

204

## ABSTRACT

### AN ANALYSIS OF THE MOTIF OF DEATH AND REVIVAL IN THE TRAGICOMEDIES OF SHAKESPEARE, DANIEL, AND FLETCHER

By

Peter James Zacharias

The motif of death and revival has three basic functions in the English and Italian plays analyzed in this thesis. Accordingly, each of the first three chapters traces the history and discusses the specific meaning of one of the functions, and the last three use these conclusions to elucidate the appearance of the motif in the pastoral tragicomedies of Lyly, Shakespeare, Daniel, and Fletcher, in the romances of Shakespeare, and in four heroic tragicomedies of Fletcher.

A death or a near death and then a sudden revival has a didactic function in the sixteenth century English and Italian humanist plays. The first of these, Grimald's Christus Redivivus and Giraldi's Altile teach the doctrines of salvation. Later plays are more secular. In R.B.'s Apus and Virginia, Whetstone's Promos and Cassandra, Edwards' Damon and Pithias, and Greene's The Scottish



History of James the Fourth the death or near-death and revival of the protagonist causes a conversion from vice to virtue in the magistrate or king who ordered his death. In Italy Tasso's Aminta portrays a conversion from indifference to love. With Guarini's Il Pastor Fido the motif loses its didactic function. He thinks a tragicomedy should only purge the audience of its melancholy.

The motif has an aesthetic function which it acquires when Boccaccio and Sannazaro first use it to structure their pastoral eclogues and romances. After Politian, who includes the motif in his pastoral drama, Orfeo, it becomes an integral part of the combined Ovidian mythological and pastoral worlds. Tasso in the Aminta weaves the grace and delicacy of the pastoral and the simplicity and beauty of the Ovidian tale around the motif of death and revival, forming a delicate and artfully constructed fable which celebrates a mystery of love. Besides reinforcing the spectator's awareness of observing a created artifice, the motif contributes to the balance, the grace, and the loveliness of the work. In Il Pastor Fido Guarini combines elements of the heroic world with Tasso's awsthetic landscape. This combination adds the self-conscious artist's ingenuity to the qualities intended to be appreciated by the audience.

The motif can also have an anagogic function which originates in Gottfried's Tristan where, in the image of



a dying knight being revived by his mistress, the motif points to the noble heart's participation in divine love. Gottfried's chief stylistic embellishment, the oxymoron, symbolizes the coincidence of opposites which indicate the divinity of the noble heart. The troubadours transmitted the image and the oxymoron to Dante who uses them in the Vita Nuova to chart the soul's upward journey from the world of the senses to the world of purified spirits who worship the splendors of God. The Neoplatonists transformed this image of the liege-lady reviving the moribund knight into a metaphysics which stresses the necessity of the death of the soul in the physical world, its rebirth in the spiritual world of the mind, and its union with divine beauty. Botticelli, Titian, Politian, and Tasso use the motif to point beyond itself to this mystery of the soul's death and rebirth.

These three function also appear in the English pastoral tragicomedies. Lyly, a humanist, uses the Italian pastoral conventions to ridicule the madness and foolishness of true love. In Two Gentlemen of Verona, Love's Labour's Lost, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and As You Like It Shakespeare uses the motif to point to the Neoplatonic mystery of the union of the soul with divine beauty. Daniel in The Queen's Arcadia and Hymen's Triumph uses it to reveal the social and moral evils in his society. And finally John Fletcher develops the aesthetic uses of the motif in The Faithful Shepherdess.

In Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale, and The Tempest Shakespeare uses the image of the dying knight being reborn to inquire into the nature of the perfect ruler. Perfection is a blend of the heroic and the pastoral values which can only be achieved after severe physical and mental suffering. Exposure to divine love, represented by the young lovers, is the only experience that will heal the fragmented soul of the ruler and make perfection a reality.

John Fletcher continues to use the motif to display his own ingenuity and artistic skill. In The Mad Lover, The Queen of Corinth, The Loyal Subject, and The Laws of Candy the motif retains only its past aesthetic associations. The always surprising and novel variations of the motif of death and revival are intended to entertain the audience and not to teach moral lessons or point beyond themselves to sacred mysteries of love.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE MOTIF OF DEATH AND REVIVAL  
IN THE TRAGICOMEDIES OF SHAKESPEARE,  
DANIEL, AND FLETCHER

By

Peter James Zacharias

A THESIS

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

1970

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the kind assistance of Dr. George Price, who read the entire rough draft and made many suggestions which substantially improved the quality of the thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. Harry Hoppe and Dr. Lawrence Babb; their advice on the subject and organization of the thesis was most gratefully received.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS . . . . .	ii
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	iv
Chapter	
I. THE DIDACTIC USE OF THE MOTIF OF DEATH AND REVIVAL IN EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH AND ITALIAN PLAYS . . . . .	1
II. THE AESTHETIC USE OF THE MOTIF IN THE ITALIAN PASTORAL TRAGICOMEDIES . . . . .	39
III. THE MOTIF OF DEATH AND REVIVAL IN RENAISSANCE THEORIES OF LOVE . . . . .	90
IV. THE FUNCTION OF THE MOTIF IN THE PASTORAL PLAYS OF LYLY, SHAKESPEARE, DANIEL, AND FLETCHER . . . . .	165
V. THE USE OF THE MOTIF IN SHAKESPEARE'S ROMANCES . . . . .	233
VI. THE DEGENERATION OF THE MOTIF IN THE TRAGICOMEDIES OF JOHN FLETCHER . . . . .	276
CONCLUSION . . . . .	313
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	316

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis analyzes the function of a particular dramatic convention, the motif of death and revival, in the works of several Renaissance dramatists. A near death and then a sudden, unexpected revival appeared in a great many Italian and English dramas throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Because the characters are brought close to death and sometimes even die, causing a great deal of sorrow, and yet a short while later return to a happy and joyous life, the dramatists and contemporary editors of their works called these plays tragicomedies.

Within this general category, three species can be distinguished. In the pastoral and mythological tragicomedy the near deaths and revivals occur in a rustic Arcadian setting populated with Ovidian gods, goddesses, satyrs, fauns, and nymphs. The heroes and heroines are lowly shepherds and shepherdesses whose difficulties with love cause their near deaths and rebirths. The second species, which for want of a better name can be called romantic tragicomedy or just romance, involves the members of a court and usually pits various people of the royal household against a cruel and irrational king. The protagonists always leave the court (sometimes on their own and sometimes

at the king's command) and journey to some wilderness where they have many adventures which culminate in their near death and revival. After reviving, they return to the court and reconcile their differences with the king. Heroic tragicomedy, the third species, also limits itself to the aristocracy surrounding the court, but the conflicts in these plays generally focus upon honor and loyalty instead of love. In a typical play a famous general or noble returns from war and is treated unjustly by those at the court. The various near deaths and sudden revivals help him to gain his rightful recognition and reward.

The motif is likely to manifest itself in any one of three forms in these tragicomedies. Sometimes it organizes the entire work. In Pericles, for example, his death and rebirth consume the five acts of the play and lend coherence to the diverse episodes. More often the death and revival confines itself to one brief scene. Behind this form of the motif lies the image, found in several medieval romances, of a dying knight being revived by his liege-lady. Finally the motif appears in the rhetoric of a play as the conjunction of the pair of opposites, life and death. The early dramatists relied upon this rhetorical figure, called oxymoron, to enliven the dialogue of their tragicomedies. The later playwrights, however, failed to see the need for the figure, so it gradually ceased to appear in their plays.

The three forms of the motif will have a didactic, an aesthetic, or an anagogic function in any particular play regardless of its species. When the motif functions didactically, it helps to effect a moral conversion in the central character, whose behavior is intended by the dramatist to be an inspiring moral lesson for the audience. The anagogic function, or the use of the motif of death and revival as a symbol that points to a truth existing beyond the world of the play, is more difficult to recognize. Generally those playwrights familiar with Neoplatonism use it to point to the necessary death and revival of the soul on its spiritual voyage to union with divine beauty. The aesthetic and emotional function, the opposite of the anagogic, turns the motif into an end in itself. The dramatist only wants to please and delight his audience, and he feels that he can best do this with a display of his own ingenuity and artistic skill; consequently he creates a work of art full of conceits and rhetorical ornaments that call attention to themselves and that possess so much wit and elegance that no one can mistake them for the real world. The motif appears in any number of novel variations, and the dramatist hopes that these new and always surprising variations will purge the melancholy from the hearts of the audience. If the motif is able to do this, then the dramatist feels that his efforts have not been in vain.



