.

⁴⁴II.ii.80-82.

⁴⁵Siegel, p. 372, says that "a tenet of the medieval religion of love said that 'joining the loved one in death qualifies the lover as one of Cupid's saints and ensures that the two meet in the Paradise in which dwelt the god of love, and in which were reserved places for his disciples.'" (Cf. William Dodd, Courtly Love in Chaucer and Gower (Boston, 1913), p. 18.) See Romeo's dream V.i.6-11 and 11. 10-12 in Sonnet 126.

gazing on the symbol of eternity, man is constantly reminded that he is mortal; but as we have already said, to Romeo and Juliet death is merely the stepping stone to another world where their world can continue in perfection and unending satisfaction.

It seems to me that the idea of fortune operating in some "secret influence" upon the actions of man cannot be discounted. The Sonnets imply this. Romeo also says: "Oh, I am fortune's fool." Juliet also says:

O Fortune, Fortune! all men call thee fickle
 If thou art fickle, what dost thou with him
 That is renown'd for faith? Be fickle, Fortune,
 For then I hope thou wilt not keep him long
 But send him back (III.v.59-63)

The important thing to remember is that Fortune always operates within Time, and the "stars were the agents of fortune."⁴⁶ In the play, Fortune is at work just as it is in the lives of every man; because Romeo and Juliet, like us, are subject to the capricious nature of time. Gordon Ross Smith adds: "Shakespeare's play employs fate only as a subjective feeling on the part of the lovers."⁴⁷ They begin to understand Man in time. Siegel also adds the idea that "the glorification of the love of Romeo and Juliet involves a basic acceptance of this world, that acceptance which is necessary if suffering and death are to be tragically

⁴⁶Norman Holland, The Shakespearean Imagination (New York, 1964), p. 73.

⁴⁷Gordon Ross Smith, "The Balance of Themes in Romeo and Juliet," Essays on Shakespeare, ed., G. R. Smith (Penn. State University Press, 1965), p. 39.

meaningful."⁴⁸

Here then is where the exquisite Sonnet 116 can illuminate the dramatized idea found in the play:

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
 Within his bending sickle's compass come;
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom.⁴⁹

The lovers must operate in Time and under the auspices of fortune; but in their love they paradoxically experience the highest of human emotions while simultaneously defeating Time-- the ultimate enemy of man.

Time is the ultimate enemy of man because it brings death. The Sonnets vividly express this idea. Sonnet 1 anticipates death and even the last sonnet on the theme of time, Sonnet 126, concentrates on the idea that nature must claim her own eventually.

The importance of this idea to the sonnet-prologue is this: the prologue anticipates death for the lovers. The stars remind man that he is mortal and that he does have a "rendezvous with death."⁵⁰ The prologue says that the lovers were born from "fatal loins." "With their death" they bury their parents' strife, and the audience is to view "the fearful passage of

⁴⁸Siegel, p. 392.

⁴⁹This sonnet will be further discussed in Chapter III as it relates to the general theme of time in the Sonnets and in Romeo and Juliet.

⁵⁰I contend that this idea accounts for all the passages referring to "stars" in the play.

I.iv.106-113.

V.i.24.

V.iii.111-112.

their death-mark'd love." This is foreshadowing to be sure; but it is not the establishment of a tragedy of fate as seen by some critics. It is the expression of the idea seen in the Sonnets, i.e., what does love do to death and what does death do to love? It is the knowledge that all human beings, including Romeo and Juliet, must learn--time brings death in spite of love's greatness. When Romeo declares, "then, I defy you, starres," he is not trying to "uncross" the stars from some twisted position. He is asserting a very humanistic position that life here is the best of all possible worlds in spite of evil, chaos and death.⁵¹ He is thrusting his fist in the face of death and accepting death as the ultimate experience of Man. Ribner also suggests that this is true: "Romeo and Juliet's acceptance of death is their final recognition that it is the finality of life's journey and that it is necessary. By accepting death, they accept the order of the universe."⁵²

The use of the term "passage" in the prologue suggests the idea of a voyage. Sonnet 116 also uses the voyage idea in a way that further illuminates the idea that the "star" image is the embodiment of a self-sustaining world for the lovers; and it also ties in with the stars as a focal point for telling one's position on earth. "Love is not love/Which alters when

⁵¹Siegel reads this line similarly: "Totally committed to love, he chooses death" "His defiance of the stars could be taken as a rejection of the destiny which God operates through the celestial constellations." (p. 388).

⁵³Ribner, p. 34.

it alteration finds . . . It is the star to every wandering bark." In these lines are summed up what I feel is the essential message of the sonnet-prologue. The lovers reckon time and life itself with the "star" they see in each other, and Death is the natural harbor of that voyage.

Achieving harmony within their private world--an acceptance of death--the public world can be restored to harmony. The prologue acknowledges this:

And the continuance of their parents' rage
Which, but their children's end, nought could remove.

B. The Sonnet in Dialogue between Romeo and Juliet

After the lovers catch their first glimpse of one another, they speak to each other in dialogue molded by the sonnet form and tradition in metre, rhyme scheme and thought:

Romeo: If I profane with my unworthing hand
This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this,
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a 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 in prayer
Romeo: O, 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.91-104)

Immediately following this set pattern, Romeo kisses Juliet and says, "Thus from my lips by thine my sin is purged" (I.v.105).

This sonnet, inserted directly into the dialogue of the play itself, serves two purposes. One, it is directly connected to the Petrarchan conventions derived from the courtly

love tradition; and two, it illustrates the "self-substantial world" that the lovers find in one another. The equation of love and religious thought was common in the thought of the Middle Ages; and Petrarch was influenced by these ideas. During the Middle Ages, the monks developed their own theory about women. With Eve as the archetype of the evil woman, woman's sole function on this earth was to tempt man and to lead him to damnation. "Carnal love was itself demonic."⁵³ The physical body of a woman was supposedly a thing of filth.⁵⁴ During the twelfth century, the concept of courtly love developed into a type of rejection of these notions about women. Then, human passion became an ennobling force in man; and it no longer assumed the proportions of a carnal activity. Often the woman became the incarnation of perfection--a perfection not otherwise found on earth. Bishop in Petrarch and His World suggests:

Medieval idealism, represented by the Church's thought, art, and architecture, by feudalism and chivalry, by devotion to the Virgin Mary, found a corresponding expression in social life and literature.⁵⁵

The application of the ideas surrounding courtly love in

⁵³Morris Bishop, Petrarch and His World (Bloomington, 1963), p. 80.

⁵⁴Bishop, Petrarch and His World, p. 80. In the Secretum, St. Augustine urged Petrarch to escape Laura's domination over him by "meditating on the filthiness of the feminine body."

⁵⁵Bishop, Petrarch, p. 80.

Petrarch were twofold. First, it taught Petrarch the possibilities of self-realization in the contemplation of the loved one; and second, the lover must conceal his passion from the world and address his loved one as one would a saint.⁵⁶

Caesella describes Love as it pertains to courtly love and its persistent influence on Petrarch:

Love is the desire of beauty, our essential delight; it is the contemplation of the intelligence through the senses, and its intuition through the movements of the heart. Ideal beauty arises beyond sensible pleasure; its recognition is the culminating moment of an intellectual process through which the subject within that beauty, recognizes itself in the intentions of its own profundities.⁵⁷

And it was from this general idea as sung by the troubadours that Petrarch obtained many of his conceits, thoughts, and language patterns. However, he rejected the high philosophic content of the true courtly lover so that Laura was more of a real woman as opposed to the allegorical figure that Beatrice had been to Dante. "They [Petrarch's poems] take their rise from actual incidents, which provoke the poet's emotions and reflections. They present the idealization of the real, or the realization of the ideal."⁵⁸ The experience on a human level was then the crux of the matter. It is a sensual desire on the part of Petrarch that made him dwell poetically on Laura.

⁵⁶Bishop, Petrarch, p. 81

⁵⁷Quoted in Bishop, Petrarch, p. 81

⁵⁸Bishop, Petrarch, p. 81.

The relation of these ideas to Romeo and Juliet's sonnet is that with Rosaline's rejection of Romeo (earlier in the same Act) we have the same essential position that Petrarch found himself in when Laura rejected his love.⁵⁹ Romeo cannot find self-fulfillment in Rosaline's love, but with Juliet now on the scene the sonnet potential is able to be realized.

Andrea Cappellanus, at the end of the twelfth century, suggested that lovers should conceal their passion from the world: "If he meets his beloved in public, he must not try to

⁵⁹Compare Romeo's statements about Rosaline and Petrarch's Sonnet CXXXII. Romeo tells Benvolio about the torture he is feeling over Rosaline's rejection:

Why then, O brawling love! O loving hate!
 O any thing, of nothing first created!
 O heavy lightness! serious vanity!
 Mis-shapen chaos of well-seeming forms!
 Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!
 Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!
 This love feel I, that feel no love in this.
 Dost thou not laugh? (I.i.169-176)

Petrarch examines these same emotions:

Can it be love that fills my heart and brain?
 If love, dear God, what is its quality?
 If it is good, why does it torture me?
 If evil, why this sweetness in my pain?
 If I burn gladly, why do I complain?
 If I hate burning, why do I never flee?
 O life-in-death, O lovely agony,
 How can you rule me so, if I'm not fain?

And if I'm willing why do I suffer so?--
 By such contrary winds I'm blown in terror
 In a frail and rudderless bark on open seas,
 ballasted all with ignorance and error.
 Even my own desire I do not know;
 I burn in winter, and in high summer freeze.

I suggest that Romeo, like Petrarch, was indeed "rudderless" until finding his "star" Juliet.

communicate by signs, but should treat her almost like a stranger. Beware of communication, anyway; too much conversation decreases love."⁶⁰ Dramatically, this notion about signs fits perfectly with the idea of the feud in the play. Romeo and Juliet must "speak" with hands and lips not only to keep their new love from "decreasing" but also from letting their feuding parents know that they are together.

Dante continued the ideas about courtly love in his poetry in such a way that it became commonplace for a poet to address his beloved in the form of prayers. Morris Bishop says that "She became a religious and a metaphysical symbol."⁶¹ C. S. Lewis also says that love at time could be "an escape from religion," "a rival religion," "an extension of religion," and even a "combination" of all these things.⁶²

Thus, from the tradition of courtly love and from the fact that Petrarch, the father of the sonnet tradition, was highly influenced by these ideas comes the appropriateness of Romeo and Juliet's sonnet with its religious imagery.

At this point, Romeo is still bound by tradition to assert his feelings in a conventional way. He is still viewing Juliet as he would Rosaline--a holy shrine. On the other hand, he is entering an almost "religious" experience in which he finds Juliet to be the source of his salvation. The "religiousness"

⁶⁰Quoted in Bishop, Petrarch, p. 81

⁶¹Bishop, Petrarch, p. 81.

⁶²Quoted in Siegel, p. 373.

of Shakespeare at this point is not the topic of this paper, but as J. B. Leishman has pointed out in Themes and Variations in Shakespeare's Sonnets Shakespeare had the theme of "compensation" in common with the "religious" theme of other sonneteers. And this theme of compensation is equated with a type of "religiousness."⁶³ Rosaline was a religion to Romeo in the sense of his courtship, languishing adoration, and protests against the lady's cruelty. Leishman compares the "religion of Laura" for Petrarch:

. . . [There] are many expressions of a kind of Christianized "Platonism," declaring that Laura's beauty of form and spirit has raised his thoughts and his soul from earth to heaven, together with occasional expressions of a desire to escape from this bondage of passion, which, as he made to St. Augustine, in his dialogue, the Secretum, lead him to confess, was not really raising his soul to heaven, but confining it to earth.⁶⁴

Romeo found this same problem to be true in his own life when he speaks to Mercutio of the heavy quality of love, the way it binds him to earth:

I am too sore enpierced with his shaft
To soar with his light feathers, and so bound,
I cannot bound a pitch above dull woe.
Under love's heavy burthen do I sink. (I.iv.19-22)

Later in the same act, in the sonnet employing religious imagery, Romeo asserts that like a pilgrim on a pilgrimage he has located that which can free him from bondage and offer him repentance. With conventional imagery, Romeo makes Juliet a

⁶³J. B. Leishman (London, 1961), p. 214.

⁶⁴Leishman, p. 216.

"saint" who can purge his sins. The new element here that breaks away from tradition is the dramatic realization that Juliet does become the source of light and life for Romeo. She becomes truth. Thus, in the first lines in Act II Romeo boldly declares that he is no longer "bound" as he was in his relationship with Rosaline, but rather a type of salvation has made him free.

Can I go forward when my heart is here?
 Turn back, dull earth, and find thy centre out.
 (II.i.1-2)

The stage directions give him dramatic action in proving that he has found new liberty: "He climbs the wall, and leaps down within it."

Shakespeare's Sonnet 146 expressed the idea that the soul is the "centre of my sinful earth." But with Romeo's "sin" purged through the kiss of Juliet, he is no longer bound to earth.

Paradoxically, he is still bound to earth in this very human relationship operating in Time. This is where the theme of compensation fits in beautifully. In Romeo's acknowledgement that Juliet is able to grant him pardon, he is implying that Juliet is all-sufficing. That this is true is clearly pointed out in Juliet's reference to Romeo as the "god of my idolatry." They worship one another. They are the "essence of good" as seen in Platonic doctrine:

The essence of "good," even in ordinary human experience, lay in self-containment, freedom from all dependence upon that which is external to the individual "The Good," says Plato in

Philebus, "Differs in its nature from everything else in that the being who possesses it always and in all respects has the most perfect sufficiency and is never in need of any other thing."⁶⁵

In Shakespeare's Sonnet 30, the same relationship is expressed:

But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restor'd and sorrows end. (ll.13-14)

Leishman suggests that in this sonnet the loved one is the "supreme object of contemplation" because it is human life-- "all-supplying, all-restoring, all-sufficing"--and in itself it is transcendent.⁶⁶ Leishman also suggests that the difference between Shakespeare's sonnets and Petrarch's is that, although they are alike in their treatment of love as "unworldly," in reference to time Shakespeare is not "otherworldly."⁶⁷ Rather Shakespeare was more in tune with the young men at the Inns of Court like John Donne who was writing a religious type of poetry to express a very human love. I suggest that this relationship between Shakespeare and Donne is analagous to the relationship change between Rosaline and Romeo and Romeo and Juliet. Romeo and Rosaline represented that potential of love that could only express itself after death because Rosaline rejected Romeo's advances to procreate for posterity. If she died no doubt Romeo would have treated her as the angelic being that Petrarch saw in Laura's death. Romeo and Juliet symbolize

⁶⁵Quoted in Lovejoy, p. 42.

⁶⁶Leishman, p. 217.

⁶⁷Leishman, p. 52.

a love that concentrates on the "now" of experience.

Leishman, in speaking of Donne's poems, explains this idea further:

. . . [they] were not poems of courtship but poems about the oneness and all-sufficingness of two lovers' unalterably established love--the fact that Donne never allowed himself to be deflected from his concentration upon the thisness [sic] of this experience into either descriptions of visual beauty or into any kind of transcendentalism, into any reflections upon the possibility of sublimating this experience into anything other than itself.⁶⁸

Granted, Romeo and Juliet's love does not meet all the conditions and environments of Leishman's comments on the love poems of John Donne. This paper is not proving this thesis. But in this religious sonnet the lovers are breaking away from a traditional past into a relationship that proves to be all-sufficient for each other. As a result, a relationship occurs that will occur later in the sonnet tradition as represented by Donne. Donne declares that "he and his beloved are a whole world in themselves, that 'nothing else is,' that princes do but play them, and that 'All other things to their destruction draw/Only our love hath no decay.'"⁶⁹ From Romeo and Juliet's first speaking lines with one another, we learn that even repentance can be granted by the lovers in their own world. This sonnet is clearly a pivotal point in the sonnet tradition as well as in the dramatic action of the play which in turn

⁶⁸Leishman, The Monarch of Wit (London, 1959), 4th ed.,

⁶⁹Quoted in Leishman, Themes and Variations, p. 217.

hinges on the very themes of that tradition.