In England and Italy these three functions aligned themselves in a rough chronological scheme. First the humanists concentrated upon the didactic function of the motif. Then Shakespeare used it anagogically; finally Fletcher developed the aesthetic and emotional purpose of the motif. In Italy Giraldis wrote didactic plays; Tasso, anagogic; and Guarini, aesthetic.

I am mainly interested in the motif's appearance in English drama, but because the English playwrights borrowed so many tragicomic conventions from Italy, a discussion of Italian tragicomedy is most relevant. The desire to include the Italian works helped to determine the following arrangement of the thesis. The six chapters divide into two sections of three chapters each. The first discusses the didactic; the second, the aesthetic; and the third, the anagogic function. These chapters also concentrate upon the Italian plays and the traditions that gave rise to them. Two of these Italian plays, Tasso's Aminta and Guarini's Il Pastor Fido possess elements pertinent to the discussion in each chapter; hence each of the first three chapters ends with a consideration of an aspect of these two plays. The conclusions reached about the motif and its traditions are employed in the last three chapters to analyze its appearance in the plays of Lyly, Shakespeare, Daniel, and Fletcher.

CHAPTER I

THE DIDACTIC USE OF THE MOTIF OF DEATH AND  
REVIVAL IN EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY  
ENGLISH AND ITALIAN PLAYS

In the sixteenth century, humanist schoolmasters based the plays which they wrote for the edification of their pupils upon the comic conventions of classical Roman drama. They applied an ancient and appropriate name, Tragicocomoedia, found in Plautus' Amphitryon, to these mixtures of farcical action and serious instruction. These products, however, of the teacher-dramatists' pens, which were intended to inculcate sound ethical and religious principles, differed greatly from the species of the same name which flourished in the beginning of the seventeenth century and which derived its name from its use of the motif of death and revival. As we shall observe in this chapter in greater detail, the early humanist plays, such as Nicholas Grimald's and Giraldi Cinthio's, concentrated upon presenting the essential doctrines of salvation. George Whetstone and R. B. (assumed to be Robert Bower), humanists of the next generation, helped to secularize the genre by showing chastity defeating the machinations of lust; moreover Whetstone, in the second part of his play,

depicted the great magnanimity of the perfect ruler. Other humanists at this time were also interested in the proper way to govern the state and in the moral qualities of the ideal king; hence Richard Edwards and Robert Greene employed the motif of death and revival to instruct their audiences--and, incidentally, the main characters in the plays themselves--in the proper behavior of the ideal king. Edwards' play marks the first use of the motif for this purpose, and Greene's is an interesting development in the same tradition, appearing much later in the century.

At the same time that the English were improving the morals of their pupils, the Italian humanists, Giraldi, Tasso, and Guarini, were altering the significance of the motif to fit their own special needs. Giraldi hoped to reveal the nature of divine providence to his audience; Tasso, to suggest the central mystery of his theory of love; and Guarini, to please and delight his audience with the variations that he developed from this simple device. Influenced by Tasso and Guarini, the English dramatists at the beginning of the next century made the same alterations to the significance of the motif. While the English presented their changes without any critical commentary, the Italians introduced theirs amidst a great deafening clash of theories. This continuing quarrel over the value of tragicomedy provides an interesting glimpse into the reasons for changing the function of the convention so

frequently. The majority of the nobility at the Italian courts, the final arbiter in matters of taste, was pleased by variety and spectacle rather than by substance; consequently in the next century the playwrights ignored the meanings of the motif and, instead, exploited its theatrical potential.

Nicholas Grimald's Christus Redivivus (1543), which belongs to that group of Neolatin plays written by English humanists, doesn't use the motif of death and revival in the same way as the playwrights of the 1590's. He says that the name, Tragicomedy, applies because the play begins with the sorrow produced by Christ in his tomb and ends with the joy of his entrance into heaven. As he puts it:

Finally, as far as the treatment of this tragicomedy is concerned . . . great things had been interwoven with the small, joyous with sad, obscure with manifest, incredible with probable. Moreover, just as the first act yields to tragic sorrow, in order that the subject matter may keep its title, so the fifth and last adapts itself to delight and joy; likewise, in order that variety may be opposed to satiety, in all the other intermediate acts sad and cheerful incidents are inserted in turn.<sup>1</sup>

The cheerful incidents interspersed throughout the play amount to no more than the boastings of the Roman soldiers in front of the tomb they are guarding and the confused and pathetic stammerings of these same guards when they awaken and learn that Christ has disappeared. Grimald

---

<sup>1</sup>The Life and Poems of Nicholas Grimald, ed. and trans. L. R. Merrill (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), p. 109; also see Plautis, Intro. to Amphitryon.

feels that anything more riotous would distract from the serious purpose of the play and then would not contribute to "the formation of character, to sound learning, or to the extension of divine praise."<sup>2</sup> Ignoring for the moment the stupefying stuffiness, it does have the slight merit of being the first play of serious intent to end upon the joy and happiness of rebirth. Unlike later plays of the same genre, no young woman saves her lover from near death, and there is no sudden reversal from sorrow to joy in the last act; unfortunately for the audience, Grimald takes the entire five acts to progress from the initial sorrow to the concluding joy and happiness.

Apius and Virginia (1575) by R(obert) B(ower) takes a step closer to the seventeenth century norm. The death of the heroine causes the villains to receive their just rewards. Apius, an unscrupulous judge, tries to get Viriginus to surrender his daughter to him, using the fabrication that Claudius, a friend of Apius, is her real father. Virginia, a goddess-like virgin and the pride of her parents, pleads with her father to kill her rather than relinquish her to Apius. In what must have been the most dramatic scene of the play, the father reluctantly decapitates his daughter. When he shows the severed head to Apius, he himself is condemned to death. Apius, then, kills

---

<sup>2</sup>Grimald, p. 103.

himself in a moment of self-revulsion. Haphazard, the Vice figure who has encouraged Apius along in his folly is captured and hanged by Justice. Virginia does not return to life after restoring order with her death, but Fame appears on stage and promises that her name and heroic sacrifice will live on long after her. This small compensation for restoring order allows the play to end more positively than it could if it were a tragedy.

This play has much in common with the older morality plays even though the frontispiece calls it "A New Tragical Comedie." It certainly shares their concern with correct morals, and R. B. undoubtedly felt that Virginia's actions constitute an excellent example of chastity. In fact, as he states in the epilogue, he knows that he has shown all of the virtues of domestic life:

Of love to wife, of love to spouse, of love to  
 husband deare,  
 Of bringing up of tender youth, all these are  
 noted heare:

(1211-12)

He underlined the importance of these virtues by having them set to music and sung. The songs are lengthy and cover with many repetitions the need for those virtues listed above.

His comedy consists in verbal clashes and horse-play between Haphazard, the Vice, and his friend, Manipulus, all of which bear no connection with the main plot. In this play Virginia's death revealed the moral lesson of the playwright and caused the change in Apius; in the next play to



be considered the complete motif of death and revival has the same results.

Readers of Measure for Measure will be roughly familiar with George Whetstone's Promos and Cassandra (1578) because Shakespeare borrowed the main outline of the plot for his play. This unjustly neglected play has a complicated and interesting plot and a subplot whose songs and jokes are fully integrated into the moral lesson of the play. Furthermore, Whetstone assures us in his dedicatory epistle that despite the unseemly actions of specific individuals, the overall trend of the actions exhibits virtue rewarded and vice punished. Actually, however, the motif of death and revival permits him to make the necessary last minute reversals so that there are no evil persons to punish.

Whetstone divides this play into two sections; the first part shows the despicable actions of a lecherous magistrate, and the second, the magnanimity of the perfect king as he rewards the virtuous and forgives the law-breakers. When Cassandra goes before the magistrate to make a plea on behalf of her brother, who has been thrown in jail for fornication, Promos, the magistrate, falls in love with her. He will allow her only to exchange her chastity for her brother's life. After much pleading, she agrees to the conditions provided he will marry her afterwards. He reneges on his part of the bargain and does not marry her and even does not free her brother. In fact he



orders her brother to be killed. In order to get revenge on Promos, she takes her grievance to the king who listens to her case and orders Promos to marry her, but he still must die for taking her virginity and killing her brother. At this moment Cassandra changes her mind and pleads for her new husband's life. Just when all appears hopeless, her brother, Andrugio, speaks up in the audience which surrounds the king. He tells him who he is and asks for pardon for Promos and himself. This the king grants, so they all live happily with their lovers.

Whetstone handled Andrugio's rebirth with a great deal of realistic detail. A friendly jailer substituted a mangled head, which allowed him to escape and go into hiding. This same jailer promised not to tell his sister or his mistress that he was alive. He lived alone in the woods until he happened to hear that Promos was going to die; then he came into town to see his enemy hanged. When he learned of Cassandra's wishes, he decided to reveal himself, even if it meant his own death, because he knew that, if Promos should die, Cassandra would soon follow suit. His timely revelation earns the king's grace and pardon, so everyone lives happily.

R. G. Hunter speculates on the reasons for the popularity of the rebirth on the stage:

It is worth noting that the explanation for the popularity of this device has nothing to do with any desire on the author's part to astound his

audience . . . . Such scenes were popular with Shakespeare and his contemporaries because they expressed what their authors were trying to say and created the effect which they were trying to achieve by enabling the author to make a point about the opposition of mercy and justice.<sup>3</sup>

Andrugio's rebirth accomplishes more specific things than these. First it causes Promos' "rebirth" by removing any crime from his conscience; in the eyes of the king and in his own judgement he has not sinned, so he does not have to be punished. Secondly, it gives the king the occasion to display his mercy and magnanimity by pardoning Andrugio as well as Promos. These actions of the king are intended to be contrasted with the harsh and wilful actions of Promos. When the audience contrasts the general happiness caused by the king's actions with the sorrow and despair caused by his magistrate, they will not hesitate to prefer the king's mercy and charity. They may even wish to see all public figures display such commendable leniency.

Richard Edwards shares Whetstone's concern about the moral character of public figures. In Damon and Pythias (1571), a popular tragicomedy, he displays the ideal moral qualities of the king and inquires into the role of the intellectual at court.<sup>4</sup> Dionysius, the prince of the

---

<sup>3</sup>Robert G. Hunter, Shakespeare and the Comedy of Forgiveness (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 58.

<sup>4</sup>David Bevington, Tudor Drama and Politics: A Critical Approach to Topical Meaning (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 164-7.



central plot, is rescued from his circle of flatterers and sycophants by the example of true friendship that Damon and Pithias dramatize for him.

In order to reveal the essential power of friendship to Dionysius and to the audience, Edwards constructed his plot to follow the rhythm of death and revival. Damon and Pithias arrive on shore at Syracuse after a very stormy voyage. They no sooner enter the city than Carisophus, a would-be court favorite, has Damon imprisoned on a charge of spying. When Pithias learns that Damon is sentenced to die, he offers to give his life in place of Damon's. Dionysius accepts his offer and frees Damon upon the condition that if he does not return in two months, Pithias must die in his place. This prepares the audience for the climactic scene which dramatizes the moral of the play.

In this, the most powerful scene of the play, the beauty of true friendship is unfolded before the audience. Damon does not return upon the appointed hour, so Pithias is brought forward to be executed. As he is being led forward, Dionysius taunts him. He believes that all men are traitors, cowards, hypocrites, or liars, and Damon's failure to appear is another confirmation of this belief and a telling blow against Pithias' faith in true friendship. Dionysius further believes that the only way to rule is with the ruthless application of force. After gloating over Damon's absence, he insists that the execution be

carried out. Then, just as the executioner is about to deliver the fatal blow, Damon appears and prevents the sword from falling. Both friends testify before the king that they are willing to die for each other and expatiate upon the beauty and practicability of true friendship. The lesson derived from this demonstration of true friendship has pierced Dionysius' heart:

O noble friendship, I must yield! at thy force I wonder.  
 My heart this rare friendship hath pierc'd to the root,  
 And quenched all my fury:  
 This sight hath brought this about, which thy grave  
 council, Eubulus,  
 and learned persuasion could never do.<sup>5</sup>

From this moment on Dionysius will guide the ship of state by the stars called trust, faith, and friendship. He now realizes that the use of force to control people is harmful. Dionysius, rejoicing in his new wisdom, pardons Damon and offers the hospitality of the court to the two friends. From the point of death, they have risen to be favorites and friends of the king: "Myself, my realm, my wealth, my health, I commit to your charge" (p. 80). The two friends accept his offer of friendship and, after putting on new clothes, join Dionysius as the "jewels" (p. 81) of his court. The rhythm and the drama of the motif converted the king, restored and rewarded the two friends, and saved the

---

<sup>5</sup>Damon and Pithias by Richard Edwards in Early English Dramatists, ed. John S. Farmer (New York, 1966), p. 79.

country from the curse of a tyrant. Syracuse will enjoy the advantages of a just and humane king.

This play has several elements in common with various plays of Shakespeare and Fletcher. All three playwrights drew upon the romance tradition which they inherited from the Medieval world. The rough sea voyage, the abrupt landing on a strange shore, an inflexible king who enforces an irrational law, and the near death and revival of the hero or heroine comprise the common elements that are often repeated in the seventeenth century plays.

Edwards showed these dramatists how to use these romance motifs in a different way. The near death and reprieve of Damon and Pithias is meant to instruct not to entertain. The conversion of Dionysius instructs the audience by providing both extremes in one character. As the function of a debate is to clarify two logical extremes by seeing them juxtaposed, so the technique of conversion allows Dionysius to display both of the emotional contraries in the same scene. The sudden alteration only helps to emphasize the conflicting positions that were being debated by the other characters. When the audience can clearly see both positions, then, of course, it is that much easier to choose the desirable course of action.

In the speech quoted above, Dionysius explains, as well as possible, the mechanisms that make conversion possible--if not entirely probable. Dionysius is filled



with wonder by the force of the example of their friendship. In a sudden, magical moment, he changes from the enemy to the friend of these two visitors. As he said to Eubulus, the dramatic presentation of friendship has had more influence upon him than all of his learned advice. The dramatic moment of near death and revival possesses a power to influence men that rhetoric and learning cannot hope to equal. The usual defenses of the mind and soul are powerless to stop this visual image from having its intended effect.

Edwards introduced the motif upon the stage to teach Dionysius and his audience a moral truth, and often, when it appeared in this and the following century, it served a didactic function. While in many cases the function remained the same, the moral lessons to be taught changed so radically that it is doubtful if Edwards would have been able to recognize what was being taught with this motif.

The Scottish History of James the Fourth (pub. 1598) by Robert Greene also employs the motif to impress a moral upon the audience. Again a near death and revival, this time of the king's wife, Dorothea, causes a complete emotional and intellectual about-face in the king. King James the Fourth allows his passions to rule his reason; consequently he gradually isolates himself from the other members of his family and from his kingdom until he has to face the powerful king of England alone. No sooner is





the king married to Dorothea than he declares his love for Ida, the daughter of one of the nobles at court, and wooing her soon absorbs all his time and energy. The Bishop confesses his concern about his replacement of his sage council with a group of flatters, who pander to his every whim and encourage his passion for Ida. The king takes offence with the bishop's concern and summarily dismisses him. This leaves only the courtier and part-time necromancer, Ateukin, to advise the king. He immediately suggests that the king have his wife killed if he wants to marry Ida. When Dorothea hears of the plan, she too leaves him alone by fleeing the court disguised as a page. By this time Ida has married another man and refuses to have anything to do with the king. Dorothea's father, hearing that she is dead, vows to kill the king and immediately invades Scotland to do just that. The nobles of the realm abandon James to his fate as the forces of the King of England draw near. Because of his foolish actions, motivated by his lust for Ida, he now has to face England's soldiers without the assistance of any spiritual or military forces. As James is about to be defeated, Sir Cuthbert, one of the nobles of the court, enters the battlefield with Dorothea. Since she actually is alive, the king of England doesn't have any reason to kill James; so he stops the war. James repents his past actions, accepts Dorothea as his loving wife, and reconciles all his differences with her father.

100

101

102

103

104

105

106

107

108

109

110

111

112

113

114

115

116

117

118

119

120

121

122

123

124

125

The near death of his queen, Dorothea, effectuates his reversal; hence her role, even though completely passive, is still necessary to the moral of the play. Dorothea's problems begin when she learns of her husband's love for Ida. She excuses his action as just an excess of youthful vigor. Not until she learns of the plot to kill her, does she take the advice of her friend, Sir Cuthbert, and flee the court as a page. Jacques, the killer hired by Ateukin to dispatch her, finds her in the woods, wounds her with his sword, and leaves her to die, thinking that no one is around to help her. Just at that moment, however, Sir Cuthbert arrives on the scene and takes the wounded queen home to be healed. While recuperating at Sir Cuthbert's, she hears that everyone believes her to be dead and that her father has vowed revenge. As soon as the two kings see that she is alive, they are immediately reconciled to one another.