C. The Choric-Sonnet Following Act I

Act I concludes with Juliet's recognition that Romeo is from the House of Montague:

Too early seen unknown, and known too late!
 Prodigious birth of love it is to me,
 That I must love a loathed enemy. (I.v.137-139)

Immediately following this speech follows another choric sonnet. As in the sonnet-prologue opening Act I, the choric sonnet before Act II has much to say about the experiences of the play. The sonnet-prologue established some of the major themes of the play to come, and the sonnet woven into the dialogue "[involving] a consciousness of sonnet as formal embodiment of valid feeling in distinction from sonneteering as mere attitudinizing" ⁷⁰ suggested a pivotal point in the love experiences of Romeo.

As Juliet concluded the actual dramatic dialogue with the theme of a new "birth of love," the second choric sonnet takes up the same theme:

Now old Desire doth in his death-bed lie,
 And young Affection gapes to be his heir;
 That Fair for which love groan'd for and would die,
 With tender Juliet match'd, is now not fair,
 Now Romeo is beloved and loves again,
 Alike bewitched by the charm of looks,
 But to his foe supposed he must complain,
 And she steal love's sweet bait from fearful hooks:
 Being held a foe, he may not have access
 To breathe such vows as lovers used to swear;
 And she as much in love, her means much less

⁷⁰Nicholas Brooke, Shakespeare's Early Tragedies (London, 1968), p. 96.

To meet her new beloved any where,
 But Passion lends them power, time means, to meet,
 Tempering extremities with extreme sweet.

The first line of this sonnet suggests the same type of gesture that the "fatal loins" phrase did in the sonnet-prologue. Somehow in his play both of the primal experiences of birth and violent death are inherently meshed together. Not only is the word "gapes" directly connected with the first sonnet-prologue (in the sense of death), but it also is fulfilled in dramatic action as Romeo violently tears open Juliet's tomb:

Thou detestable saw, thou womb of death,
 Gorged with the dearest morsel of the earth,
 Thus, I enforce thy rotten jaws to open

The word "gapes" in the choric sonnet takes on the full force of gesture.

The young heirs of the houses of the Capulets and Montagues are destined for death; and the young love of the lovers pushing its way to existence against the strains of a dying Petrarchan love is destined to be tempted by death. The primeval emotions of birth, love, and death are found within the experience of these lovers.

The next two lines make a paradoxical statement about Juliet in relation to Rosaline. Rosaline was described as "fair."

And she's fair I love.
 A right fair mark, fair coz, is soonest hit.
 (I.i.199-200)

Again a few lines later, Benvolio discusses the possibility of Romeo giving "liberty unto thine eyes" Romeo replies:

These happy masks, that kiss fair ladies' brows,
 Being black put us in mind they hide the fair;
 He that is stricken blind cannot forget
 The precious treasure of his eyesight lost:
 Show me a mistress that is passing fair,
 What doth her beauty serve but as a note
 Where I may read who pass'd that passing fair?
 (I.i.233-240)⁷¹

The use of the word "fair" is almost obnoxious in its triteness and conventional usage. However, when he first describes Juliet for the audience the word "fair" is obvious in its absence. He says instead:

O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
 It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
 Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear;
 Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!
 (I.v.42-45)

In a dramatic sense, Shakespeare is rejecting the conventional use of "fair" that the sonneteers before him had found so alluring.⁷² He did the same thing in Sonnet 130:

⁷¹Note also that Lady Capulet refers to Paris as "fair." I.iii.85,90. By not using "fair" in relation to Romeo and Juliet's relationship, Shakespeare is taking them out of the conventional mode of expression to describe beauty.

⁷²For illustration, Edmund Spenser in his Epithalamion writes:

Tell me, ye merchants' daughters, did ye see
 So fair a creature in your town before;
 So sweet, so lovely, and so mild as she,
 Adorned with beauty's grace and virtue's store?
 Her goodly eyes like sapphires shining bright
 Her forehead ivory white,
 Her cheeks like apples which the sun hath rudded,
 Her lips like cherries charming men to bite.
 Her breast like to a bowl of cream uncrudded,
 Her nape like lilies budded,
 Her snowly neck like to a marble tower;
 And all her body like a palace fair. . .

Quoted in Hiram Haydn, ed., The Portable Elizabethan Reader (New York, 1968), pp. 629-630.

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
 Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
 If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
 If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
 I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
 But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
 And in some perfumes is there more ^{de}light
 Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
 (130.1-8)

Juliet is not "fair" because she is not a conventional type of mistress to be addressed in such terms. She is the young affection, heiress to the type of love that cannot be described in conventions and that cannot wait for its proper time to appear on the scene. It appears, it "gapes" to be the heir.

The reason that this young Affection "gapes" to be the heir is again concerned with the problem of Time. There is the element of necessity involved here. In the couplet, we learn that "passion lends them power, time means, to meet." The all-important factor is once again brought out--they are operating within time. They can only achieve the goals of their love as long as time lends to them a few short hours.

The three sonnets discussed here have definite ideas to say about the major themes of the play. They also reflect on the sonnet tradition behind them. It is significant that with the conclusion of the second choric-sonnet a formal sonnet does not appear again. The old Petrarch type of love is dead, to be sure, but even more important, the heir that has survived will continue with the sonnet themes in even more dramatic proportion--in action that includes the consummation of marriage in the tomb against the background of Time.

CHAPTER III

THE POETIC TREATMENT OF LOVE AND TIME IN THE SONNETS AND ITS RELATION TO THE DRAMATIC TREATMENT OF LOVE AND TIME IN ROMEO AND JULIET

To explore the world of Shakespeare's Sonnets "thematically," and to see how that thematic scheme on love and time was dramatized in Romeo and Juliet requires a look into the way this paper will approach them. Two current points of view, although unlike by definition, seem appropriate to this discussion. In Anatomy of Criticism, Northrop Frye gives a somewhat traditional definition of the word "thematic." The definition of "thematic" corresponds to the "point of this story" with full emphasis on the abstract conceptions drawn from the "aesthetic totality" of the work.¹ And to grasp the aesthetic totality of the works--the Sonnets and Romeo and Juliet--demands a look at the poetry and drama from the contextual critic's method of literary evaluation. The reader must look at literature as literature and not as a comment on biography, society, or great ideas.

We should be better advised to start with the assumption that the sonnets are poetry, therefore written in a specific literary tradition and a specific literary genre, both of which were developed for specifically literary reasons.²

¹Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton, 1957), pp. 52-55.

²Northrop Frye, "How True a Twain," The Riddle of Shakespeare's Sonnets (New York, 1962), p. 29. The contextual critic's method of evaluation is elucidated in René Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (New York, 1956), pp. 127-227.

Frye in the same essay continues that "poetry is not reporting on experience, and love is not an uncultivated experience; in both poetry and love, reality is what is created, not the raw material for the creation."³

The critic Murray Krieger attempts to go beyond new criticism in his definition of theme, because he does not accept the idea that a philosophic theme is separable from the aesthetic totality. To illustrate his rather obscure definition of thematics (" . . . the study of the experiential tensions which, dramatically entangled in the literary work, become an existential reflection of that work's aesthetic complexity"),⁴ Krieger assumes a dualistic role for the Sonnets in agreement with his mirror-window concept of poetry.

Shakespeare's task is to convert the rapturous equations of love's mystic into a total presentative body of language, to convert claims about [sic] a mirror-window miracle into the presentative immediacy of a form of which the mirror-window is the controlling feature open to our aesthetic perception. Thus Spitzer's three criteria--poetic vision, historic greatness and organic artistry--can be united in the aesthetic moment.⁵

Thus, in the search for meaning through the exposition of theme, the reader may view the Sonnets and Romeo and Juliet either as a window looking out onto the world of Elizabethan England, the experiences and people, the literary traditions that influenced Shakespeare as he wrote these works; or as mirrors trapping the reader with its distinctive and unique

³Ibid., p. 31.

⁴Krieger, p. 207.

⁵Krieger, p. 203.

meanings eternally reflecting themselves; or as both a window and mirror giving the reader meaning through an evaluation of the work itself and simultaneously opening the shutters to "man's concern as a social-historical being."⁶ The previous two chapters have treated the tradition behind the sonnet as it applied to various ways of reading the Sonnets and Romeo and Juliet. But now it is time to consider the works from another approach.

The Southampton-Pembroke controversy has often engaged the critic interested in the autobiographical elements that can be "lifted" from the Sonnets. Consider Frank Harris' comment: "The Sonnets give us the story, the whole terrible sinful magical story of Shakespeare's passion."⁷ To expound on theme from this standpoint alone would involve a clear and detailed picture of Shakespeare's life and an indisputable knowledge of his intentions while composing; and moreover, the universal intrinsic merits found in the thematic material would be subordinate to mere personal experience. Instead of "eternal durability," the reader would be lost to relationships that existed only for Shakespeare and his friend, whoever it might have been, and Shakespeare's dark Mistress.

After all, even if Shakespeare had assured us that the Sonnets were written under the duress of a friendship broken and restored and an intrigue with Mary Fitton, the only importance they could have for

⁶Krieger, p. 4.

⁷Quoted in L. C. Knight, "Shakespeare's Sonnets," Elizabethan Poetry, ed., Paul J. Alpers (New York, 1967), p. 276.

us would be poetry, as something made out of experience.⁸

J. B. Leishman, in Themes and Variations in Shakespeare's Sonnets, has attempted to treat theme in the Sonnets in historical relationships to the sonnets and/or love poems of the Roman poets, Petrarch, Tasso, Ronsard, Wyatt, Surrey, Sidney and Spenser, and Donne. As interesting as this may prove in the study and development of a literary tradition, the reader is still aware of only the general thought and attitude surrounding the convention of the sonnet, and to discuss the theme of Shakespeare's Sonnets as it was dramatized in Romeo and Juliet from the point of view of a literary tradition tells the reader no more than "an account of the Revenge play tells us about Hamlet."⁹

It seems, then, that the author's experience and the literary traditions are enlightening about theme only to a limited extent. The serious critic must deal with the works themselves and consider the biographical significance and literary tradition relevant to the general theme and particular situation.

The purpose of this chapter is to propose, after close scrutiny of particular sonnets and lines in the drama, certain themes which once set forth in the Sonnets were given the breath of dramatic life in Romeo and Juliet. Granted, theme cannot be entirely separated philosophically from the

⁸Knight, p. 278.

⁹Knight, p. 279.

"experiential tensions" of an author or of a tradition, but they can be observed for what they essentially are. Maud Bodkin suggests:

A profound response to great poetic themes can be secured only by living with such themes, dwelling and brooding upon them, choosing those moments when the mind seems spontaneously to open itself to their influence.¹⁰

The destruction wrought by time organizes the themes for both the Sonnets and Romeo and Juliet. In Sonnets 1-126, "time" is mentioned seventy-eight times and never again after that.¹¹ Time is treated as a thing to be defied by children; and later it is treated as a thing that cannot decay the beauty of the loved one. In Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare took Brooke's tale and, as Granville-Barker says, "doubled its dramatic value by turning its months to days."¹² Speaking generally, Time in the Sonnets is metaphorically portrayed as a scythe, an hour-glass, a reaper's sickle. Time is also portrayed in the Sonnets as operating within the forces of the seasons. Spring means youth. Summer means ripeness. Winter means death.

¹⁰Maud Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry (London, 1963), p. 2.

¹¹Edward Hubler, Shakespeare's Songs and Poems (New York, 1959), p. 24. See Sonnets 1-17, 18, 55, 73, 60, 63-64, 73, 97, 116, 123.

¹²Harley Granville-Barker, "Romeo and Juliet--The Conduct of the Action," Twentieth-Century Interpretations of Romeo and Juliet, ed., Douglas Cole (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1970), p. 19. For a very minute analysis of the references to time see G. Thomas Tanselle, "Time in Romeo and Juliet," Shakespeare Quarterly XV (Autumn, 1964), pp. 349-361.

When I do count the clock that tells the time,
 And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;
 When I behold the violet past prime,
 And sable curls all silver'd o'er with white;
 When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,
 Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
 And summer's green all girded up in sheaves,
 Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard,
 Then of thy beauty do I question make,
 That thou among the wastes of time must go
 (12.1-10)

With Romeo and Juliet taking place in the hot dog days of August, it is no wonder that haste and swift time are significant. When death sits upon Juliet as "an untimely frost upon the fairest flower in the field," we are intensely aware that Time is marching to his harvest fields in almost unnatural speed. In the Sonnets, the cyclical nature of the seasons is emphasized throughout the first 126 sonnets. In Romeo and Juliet, dramatic action is carried out as though the reaper Time was standing there with his scythe over the heads of the lovers; and indeed he is. The play involves a cyclical plan also. Old age produces youth. Youth dies and we are left on stage with old age and winter "confounded there." In the line of Capulet's that Juliet is indeed the "fairest flower of the field," spring, summer, and winter are combined in one person. Romeo says at her tomb that "Death hath suck'd the honey of thy breath" (V.iii.92). The flower is at once in its prime, ripe and dead. Nature has done her work. In the Sonnets, we learn from poetry that death is inevitable. In Romeo and Juliet, death comes.

Love operating in time complements the general theme and,

. . . he [Shakespeare] displays in certain poems an obsession with certain metaphysical notions of time and destruction, particularly in their subtle and imperceptible impingement upon the human consciousness. Shakespeare is minutely aware--almost sensuously aware--of the invading chaos, the unmanageable and absorptive continuum, amid which the ethical man, the man of free choice and of usable distinctions exists.¹³

Petrarch used the triumph of love over life, chastity, death, fame, time, eternity much like a Roman military procession in triumphal celebration through the Roman streets; and by suggesting the triumph of time, the ancient poets implied a compromise, a cooperation, with time. In Shakespeare, "time is the enemy of all things."¹⁴ Defiance of time is of the essence. Both the Sonnets and Romeo and Juliet reflect fears of time and its "love-devouring death."¹⁵ In both of the works, time is never finally submitted to in spite of the fact that the laws of time are accepted.

For him [Shakespeare] there is no recognisable distinction, as there seems to have been for the ancients, between Time that destroys the mightiest monuments of stone or bronze and the Time that transfixes the flourish set on youth; for him the devouringness of Time, the swift-footedness of Time, the brevity of human life and the transience of youth and beauty are continually and inseparably associated, and what he gives us is an ever-changing series of variations upon, personifications, metaphors and . . . dramatisations of the great single theme of transience.¹⁶

¹³Ivor Winters, "The 16th Century Lyric in England A Critical and Historical Reinterpretation," Elizabethan Poetry, ed., Paul J. Alpers (New York, 1967), p. 120.

¹⁴Frye, "How True a Twain," p. 43.

¹⁵Bradbook, p. 143.

¹⁶Leishman, pp. 100-101.

The treatment of love in time reflects the enigma that what is created in time must eventually be destroyed. Joseph Chang says:

As in the sonnets, love is used as a vehicle for representing, simultaneously, man's subjection to time and decay and man's ability to transcend the limits prescribed by its mortal nature. Paradoxically by seizing the day, lovers can triumph over time. It is precisely because man is born to die that the play moves inexorably to its conclusion, dateless death The tragic experience is exclusively reserved for the lovers because they alone perceive, gradually, that the scope and compass allotted by time is not enough.¹⁷

Love becomes a reaction, and it is often violent in its action because man fatally perceives the transience of even the highest of spiritual values.¹⁸ The poet is violent in his words as he recognizes this transience:

Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws,
And make the earth devour her own sweet brood;
Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws,
And burn the long-liv'd phoenix in her blood;
Make glad and sorry seasons as thou fleets,
And do whate'er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,
To the wide world and all her fading sweets;
But I forbid thee one most heinous crime
(19.1-8)

The dramatist is also describing this "violence" as he has the Friar say, "These violent delights have violent ends." Romeo proves in a dramatic way the violent action that comes from perceiving life's transience. Before Juliet's tomb he tells Paris:

¹⁷Chang, p. 39.

¹⁸Boris Ford, ed., The Age of Shakespeare, II (Baltimore, 1955), p. 189.

I will tear thee joint by joint
 And strew this hungry churchyard with thy limbs;
 The time and my intents are savage-wild,
 More fierce and more inexorable far
 Than empty tigers or the roaring sea. (V.iii.35-39)

After which, Romeo violently breaks open the tomb.

Amidst these themes, the ultimate question is posed: in the light of Time's destruction over all of man's achievements what can preserve and eternalize that which man has created?

In the Sonnets and Romeo and Juliet, this dilemma is explored; and the ideas set forth in the Sonnets are dramatized in Romeo and Juliet. One way to immortalize what time destroys is through children.