Besides restoring the lost harmony to the kingdom, she impresses a moral lesson upon the soul of her husband. She forgives his errors--but not the ones we would expect. She does not mention or even appear to resent his passion for Ida. His mistake was to listen to Ateukin, the self-seeking courtier. He, like Dionysius, was led astray by sycophants. Blinded by the corrupt flattery of the court, they could no longer see how to behave in an honorable and humane manner. In both instances the force of the example

penetrated the wall of error surrounding the king and revealed a moral truth to him.

Greene would also like the theater audience to be enlightened by the king's repentance. To insure that the audience will not overlook the intended moral, Greene invents two characters, Oberon and Bohan, to present the story and to act as chorus. They appear at the beginning of the performance and at the end of each act. Bohan is a former courtier who became so disgusted with the corruptions of the court that he went to live in the forest. There he lives in a tomb--his only possession--far away from the greed, the flattery, and the hypocrisy of his former life. Oberon, the king of the fairies, happens upon Bohan one day, who presents the play to show him what life was like in court and why he left. These two characters also supply the merriment. They entertain the audience with a variety of dances, songs and dumb shows.

Greene, the best dramatist we have encountered so far, tries to take advantage of the dramatic incidents in the plot. The action that reveals Dorothea to her husband is accompanied by a heightening of the rhetoric of the dialogue and by some kind of stage action.<sup>6</sup> While he loves

---

<sup>6</sup>The stage direction merely says, "He discovereth her" (V, vi). See The Scottish History of James the Fourth by Robert Greene, ed. J. A. Lavin (London, 1967). Evidently she is hidden in some fashion, and at the proper moment, he either brings her forward or drops the covering.

the comic scenes as much as Edwards, he integrates them into the plot better. The theater audience must have been both edified and entertained by the variety of this production.<sup>7</sup>

Of these four examples, only Greene's contains any advance in technique over the academic plays, but he is still far behind the early Shakespeare or even the early Fletcher. Moving ahead briefly to Fletcher's The Faithful Shepherdess, an early pastoral tragicomedy, we find that the greatest difference between the two lies in Fletcher's indifference to history.<sup>8</sup> It does not refer to any known reality either historical or contemporary. Its characters and actions owe their existence to the imagination and live and almost die within the pastoral world of the play. Greene's play is still partially connected to the world. He uses the historical personages and melange of historical incidents to lend an air of historicity to the events in the play.<sup>9</sup> These contrived historical incidents only obscure the moral purpose of the play. Fletcher does not

---

<sup>7</sup>Mr. Bevington's statement, "More positively considered, Greene is the apostle of entertainment in literature for whom didacticism is a guise necessitated by the norms of his generation" (p. 208), does a disservice to the serious moral purpose behind the play. Greene is just a better dramatist than moralist.

<sup>8</sup>Only eighteen years separates them. James was performed 1591 and printed in 1598; Shepherdess was performed 1608 and printed 1610.

<sup>9</sup>Bevington, p. 208f. He expresses well the exasperation of the historian with this "unhistorical" history.

allow any elements that are not harmonious with the rest of his play into the production. The same cannot be said of Greene. The mixture of fairies, hermits, courtiers, kings and tradesmen violates even the most rudimentary notion of decorum. He tries to distinguish his characters by their speech, but he cannot handle the different meters well; this device only calls attention to his poor verse. The audience never experiences the rhythms of death and revival without comic or choric or musical interruptions. From the native playwrights Shakespeare, Daniel, and Fletcher learned that the motif could be used for didactic purposes, but they learned how to present it with artificiality, grace, and style from examples produced on the continent.

They found their models of style and decorum in Cinquecento Italy, that center of inexhaustible creative activity. During the same span of years that Grimald, Edwards, Whetstone and Greene were writing in England, Giralaldi, Tasso, and Guarini were using the motif of death and revival to create a distinctively new dramatic species, called the pastoral tragicomedy. Since the examples and theories of these three Italians supplied so much material for the English playwrights, a discussion of their use of the motif will isolate and explain the differences found in the seventeenth century English tragicomedies.

Altile (1543) by Giambattista Giralaldi Cinthio is the first of the new Italian tragicomedies to use the motif

of death and revival.<sup>10</sup> This was one of his most successful experiments, and he himself imitated the pattern in five of his six later tragedies.<sup>11</sup> Horne has high praise for Altile, believing it to be the best of all Giralaldi's plays.<sup>12</sup> It is an adaptation of one of his own novelle from his collection called, Hecatommithi.<sup>13</sup> The heroine, Altile, bears a close resemblance to Dorothea. She comes close to death, and only at the last minute is she allowed to live; her near death forces the king to become aware of the existence and cause of his moral blindness. Altile, the sister of Tamano, the King of Syria, has secretly married a courtier, named Norrino. The king discovers it and forces Norrino to flee the city. Altile thinks that she is abandoned and contemplates suicide. Her brother, the king, increases her loneliness by refusing to forgive her actions. He has a

---

<sup>10</sup>P. R. Horne, The Tragedies of Giambattista Cinthio Giralaldi (Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 63-75. My discussion relies upon his description and evaluation of the play.

<sup>11</sup>Frank H. Ristine, English Tragicomedy: Its Origin and History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1910), p. 30.

<sup>12</sup>Horne, p. 72.

<sup>13</sup>This collection was very popular among the dramatists. Giralaldi's Epitia and Amenopia, Whetstone's Promos and Cassandra, Greene's James IV, and Shakespeare's Measure for Measure and Othello find their sources in it. For a general discussion of Italian works that influenced Elizabethan plays see F. E. Schelling, Foreign Influence in Elizabethan Plays (New York and London, 1923), pp. 38-78.



sword and a vial of poison sent to her with instructions that she is to kill herself by one of these two means or be burned alive. When she sees that her husband, Norrino, has been captured, she begs desperately to be allowed to join him. Just as they are about to die together, King Lurcone of Tunis, who is also Norrino's father, arrives. He recognizes his son, and Tamano revokes the sentence and accepts the marriage.

As in Damon and Pithias and King James the Fourth, the King has been misled by an unscrupulous favorite. Astano, however, does not want to advance himself; rather he wants revenge because Altile rejected his love. Astano reveals to the king the two lovers in the act of love; this sight enrages him, so that he does not forgive Altile. It takes a stranger to awaken the king to the truth about his sister. Once he learns the truth, harmony is restored to the royal family; when Astano realizes that his plan has not worked, he commits suicide.

Although Altile, Damon and Pithias, and King James the Fourth use an unscrupulous courtier to deceive the king, Giralaldi does not share the other playwrights' concerns about the political evils these flatterers generate. He is more interested in religion than in statecraft or the ideal prince. The motif of death and revival is his chief means of instructing the audience in the workings of divine providence. The last-second rescue of Altile and Norrino

illustrates that no matter how severe the reversals of fortune may be, the destinies of individuals are in the hands of a benevolent God.<sup>14</sup> This is also why Giraldi insists upon poetic justice. He teaches the audience the way of God when he rewards the lovers and punishes Astano with death.<sup>15</sup>

Giraldi used the motif to delight as well as instruct. The plot keeps the issue in doubt until the last minute, thus building suspense in the audience and capturing their attention so that they will attend to the message of the play. Fictitious plots are the best, Giraldi believes, to assist in this praiseworthy activity. The audience is attracted to the novelty of the tale and imbibes the moral lesson much more easily.<sup>16</sup> This, at any rate, is Giraldi's justification for bringing stories from his romances onto the stage. The introduction of the fictitious plots of the romances is another difference from the practice of the English playwrights. They used either traditional or historical stories for the subjects

---

<sup>14</sup>Horne, p. 38 n2: A translation from ll. 59-69 of the Prologue to Altile: "You will see then in this play of ours, Altile, how great is the inconstancy of human affairs, and that an evil disposition never finds joy through wrongdoing, and that what is decreed in heaven by the supreme Mover, who governs all things with His ineffable providence, must come to pass."

<sup>15</sup>Marvin T. Herrick, Tragicomedy: Its Origin and Development in Italy, France, and England (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962), p. 65.

<sup>16</sup>Horne, p. 35.



of their dramas. Greene tried to have the best of both worlds by calling his romance a history. None of these English playwrights, however, were prepared to sever their productions from the real world.

Giraldi, alone, associated the motif of death and rebirth with the fictitious plot in order to inculcate the doctrine that no matter how capricious Fortune may be, events will turn out happily in the end. In order to make this belief more palatable to his audience, he used the rhythms of the motif of death and revival to create suspense, fright, sorrow, and then joy. These considerations of the practical playwright forced him to break with those dramatists who wrote according to their interpretation of Aristotle or who wrote plays only for recitation.

Giraldi's defense of his own position discloses a few more details about the tragedia di lieto fin. His first statements on the nature of tragedy were made in a letter addressed to Ercole II (c. 1543), published forty years later.<sup>17</sup> In it Giraldi replies to several criticisms against Didone made by an anonymous Aristotelian critic, viz., Giraldi's play doesn't follow Oedipus Tyrannus; it is too long; there are too many characters; there should be no acts or scenes; and the Gods should not enter into the play.

---

<sup>17</sup> Bernard Weinberg, A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961) 2 Vols., pp. 912-13.

Giraldi replies that Aristotle does not have to be followed to the letter because the modern must be able to adapt to his own times.<sup>18</sup> He doesn't dispense with authority completely, but he does believe that the taste of the audience should determine what the dramatist puts on the stage.

Weinberg says:

Hence, whenever [Giraldi] finds that the rules or ancient practices conflict with his notions of verisimilitude, of audience credibility and audience pleasure, he chooses the solution of the playwright and the man of the theater.<sup>19</sup>

Giraldi objects to comedy that lasts more than an hour for the simple reason that the audience becomes bored. The dramatist should listen to the audience first and then perhaps glance at Aristotle or Horace. The motif of death and revival, which was the basis of Giraldi's conception of tragedy, was sanctioned as much by the taste of the audience as it was by Giraldi's religious beliefs. The audience accepted it and continued to ask for it in the plays they watched. While the academicians caviled against it, it became a part of the cultural milieu and, therefore, something to be imitated by foreigners.

Giraldi's more comprehensive statement of the nature of tragedy, entitled Discorso intorno al Comporre delle

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Weinberg, p. 914.

Tragedie (1543-1554),<sup>20</sup> continues to stress the importance of the audience's emotions and morals. Both tragedy and comedy have the same end:

Tragedy and comedy have their end in common because both endeavor to introduce good morals.<sup>21</sup>

They introduce good morals in different ways, however; comedy uses pleasure and pleasing sayings, while tragedy:

. . . whether it has a happy conclusion or an unhappy one, by means of the pitiable and the terrible, purges the minds of the hearers from their vices and influences them to adopt good morals . . . <sup>22</sup>

We have moved a considerable distance from Aristotle's position. All he said in the Poetics was that tragedy purged the emotions of pity and terror.<sup>23</sup>

Giraldi was by no means alone in believing that the purpose of drama was to effect a moral reversal in the members of the audience. The humanist critics held this position throughout the century and never failed to criticize those plays that they felt lacked the proper

---

<sup>20</sup>For a discussion of the probable dates of composition see Horne, p. 25.

<sup>21</sup>Allan H. Gilbert, Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1962), p. 252.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>S. H. Butcher, Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art with a Critical Text and Translation of the Poetics (New York: reprinted by Dover Publications, 1951), p. 25. "Through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions" (1449b 27-8). Horne (pp. 30-1) discusses the ambiguity of this phrase.

uplifting material. The reaction of Dionysius, the tyrant in Damon and Pithias, is perhaps the ideal that they have in the back of their minds when they speak of a drama changing the morals of the audience. The act of watching the near death purged his soul, altering his moral principles. This, then, is one reason for the frequent occurrence of the motif of death and revival. Behind the humanists' use of this motif lies a belief about the effect of drama upon the human soul.

Giraldi describes the imagined process within the soul of the theater-goer in more detail in his discussion of the effect of poetic justice upon a member of the audience:

From this [Oedipus' discovery of his sin] can he see that ignorance of the sin committed, when the evil doer incurs punishment for the evil he has done, causes the greatest horror and the greatest compassion. And this wonderfully purges the mind from such errors, because the spectator drawing a silent conclusion says to himself: if the tragic character has suffered as severely as he does because of an involuntary error, what would happen to me if I should voluntarily commit such a sin?<sup>24</sup>

The key, as it were, that opens the mind to the possibility of reform is the realization that the hero sinned involuntarily, which means unknowingly. Oedipus thought that he was acting well within the laws of nature when he married Jocasta. The revelation, however, that she is his mother forces him to see his action as a sin and precipitates a

---

<sup>24</sup>Gilbert, p. 255.

dramatic reversal of fortune from King of Thebes to a wandering exile. Although Giraldi thought a great deal of this dramatic reversal from good to bad, he prefers to use another kind that shows the workings of a beneficent deity. To be effective a reversal must be sudden, dramatic, and complete. The most explicit reversals, such as Oedipus', exchange one state for its opposite, and one of the most shocking of these is the exchange of life for death because it acts contrary to our sense of the possible. Giraldi, then, uses the motif of death and revival because the unexpected near death shocks the audience into examining their consciences, while the revival assures them that God is indeed good, just, and merciful. The complete motif also impresses its moral upon the audience with much more force than words alone could muster.

When Giraldi justifies the means that he employs to remove the threat of death, he again refers to the emotions of the audience:

It [the second kind of tragedy] is in its nature more pleasing to the spectators because it ends in happiness. In this kind of tragedy the recognition or, as we prefer to call it, the identification of persons is especially in place; through this identification those for whom we feel honor and compassion are taken from perils and from death.<sup>25</sup>

What he means is that the discovery, as in Altile, that the one about to die is a prince and not low born, as was originally thought, is enough to remove the threat of death.

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



Giraldi, the practical dramatist, justifies the motif of death and revival by citing the audience's need for enlightenment and delight. In the continuing discussion of the nature of tragicomedy, he is the last Italian playwright to emphasize the moral purpose of the motif. After Giraldi, only its ability to provide entertainment is singled out for praise.

Giraldi introduced the fictitious plot on the stage, but even such an enthusiastic champion of the feigned never created an entirely artificial world--that was left to Torquato Tasso and Giambattista Guarini. Tasso and Guarini blended the pastoral eclogue with the motif of death and revival to create a new species of drama called the pastoral tragicomedy. It had an even more extensive influence upon the seventeenth century than Giraldi's romantic variety of tragicomedy because, among other things, it was intimately connected with the Neoplatonic mysteries.

Tasso, in the play called Aminta (1581) uses the motif of death and revival in a very different way from Giraldi. It orders the rhythms of the play, but now it is in the service of love and not morality.<sup>26</sup> Aminta, the hero of this play, is neither a king nor a courtier;

---

<sup>26</sup> Still the critics hesitate to call it a tragicomedy. C. P. Brand in his book Torquato Tasso (Cambridge, 1965), p. 39, says that it belongs to no one genre: "It contains elements of comedy, tragedy, the dramatic eclogue and the lyric eclogue, and at the end of the last century the debate of literary origins preoccupied critics of Tasso."

he is a shepherd suffering from unrequited love. He loves Silvia, a beautiful shepherdess who prefers the hunt to wedded bliss (I, i). The pains of love caused by her disdain drive him to such distraction that he wants to kill himself before her eyes (I, ii). At Thirsis' urging, Aminta goes to observe Silvia bathing at the sacred fountain. When he arrives, he finds her tied to a tree and a satyr about to ravish her. After chasing the satyr into the woods, he returns to free her. Before he can untie all the knots that bind her, she commands him not to touch her because she belongs to the goddess Diana (III, I). A little later, the news that Silvia has been devoured by a lion plunges him into even greater despair (III, ii). He finally resolves to kill himself and jumps off of a cliff, but his fall is broken by some bushes growing at the base. As he lies senseless, his friends vainly try to revive him. Silvia, when she realizes who is lying on the ground, throws herself on his body in a frenzy of grief (V, i). The tears from her weeping awaken him, and both rejoice that the other is alive.

This plot holds several disparate elements together. Tasso includes some effusive praise of court life, a discussion of the value of marriage and of chastity, praise of the simple life and of the golden age of lovers, and a description of the vision of a poet and the reasons why he became a recluse. Scattered throughout are descriptions

of love and speculations on its relation to nature and to happiness. Most of these elements also appear in the Renaissance pastoral eclogue, but Tasso had to make some changes to adapt them to the drama.

In The History of King James the Fourth the near death of a woman caused the man who was her husband to change his hate into love. In Tasso's play, the near death of Aminta makes Silvia repudiate the life of chastity and realize that she should have accepted the love of Aminta. His supposed death has demonstrated to her the depth and sincerity of his love. When her friend tells her of his death, she confesses that until this moment she has lived completely bound up within herself (IV, i). She wishes that Aminta were alive now, so that she could live for him. Since he is dead, she vows to end his funeral rites with her own death(IV, i). After she finds him at the base of the cliff, her tears of heartfelt grief, falling on his face, awaken him again; now they will have an opportunity to be united, each living his life for the other.