The doctrine or theme of increase is explored both in the Sonnets and in Romeo and Juliet. Within the first nineteen sonnets of the 1609 Quarto,¹⁹ the poet advises his friend to marry and procreate:

From fairest creatures we desire increase
 That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
 But as the ripener should by time decease,
 His tender heir might bear his memory I.1-4)

Two virtues for procreation were sounded for the age in the epistle Encomium Matrimonii by Erasmus (translated in Wilson's Arte of Rhetorique) and by the parable of the Talents found in Matthew 25:14-30. Erasmus declares:

This is the law of nature, not written in the Tables of Brasse, but firmly printed in our mindes, the

¹⁹C. Knox Pooler, ed., The Works of Shakespeare Sonnets (London, 1943), p. 3. Pooler suggests Sonnet XVII is the last sonnet to urge marriage. It is, but XVIII and XIX carry on with the theme of immortalization through verse as a solution to the Friend's reluctance to marry so this paper treats I-XIX as one thematic group.

whiche have, whosoever doeth not obeye, he is not worthie to be called a man, mvche lesse shall he be covmpted [sic] a Citezen For there is nothing so natvrall, not onely vnto all other living creatvres, as it is for every one of them, to keepe their owne kind from decaie, and through increase of issue, to maketheir whole kind immortall. The whiche thyng (all men knowe) can never be done without Wedlocke, and carnal copvlation.²⁰

In Jesus' parable of the Talents, two servants made good use of their talents according to their abilities and the third, who originally received one talent, buried his in the ground. When the Lord returned from his journey, he required an account of the talents. Upon finding out about the two responsible servants, he promoted them. The third one was reprimanded and had his one talent taken away.

For unto every one that hath shall be given and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.
(Matt. 25:29)

This "sin" of hoarding the talent is brought out in the Sonnets. The talent is the gift of beauty.

In the Sonnets, the poet urges the friend not to hoard his gift of beauty, for the one unassailable way to preserve beauty and to defy time is to produce children. Barber says that this "strangely special theme of the first seventeen sonnets . . . [enables Shakespeare] to envisage generously, in the idea of having children, a process by which one identity is re-created in another"²¹ And in relevance to the Biblical parable,

²⁰Lever, p. 190.

²¹C. L. Barber, "An Essay on the Sonnets," Elizabethan Poetry, ed., Paul J. Alpers (New York, 1967), p. 311.

beauty will not be taken away if the friend "uses" beauty responsibly. Much like the parable, the poet says of the friend, that not only is the friend in the prime of life but also he is as a rosebud containing within potential beauty-- fatherhood.²²

Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament
And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own bud buriest thy content
And tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding.
(I, 9-12)

Sonnet 2 brings out the theme of Time as the ultimate conqueror of beauty, in that after "forty winters" "youth's proud livery" will be a "tattered weed." And moreover, when the friend is required in old age to produce his treasure, the poet advises that the friend would be well praised if he could answer:

'This fair child of mine
Shall sum my count and make my old excuse,
Proving his beauty of succession thine! (II.10-12)

In Sonnet 3, Shakespeare makes a connection between offspring and usury. Beauty is seen as a legacy--"Nature's bequest." The poet accuses the friend of being a "profitless usurer" in light of the bounteous largess" given to the friend. According to Landry, the Greek word tokos suggests the ancient and natural relationship between offspring and usury. The semantic sense is child, son, or interest on a loan as exhibited by the word "increase."²³

Not only will Beauty be eroded by time and finally lost

²²Pooler, p. 3. See Tucker Brooke, Shakespeare's Sonnets (London, 1936), p. 34, for a brief but clear outline of this sonnet group.

²³Landry, p. 45.

without progeny, but also Truth will be destroyed:

But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive
 And constant stars, I read in them such art
 As, "truth and beauty shall together thrive,
 If from thyself to store thou wouldst convert;"
 Or else of thee this I prognosticate:
 "Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date."
 (XIV.9-14)

Truth as identified with the immutable stars is linked with the friend, because stars were traditionally the source of higher knowledge and its sublime aspects. Also, eyes of human beings contained truth much like the stars; and with death, or the cessation of eyes, "this quality man shares with higher intelligences of the outer spheres"²⁴ is extinguished. The dilemma here expressed in the Sonnets is the inability of truth to be restored through procreation. Lever declares:

The unique personality of the Friend, the truth shining in his eyes, must perish, and breed cannot restore it. This dilemma growing unforeseen out of the very process of poetic thought, will assert itself, inexorably from now on, and compel a new assessment of the initial theme.²⁵

The poet resigning himself to the reluctance of the friend to marry and produce children, proffers the suggestion that "rhyme" can immortalize the gift of beauty given to the friend. There will always remain the "mightier way" in which to "war upon this bloody tyrant, Time" (XVI.1-2)--keep one's beauty through children. The poet acknowledges that his poetic ability is rather dim--no more than a "tomb/which hides your

²⁴Lever, p. 198.

²⁵Lever, p. 198.

life and shows not half your parts." (XVII.3-4)

No matter what the poet writes to immortalize the friend's "eternal summer," a child as representative of the human race still remains of the highest value. Only man can appreciate or even comprehend art, and it is from human experience that poetry can be understood:²⁶

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.
(XVIII.13-14)

"For in these sonnets mankind is, in the last analysis, the sole tribunal of all values."²⁷ The friend refuses to procreate, and thus he refuses to make wise use of his talent. The question still remains--can the poet intervene with immortality?

This theme of increase is explored dramatically within Romeo and Juliet. We will look at the treatment of the theme of increase in two ways. One, the Capulets and the Montagues are holders of "talents" in respect to their children. And, as proven out at the end of the play, they are chastised for not making wise use of their talents--"for crossing the heavens." Second, Romeo and Juliet refuse to consider procreation as a defiance of time. They are content to be in their self-substantial world. And, as a result, they too must be responsible for their actions.

²⁶Lever, p. 201.

²⁷Lever, p. 201.

Rather than urging the Capulets and Montagues to procreate in order to preserve their gifts of nature, the beautiful legacies--Juliet and Romeo--have already been bestowed. The "talents," in a manner of speaking, have already been given, the charge to use wisely has been uttered and the "Lord" has departed as the characters come to life on the stage. Hardin Craig suggests:

Youth is forever born into a World not of its own making, and the sins of the fathers are continually visited upon the children. What had this youth and maiden to do with the ancient stupid feud of the Montagues and Capulets? And what in general has youth had to do with error, perplexities, injustices, and crimes which it finds in our world or in any world? Youth often destroys itself in the age-old sins and cruelties of a new and unknown life, destroys itself because of its own ignorance and willfulness. The tragedy is that age has its heart broken because it has destroyed youth.²⁸

From the sonnet-prologue, the "ancient grudge" becomes the world into which these children are born.

Apart from the main dramatic relationship of father to child, i.e., Capulet to Juliet and Montague to Romeo, another dramatic facet of the parable of the talents presents itself early in Act I. Romeo speaks with Benvolio on Rosaline's desire to hoard beauty:

Romeo: She will not stay the seige of loving terms,
Nor bide the encounter of assailing eyes,
Nor ope her lap to saint-seducing gold:
O, she is rich in beauty, only poor
That, when she dies, with beauty dies her store.

Benvolio: Then she hath sworn that she will still live
chaste?

²⁸Hardin Craig, An Interpretation of Shakespeare (New York, 1948), p. 46.

Romeo: She hath, and in that sparing makes huge waste;
 For beauty, starved with her severity,
 Cuts beauty off from all prosperity.
 (I.i.205-213)

As in Sonnet 4, Rosaline is made analogous to the friend who is a hoarder-usurer. She not only has generous gifts bestowed, with her "unthrift" she ultimately moves to poverty, doom and waste. As in the Biblical parable, kept unused the gift itself is destroyed.²⁹ Sonnet 9 echoes:

But beauty's waste hath in the world an end,
 And kept unus'd, the user so destroys it. (IX.10,11)

Romeo's advice is traditional and conventional in treatment. With Juliet, the unconventional becomes the response in the possibility of future generations defying time for the lovers.

The evidence that Juliet and Romeo are "talents" loaned to their respective parents begins early in Act I too. Paris seeks Juliet's hand in marriage, and in so doing he first emphasizes motherhood for Juliet. Capulet retorts to Paris' proposal that Juliet has not seen the change of fourteen years, thus emphasizing her extreme youth. Paris counters with the idea: "Younger than she are happy mothers made" (I.ii.12) Later in Acts III and IV this pressure to marry Paris, brings out the dramatic conflict between father and child and precipitates the tragedy. In both of the works paradoxically the final immortalization results from the reluctance to marry in order to propagate.

²⁹Krieger, p. 109.

Capulet at once acknowledges that Juliet is his fille de terre -- an heiress: "She is the hopeful lady of my earth."

(I.ii.15) Steevens refers to earth as a Gallicism with the old use synonymous with lands or landed estate.³⁰ All of Capulet's "hopes" are in Juliet for the earth, in this case meaning tomb,³¹ has swallowed all of his other "legacies."

In Act I. iii, Lady Capulet opens with a call for "my daughter." The Nurse relays the call to Juliet with a distinct emphasis on the words "your mother." Juliet answers:

Madam, I am here.
What is your will? (I.iii.5,6)

Juliet, in her first spoken lines, reveals her willingness or possibly passivity to be used much like the Biblical talent--wisely or irresponsibly. The choice depends on the nature of the character holding the talent, and the reader and/or audience has already been made aware of the fiery strife governing the two fathers.

To stress the open, innocent position of Juliet as the young heiress, the Nurse emphatically states Juliet's age as fourteen; and then she reminisces on her dead daughter, Susan:

. . . well Susan is with God,
She was too good for me. (I.iii.19,20)

The legacy was given and taken away. In a way, this is prophetic of the action that will be taken against the feuding houses, but perhaps this is also the reason Angelica is totally

³⁰Quoted in Furness, p. 32.

³¹Clarke quoted in Furness, p. 31.

unable to grasp the youthful passion of Juliet and eventually forces the isolation of the young lover. Sonnet III explains:

Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her prime;
So thou through windows of thine age shalt see,
Despite of wrinkles, this thy golden time.
(III.9-12)

On the heels of the Nurse's revelation about herself and about Juliet, Lady Capulet states the theme at the heart of the action:

Marry, that "marry" is the very theme I came to
talk of. Tell me, daughter Juliet, How stands
your disposition to be married? (I.iii.63-65)

And like Paris, Lady Capulet continues on the quantity of young mothers already made in Verona. The world expects its youth to marry³²--as exhibited in the Sonnets:

Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.
(I.13,14)

Thou dost beguile the world (III.4)
The world will wail thee (IX.4)

No young woman would reject the young friend in the Sonnets, and Capulet is also quite convinced of Paris' complete acceptability. All Paris lacks is Juliet because:

. . . tis much pride
For fair without the fair within to hide. (I.iii.89-90)

Love is not necessarily innate in the idea of marriage, but rather the theme of increase is the response suggested by characters other than Romeo and Juliet.

³²Brooke, pp. 75-76.

In Act I.iv, Mercutio's Queen Mab speech refers to progeny--progeny from a fantasy world. After Mercutio tells Romeo that Queen Mab has been present in Romeo's dreams, the next line blatantly states that this Mab is the "Fairies' midwife" (I.iv.54). Steevens believes "midwife" to mean that she delivers the fancies of men to their dreams and not that she is midwife to the fairies.³³ This is borne out by Mercutio's conclusion to his lively treatise on the fairy world:

True, I talk of dreams;
Which are the children of an idle brain
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy. (I.iv.97-99)

Like the Sonnet's analogy of truth to stars, all must be linked to primordial human values. Immediately after the "moonshine's watery beam" world of the fairies and their relation to the world of men through dreams, Romeo fearfully "misgives/Some consequence yet hanging in the stars" (I.iv.106-107). The "dream" children of a whimsical capricious world are "bitterly" linked to the children from the "fatal loins" of human existence. This dream world reference gives birth to a new type of love. The nature of this new love is then both of this world and otherworldly.

The meeting of Romeo and Juliet at the Capulet feast is not without references to the young people as legacies. At the conclusion of the sonnet built into Act I, scene iv, Romeo realizes that if Juliet is a Capulet, "my life is my foe's

³³Quoted in Furness, p. 62.

debt." In the collations of Furness's Variorum, Staunton states that "debt" means much what it did in Brooke's poem:

So hath he learn'd her name, and knowth she is no
geast,
Her father was a Capulet, and master of the feast
Thus hath his foe in choyse to geve him life or death,
That scareceely can his wofull brest keepe in the
lively breath³⁴

Romeo's existence is at the mercy of Capulet.

In the opinion of the author of this paper, the above is a possible reading; but in the light of the treatment of Juliet as a legacy and in later passages when Romeo and Juliet claim to exchange souls, "my life" could refer to Juliet and "my foe's debt" could refer to Juliet's position within the Capulet family.³⁵

When Juliet inquires of the Nurse: "What is yond gentleman?", the Nurse replies:

His name is Romeo, and a Montague,
The only son of your great enemy. (I.v.135)

Besides helping to add suspense to the resolution of the feud, the emphasis is laid again on these young people as legacies-- as inheritors.

The sonnet-chorus at the conclusion of Act I also treats parenthood and the heir in personification:

Now old Desire doth in his death bed lye
And young Affection gapes to be his heir;

³⁴Quoted in Furness, p. 82.

³⁵Cf. the exclamation leading to the quote: "Is she a Capulet/
O dear account!" (I.v.115,116) See also II.ii.164.

Swinburne comments that "gapes," uncommonly used here, refers to the impudency of the heir "to crie upon the testator."³⁶

In Act II, the famous passage on the renunciation of their respective names "thwarts" the doctrine or theme of increase:

Juliet: O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet. (II.ii.33-36)

Several lines later Romeo answers:

Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo. (II.ii.50-51)

The lovers attempt to isolate themselves without ancestry and without posterity. Romeo is such Truth to Juliet that a conceit is woven into her Epithalamium to express the idea that at Romeo's death, he should be cut out into stars and flung into the face of heaven to outshine the "garish sun" (III.ii.21-25). As in the sonnet passage linking eyes, stars, and truth, in II.iii.15-23 Romeo speaks of Juliet's eyes like stars that can be interchanged with the heavenly bodies; and even nature would be convinced of their superiority for the "birds would sing and think it were not night." (II.ii.23). For the lovers at this point, self-sufficiency is all. Enchanted through each other's eyes, they echo Sonnet I:

But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feedst thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel
Making a famine where abundance lies. . . . (1.5-7)

The eye, able to grasp its object while beholding the

³⁶from Swinburne's Brief Treatise of Testaments and Last Wills (1590) quoted in Furness, p. 85.

object, evolves from a Petrarchan conceit molded from medieval physiology. The image made prisoner by the eye, i.e., "through the eyes in the heart," becomes the very life of the lover.

. . . it is through the eye and only through the eye that the beloved can be humanly reflected in a way that turns the appearance into the "true image."³⁷

Krieger continues explaining this Petrarchan conceit with its "substantial oneness" necessary to comprehension--"the enclosure of self-love is broken by love."³⁸ Shakespeare, in the Sonnets, suggests that progeny will break this "contract" to the eyes. In Romeo and Juliet, the bondage is broken by love--love that magnificently surpasses courtly love--love that defies time. The inherent dilemma here, worked out from the necessities of "dramatic thought," is love which holds no room for breed. Breed could not possibly restore or preserve this lightning-in-the-night. By nature it perishes. Not once in their rapture do they mention posterity. Ordinary courtly love as exhibited between Romeo and Rosaline is the scene for discussing posterity in contrast to Juliet's love which is "bounty" in itself with an infinite source to be given to Romeo and also kept for herself. (II.ii.134-135). John Fowles says in The French Lieutenant's Woman:

The supposed great misery of our century is the lack of time. Our sense of that, not a disinterested love of science, and certainly not wisdom, is why we devote such a huge proportion of the ingenuity and

³⁷Krieger, pp. 81-82.

³⁸Krieger, p. 82.

income of our societies to finding faster ways of doing things--as if the final aim of mankind was to grow closer not to a perfect humanity, but to a perfect lightning flash.³⁹

Romeo and Juliet in their battle against time succeed in creating that perfect lightning flash, but they also by that action die alone when the lightning flash is over.

Sonnet 10 contains a unique comment that I suggest is dramatized in Romeo and Juliet at this point. The chief image in this sonnet is one of a person attempting to ruin a beautiful house and family because that person is filled with a murderous hate.

For thou art so possess'd with murderous hate,
That 'gainst thyself thou stick'st not to conspire,
Seeking that beauteous rooffe to ruinate
Which to repair should be thy chief desire. (X.5-8)

This is interesting because in the midst of the sonnets on procreation, the poet is stating the fact that with unwise use of love, it will wither away. He states even more emphatically that with this unwise use an entire "house" or family line can be destroyed.

On a biographical level, A. L. Rowse sees this as the poet's attempt to aid the young earl of Southampton's mother in her campaign to get the earl to marry and to continue the house. In reference to the quotation from the sonnet above, Rowse makes this statement:

This is the point of ll.7-8: it was Southampton's duty to repair the fortunes of his family, damaged

³⁹John Fowles, The French Lieutenant's Woman (Boston, 1969), p. 19.

by his father's extravagance, jeopardized by its catholicism, and make its future safe.⁴⁰

If young Southampton does not marry Lady Elizabeth Vere, then very possibly the lineage will come to a close. By the young friend's self-hatred, an entire house will be ruined.

In Romeo and Juliet, two houses are ruined. With the deaths of Romeo and Juliet the house of the Montagues and the house of the Capulets are respectively cut off from further heirs. A point has already been made concerning the fact that Romeo and Juliet are sole heirs to their respective houses.

Traditionally, the stupidity of the Capulets and the Montagues was held responsible for the destruction of their houses. This paper agrees with that premise, as it has already been intimated in the treatment of the traditional "urge to marry theme." However, the idea of "self-hatred," as initiated in Sonnet 10, poses a new way in which to read Romeo and Juliet; and it aids in the explanation of the dramatization of the Sonnets in Romeo and Juliet.

Romeo and Juliet, as stated above, cut themselves off from ancestry and posterity. They, in a sense, refuse to procreate in order to preserve their beauty as well as their houses. According to the poet in the Sonnets, the refusal to "make a child" is indicative of self-destruction and murder. In the drama, this potential is actualized in plot, character, and action so that at the conclusion of the play Romeo commits

⁴⁰A. L. Rowse, Shakespeare's Sonnets (New York and Evanston, 1964), p. 23.

both murder and suicide and Juliet commits suicide. Although this is not a psychological study of two Italian young people, psychiatrists might agree that this could be one reason for the calamity that befalls the characters in the play. G. R. Smith makes a case for looking at the play from this psychological point of view:

. . . it seems not only possible but likely that much art in the Renaissance or earlier is intellectually, esthetically and psychologically as complex as anything done since. In the interest of the fullest understanding, it needs all the instruments that can be brought to bear upon it.⁴¹

Psychiatrist Eric Berne explains this creative urge as it is thwarted by the destructive urge in man:

The two most powerful urges of human beings are the creative urge and the destructive urge. The creative urge gives rise to generous love and giving, ardent procreation, and joyful building up. The tension which drives man toward these constructive goals may be called libido, and its most concentrated expression is in sexual desire. The destructive urge activates hostility and hate, blind anger, and the uncanny pleasures of cruelty and decay. The tension which lends force to such feelings may be called mortido. It finds its most concentrated expression while fighting for survival⁴²

Thus, we have two drives mightily at work within the mind of man--the energy of the life-wish and the energy of the death-wish. According to Dr. Berne, there are two basic methods in dealing with these two "energies." And they must

⁴¹G. R. Smith, p. 56.

⁴²Eric Berne, A Layman's Guide to Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis (New York, 1968), p. 60. This is the 3rd revised edition from Berne's The Mind in Action.

be dealt with in whatever manner because they inevitably collide and erupt into a conflict within the mind. The first way to handle these drives is to ignore their presence and to attempt to push an unwanted drive out of one's consciousness. The other method is to allow one feeling to dominate one moment and another feeling to govern the next moment.⁴³

In fact, we are now ready to say that human behavior, is determined largely by the tensions of libido and mortido, which upset the mental equilibrium of the human being and drive him to act in such a way that he has a chance to restore his energy balance.⁴⁴

If the creative urge must find expression in sexual relations and procreation, then we see in Romeo and Juliet that the creative urge is distinctly thwarted in favor of the death-urge. Immediately before Juliet's epithalamium in which she pleads for "love-performing night" to come, the Prince has issued an edict concerning the murderer, Romeo:

Let Romeo hence in haste,
Else, when he's found, that hour is his last.
Bear hence his body, attend our will.
Mercy but murder, pardoning those that kill.
(III.ii.199-202)

Romeo has murdered Tybalt. It is true that Benvolio agrees with the Prince that Romeo did not instigate the quarrel but rather:

Romeo that spoke him fair, bade him bethink
How nice the quarrel was, and urged withal
Your high displeasure. (III.ii.158-160)

⁴³Berne, p. 62.

⁴⁴Berne, p. 62.

But we cannot disregard Romeo's own words immediately before the slaying:

Away to Heaven, respective lenity,
And fire-eyed fury be my conduct now! (III.ii.128-129)

According to Goddard, this use of "fury" is significant here, because for Shakespeare, fury connoted an animal passion in a man gone mad.⁴⁵ Romeo yields himself to the death spirit and in particular to the spirit of Mercutio. Eric Berne, continuing his discussion of the difference between libido and mortido, enlightens us on Romeo's actions:

. . . One can be very hateful toward others, the most aggressive act in this case being murder; or one can be very hateful toward oneself, the most aggressive act then being suicide.⁴⁶

After the murder, we next see Romeo in a state of suicidal despair. We will consider this in a moment. In between the murder and Romeo's suicidal state, Juliet says her epithalamium. Curiously enough the epithalamium makes references in a metaphysical conceit to the death of Romeo.⁴⁷ When the nurse breaks in to announce that Tybalt is dead, Juliet's first reaction is this: "Wath Romeo slain himself?" And immediately Juliet declares that she will press to earth on the same bier as Romeo. She wishes death for herself also. The oxymorons immediately following her outcry suggest the type of tension

⁴⁵Goddard, p. 131.

⁴⁶Berne, p. 62.

⁴⁷III.ii.21-24.

found in the tension between the libido and the mortido:

Beautiful tyrant! Fiend angelical!
 Dove-feathered raven! Wolvish-ravening lamb!
 Despised substance of divinest show!
 Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st,
 A damned saint, an honorable villain! (III.ii.75-80)

Harrison suggests that these oxymorons were very typical of early Elizabethan dramatic poetry and that they reflect on the Petrarchan language of paradox.⁴⁸ No doubt this is quite true, but I suggest that it also reflects the tensions between self-hate and self-love at war within the consciousness of Juliet. She is herself torn between her aggressive expressions-- should she love Romeo or hate him and in hating him hate herself? By the end of her vacillation, she makes the dramatic statement:

Come cords, come Nurse, I'll to my wedding bed,
 And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead!
 (III.ii.134-135)

The juxtaposition of wedding bed and death clearly thwarts the traditional idea of joy and procreation resulting from the wedding bed. Structurally, Shakespeare has put the scenes of murder and of suicidal despair around the scene of Juliet's wedding song. Just as in Sonnet 10 we see a confusion of the natural urge to procreate by self-hate, in Romeo and Juliet, the "beauteous roofe" is about to be ruined instead of "repaired" through dramatic action.

The scene following Juliet's epithalamium involves Friar

⁴⁸ G. B. Harrison, ed., Shakespeare The Complete Works (New York, 1952), p. 494.

Laurence and Romeo in the Friar's cell. The Friar's first speech indicates that Romeo's marriage is not to Juliet, in a manner of speaking, but to "calamity":

Affliction is enamored of thy parts,
And thou art wedded to calamity. (III.iii.2-3)

Harrison says the first line suggests that "sorrow has fallen in love with your good qualities."⁴⁹ On a sexual level, "parts" could also refer to the male sex organ which would make the whole line imply that "affliction" as a lover would devour that organ of procreation. It is unnatural, just as it is unnatural that Romeo and Juliet should be wedded in death before an heir can be produced. The second line clearly reveals this to be true. Calamity and the wedded state are not natural companions.

After Romeo laments and analyzes the state of his banishment from Verona, he falls in suicidal despair. Romeo tells the Nurse, who has just entered, that Juliet must now hate him:

Doth she not think me an old murderer,
Now I have stained the childhood of our joy
With blood removed but little from her own?
(III.iii.94-96)

The use of the three nouns "murderer," "childhood," and "blood" in Romeo's outburst signifies not only the hate that he thinks Juliet feels for him, but also his own state of self-hate. As a murderer, his aggressive expression of hate has been loosed. "Childhood of our joy" refers to themselves as young lovers,

⁴⁹Harrison, p. 495.

but it also ties in with the impossibility of their creation of a child. "Blood" in Elizabethan times was tied in directly with sperm. Landry explains:

Renaissance physiology recognized loss of vitality in sexual relations especially when excessive. Sperm was made from a large amount of blood and transformed into a small amount of seed.⁵⁰

These words directly then, in juxtaposition, echo the meaning of Sonnet 10. Self-hate and its resulting action, murder, will be in tension with the theme of procreation. Self-hate will bring ruin on a "beauteous roefe."

Immediately following Romeo's perception about Juliet, he would commit suicide:

In what vile part of this anatomy
Doth my name lodge? Tell me, that I may sack
The hateful mansion. (III.iii.106-108)

This speech connects with the passage discussed above on their respective name-reflections. Not only will he cut himself off from ancestry and posterity, but he will also eradicate that name entirely. The use of the phrase "the hateful mansion" truly becomes language as gesture. In these two words, the whole problem concerning hate and lineage is summed up. It is through self-hate that a body can be destroyed--either suicide or murder--and it is through self-hate that a house can be brought to destruction.

Priar Laurence then picks up the word "fury" as used earlier by Romeo. He supports the original idea that Romeo has turned from man into a beast:

⁵⁰
Landry, p. 97.

Thy tears are womanish, thy wild acts denote
 The unreasonable fury of a beast,
 Unseemly woman in a seeming man!
 Or ill-seeming beast in seeming both!

(III.iii.110-113)

Harrison explicates these lines by suggesting that line 113 indicates a shameful beast that is neither man nor woman.⁵¹ Again, procreation--or the creative urge--is unable to function when man in self-hate turns on himself much like the beast. And in this case, the beast even assumes no sexual distinction. The Friar continues in rebuking Romeo:

Thy dear love sworn, but hollow perjury,
 Killing that love which thou hast vowed to cherish . . .

(III.iii.128-129)

Essentially what the Friar is saying is essentially what Sonnet 10 says except that the Friar is commenting on a dramatic action--a dramatic conflict raging within Romeo's breast and a dramatic action that finally fulfills itself as Romeo dies drinking poison and Juliet dies plunging a dagger into her bosom. In Sonnet 10, the wise poet revealed the human potential to commit murder and suicide through self-hate. In Romeo and Juliet it is actualized. Eric Berne states that "the chief argument among psychiatrists is whether destructive urges are inborn or develop as a result of thwarting the creative urge."⁵²

In the Sonnet series, numbers 1-17 continue on the theme of procreation. Sonnet 10 continues this theme but with the startling idea of self-hate that thwarts the procreative urge.

⁵¹Harrison, p. 496.

⁵²Berne, p. 63.

It is an awareness on the part of the poet that this could be a reason for the lack of procreation, and it enters before poetic thought works out the defiance of time through verse. In Romeo and Juliet, the idea is given dramatic structure as the wedding song is placed between a murder and suicidal despair. The rejection of their names amplifies the frustration found in their seeming indifference to procreation. Thus, it is suggested that the destructiveness exhibited in Sonnet 10 and the destructiveness shown in the dramatic scenes in Romeo and Juliet both result from a thwarting of the creative urge.

Going back to Act II briefly to bring out another aspect of this theme, finds Romeo visiting his "spiritual Father." The Friar, like Mercutio, speaks of another type of mother and child. Friar Lawrence introduces the idea that the earth, nature's mother, serves simultaneously as a womb and a tomb:

The earth that's nature's mother is her tomb;
What is her burying grave, that is her womb.
(II.iii.10-11)

The combination of "womb" and "tomb" is also found in Sonnet III. The relation of one to the other is by negation of use, life itself is on the line. And again, Krieger explains the ". . . lineage of the giving of gifts, the movement from legacy to legacy that ensures a history that is both repetition and progression, is extended.⁵³ For Romeo, the "fatal cannon's womb" violently explodes both life and death. The combination of womb and tomb places a distinct value on life's entrance

⁵³Krieger, pp. 109-110.

and life's destiny. That the two should be so closely rhymed and in juxtaposition is significant because life now is pushed to the highest value.

In a philosophic vein, the Friar soliloquizes on the dual nature of herbs, plants, stones, and ultimately man. The "weak Flower" with its inner poison revolts from "true birth." Again, the analogy is linked with human values; and these values are dramatized in Act IV, scene v as Lady Capulet and her husband discover Juliet in feigned death. Lady Capulet initiates the lament: "My child, my only life." Capulet continues:

Death is my son-in-law, death is my heir,
My daughter he hath wedded. I will die,
And leave him all; life, living, all is Death's.
(IV.v.38-40)

Apart from the Liebestod theme inherent in old Capulet's speech, Death has finally claimed the legacy. All of Capulet's fortunes belong to Death. In the Sonnets, the child, according to the poet, contained the potential for "reflection and incarnation."⁵⁴ The Rape of Lucrece presents the idea as Lucretius grieves over his dead daughter:

"Daughter, dear daughter!" old Lucretius cries,
"That life was mine which thou hast here deprived.
If in the child the father's image lies,
Where shall I live now Lucrece is unliv'd?
Thou was not to this end from me derived.
If children predecease progenitors,
We are their offspring, and they none of ours.

"Poor broken glass, I often did behold
In thy sweet semblance my old age new born;

⁵⁴Krieger, p. 85.

But now that fresh fair mirror, dim and old,
Shows me a bare-don'd death by time outworn.
O, from thy cheeks my image thou hast torn
And shiver'd all the beauty of my glass,
That I no more can see what once I was."

(11.1751-1764)⁵⁵

The past and present were united in this daughter as were the past and present united in Juliet for the Capulets. The future will not be assured without an heir. Krieger says that "as such she was more than mirror in that she destroyed time by maintaining an eternal present for the aging father, thus defeating that aging."⁵⁶ Lady Capulet reflects the same sentiment with a tone of a death drum's monotonous beat:

. . . this sight of death is as a bell
That warns my old age to a sepulchre. (V.iii.205-206)

The "Lord" has returned to take back the loan, comments the Friar:

Heaven and yourself had part in this fair maid;
Now Heaven hath all. (IV.v.66-67)

In Act V.iii.208, the Prince recounts to Montague that "thy son and heir [is] more early down," and Montague laments that it is almost unnatural for the son to press to the grave before the father. The tragedy then may be placed, in one interpretation, on the scourging of the Montagues and the Capulets as irresponsible servants.⁵⁷

The closing scenes of the play reveal the inadequacies of both parents as stewards of their "talents." The Friar anticipates the doom which will fall on both parents:

⁵⁵Quoted in Krieger, p. 85.

⁵⁶Krieger, p. 86.

⁵⁷Robert Metcalf Smith, Types of Romantic Drama (New York, 1928), p. 8.

. . . every one prepare
 To follow this fair corse unto her grave;
 The heavens do lour upon you for some ill;
 Move them no more by crossing their high will.
 (IV.v.92-95)

The alliance did not prove to turn "rancour to pure love,"
 and the Prince echoes this failure:

See what a scourge is laid upon your hate,
 That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love!
 . . . all are punish'd. (V.iii.291-292,294)

The drama then moves to the final problem of immortalization. The feud ceases as Capulet reaches for Montague: "O brother Montague, give me thy hand!" (V.iii.295). In order to preserve what the father could not keep, Montague proposes to raise a statue in pure gold to immortalize Juliet--a statue that will symbolize her truth as long as Verona is known. The total inadequacy of the response is astounding.⁵⁸ The proposal is even below the trite conventional: it is much like raising an aluminum tree in tribute to the majestic forest evergreen. In the Sonnets, the immortalization comes from the change from convention to poiesis--poetry will seize the "eternal essence."⁵⁹ The immortalization in Romeo and Juliet has already occurred and paradoxically perished--their love.