Tasso has made an interesting variation in the usual motif. He introduces it in the service of love. Aminta changes Silvia from narcissism to altruism, and she brings him back to life again with her tears. In both cases the force of sincerity is powerful enough to cause a reversal in the soul of the individual. The motif determines the purity of the love contained in the soul of the one beloved.

Furthermore the happiness of the lovers alters the traditional pattern of courtly love. The worshiped loved-one does not remain unattainable. She learns to see the value in her suitor, and his trials and sufferings end joyously in fulfillment. Tasso completely denies the sorrow implicit in the opening situation.

Despite its obvious dramatic defects, this play turned a great many playwrights in the direction of the pastoral. By 1615, thirty-four years after Tasso's Aminta, in Italy alone at least eighty-five pastoral plays had been written, and by 1700 the number had grown to 200.<sup>27</sup> Definitely the most famous of these is Il Pastor Fido by Giovanni Battista Guarini.<sup>28</sup> Guarini complicated matters by using a double plot in the manner of Terence.<sup>29</sup> Two plots begin, develop, and end which share just a little more than their theme and location. Each plot centers on a pair of lovers, and each has a near death and rebirth. Actually Guarini has taken

---

<sup>27</sup>Brand, p. 277.

<sup>28</sup>The composition of this play is a curious story. He began it about 1580, submitted rough drafts to friends for comment; then about 1586 the plot took final form, and he continued to improve it until 1590. It is doubtful if it was ever performed prior to 1596. For further details see Walter F. Staton, Jr., and William E. Simeone, A Critical Edition of Sir Richard Fanshawe's 1647 Translation of Giovanni Battista Guarini's Il Pastor Fido (Oxford, 1964), p. xi of the Introduction and John Shearman, Manerism (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1967), pp. 92-3.

<sup>29</sup>For Guarini's discussion of his plot see Gilbert, pp. 506-7.

the essential elements of the plots of Altile and Aminta and so arranged them that they are part of the same pastoral world; each is a complete tragicomedy in itself. The plot, which resembles that of the Aminta, presents the trials of Silvio, a young man who prefers hunting to loving, and Dorinda, a young woman hopelessly in love with him.

Silvio's rude treatment of her only emboldens her to follow him into the woods (II, ii). Silvio, in the meantime, kills the boar that threatened Arcadia, and the people are grateful (IV, vi). As he exults in the prowess chastity has lent him, an echo predicts that he will marry Dorinda (IV, viii). Just then, he sees a wolf in the bushes and shoots it (IV, ix). It turns out to be Dorinda. The spectacle of her dying pierces his heart and forces him to realize that he loves her. He worships her by breaking his bow and vowing to hunt no more (IV, ix). He thinks of a herb that will stop the bleeding and will allow him to pull the arrow out of her body (V, vii). When she revives, the lovers have been transformed; both have demonstrated the sincerity of their emotions to the other; so now both are united in each other's love.

The second plot, which resembles Altile, is more complex than this. Mirtillo loves Amarilli but is not loved in return (I, ii). The two meet at a game of blind man's bluff, but Mirtillo is only further disheartened by Amarillis' refusal to love him (III, i). He then sees her enter a cave in

which, he thinks, her lover waits. Now his anguish becomes too much to bear, and he enters the cave to kill her lover and then himself (III, iv). A priest catches them in the cave, and he sentences Amarillis to be sacrificed to Diana because she was unfaithful to her fiancé (Her father had betrothed her to Silvio.) (IV, v). Mirtillo, who was also arrested, offers to exchange his life for hers (V, ii). The priest, Montano, reluctantly consents to the substitution; moreover he has a very difficult time making the sacrificial knife move towards Mirtillo's chest. To compound his frustration, two strangers, who happen to be watching the rite, deduce that Mirtillo must be the son of Montano. The news of his parentage prevents him from being killed and leads to other, happier events. Since both Amarillis and Mirtillo are descended from the gods via the priestly class of Arcadians, they can now get married, and as the old soothsayer explains, their marriage will lift the curse from Arcadia. Mirtillo's near death ends joyously for him and the other Arcadians.

Judging by this bare outline, the motif appears to have the same purpose that it did in Giraldi's and Tasso's plays. But a more thorough study of the play in light of Guarini's own discussion of the purpose of tragicomedy discloses a completely new use for the motif--a use that quickly spread to England in the tragicomedies of Beaumont and Fletcher. The publication of Il Pastor Fido occasioned

a literary quarrel that lasted well into the seventeenth century. From the start it had the air about it of the ancients versus the moderns, except that in this case, the entire quarrel ebbed and swelled around Aristotle, Plato, Horace, and Cicero. The principal parties in the dispute were a humanist critic named Giason Denores and Guarini himself.<sup>30</sup> Denores' position is easily maintained in theory but very difficult to put into practice. He believes that all aspects of the work of art should be subordinated to and determined by moral and social purposes. The last clause of his definition of poetry lists those ends:

. . . in order to purge them [the listeners], by means of pleasure, of the most important passions of the soul, and to direct them to good living, to the imitation of virtuous men, and to the conservation of good republics.<sup>31</sup>

The purpose of tragedy is a bit more modest; it purges terror and pity from the spectator and teaches him to hate tyrants

---

<sup>30</sup> The major documents in this quarrel are: 1. Giason Denores Discorso intorno a que principii, cause, et accrescimenti, che la comedia, la tragedia, et il poema heroico ricevono dalla philosophia morale, civile, & de governatori delle republiche (1586). 2. Battista Guarini Il Verrato, overo difesa di quanto hei scritto M. Giason Denores contra la tragicomedia, et le pastorale in un sou discorso di poesia (1588). 3. Giason Denores, Apologia contra l'arittor del Verato (1590). 4. Battista Guarini's Il Verato secondo overo replica dell' Attizzato accademico ferreoese in difesa del Pastor Fido (1593). For a good blow by blow account which includes the minor participants not mentioned here see Weinberg, pp. 1074-1105.

<sup>31</sup> Weinberg, p. 316.

and to eschew their style of life.<sup>32</sup> In this he agrees with both the English and Italian humanist playwrights. All see in poetry and drama a power that can change the soul and ultimately the behavior of those who witness it.

But Denores, propelled by the logic of the argument, goes farther than the practicing playwrights would think necessary. Every part of the poem must in some fashion contribute to the general moral and political end. If some part does not contribute, then the critic must call the author's attention to this major imperfection. This, he affirms, is precisely the defect of tragicomedy.

Weinberg summarizes Denores' objections for us:

He [Denores] himself, applying the same principles, declares that such forms as the tragicomedy and the pastoral are not worthy of attention since they are monstrous as artistic compositions and, more damaging still, they cannot possibly teach the kinds of lessons which are the province of poetry. Their authors are not poets; at best, since they seek only the pleasure of their audience and not its profit, they are like sophists who pursue a false and deceptive form of their art.<sup>33</sup>

Guarini sensed a specific attack upon his play in Denores' general statement and made a hasty reply. In order to justify his new species of drama, he assumes a point of view directly opposed to Denores. Guarini never argues that tragicomedy has a moral function that has escaped Denores; he prefers to argue that poetry does not have a

---

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Weinberg, p. 319.



utilitarian purpose.<sup>34</sup> Separating Aristotle's Poetics from his Politics, he maintains that Poetry strives for pleasure through imitation<sup>35</sup> and that Aristotle did not limit poetry to three rigid genres; rather he approved of the growth of new forms.<sup>36</sup> He also borrows an idea from Giraldi and says that the taste and the attitudes of the times demand new forms of poetry. The Christian religion performs most ably the functions once delegated to tragic drama, so the only reason to introduce a tragic action now is to "get delight from it."<sup>37</sup> Contemporary comedies have ceased to amuse their audiences. Only a new form, tragicomedy, can raise the level of comic action and re-awaken interest in the tragic plot.<sup>38</sup> He conceives of tragicomedy as a mixture of those elements of the older forms that are compatible and that the audience will enjoy. He sums all this up in his concluding definition of tragicomedy:

. . . it [the end of tragicomedy] is to imitate with the resources of the stage an action that is feigned and in which are mingled all the tragic and comic parts that can co-exist in verisimilitude and decorum, properly arranged in a single dramatic form, with the end of purging with pleasure the sadness of the hearers.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup>Weinberg, p. 1078.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Weinberg, p. 1079.

<sup>37</sup>Gilbert, p. 523.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Gilbert, p. 524.