It is in the speech of Diotima, however, as reported by Socrates, that the essential Shakespearean attitudes toward love's triumph over time can be perceived. What object do lovers have in view, the

⁵⁸ David Laird, "The Generation of Style in Romeo and Juliet," Journal of English and Germanic Philology 63 (April 1964), p. 205.

⁵⁹ R. P. Blackmur, "A Poetics for Infatuation, The Riddle of Shakespeare's Sonnets (New York, 1962), p. 135.

prophetess asks, and answers herself, "The object is birth in beauty, whether of body or soul Wherefore love is of immortality Those who are pregnant in the body only, betake themselves to women and beget children . . . but souls which are pregnant . . . conceive that which is proper for the soul . . . And such creators are poets."⁶⁰

What was poetic potential in the Sonnets has come to pass in dramatic action--death takes away the beautiful one who has refused to re-create that beauty in a child. And those who have refused to use their talents wisely have been chastized.

In the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, it is significant that we do not feel the terror in the presence of death as we do in the later tragedies such as King Lear. Many critics have attributed this seeming lack of a true tragic vision to the early composition of Romeo and Juliet in Shakespeare's dramatic career. This is true: it was an early work for Shakespeare. But I would suggest that this work is not immature in reference to the play as a true tragedy as many critics have suggested, but rather it is the dramatization of the sonnets in the defiance of time by love and poetry. We are sorry, extremely sorry, that we must leave the lovers silent in the tomb. But we learned from the sonnets that this is natural: it is to be expected as the only possible outcome of time. Death is the ultimate "debt" that Nature has to pay. A. C. Ward says:

⁶⁰Quoted in Leslie A. Fiedler, "Some Contexts of Shakespeare's Sonnets," The Riddle of Shakespeare's Sonnets (New York, 1962), pp. 81-82.

Tragedy in *Romeo and Juliet* is a misnomer because death is the inevitable escape from tragedy; it was the perpetuating culmination of their ecstasy and the apotheosis to which all lovers aspire in the moment of complete union.⁶¹

⁶¹ward, p. 201. According to G. R. Smith, p. 60:

The symbolic equating of sleep with death is world-wide Renaissance and seventeenth-century English usage allowed the infinitive 'to die' as a cant term for the sexual act. The Renaissance association of love with death was recognized as a mystery, but felt to be "right." Shakespeare has stressed death so much in this play . . . that we may suspect its deepest appeal is to the death instinct hypothesized by both Leonardo and Freud.

Leonardo da Vinci says on the return to the death instinct:

Behold now the hope and desire of going back to one's own country or returning to primal chaos, like that of the moth to the light, of the man who with perpetual longing always looks forward with joy to each new spring and each new summer, and to the new months and the new years, deeming that the things he longs for are too slow in coming; and who does not perceive that he is longing for his own destruction. But this longing is in its quintessence the spirit of the elements, which finding itself imprisoned within the life of the human body desires continually to return to its source. And I would have you to know that this same longing is in its quintessence inherent in nature, and that man is a type of the world.

From the Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci, trans. Edward MacCurdy (New York, n.d. [1938]), pp. 80-81.

Freud also says on the death instinct:

The attributes of life were at some time evoked in inanimate matter by the action of a force of whose nature we can form no conception. It may perhaps have been a process similar in type to that which later caused the development of consciousness in a particular stratum of living matter. The tension which then arose in what had hitherto been an inanimate substance endeavored to cancel itself out. In this way the first instinct came into being: the instinct to return to the inanimate state. It was

Death is not the final element of revenge as in Hamlet. It is not the final punishment for a fatal flaw or hamartia as in Lear. In Romeo and Juliet, we are prepared for death as the natural outcome of time and love. The Sonnets have prepared us for this:

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
 So do our minutes hasten to their end;
 Each changing place with that which goes before,
 In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
 Nativity, once in the main of light,
 Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,
 Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
 And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.
 Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth
 And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,
 Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
 And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow;
 And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
 Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand. (XXX)

The problem, however, still remains: what defies Time? I have already suggested that Shakespeare was more concerned with life here and the "now" of experience than with the other-world philosophy of the Platonists. In turn, this implies that this high premium placed on human life here and now is ultimately

still an easy matter at that time for a living substance to die; the course of its life was probably only a brief one, whose direction was determined by the chemical structure of the young life. For a long time, perhaps, living substance was thus being constantly created afresh and easily dying, till decisive external influences altered in such a way as to oblige the still surviving substance to diverge ever more widely from its original course of life and to make ever more complicated détours before reaching its aim of death. These circuitous paths to death, faithfully kept by the conservative instincts would thus present us today with the picture of the phenomena of life.

From Beyond the Pleasure Principle, trans. James Strachey, et al. (London, 1955), pp. 38-39.

confronted with mortal decay. The defiance of Time is then eventually impossible. But in the Sonnets and in Romeo and Juliet, that is not the final thought in spite of death's final conquest of every man. The triumphant thought that both the poet of the Sonnets and the dramatist of the play conceive is that verse can defy time. Art can maintain eternal durability but only as long as man is around to comprehend and understand its supreme value.

At the conclusion of the sonnets on procreation as a method of defying time, the poet announces that verse instead will make the loved one immortal:

Yet do thy worst, old Time: despite thy wrong,
My love shall in my verse ever live young.
(19.13-14)

Sonnets 54 and 55 take up these themes also adding new insights to the theme of procreation being replaced by verse. Before discussing these sonnets, let us return to Sonnet 5 first. In Sonnet 5, the poet speaks of summer's distillation:

A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,
Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,
Nor it nor no remembrance what it was;
But flowers distill'd, though they with winter meet,
Leese but their show; their substance still lives
sweet. (10-14)

The sap in a tree though it may be covered with frost on the outside is still a guarantor of future creativity. As Krieger says, "the human, sexual equivalent of procreation can hardly be missed" ⁶²

⁶²Krieger, p. 114.

It is life in the midst of death: as the seminal fluid that guarantees the ever-returning April it is the dissolution of the ice that is death And of course primarily--and explicitly--the liquid is "prisoner" of the "walls of glass," as if the ice, true to its service of the immobile, were actively containing it, keeping it from flowing abroad to bring the world to new birth.⁶³

In Sonnet 54, the idea that the "child is to his dead father as rose-water to the rose"⁶⁴ is forsaken for the idea that verse can distill this truth found in the loved one. In opposition to the canker blooms that only die to themselves:

. . . Sweet roses do not so;
Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made;
And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
When that shall vade, [sic] ^{my} verse distills your
truth. (11-14)

Sonnet 55 continues by rejecting the idea that another form of art, sculpture and architecture, can achieve immortalization:

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find
room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the judgement that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

In the play, these ideas are dramatized as we have already

⁶³Krieger, p. 114.

⁶⁴Pooler, p. 8.

seen. Romeo and Juliet refuse to release that "distillation" in order that their beauty might be preserved in heirs. The Capulets and the Montagues want to raise a golden statue to Juliet. Verse must achieve what the parents and children could not accomplish on this earth. However, it seems quite strange that the idea of fathers and children should somehow be equated with the possibilities of immortal art. Maud Bodkin suggests that the poet-image and the father image can function in the same manner:

The communicated experiences of poetry bear witness to a positive, creative aspect which the figure of poet or father may possess within the inner life, mediating to the individual those social values which can be assimilated by his own nature. As to the child the father may first appear pre-eminently the being that has command over speech, material contrivance, and all forms of the world's stored magic, so, with the development of the inner life, other figures-by chance-the poet-take the father's place, as charged with the same mana.⁶⁵

Art and poetry can achieve that power of re-creation every "spring" for man, because it can function in the same life-giving way as a father does. Art and poetry can communicate the values and ideals of love that seemingly perished with the lover's death, because art is, not was.

⁶⁵Bodkin, pp. 301-302.

CHAPTER IV

THE DRAMATIC USE OF THE PETRARCHAN SONNET'S THESIS AND ANTITHESIS

As pointed out in the previous chapters, Romeo and Juliet is a speaking sonnet in its dramatic presentation of the self-substantial world created by the lovers and in the triumph over time by love and art. But Romeo and Juliet is also a speaking sonnet from a structural standpoint. The play structurally reflects the Petrarchan sonnet tradition of thesis and antithesis. The thesis of the Petrarchan sonnet tradition is built up before the death of Mercutio, and with his death, the antithesis begins. The formality of the play has been highly stressed by critics. As Nicholas Brooke says, "[the play] in many ways seems to be a formal exercise in romantic tragedy, given the kind of overt formality of structure and verse which rather suggests the order of a stately dance."¹

The sonnet too is a formal, tightly woven unit. Stephen Booth says:

The most important thing about a sonnet is that it is a sonnet: that is true because the sonnet form is, like the sonnet tradition, a peculiarly urgent factor in a reader's experience of the particular sounds and substances of particular sonnets. By its structural nature, any sonnet stresses simultaneously both its unity and its disunity. The unity of a sonnet is the first thing that a reader sees about it.²

¹Brooke, p. 81.

²Stephen Booth, An Essay on Shakespeare's Sonnets (New Haven and London, 1969), p. 29.

When we first read Romeo and Juliet the first thing we also notice is that it is entirely about love, and the fact that the world expresses one opinion about love and Romeo and Juliet reveal another opinion about love.

Petrarch's major work, Canzoniere or Rime, or, as he referred to it, Rerum vulgarium fragmenta,³ contained 317 sonnets out of 366 items.⁴ In an analysis of the very first sonnet of the Canzoniere, Bergin says that it characterizes the other sonnets found in the series: "--the formula, then, as illustrated by the keynote sonnet of the Rhymes, is a straight-forward statement of an emotional condition, adorned with rhetorical embellishment, musically set forth and conceived as a unity."⁵ For Petrarch, the emotional condition and unity molded from disunity made the importance of the sonnet form. The sonnet was to contain exactly fourteen lines, and a single theme was developed within this rigid pattern. In the Petrarchan rhyme scheme, there are three possibilities. There is either abba abba cde cde, or abba abba cdc cdc, or abba abba cde dce. The two quatrains form the octave or thesis and in the thesis the problem is stated and developed. The last six lines or sestet resolve the problem. This last sestet often offers a resolution which could involve a turn of thought

³Thomas G. Bergin, Petrarch (New York, 1970), p. 154.

⁴Bergin, p. 158. The remaining forty-seven items consist of 29 canzoni, nine sestine, seven ballate and four madrigali.

⁵Bergin, p. 176.

or antithesis. The interesting feature here is that the rhyming scheme of the octave offers a linking of rhyme so that the first eight lines seem almost a single unit. In Petrarch's rhyme scheme, the last six lines offer no possibility for a couplet. As a result, it presents a unified section.⁶ Gayley says of this type of sonnet:

The octave bears the burden; a doubt, a problem, a reflection, a query, an historical statement, a cry of indignation or desire, a vision of the ideal. The sestet eases the load, resolves the problem or doubt, answers the query, solaces the yearning, realizes the vision.⁷

The feeling engendered is like a tidal wave rushing in on the shore and then falling back to reveal what has been left by the powerful arm of the sea. And what is left gives clues to the sea and the tide that left them there. Petrarch's poetry became a delicate balance of opposites. Booth says:

The logical and syntactical reinforcement of the division between the two physically dissimilar parts of the sonnet centers the energy of the poem inside it. When, as is often the case in such sonnets, the sestet contradicts or modifies the statement of the octave, and when the division is simultaneously enforced by rhyme and syntax, the whole energy of the first eight lines is directed forward, while the energy of the last six is directed backward in formal, logical, and emotional contradiction to the octave. The division at line 9 not only heightens the contrast but turns the poem in upon itself, asserting unity by division. The continental sonnet, a vehicle for paradoxes, is itself paradoxical.⁸

Of course, underlying this delicate balance in structure

⁶William Thrall and Addison Hibbard, A Handbook to Literature (New York, 1960), p. 465.

⁷Quoted in Thrall and Hibbard, p. 465.

⁸Booth, p. 30.

was the frustration between Petrarch's desire for passion and his desire for purification that he inherited from the delce still nuove tradition. Leonard Forster says that "he designates this state of affairs by a characteristic antithetical paradox: he speaks of 'dolendi voluptas.'"⁹ Forster continues by suggesting that Petrarch's sonnets 132 and 134 are very typical of this type of elaboration and exploitation. In sonnet 132, Petrarch examines his contradictory emotions:

Can it be love that fills my heart and brain?
 If love, dear God, what is its quality?
 If it is good, why does it torture me?
 If evil, why this sweetness in my pain?
 If I burn gladly, why do I complain?
 If I hate burning, why do I never flee?
 O life-in-death, O lovely agony,
 How can you rule me so, if I am not fain?

And if I'm willing, why do I suffer so?--
 By such contrary winds I'm blown in terror
 In a frail and rudderless bark on open seas,
 Ballasted all with ignorance and error.
 Even my own desire I do not know;
 I burn in winter, and in high summer freeze.¹⁰

The octave is mainly concerned with rhetorical questions, and of those rhetorical questions each is concerned with a type of contrast. The phrase "life-in-death" and the phrase "lovely agony" break up the monotony of the first six rather monotonous lines. These antithetical pairs sum up the concentrated images that come before.¹¹ The sestet then concludes the intellectual argument. "The last line but one breaks the

⁹ Leonard Forster, The Icy Fire (Cambridge, 1969), p. 31

¹⁰ Translated by Morris Bishop, Petrarch and His World, p. 154.

¹¹ Forster, p. 5.

series of images, before it too becomes monotonous, by the simple statement of confused desire (which, however, is itself an implied antithesis) and the sonnet culminates in two antithetical paradoxes.¹² This thesis and antithesis for Petrarch became an important element in his poetic treatment of love. Thesis and the delicate balance of antithesis worked not only in imagery and conceits on an internal basis but also in the actual structure of his sonnets.

The same is true in the play Romeo and Juliet. In earlier chapters the features of the paradoxes and oxymorons were discussed as they related to the explanation of the dramatization of the sonnets in Romeo and Juliet. The play also reveals a structure built around a type of thesis and antithesis.

The "problem" stated and developed in the thesis of the play is of course the problem of love. Bradbook says of the central core of Shakespeare's plays:

The central core of each of his plays--its governing idea, or germ--is an informing power radiating and glowing through every tissue and fibre of the whole, down to the single word. It is, as the Elizabethans would say, the "soul" of the play, which is "diffused quite through" to "make it of a piece." It is this central idea or germ which determines the quality of the play, controlling and shaping the language and structure, the use of common material and use of experiment.¹³

Until the death of Mercutio, the first portion of the play is concerned with an attitude of love that is completely

¹²Forster, pp. 5-6.

¹³Bradbook, p. 81.

unlike the type of love Romeo and Juliet later find--a love that can be a "formal embodiment of feeling" rather than just attitudinizing. The thesis presents love in a Petrarchan manner.

As the servants, Gregory and Samson appear on the scene, love is absent and raw sex is present. Hate, sex and violence are combined in their puns and images:

Samson: 'Tis all one, I will show myself a tyrant: when I have fought with the men, I will be cruel with the maids; I will cut off their heads.

Greg: The heads of the maids?

Samson: Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads; take it in what sense thou wilt.

Greg: They must take it in sense that feel it.
(I.i.18-23)

Nicholas Brooke says of the first scene:

It is a variation on the theme proposed in the opening chorus, at the other end of the scale from the symbolic kiss with which Romeo and Juliet conclude this Act. That development prefigures the play, in its movement from the comic to the serious, and one function of this scene is therefore to set the play moving decisively in comic terms. I remarked that until Mercutio's death the tone (in varied ways) is predominantly comic¹⁴

Love as a comic response is primarily the problem set up in the thesis of the play. This theme of love especially as it is exhibited in the scenes before Mercutio's death appeared to the Elizabethans as "comical." Bradbook says that "Elizabethans would, then, have seen Romeo and Juliet as an 'amorous tragi-comedy' if any Polonius had essayed its classification."¹⁵

¹⁴Brooke, p. 89.

¹⁵Bradbook, p. 121.

The servants have focused sex and violence together as the Prince of Verona enters with his images of "purple fountains issuing from your veins" ¹⁶ Death is the principal focus of his speech, and Brooke suggests that sexual implications may also be latent here. ¹⁷ Immediately Benvolio appears on the scene to further move the discussion of love. Love is shown as a frustrating experience much as it was for Petrarch. The servants' scene revealed the lustful side of passion in broad jests and puns. The Prince brings up the subject of death, and Benvolio and Romeo in the grove of sycamore trees show the side of love that is frustrated by the simultaneous desire of lustful passion and the desire for purification from the loved one. It is an essential Petrarchan dilemma that Romeo faces.

The Petrarchan obligatory language of love was three-fold: on an external basis "praise of the lady, the lady's accomplishments, objects belonging to the lady; celebration of the place of lovers' meeting, and meeting the beloved in dreams" ¹⁸ were the subject matter for Petrarch's conceits. On an internal basis "the nature of love, the relations between lovers; the effects of love; rejection of the beloved; and the death motifs" ¹⁹ were also the subject matter for Petrarchan

¹⁶I.i.78.

¹⁷Brooke, p. 90.

¹⁸Forster, p. 8.

¹⁹Forster, p. 8.

conceits. The third type of language used was the conceit that "love is as a cosmic phenomenon."²⁰

Dream-themes are of a high importance in Petrarch because the union of lovers took place only in these dreams. The lovers could not approach one another on a physical basis. The frustration built up for the lover is obvious, and as a result the "interpenetration of pleasure and pain, and the satisfaction which could be derived from holding these two opposites in an uneasy balance, is basic in Petrarch's work and becomes the fundamental theme of the Petrarchistic convention."²¹ The association of love with war imagery was common, and corresponding to this idea was the "freedom-servitude paradox."²² Death imagery was exploited, and the senses were confused: "the lover quite literally does not know whether he is coming or going, even the sense of individuality is lost."²³

Romeo is definitely speaking to Benvolio in this vein. Benvolio says to Romeo:

Alas, that love, so gentle in his view,
Should be so tyrannous and rough in proof!
(I.i.163-164)

Romeo replies in a series of oxymorons:

²⁰Forster, p. 9.

²¹Forster, p. 13.

²²Forster, p. 13.

²³Forster, p. 14.

Why, then, O brawling love! O loving hate!
 O any thing, of nothing first created!
 O heavy lightness! Serious vanity!
 Mis-shapen chaos of well-seeming forms!
 Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!
 Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!
 This love feel I, that feel no love in this.
 (I.i.169-175)

Romeo continues by speaking of the heaviness in his breast, of the "discreet madness" he feels. His senses are truly lost as well as his individuality as he says, "I have lost myself; I am not here;" (I.i.190). He next speaks of Rosaline as dying with her beauty cutting all that beauty off from posterity. And because Rosaline would live so, Romeo must live "dead." He is almost a walking ghost. Benvolio begs him to give "liberty to his eyes" by seeking out other beauties. Essentially, the whole Petrarchan idiom of love is present in this incident. Love is not that fullest expression of mankind's emotional potential, but rather it is an attitude--a posture taken before love.

The next scene involves Paris and Capulet attempting to arrange a marriage for Juliet. This is striking in relation to the scene that has gone before, because with marriage comes sexual fulfillment and a lack of frustration as exhibited by Romeo. As stated in Chapter III²⁴ before, Paris is concerned with posterity and Capulet is also concerned in his own way about the potential of Juliet: "She is the hopeful lady of my earth." Love is not true feeling for them either, but

²⁴See p. 84.

rather the theme of increase is the subject of their thoughts. Capulet says to Paris that at the feast tonight "Among fresh female buds shall you this night/Inherit at my house." (I.ii. 29-30). Furness quotes M. Ilwine in the Variorum that to inherit meant to possess.²⁵

The next scenes involve Romeo talking to Benvolio of "mad bondage" where Romeo is the Petrarchan lover "Shut up in prison, kept without my food,/Whipt and tormented" (I.ii.54-55).

Mention has already been made in Chapter II²⁶ that Romeo and Juliet created a world of their own as they were contracted to one another through their eyes. Romeo and Rosaline were also contracted to one another's eyes but in the conventional way. And Romeo illustrates this convention in I.ii.85-88:

When the devout religion of mine eye
Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires!
And these, who, often drown'd, could never die,
Transparent heretics, he burnt for liars!

The combination of "tears" and "fires" is particularly significant because many Petrarchists dissolved themselves in almost a continuous weeping. "The commonplace of love as a fire is of course very ancient, and Petrarch used it extensively. The flames became a shorthand symbol for love itself as in French classical tragedy, and the symbol still persists in our phrase "an old flame!"²⁷ Bradbook also says that for

²⁵Furness, p. 34.

²⁶See p. 50.

²⁷Forster, pp. 16-17.

the Elizabethans this image of lovers seeing each other "reflected in the pupil of the eye is a symbol of character defined in terms of relationship."²⁸ Romeo and Rosaline had little or no relationship, and so the Petrarchan image speaks only of Romeo's attempt to create a posture in love. In opposition, Romeo and Juliet have a vital dynamic relationship in love; and they can use this image and cause it to mean a valid love feeling. "This is the doctrine of courtly love, whereby the universe becomes interpreted to the lover in terms of his relationship to his lady, focused through that relationship, so that in the end she becomes the mediator both of knowledge and of grace."²⁹ This is essentially what happens in the sonnet-dialogue between Romeo and Juliet at the feast.

The Nurse and Lady Capulet appear next on the scene. The Nurse's comments refer to the one side of tension felt by the Petrarchan lover--lustful passion. For the Nurse, marriage is only the legal solution to the satisfaction of that lust.³⁰ For Lady Capulet, marriage is again only tied in with the theme of increase, but even more important is the conceit of the book she uses to describe Paris:

Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face,
And find delight writ there with beauty's pen;
Examine every married lineament,
And see how one another lends content;

²⁸Bradbook, p. 85.

²⁹Bradbook, p. 87.

³⁰See I.iii.40-45,95.

And what obscured in this fair volume lies
 Find written in the margent of his eyes.
 (I.iii.81-86)

The book conceit suggest a pedantry toward love, a prescribed set of manners or rules that can be applied to love. This book conceit is used throughout the thesis, but it is rejected more and more until the lovers take their love with spontaneity in the antithesis. Bradbook says that "pedants of language, of the duello and of the proceedings leading up to it, peddlers of the orthodoxies of consolation or good advice, lovers who spoke by the book are glanced at not for their 'humors' but for their insufficiency."³¹

The next scene sees Romeo still "heavy" when Mercutio speaks his first lines in the play. Mercutio begins a tension that prepares the way for a resolution to the problem of love as a mere posture or attitude. Mercutio immediately ridicules Romeo for his inability to borrow Cupid's wings and soar above the heaviness of love. Romeo rails against love itself as all Petrarchan lovers do, and Mercutio retorts with the idea that if love is so cruel, be cruel to love; and he says that he will draw Romeo from the "mire of this sir-reverence love." Nares says that "sir-reverence" is "a kind of apologetical apostrophe when anything was said that might be thought filthy or indecent; salvâ reverentiâ. It was contracted into sa'rev-
erence, and thence corrupted into sir or sur-reverence. This

³¹Bradbook, p. 49.

word was considered as a sufficient apology for anything indecorous."³²

A few lines distant from the above scene, Romeo begins the statement that he has dreamt a dream, but he is interrupted by Mercutio's account of his own dreams. Very possibly if Romeo had been allowed to continue he might have spoken of Rosaline and sexual fulfillment in his dreams as the Petrarchan lovers did. But Mercutio says that the dream of the loved one is not necessarily valid, but rather it is a nightmare. The Petrarchan fulfillment of love in dreams is as unreal as a fairy world.

Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut,
Made by the joiner squirrel or old grub,
Time out of mind the Fairies' coachmakers,
And in this state, she gallops night by night
Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of
love (I.iv.67-71)

Romeo interrupts Mercutio by saying that Mercutio is talking of "nothing." And Mercutio answers with the inherent truth that he has found out about Petrarchan "dreams:"

True, I talk of dreams;
Which are the children of an idle brain,
Beget of nothing but vain fantasy,
Which is a thing of substance as the air
(I.iv.97-100)

And then he says that dreams are as inconstant as the wind:

. . . who wooes
Even now the frozen bosom of the North,
And, being anger'd, puffs away from thence,
Turning his face to the dew-dropping South.

It is through Mercutio is implying that the fantasy of this type of dream belongs to the southlands, Italy and Southern

³²Nares quoted in Furness, p. 59.

France, the source of the sonnet form, and not to the cold north lands like England that should be ruled by reason. This type of dream is having no success in converting the North to its type of courtship. In spite of the fact that Mercutio is a citizen of Verona, he speaks as though he is a citizen of the North untouched by the soft Italian winds. The dramatist brings Mercutio back to Italy when Romeo says the "wind . . . blows us from ourselves."

Scene v opens with the servants rushing to and fro preparing for the feast. There is a noticeable emphasis on manners again. Things must be done by the rule. The second servant says, "When good manners shall lie all in one or two men's hands, and they unwashed too, 'tis a foul thing."

As Romeo sees Juliet for the first time, he forswears his past love in the presence of her "true beauty." Then in the sonnet shared between them they combine a newly felt passion with the religious imagery of purification. As a pilgrim, Romeo can find satisfaction at last at the shrine of Juliet.³³ At first glance, we may suspect that the agony

³³C. S. Lewis in The Allegory of Love, p. 29, illustrates that this type of religious devotion was not unusual for the courtly love tradition. He speaks of Lancelot and the Queen:

"Although his love is by no means supersensual and is indeed carnally rewarded in this very poem, he is represented as treating Guinevere with saintly, if not divine honours. When he comes before the bed where she lies he kneels and adores her; as Chretien explicitly tells us, there is no corseynt in whom he has greater faith. When he leaves her chamber he makes a genuflexion as if he were before a shrine."

shared by the lovers Troilus and Criseyde will occur again, >? but by the antithesis we are fully aware that this type of love cannot share that fate.

After the sonnet, Juliet accuses Romeo of "kissing by the book." Romeo is still "bound" somewhat by the notion that he must act according to a certain manner in order to be acceptable. But he is learning, for in the next scene he is seen leaping over the wall--symbolic of his breaking gradually out of "bondage." That attitude is short-lived, however, as Mercutio, within Romeo's earshot, ridicules all that Romeo has thought of as love:

Romeo! humors! madman! passion! lover!
 Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh!
 Speak but one rhyme, and I am satisfied
 (II.i.7-9)

Mercutio continues by parodying the descriptions set forth by the Petrarchan lover. The lover could conjure up the beloved by dwelling on her physical aspects and Mercutio takes advantage of that prospect.³⁴ Romeo at this point is unwilling to admit that Mercutio could be right: "He jests at scars that never felt a wound." So Romeo still continues with a Petrarchan eye conceit as he sees Juliet on her balcony, and he dotes upon an object of his beloved--her glove as it is resting on her cheek. As far as he is concerned and in the stage directions, Juliet is above him, and he is still posturing in love as Petrarch did before Laura and as Dante did before Beatrice.

³⁴II.i.18-20.

Juliet is his "winged messenger of heaven." Their love has not yet blossomed into valid feeling. But the tension is beginning to mount as Romeo tells Juliet that he can overleap the walls with "love's light wings." Mercutio said it was a possibility and Romeo is proving it to be true. As he speaks to Juliet his struggle with the agonies of love begins to melt. He surrenders himself to love as a pilot that can guide him to the "farthest sea."

Unlike Laura, and other ladies in the courtly love tradition, Juliet fully admits her passion honestly and frankly. Laura did not love Petrarch.³⁵ His "love" was a one-sided affair. It was not unusual for the ladies sought in love, like Rosaline, to be completely cruel, and if by fortune's good favor they should desire their lover it was usually because the lover was "worthy." C. S. Lewis says that "the lady is allowed free choice in her acceptance or rejection of a lover in order that she may reward the merit of the best; she must not abuse this power in order to gratify her own fancies. By admitting a worthy lover to her favours she does well."³⁶ The feeling is still there that the woman is doing the man a supreme favor in admitting him to her graces; love is not the equally shared vital emotion that it proved to be for Romeo and Juliet. Juliet says to Romeo:

³⁵Bishop, Petrarch and His World, p. 158.

³⁶C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love (London, 1958), p. 34.

But to be frank, and give it thee again.
 And yet I wish but for the thing I have;
 My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
 My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
 The more I have, for both are infinite.³⁷

(II.ii.131-135)

But Romeo, still bound by Petrarchan conventions, answers Juliet with the possibility that all this is only a dream, "Too flattering-sweet to be substantial." For him, fruition of his love seems almost unreal, as unreal as Mercutio suggested that lovers' dreams could be. Romeo vaguely begins to understand that love does not require a book of prescriptions to share in love, to understand the nature of true love:

Love goes toward love, as schoolboys from their books,
 But love from love, toward school with heavy looks.

Juliet appears again on the balcony and says after her final parting speech: "Good night, good night! parting is such sweet sorrow" This is the paradox that links the Petrarchan manner that is made comic in the thesis and made tragic in the antithesis, because love is proven to be at least a sorrow that leads to death and a redemptive spirit over hate. Again linking the nature of love to the circular seasons, love is as sweet as an August night and simultaneously as sorrowful as a December night. Krieger says:

³⁷George Brandes says that Juliet's love for Romeo " . . . is a mere ferment of the senses . . . a vibration of the whole being in longing and desire, a quivering of all its chords, from the highest to the lowest, so intense that neither he nor she can tell where body ends and soul begins." From William Shakespeare (New York, 1927), p. 85.

It becomes clear that the appeal to imitate the natural order, or rather to acknowledge one's part in it, with its eternal rebirth and its transcendence of singularity, comes by way of turning nature into Eden, by way of the pastoral convention which has always insisted on nature as a reflection of man.³⁸

Thus, in the thesis, we are receiving a type of early anticipation to the resolution or antithesis that will occur later in the play.

The Friar's opening speech on the opposites found in the natural world also takes up the general theme that life too is a reconciliation of opposites. The Petrarchan sonnet was a unified form reconciling one wave of the thesis and a pulling back of that wave in the antithesis, but the Friar is the one in the play who would ride on the crest of that wave. He suggests a delicate balance of "Grace and rude will." He seems to completely understand that man is a mixture of Heaven and hell, but this stand on moderation for love typifies his position as a part of that structural basis in the play. The end of the thesis is almost present, and he is representative of that part of the "wave" that momentarily hesitates before plunging back to the sea.

Romeo, at the Friar's cell, begins to recognize the nature of love: it is not an attitude but it is a sharing of a valid feeling. He tells the Friar:

I pray thee, chide not: she whom I love now
Doth grace for grace and love for love allow;
The other did not so.

³⁸Krieger, p. 90.

The Friar recognizes this to be true as he tells Romeo that Rosaline knew that Romeo's love was only meted out in a bookish manner.

The thesis is coming to its "eighth line" in the structure of the play as Mercutio enters again in Act II, scene iv. He forcefully rails and ridicules Rosaline as a "pale hard-hearted wench" and Romeo as "mad." He completely characterizes Romeo as a Petrarchan lover, because Romeo is "already dead." Forster says that Petrarch extensively used the death-in-life and life-in-death paradox:

This is already implicit in Petrarch, for in the Trionfo della Morte he has a vision of the dead Laura who says 'Viva son io, e tu se' morto ancora'--'I am alive and you are still dead'; she is alive because she is in the Paradise of eternal life, but he is dead because he is still in this world, which is living death.³⁹

Then Mercutio outrightly says that Romeo is trying to outdo Petrarch: "Laura to his lady was but a kitchen-wench." The Petrarchan manner, according to Mercutio, is to be laughed at and considered outmoded. But simultaneously Romeo's Petrarchan type of melancholy is gradually slipping away. He says in a tone of voice completely unlike the tone when Benvolio first sought him out among the sycamores: "Good morrow to you both." Furness quotes Coleridge in Literary Remains: "Compare again Romeo's half exerted and half real ease of mind with his first manner when in love with Rosaline.

³⁹Forster, p. 20.

His will had come to the clenching point."⁴⁰ And most important, Mercutio praises Romeo when his change is made obvious:

Why, is not this better now than groaning for love?
now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo;
now art thou what thou art, by art as well as by
nature (II.iv.78-80)

Romeo has regained his sense of individuality.