Nowhere in his discussion, which tries to imitate the exhaustive nature of Aristotle's description, does he mention moral purpose in connection with the formal end of tragicomedy; furthermore he breaks with Giraldi by banning poetic justice from the new synthesis:

Punishment, which in the double form of tragedy comes upon the malefactors, is unfitting to tragicomic poetry, in which according to comic custom, the bad characters are not chastised  
 . . . <sup>40</sup>

Tragicomedy no longer enlightens; its only purpose is to give pleasure to the audience. Any element not contributing to the audience's delight is expunged.

Hidden within these innocuous definitions is an entirely new conception of drama, one that will produce many changes in the plays written in the seventeenth century. The performance of a tragicomedy produces only pleasure, and the audience no longer learns or is purged or is shown exemplary humans to imitate; consequently the drama has ceased to refer to anything beyond itself; it has no point, no meaning. Guarini has reduced the tragicomedy to a game and the audience to spectators. The raison d'etre of a game is pleasure for both participants and audience; it refers to nothing beyond the confines of the playing area. All the meaning and artistic significance that it possesses are contained within the rules and definitions that create the end and regulate the

---

<sup>40</sup> Gilbert, p. 527.

actions toward that end. The challenge of this form comes in attempting to construct the work according to the self-imposed limitations and still create a successful work of art. Thus, the motif of death and revival finds a new function in Guarini's drama. It becomes one of those limitations which challenge the artist's ingenuity and, as it were, defines the game to be played.

Viewing the motif of death and revival from this perspective reveals the extent of Guarini's ingenuity. Those readers familiar with both Giralaldi and Tasso would immediately recognize that he has used both of their plots in his play, but, that in both cases, he has reversed the sex of those who come near to death and then revive. He ties the two plots together by having the fathers of Silvio and Amarillis agree to their marriage in order to remove the curse from Arcadia. Also, he has added hints of Oedipus Tryannus to the death and revival motif.

Arcadia is a land with a curse, but this curse can only be removed by a holy marriage instead of a sacred death. The identification of the parentage of Mirtillo saves his life instead of causing his decline as in Oedipus, and a blind seer is the only one who sees that the marriage of Mirtillo and Amarillis will lift the curse from Arcadia.

Guarini, by his ingenious complications, manages to keep his audience in suspense until the last episode. First Mirtillo substitutes himself for his beloved

Amarillis; then Montano fails to plunge the knife into Mirtillo; next Carino interrupts to discuss Mirtillo's parentage. Finally Montano decides to kill himself instead of his son. By this time the audiences' anxiety should have been increased by this variety of incidents that prolongs the ending of the play.

Perhaps his neatest trick is the handling of the Silvio-Dorinda story. Just through the spacing of the incidents throughout the play, he keeps the audience apprehensive about Dorinda's fate. Only in the next to the last scene do they find out that she has recovered. Then it is told by Linco, a character from whom the audience did not expect to hear such news. At the conclusion the audience must have been impressed by the author's skill with the motif of death and revival when they realized that the entire play fit together and that there was a reason--albeit often very improbable--for everything that happened.

Two conceptions of the function of the motif of death and revival were available to the English dramatists in the last decades of the sixteenth century. The English humanists surrounded the motif with a feigned plot derived from the tradition of the romance in order to convey an ethical, political, or social truth to their audience. Battista Guarini in a conscious revolt against this method invented a new species of tragicomedy that did not refer to anything beyond itself. Anticipating the audience's taste

and modern customs, he combined comedy and tragedy together in such a way that its end was to purge melancholy from the audience by giving pleasure. The motif now helped to show off the artist's skill because it was another of the limitations that he imposed upon himself; the motif became a concern of aesthetics and not of education.

## CHAPTER II

### THE AESTHETIC USE OF THE MOTIF IN THE ITALIAN PASTORAL TRAGICOMEDIES

Even before the motif of death and revival appeared on the stage in the pastoral landscapes of Aminta and Il Pastor Fido, it had become a permanent part of the Arcadian scene. In fact, the frequent appearance of the motif in the Renaissance pastoral separates this species from the earlier classical pastoral eclogues, which were the parent plant from which the Renaissance grafts were cut. This chapter, in its endeavor to discover and understand the aesthetic qualities which became associated with death and revival, traces the marriage of the motif with the pastoral from Boccaccio to Guarini, who exploited these qualities for their own sake. The following constitutes a brief outline of what the rest of this chapter discusses at length.

Boccaccio first blended the motif and the pastoral together in Olympia and again in Ameto. In the former, a pastoral eclogue, he associates the joys of heaven and the healing powers of Christ with the Arcadian fields, and in the latter, a longer story in prose and verse, he presents Ameto's death and rebirth as an initiation into the

knowledge of true love and true happiness. Sannazaro's Arcadia, the next significant work, transforms the pastoral scenery into a self-conscious piece of art, which reinforces and counterpoints the hero's inner experiences. Politian's Orfeo, one of the earliest pastoral dramas, makes the next important addition by placing the Ovidian mythological world in the pastoral fields. In his hands, the motif stresses the love and the frustrated desire of the courtly lover, who has discovered a welcome refuge in the pastoral hills. Arcadia becomes the symbol of the inner life of the emotions. Continuing the same themes in Aminta, Tasso makes the motif of death and revival the means to fulfilling all desires in Arcadia; thus he completes the identification of the aesthetic qualities of the pastoral world with love and happiness. Guarini is not particularly interested in the nature of love, but he retains all the pastoral qualities of the motif in Il Pastor Fido. The motif becomes a device to turn these qualities into heroic action and heroic action back into the pastoral life, thereby adding another complication to the game that he is playing. The audience's appreciation of his complicated aesthetics and its enjoyment of his elaborate plot constitute the total justification for the many years he labored on this work.

Giovanni Boccaccio's famous pastoral elegy, Olympia (c. 1358), uses the conventions of the pastoral eclogue to

dramatize his own personal recovery from the sorrow occasioned by his daughter's death. Boccaccio also combines another, older form, the consolation, with the traditional pastoral elegy, and in so doing, he shifts the center of the elegy from the grief of loss to the joy of recovery. The greater part of his elegy describes a momentary vision of the joys of those reborn into the heavenly paradise.

Silvius, too grief stricken to leave his hut, asks his friends to go see what is exciting his dog. Just then a strange light appears that dazzles the eye, and a voice, somewhere within it, says that it is his daughter. She has appeared to dry Silvius' eyes. Skeptical at first, he slowly is convinced that this unearthly radiance is his daughter. He then joins hands with her and, delirious with joy, wants to celebrate with a festival to Bacchus. She joins in the festivities by singing about the power of Christ to console spirits that are troubled by death. As he listens to her song, he thinks that no shepherd ever sang so sweetly as his daughter, Olympia. When she tells him that she won't be able to live with him again because she now lives among the gods, he threatens to die from weeping. Her reply signals the joy that attends the replacement of grief with happiness:



Away with grief! Think'st thou to burst thy fate  
 With tears? As many as created be,  
 We all are born for death.<sup>1</sup>

She then describes the joys of Elysium, the place where they will meet again after he dies. The scents, the flowers, the streams, and the gentle and compatible creatures, recall Virgil's nostalgic creation, Arcadia. The ruler of this kingdom of Elysium, which knows neither the ravages of time nor of death, is beyond the grasp of most men's minds. Man can know, however, that in the ruler's bosom is a gentle lamb:

Thence comes our weal, and life to those re-born.  
 And from them both alike there flames a fire,  
 Wondrous to throw! To all things spreads that light:  
 The sad it comforts, purges the mind's eye,  
 Counsels the wretched, strengthens those that fall,  
 With sweetest love informs the souls of men.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, she has just described the purpose of her own presence in Arcadia. Since she does all these things for Silvius, she is the agent of his rebirth, providing comfort, knowledge, and love to this wretched man. She continues to describe other aspects of Elysium, and finally Silvius wants to know how to get there. Good deeds will raise him up to Elysium. After imparting that knowledge to him, she returns to Elysium herself. Silvius dries his tears and energetically orders his boys to drive the cattle out into the fields. Silvius also has been reborn.

---

<sup>1</sup>Boccaccio's Olympia, trans. Sir Israel Gollancz (London, 1904) reprinted in Scott Elledge, Milton's "Lycidas" (New York, 1966), p. 61.

<sup>2</sup>Elledge, p. 64.