For the courtly lover love and marriage were definitely not a part of that "code." C. S. Lewis says:

. . . no rule is made clearer than that which
excludes love from the marriage relation
Conjugal affection cannot be "love" because there
is in it an element of duty or necessity; a wife,
in loving her husband, is not exercising her free
choice in the reward of merit, and her love there-
fore cannot increase his probitas.⁴¹

Marriage for Romeo and Juliet, on the other hand, is the natural outcome of their love. The Petrarchan conventions had drawn on the courtly love models to the extent that marriage was also absent from the solution to their frustration. Petrarch drew on the troubadour and minnesang poetry that did not treat the final satisfaction of love and on the delce stil nuove tradition in which "sensual satisfaction is excluded almost by definition."⁴² The fact that Shakespeare should put the marriage before Mercutio's death is significant, because the marriage is a dramatic event that clearly reveals that the Petrarchan conventions and manners are no longer valid. The

⁴⁰Furness, p. 125.

⁴¹Lewis, pp. 35-36.

⁴²Forster, pp. 2-3.

Petrarchan posturing and frustration that Mercutio so vividly ridiculed are soon to be over. The passionate desire felt by the Petrarchan lover and the desire felt for purification are satisfied in the marriage of Romeo and Juliet which is symbolic of the final establishment of their "self-substantial world."

Immediately following the marriage, Mercutio's death scene occurs. After the bantering between Benvolio, Tybalt, and Mercutio, Romeo appears on the scene, and his treatment of Tybalt reveals that the love he has found is a redemptive type of love even in life:

Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee
Doth much excuse the appeartaining rage
To such a greeting: villain am I none.

(III.1.57-59)

Mercutio then disclaims Romeo's submission, and this is ironic because what Mercutio has been advocating has taken place and he cannot recognize it. He has satirized the Petrarchan "invalid" feelings, and Romeo has indeed broken out of that type of feeling. Another irony is also present in Mercutio's death: he is killed by one who "fights by the book"--in a prescribed manner. Mercutio has ridiculed the feelings of love that cause one to utter melancholy set rhymes, but he is killed by the very "villain that fights by the book of arithmetic!" Mercutio's death sets up one of the biggest paradoxes in the play. Just as he is killed by one who fights by the rules when he himself was against the "rules" of love, Romeo

and Juliet are killed by a love that is in direct opposition to the type of Petrarchan love that could have kept them alive. I suggest that Mercutio is killed not only to reverse the comic tone but also to allow the antithesis to fulfill itself in dramatic action. Love is no longer a posture or prescribed attitude, but it is a true feeling. Mercutio calls upon a "plague" to fall upon both of the houses, but he does not recognize that the satirical attitude toward Petrarchan love has allowed the characters to move toward a healing of that plague--to love as a "valid feeling" with its possibilities for redemption.

The resolution to the problem of the octave in the play's "sestet" is the idea that love conquers death and hate. Love becomes a valid feeling.⁴³ The type of love that Romeo and Juliet now share is a redemptive love, and in structure Shakespeare arranges Act III, scene i, to bring up the violence of the feud as he did in Act I, scene i. What happens after that first scene in Act I does not bring harmony on a private and public level, but it does move toward a chance for that harmony. What happens after that first scene in Act III does bring harmony on a private and public level. Romeo is banished and the test of the true love begins.

⁴³Miss Lu Emily Pearson in Elizabethan Love Conventions (Berkeley, 1933), p. 32, says that "in this play Shakespeare shows first the break between Petrarchan love and natural love."

Juliet's epithalamium follows.⁴⁴ In this genre she follows a tradition that sprang from the classics and moved through the Italian and French troubadours' use of that tradition to satisfy the basic frustration found when the lover would not submit her favors. Julius Caesar Scaliger prescribed and codified the sixteenth-century Latin practice of writing epithalamiums. In his 101st chapter of the third book of Poetics, he clearly and vividly describes six different methods for writing an epithalamium.⁴⁵ The background against which Scaliger wrote was that of the "hard-hearted girl and the languishing lover."⁴⁶

. . . it is the petrarchistic pattern, which Scaliger himself in his Latin verses did a very great deal to propagate. A further characteristically antithetical petrarchistic note is

⁴⁴Brooke, p. 85, suggests that the Queen Mab speech is directly connected with Juliet's epithalamium that begins:

Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds
Towards Phoebus lodging; such a waggoner
As Phaethon would whip you to the west,
And bring in cloudy night immediately.

Brooke says:

Both speeches are obviously set-pieces, designed to stand out from their context, as they do, and thus acquire a related significance as comments on the play. Their relationship is of very much the same kind as the successive emblem pictures of the countryside . . . radically different [sic] views of the same thing. In the case of Queen Mab, reduced to a minimum, as Mercutio sees it, and with Phaeton, in Juliet's view on her clandestine wedding night, at maximum extension translated from the absurd to the magnificent. The dramatic pivot of this poetic irony, is Mercutio's death.

⁴⁵Forster, p. 106.

⁴⁶Forster, p. 114.

introduced when Scaliger says that the poet may describe the bride as fearing the victory in the coming pleasurable battle, and "the smile arising from tears" (e lacrymis risum). The whole background of meaning of the adjective tabescens, moreover, calls up the petrarchistic commonplaces of ice, wax and wasting disease. But the epithalamium celebrates an event which the strict petrarchistic convention excludes: the surrender of the lady.⁴⁷

Thus, it is significant that Juliet should be expressing this epithalamium instead of a frustrated Petrarchan lover; and also Juliet is saying this set piece because the love she feels is not a Petrarchan "favor." So from the very beginning of this "sestet," Petrarchan conventions are rejected in Juliet's desire for complete surrender to Romeo.

In Act III, scene ii, Juliet's oxymorons over the slaying of Tybalt by Romeo and Romeo's despair over the fact that cats, dogs, and mice can look on Juliet but he cannot, both hearken back to a type of Petrarchan despair. But the practical soon breaks through. Concrete plans are made to reunite them once again. The Friar reminds Romeo of the dignity of man; and most important he reminds Romeo that it is "wit, that ornament to shape and love" that must be employed--not irrational despair. The Friar refuses to allow Romeo to sink into his former Petrarchan despair:

Happiness courts thee in her best arrays;
 But, like a misbehaved and sullen wench,
 Thou pout'st upon thy fortune and thy love:
 Take heed, take heed, for such die miserable.
 Go, get thee to thy love, as was decreed,
 Ascend her chamber, hence and comfort her
 (III.iii.i42-i46)

⁴⁷Forster, p. 114. See also Green, The Epithalamium in the Renaissance for Petrarchan commonplaces in the epithalamium.

Immediately following this scene, Old Capulet and Paris appear, and they too try to resort to the idea that love can be "ruled." Old Capulet says:

I think she will be ruled
In all respects by me; nay more, I doubt it not.--

But this notion is again directly contradicted as Romeo and Juliet's lyrical aubade occurs. The dramatist never allows the audience to forget that the lovers now have entered a new phase of love. Mark Van Doren says of Romeo and Juliet essentially the same thing: "The author of Romeo and Juliet watches us as affectionately as he watches his hero and heroine; no sooner has he hurt our feelings than he has saved them, no sooner are we outraged than we are healed."⁴⁸ With the aubade all physical tension is melted for the lovers. The Petrarchan frustration is over, and from this point on the action moves to reveal love's redemptive power.

The next few scenes present an onslaught of rejection of the Petrarchan manner. First, Juliet imagines that she sees Romeo dead, which is direct contradiction to the Petrarchan roles. Coleridge says this is "imagination deeply stirred by passionate emotion,"⁴⁹ and it is not death imagined to grant sexual fulfillment. Capulet then asserts the worth of Paris in almost a parody of a Petrarchan lover attracted to outer

⁴⁸ Mark Van Doren, "Romeo and Juliet," Shakespeare (New York, 1940), p. 74.

⁴⁹ Coleridge, Literary Remains, vol. ii, p. 174, quoted in Furness, p. 197.

beauty. Like the Petrarchan lover, Paris is "worthy" of her favors.⁵⁰ And the earthy Nurse echoes the sentiments of Capulet. But Juliet recognizes that the attraction to the outer man is fickle and does not necessarily suggest the power of love, as she rejects the "Ancient damnation" in the form of the Nurse. Shortly after, Juliet rejects another tenet of the courtly love tradition that found its way into the Petrarchan manner, i.e., adultery.

C. S. Lewis says of the "theory of adultery" in the courtly love tradition that "conjugal love is not furtive, and jealousy, which is of the essence of true love, is merely a pest in marriage."⁵¹ In opposition Juliet pledges constancy in love:

God join'd my heart and Romeo's, thou our hands;
And ere this hand, by thee to Romeo seal'd,
Shall be the label to another deed,
Or my true heart with treacherous revolt
Turn to another, this shall slay them both
(IV.i.55-59)

From this point on, she chooses death rather than inconstancy. And in her desire for constancy in love and its outcome, death, Juliet begins to equate love with death itself. Brooke says:

One cannot, by the end, conceive of their love otherwise than as a lightning before death, and this is one of the play's most characteristic diagnoses of the sonnet-love tradition: it is indeed the most serious aspect of the play as

⁵⁰ III.v.177-182.

⁵¹ Lewis, p. 36.

tragedy--that the sense of it as comedy (sonneteer's romance) demands death as its fulfilment.⁵²

This is proven out structurally. In her suicide soliloquy, Juliet again pledges herself to the sacrament of marriage and to true love which is found in Romeo. A comic scene intervenes with Old Capulet and the servants discussing the marriage banquet and the baked meats when the Nurse interrupts the marriage conversation with news of Juliet's death. We have already seen the fact that after the wedding night is over and the aubade sung, Romeo and Juliet imagine each other dead. This is only right, says G. R. Smith, because "death for the renaissance humanists was the means to the greatest love to be desired."⁵³

Edgar Wind has shown that the Italian Renaissance humanists identified Eros or Amor "with death itself, in its painful no less than its joyous aspect." They derived this notion from their readings of Plato and Plotinus and from the many Roman sarcophagi on which they found either the image of the deceased supported by the winged adolescent boy Amor, or figures of the mortals who had been loved by gods--Endymion, Leda, Ganymede, Rhea, Psyche, and the rest. Edgar Wind quotes Pico's account of Alcestis, that she "did achieve the perfection of love because she wanted to go to the beloved through death; and dying through love, she was by the grace of the gods revived," and Lorenzo de' Medici, who wrote that "the beginning of the vita amorosa proceeds from death, because whoever lives for love, first dies to everything else. And if love has in it a certain perfection . . . it is impossible to arrive at that perfection without first dying with regard to the more imperfect things." And so Wind concludes that to these Renaissance humanists, "Thanatos and the Funerary Eros were one."⁵⁴

⁵²Brooke, p. 99.

⁵³Smith, p. 54.

⁵⁴Smith, p. 54.

As soon as the Capulets see Juliet "dead," then all is lost. All thoughts of marriage are turned to death exactly as Romeo and Juliet did after their own marriage. Old Capulet says:

Death is my son-in-law, death is my heir;
My daughter he hath wedded: I will die,
And leave him all; life, living, all is Death's.

Death does not allow for rigid behavior and posturizing, and perhaps this is one reason Old Capulet can utter those beautiful spontaneous lines:

Death lies on her like an untimely frost
Upon the sweetest flower of the field.

Bradbook suggests that Shakespeare's use of spontaneity exhibits a "deeper and more complex resolution of discord."⁵⁵ For Capulet, living by "rules" made life simple and trite, but this spontaneous imagination characterizes a new spark in his understanding of life and love.

Act V opens with a dream, but it is not the dream of a Petrarchan lover. "All of Petrarch's dream poems are on Laura dead."⁵⁶ Romeo's dream is in reverse. He is dead and Juliet revives him with a kiss so that he is an emperor. G. R. Smith uses Cardinal Bembo's theory of love and the next world in an analysis of V.i.i-11:

A kiss is the communion of two souls who ought to awake in the eternal Beyond; the seventh line above tells us that awakening cannot be, but the ninth line asserts in the face of reason and disaster, it

⁵⁵Bradbook, p. 46.

⁵⁶Forster, p. 12.

will be. The tenth and eleventh lines are a Neoplatonic double equation: his nighttime dream of life is to waking earthly love as his earthly love is to his love in the heavenly Beyond of his dream. The series of concepts is circular, perhaps because according to Bembo a circle is the perfect form-- as well as a common symbol of eternity.⁵⁷

Once again, the Petrarchan manner is rejected for the idea that love is a valid feeling in this world and a possibility for the next world.

Romeo also pledges himself to love's natural outcome-- death, and he refers to the poison as a "cordial." By the laws of nature, poison will kill him; but as the Friar suggested earlier vice can sometimes work for virtue. The laws of the Petrarchan code led to a "death" of love's true feeling, while the growth of love's valid feeling leads to physical death but also brings redemptive and healing power on a private and public level. To reinforce this idea we see Friar John unable to reach Romeo at Mantua. This is symbolic of life's inability to be ruled or codified or even to be planned. There is an element in the nature of the world that cannot be ruled. Just as love could not be guaranteed by obeying the Petrarchan manner, life cannot be guaranteed by a certain plan.

As Romeo enters the graveyard in V.iii, the sextet nears completion because Romeo has completely rejected the Petrarchan posturing before love. Now he enters a type of tragic knowledge that the life and death paradox is just a part of that

⁵⁷Smith, p. 53.

Petrarchan manner. With a knowledge of true love as he has experienced with Juliet, death becomes the natural end of love's union as well as the final harbor for life's voyage. The dramatic presentation of life and death leads not to an irreconcilable opposition of life and death, but rather suggests that death may bring out the highest qualities of man's existence. In the presence of the "detestable womb of death," Romeo realizes that he is a man. There is no question that death is bitter, but unlike the Petrarchan paradox, a man is neither "dead" in life nor "alive" in death. Man assumes the full potential of life in this world even in the face of death.

He also begins to understand the quality of beauty that is not present in the trite descriptions of the Petrarchan lady. Beauty for Romeo does not exist in the lady's physical "parts." Romeo says that even in the horrible darkness of the tomb, Juliet's beauty makes "This vault a feasting presence full of light." We sense a certain glory in Romeo's realization because love is not in the physical parts. Joseph Chang says:

In the conventional sonnet tradition, the blazon of love attempts to evoke the essential beauty of the beloved. But in his sonnet [Sonnet 130] and in this play, Shakespeare modifies tradition so that his reader and his audience can realize love has nothing to do with either coral lips or reeking breaths.⁵⁸

Romeo surrenders finally to love as his pilot as he did

⁵⁸Chang, pp. 27-28.

before the feast, and dies with a kiss. The Petrarchan lover too was guided through life's tempestuous seas by love, but for Romeo that love came to fruition. Juliet also dies with a kiss as a restorative, and this is important because she dies triumphantly with the idea that their love is reconstructed in death as it was in life. They are united in death, but love continues.

As the play ends, the Prince tells of the use of love in death--that enmity is forsaken for brotherhood and full harmony is achieved on every level. Perhaps only a Romantic can completely understand the change that is wrought in the play from love-sickness to truly being in love. William Hazlitt says:

For if it has the sweetness of the rose, it has its freshness too; if it has the languor of the nightingale's song, it has also its giddy transport; if it has the softness of a southern spring, it is as glowing and bright. There is nothing of the sickly, sentimental cast. Romeo and Juliet are in love but they are not love-sick. Everything speaks the very soul of pleasure, the high and healthy pulse of the passions: the heart beats and the blood circulates and mantles throughout. Their courtship is not an insipid interchange of sentiments lip-deep, learnt at second-hand from poems and plays--made up of beauties of the most shadowy kind, of "fancies wan," of evanescent smiles and sighs that breathe not, of delicacy that shrinks from the touch, and feebleness that scarce supports artificial dearth of sense, spirit, truth and nature! It is the reverse of all this.⁵⁹

⁵⁹quoted in Furness, p. 300.

CONCLUSION

Romeo and Juliet is a dramatization of the world of the sonnets. It dramatizes the themes of Shakespeare's Sonnets 1-126, and it dramatizes elements of the sonnet tradition. Both of Shakespeare's works were written early in his career, and both were quite possibly written during a fashionable sonnet vogue and during a general lyrical period. By dramatization of the sonnets, I have meant that what was once a poetic potential became a dramatic action. In the sonnet tradition and in Shakespeare's Sonnets, the omnipresence of death in the face of love is constantly acknowledged. The poets state that death is inevitable, but by the nature of poetry death cannot actually occur. In drama, a living character can be stricken by death's fatal hand. Granted, it is only an artistic representation of death's action, but it is action. The sonnets tell us that love perishes with death. In the drama, love is shown to perish with death.

Both of the works are enmeshed in a Renaissance environment. The very form of the sonnet was an outgrowth of a Renaissance humanist's artistic skill. In this tightly woven form made up of fourteen lines and an internal balance between a thesis and antithesis, Petrarch expressed the qualities of love in life and in death. As he worked with the characteristics of the dolce stil nuovo tradition and the love poetry of the troubadours, new themes came to the forefront such as

the transitoriness of beauty, the pains of absence, the immortality granted by verse, and the unassailable chastity of the lady. These themes later inspired a school of Petrarchists who also used the conceits and images of Petrarch to express a love that could only be described in ingenious, clever ways. By concentrating on the conventional themes and images, love as a valid feeling gradually faded in favor of a posture taken toward love. The sonnets of the English poets, Watson and Barnes in particular, clearly reveal the way the Petrarchan manner had come to stand for love.

In Romeo and Juliet and the Sonnets, Shakespeare makes use of the Petrarchan themes and structure, but he rejects the Petrarchan manner as only an appearance as opposed to the reality of true love. And in both of the works, art is finally the medium through which immortality is gained. Even though Petrarch was an early humanist with an intense belief in the possibilities of man, his love experiences were frustrated and he only "dreamed" of sexual fulfillment. After Laura's death, she became an angelic being whom Petrarch would join after his death. As a result, Petrarch had to concentrate on the world beyond death or a fantasy world of dreams. Romeo and Juliet's experience as well as the young lover's experience in the Sonnets, concentrated on love in this world. Love inevitably led to death--the concentration on the swiftness of time in both works suggests this--but love can be enjoyed in this world too.

The idea of the "now" of experience gave rise to another feature of the Sonnets that is dramatized in Romeo and Juliet. The poet and the beloved of the Sonnets and Romeo and Juliet both create worlds where "all losses are restored" in each other. They exist in a flame that burns with "self-substantial fuel."

The three formal sonnets placed in Act I of Romeo and Juliet are another unique feature in the dramatization of the sonnets within the play. The first choric-sonnet gives clues to the larger import of life and death in relation to love. It relates this disharmony on the public level and it prepares the audience for the underlying conflict between appearance and reality. Sonnets 53-54, 69-70, 90-96 poetically take up these same themes that are dramatically portrayed in the play--corruption in one level of society corrupts the levels surrounding it. And corruption can only be healed through a restoration of love because the all-pervading love of God also governs the great chain of being that holds together the universe. Love must be the motivating force on the microcosm of the human personality and it will be reflected on a macrocosm level of society and the world.

The second sonnet is built into Romeo and Juliet's dialogue at Old Capulet's feast. It brings in the sonnet tradition as it in turn drew on the courtly love tradition. The sonnet within its religious imagery reflects the tension between earthly passion and the desire to remain holy. Loving God and

loving a woman was a fusion of thought for the medieval thinkers. Romeo and Juliet's sonnet reflects on this same tension, but in this sonnet and from this point on Romeo breaks out of that frustrating bondage to the shrine, to all attempts to make earthly love analogous to loving God and its inherent realization that it brings only tension. Romeo gradually frees himself from this "medieval problem," and breaks into a spontaneous world of love. Religious truth, couched in religious imagery before a flesh and blood woman, was no longer important to Romeo. He found his source of repentance and truth in Juliet.

The third sonnet, at the close of Act I, treats the death of an old love at the birth of a new love. The appearance of love in the person of Rosaline is dead, and the reality of love in the person of Juliet is born. Birth and death--again this theme hearkens back to the first choric-sonnet and its discussion on "the fatal loins." Birth and life necessarily imply the coming of death for as sure as there is a birth there will also be a death. And as sure as there is a life there is that mysterious element of fortune or fate working within man's earthly existence.

The Sonnets (14-15) bring out the idea that fortune operates because man is in time, and he cannot guarantee the success of his most carefully wrought plans. But if lovers are ruled by the stars they find in one another's eyes, then their "astrology" will guarantee the constancy of love and love will not depend on the external world where conventional fortune

operates. This idea is definitely dramatized in Romeo and Juliet.

Romeo and Juliet find truth in one another's eyes which they equate with "stars." On a second level the stars remind man of his mortality because stars traditionally represent eternity's unchanging quality. The stars are outside of time. When Romeo shakes the "inauspicious stars from this world-wearied flesh" and when he defies the stars, he is acknowledging the stars as the symbol of eternity and the fact that death is the outcome of mortality. He rejects the symbol of eternity, because he realizes that his love must face the inevitability of death. As in Sonnet 73, Romeo comes to the recognition that this life holds the key to the highest values.

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
 When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
 Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
 Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
 In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
 As after sunset fadeth in the west;
 Which by and by black night doth take away,
 Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
 In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
 That on the ashes of his youth doth lie
 As on the death-bed where on it must expire,
 Consum'd with that, which it was nourish'd by.
 This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more
 strong,
 To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

A point was made in this paper that Romeo and Juliet fail to defy time by not considering the possibility of procreation as a preservative of their love and beauty. They as much as destroy a "beauteous rooffe." The Capulets and Montagues also fail to preserve what they have in their legacies. They also

are unwise stewards of their talents. A more important point comes out in the Sonnets and Romeo and Juliet in reference to the defiance of time. Art will defy time because of its eternal durability and because it remains an "ionic solidity" for future generations. But the humanist position in the worth and dignity of man is implied here too. Art is of no value unless men are around to perceive its meaning.

The Liebestod suggestions are definitely present. Death's coming is a major theme of the play, and there is no doubt that the Capulets see Juliet as wedded to death. But the suggestion is not as major as first might be suspected. Juliet's passion would demand a fulfillment in this present world and not the type of passion Cleopatra speaks of when she says, "I have immortal longings in me." Romeo and Juliet pursue marriage that emphasizes the value of the highest emotion--love--in this world regardless of how painful the environment.

The world of the sonnets, then is dramatized in the play, Romeo and Juliet, in these ways. One, the Sonnets in their poetic expression of man's possibilities of living life to the fullest in this world are dramatized in Romeo and Juliet as both lovers reject an other-world philosophy for the "now" of experience. Two, Romeo and Juliet dramatizes the idea found in the Sonnets that what appears on the surface as harmonious may in reality not be "fair" but rotting away with canker.

Three, youth must "outlive" this slander in order to prove that appearance and reality can be synonymous. In the

Sonnets the young friend gains immortality in verse and thus outlives the contemporary evils of inconstancy, and in Romeo and Juliet the young lovers heal the corruption through love. Four, the Sonnets urge the young lover to procreate in order to preserve his beauty. The poet says that the friend is bringing destruction upon his own roof, but still the poet is forced to take the place of the father. Romeo and Juliet also refuse to procreate in order to keep what they must lose, but they also bring destruction upon their respective houses. The dramatist preserves their love in his drama in direct opposition to the statue that will be eroded with the centuries.

Five, the Sonnets speak of a new astronomy garnered from the stellar qualities of the loved one's eyes and this is the "fortune" that governs their lives. In the play this is dramatized as Romeo and Juliet accept each other and the "fortune" that governs them. Six, the Sonnets reject the Petrarchan manner that came to be synonymous with love and Romeo and Juliet reject that Petrarchan manner paradoxically through the Petrarchan sonnet thesis and antithesis.

Romeo and Juliet is a speaking sonnet in reference to its companion piece the Sonnets, its place in the lyrical output of the period, and its employment of various elements of the sonnet tradition that originated with the Renaissance humanist Petrarch. Romeo and Juliet is a dramatization of the world of the sonnets because poetic potential comes alive in dramatic action.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Acheson, Arthur. Shakespeare's Sonnet Story 1592-1598. London, 1922.
- Allen, Don Cameron. The Star-Crossed Renaissance. Durham, North Carolina, 1941.
- Barber, C. L. "An Essay on the Sonnets," Elizabethan Poetry, ed. Paul J. Alpers. New York, 1967, 299-321.
- Baugh, Albert C. and George William McClelland, eds. English Literature. New York, 1954.
- Bergin, Thomas G. Petrarch. New York, 1970.
- Berne, Eric. A Layman's Guide to Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis. New York, 1968.
- Bishop, Morris. The Horizon Book of the Middle Ages, ed. Norman Kotker, New York, 1968.
- Petrarch and His World. Bloomington, 1963.
- Blackmur, R. P. "A Poetics for Infatuation," The Riddle of Shakespeare's Sonnets. New York, 1962.
- Bodkin, Maud. Archetypal Patterns in Poetry. London, 1963.
- Booth, Stephen. An Essay on Shakespeare's Sonnets. New Haven and London, 1969.
- Bradbook, M. C. Shakespeare and Elizabethan Poetry. New York, 1952.
- Brandes, George. William Shakespeare. New York, 1927.
- Brooke, Nicholas. Shakespeare's Early Tragedies. London, 1968.
- Calderwood, James L. and Harold E. Toliver, eds. Forms of Poetry. New Jersey, 1968.
- Campbell, Oscar James, ed. The Sonnets Songs and Poems of Shakespeare. New York, 1964.
- Chang, Joseph S. M. J. "The Language of Paradox in Romeo and Juliet," Shakespeare Studies III, ed. J. Leeds Barroll. Cincinnati, 1967. 22-43.
- Charlton, H. B. Shakespearian Tragedy. Cambridge, 1948.

- Clemen, W. H. The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery. Cambridge, 1948.
- Cole, Douglas, ed. Twentieth Century Interpretations of Romeo and Juliet. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1970.
- Craig, Hardin. An Interpretation of Shakespeare. New York, 1948.
- Daiches, David. A Critical History of English Literature. 2 vols. New York, 1960.
- Driver, Tom F. "The Shakespearian Clock: Time and the Vision of Reality in Romeo and Juliet," Shakespeare Quarterly, XV (1964), 363-370.
- Fiedler, Leslie A. "Some Contexts of Shakespeare's Sonnets," The Riddle of Shakespeare's Sonnets. New York, 1962.
- Ford, Boris, ed. The Age of Shakespeare. II Baltimore, Maryland, 1955.
- Forster, Leonard. The Icy Fire. Cambridge, 1969.
- Fowles, John. The French Lieutenant's Woman. Boston, 1969.
- Freeman, Rosemary. English Emblem Books. London, 1967.
- Freud, Sigmund. Beyond the Pleasure Principle, trans. James Strachey et al. London, 1955.
- Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism. Princeton, 1957.
- _____. "How True a Twain," The Riddle of Shakespeare's Sonnets. New York, 1962.
- Granville-Barker, Harley. Prefaces to Shakespeare. 2 vols. Princeton, New Jersey, 1947.
- Goddard, Harold C. The Meaning of Shakespeare. Chicago, 1951.
- Harrison, G. B. Shakespeare's Tragedies. New York, 1951.
- Haydn, Hiram. The Portable Elizabethan Reader. New York, 1946.
- Hernstein, Barbara, ed. Discussions of Shakespeare's Sonnets. Boston, 1964.
- Holland, Norman. "Mercutio, Mine Own Son the Dentist," Essays on Shakespeare, ed. Gordon Ross Smith. Pennsylvania, 1965.
- _____. The Shakespearian Imagination. New York, 1964.

- Hubler, Edward. Shakespeare's Songs and Poems. New York, 1959.
- Ing, Catherine. Elizabethan Lyrics. London, 1951.
- Inglis, Fred, ed. English Poetry 1550-1660. London, 1965.
- John, L. C. The Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences. New York, 1938.
- Kaufman, Walter. Tragedy and Philosophy. New York, 1968.
- Kernan, A. B. Character and Conflict. New York, 1963.
- Knight, L. C. "Shakespeare's Sonnets," Elizabethan Poetry, ed. Paul J. Alpers. New York, 1967.
- Krieger, Murray. A Window to Criticism. Princeton, New Jersey, 1964.
- Laird, David. "The Generation of Style in Romeo and Juliet," Journal of English and Germanic Philology, LXIII (April 1964), 204-213.
- Landry, Hilton. Interpretations in Shakespeare's Sonnets. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963.
- Leishman, James Blair. The Monarch of Wit. London, 1959.
- _____. Themes and Variations in Shakespeare's Sonnets. London, 1961.
- Lever, J. W. The Elizabethan Love Sonnet. London, 1966.
- Levin, Harry. "Form and Formality in Romeo and Juliet," Shakespeare Quarterly, XI (1960), 3-11.
- Lewis, C. S. The Allegory of Love. London, 1958.
- _____. English Literature in the Sixteenth-Century. Oxford, 1954.
- Lovejoy, A. O. The Great Chain of Being. New York, 1936.
- Lucas, F. L., ed. The Sonnets, Triumphs, and Other Poems of Petrarch. London, 1909.
- Lucas, Henry S. The Renaissance and the Reformation. New York, 1960.
- Mirandola, Giovanni Pico Della. Oration on the Dignity of Man, trans. A. Robert Caponigri. Chicago, 1956.
- Mommsen, Theodor E. Medieval and Renaissance Studies. New York, 1959.

- _____. Petrarch: Sonnets and Songs, trans. A. M. Armi. New York, 1946.
- Moulton, Richard G. Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist. Oxford, 1897.
- Muir, Kenneth, ed. Elizabethan Lyrics. Freeport, New York, 1969.
- Olson, Elder. Tragedy and the Theory of Drama. Detroit, 1961.
- Parr, Johnstone. Tamburlaine's Malady and Other Essays on Astrology in Elizabethan Drama. University, Alabama, 1953.
- Ribner, Irving. Patterns in Shakespearian Tragedy. London, 1960.
- Rowse, A. L. William Shakespeare. New York and Evanston, 1963.
- _____. Shakespeare's Sonnets. New York, 1964.
- Shakespeare, William. The Complete Works, ed. G. B. Harrison. New York, 1952.
- _____. The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, ed. Edward Dowden. London, 1935.
- _____. Romeo and Juliet. A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare. I, ed. Horace Howard Furness. Philadelphia, 1871.
- _____. Shakespeare's Sonnets, ed. Tucker Brooke. London, 1936.
- _____. Sonnets, ed. W. G. Ingram and Theodore Redpath, London, 1964.
- _____. Sonnets, ed. C. Knox Pooler, London, 1943.
- _____. Sonnets. A New Variorum Edition, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins. 2 vols. Philadelphia, 1944.
- Siegel, Paul. "Christianity and the Religion of Love in Romeo and Juliet," Shakespeare Quarterly, XII (1961), 371-392.
- Siegel, P. N. "The Petrarchan Sonneteers and Neo-Platonic Love," Studies in Philology XLII (April 1945), 164-182.
- Smith, Gordon Ross, ed. "The Balance of Themes in Romeo and Juliet," Essays on Shakespeare. Pennsylvania, 1965.

- Smith, Robert Metcalf. Types of Romantic Drama. New York, 1928.
- Smith, Warren. "The Elizabethan Rejection of Judicial Astrology and Shakespeare's Practice" Shakespeare Quarterly, IX (1958), 159-176.
- Spencer, Theodore. "The Poetry of Sir Philip Sidney," English Literary History, XII, iv (December 1945), 251-278.
- Tanselle, G. Thomas. "Time in Romeo and Juliet," Shakespeare Quarterly, XV (1964), 349-361.
- Thrall, William Flint and Addison Hibbard. A Handbook to Literature. New York, 1960.
- Toynbee, Arnold J. A Study of History, Abridgement of volumes VII-X by D. C. Somervell. New York and London, 1957.
- Vinci, Leonardo da. The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci, trans. Edward MacCurdy. New York, 1938.
- Ward, A. C. Illustrated History of English Literature. 2 vols. New York, 1964.
- Wellek, René and Austin Warren. Theory of Literature. New York, 1956.
- Williams, Charles. "Romeo and Juliet in the Cycle of Shakespeare," Shakespeare's Tragedies, ed. Laurence Lerner. Baltimore, Maryland, 1963, 33-35.
- Wilson, Harold S. On the Design of Shakespearian Tragedy. Toronto, 1957.
- Winters, Yvor. "The 16th Century Lyric in England A Critical and Historical Reinterpretation," Elizabethan Poetry, ed. Paul J. Alpers. New York, 1967, 93-123.