This remarkable elegy blends three elements together which are often found in later pastorals and tragicomedies. The first is the power of spiritual rebirth. This power emanates from God and Christ and makes a wretched life happy, a broken soul whole, and ignorance knowledge. The second, the agency that cures the sufferer, is either a woman who, having died, returns in a vision or a deity who descends from on high. The third element is the pastoral world. The nymphs, the satyrs, the shepherds, the woods, and the flowers become part of the metaphor of the Christian heaven. The pleasure and joyous happiness that was always associated with the heaven of Christ, the realm of the Lord, transfers to the pastoral world. Arcadia, which before this only allowed a slightly nostalgic sorrow to disturb its serenity, becomes the scene of ecstatic joy and happiness.

The Ameto was written about 1341 and was the first to combine prose and verse in the same narration.<sup>3</sup> As Greg describes the story, Ameto, a shepherd, is struck by the song of the beautiful Lia.<sup>4</sup> He falls in love with her, but winter intervenes, and he doesn't see her until spring during the festival of Venus at whose temple all the pastoral creatures have gathered. At the festival,

---

<sup>3</sup>W. W. Greg, Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama (London, 1906), p. 40.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

Lia proposes that each of seven nymphs tells the story of her love. Ameto listens to each and falls in love with each in turn. Then, as they finish, something completely unexpected happens to him:

When the last has ended a sudden brightness shines around and "there descended with wondrous noise a column of pure flame, even such as by night went before the Israelitish people in the desert places." Out of the brightness comes the voice of Venus:

Io son luce del cielo unica e trina,  
Principio e fine di ciascuna cosa,  
Del qual men fie, nè fia nulla vicina.

Ameto, though half blinded by the heavenly effulgence, sees a new joy and beauty shine upon the faces of the nymphs, and understands that the flame-shrouded presence is that, not of the wanton mater cupidinum, but of the goddess of divine fire who comes to reveal to him the mysteries of love. Cleansed of his grosser nature by a baptismal rite, in which each of the nymphs performs some symbolic ceremonial, he feels heavenly love replacing human in his heart, and is able to bear undazzled the radiance of the divine purity.<sup>5</sup>

The same basic situation found in Olympia is present in this work. A goddess descends, and her power causes a change in the soul of a man. In this instance love is the agent that refines man's crude nature and purifies it enough to receive the virtues (represented by the nymphs)<sup>6</sup> which enable him to behold the divine essence. Ameto's soul, having been transformed in the baptismal ceremony,

---

<sup>5</sup>Greg, pp. 40-1.

<sup>6</sup>"One nymph breathed between his lips and kindled a flame in his soul that he never felt before (Greg, p. 41)."

enters a new world, which lies on a much higher plane of existence.

The pastoral world now becomes the site of the sacred operations of love. The initiation, indicated by the death and rebirth, amounts to a passage from the gross material world into the pure spiritual realm, where true love dwells. Boccaccio centers his death and revival within the baptismal ceremony to lend the force of the sacred to his belief about the purifying power of love. The procedures in his festival are there for didactic purposes and do not imitate any actual ceremony. In the following centuries the religious festival in Arcadia becomes one of the standard activities of the shepherds. By this time, however, it has ceased to have a heuristic purpose; all it has is an aesthetic function within the work.

Giacopo Sannazaro is the man who changed the purpose of the pastoral world. In his Arcadia<sup>7</sup> the pastoral loses all allegorical or didactic meaning and becomes instead a completely aesthetic world whose purpose is only to reflect the emotions of a poet. It becomes a paradise for poets.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup>The dating of this work is only tentative. Chaps. 1-10 were written between 1482 and 1489. See Jacopo Sannazaro, Arcadia & Piscatorial Eclogues, trans. Ralph Nash (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1966), p. 12.

<sup>8</sup>David Kalstone, Sidney's Poetry (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 12.

Consequently, the pastoral world as a lost Golden Age or as an ideal of simple virtue that can be used to criticize contemporary vices doesn't appeal to Sannazaro. Unlike Boccaccio's, his eclogues do not describe the happiness caused by rebirth. His concentrate instead upon a young lover's melancholy and his rebirth as a poet.

Twelve eclogues comprise the Arcadia; each is preceded by a prose passage that provides a description of the scene and establishes the mood of the eclogue. Many of the eclogues try to present pleasing and complicated verse patterns, but to Greg's taste at least they fail miserably.<sup>9</sup> These twelve eclogues are not primarily intended to tell a story; rather they reflect a series of moods that cluster around the existential situation of the poet. Mr. Nash states this situation clearly when he says:

It [Arcadia] is the story of a young man's temporary withdrawal from his normal milieu, his ardent dedication to poetry, and his return to the world from which he had exiled himself.<sup>10</sup>

The first four eclogues dramatize the world into which the poet has withdrawn. With the exception of the

---

<sup>9</sup>"The verse is mediocre, and several of the eclogues are composed in the unattractive sestina form, while others affect the wearisome rime sdruciole" (p. 48).

<sup>10</sup>Sannazaro, p. 24.

first, which is Ergasto's melancholic complaint, the shepherds pursue peaceful and light-hearted activities. The shepherds laugh, jest, discuss poetry, and sing compliments to their mistresses. It resembles the traditional Arcadia created by Virgil. In the fifth eclogue, the elegiac mood appears and continues to dominate until the end. In this eclogue, Ergasto sings an elegy to a dead comrade, Androgeo, which causes Sincero (the narrator) to become melancholic himself. The rest of the shepherds are curious about his sudden melancholy, and at the behest of Carino, he finally tells his whole story. Another shepherd, Clonico, also suffers from unrequited love, and eclogues eight, nine, and ten are pieces of good advice from the wiser and more experienced shepherds. The eleventh eclogue is the emotional climax of the series; here Ergasto, the best poet among the shepherds, performs a long elegy over the tomb of Marsilia, his dead love. The last eclogue presents the poet's return to his city and family. His journey home begins when he dreams that his love has died. This affects him so deeply that he wanders despondently over the Arcadian countryside until a nymph manages to catch his attention and direct him under the earth to the stream that flows to his city. He follows this river, the Sebeto, until he reaches Naples where he learns that his love has indeed died. In the epilogue, he hopes that his verses will immortalize his love.

The clue to what is happening here resides in Sincero's life history, which he reluctantly reveals to his companions. He was born in Naples and was barely eight years old when he fell in love with a playmate, the daughter of a nobleman. Because he did not dare reveal his feeling for her, he fell into a deep melancholy and began to look like the shadow of death. After contemplating and then rejecting suicide, he left Naples for the Arcadian countryside. Much to his dismay, distance did not help him. Everything in his surroundings still reminds him of the girl he knew in Naples:

Likewise no other thing can I see here that is not primarily the cause of my remembering her with greater fervor and solicitude; and it seems to me that the hollow caves, the springs, the valleys, the mountains, with all the forests summon her, and the tall trees constantly repeat her name.<sup>11</sup>

Even in Arcadia he can't rid himself of his sorrow. He still suffers from the symptoms of love and is incapable of finding pleasure in love or in Arcadia. He completes his story by asking God to end his misery with either death or fulfillment. Sincero is not alone in his woe either; Carino has essentially the same sad tale to tell, and Ergasto twice sings of his sorrow caused by the death of his mistress.

Boccaccio provides the reason for these troubled poets frequenting Arcadia:

---

<sup>11</sup>Sannazaro, pp. 72-3.

Then, as these pleasures [the sights and sounds of Arcadia] possess both eye and ear, they soothe the soul; then they collect the scattered energies of the mind, and renew the power of the poet's genius, if it be weary, prompting it, as it were, to long for contemplation of high themes, and yearn for expression--impulses wonderfully reinforced by the gentle society of books, and the melodious bands of the Muses moving in stately dance . . . .<sup>12</sup>

Arcadia itself functions as Olympia or Venus in the poet's renewal. Sincero came to Arcadia expecting the woods and streams to heal the sorrow in his soul, but he learns there that his ailment cannot be cured. He is the traditional courtly lover, fated to love a woman who can be neither possessed nor forgotten. His life can only amount to the sorrow and misery of unfulfilled desire; therefore his rebirth as a poet presents the only respite from his torments.

Pastoral poetry is only the first stage in the life dedicated to fame through poetry. In Arcadia the poet grows to maturity and learns his craft.<sup>13</sup> The pastoral poem cannot be the artless and spontaneous creation that some think it should be. Every line has to show the poet's talent and confirm the efficacy of his source of inspiration.

---

<sup>12</sup>Charles G. Osgood, Boccaccio on Poetry ("Library of Liberal Arts"; New York, 1956), pp. 56-7.

<sup>13</sup>"With this I [Carino] trust that you [Sincero], if it be not denied you by the fates, in the future will sing in loftier vein the loves of the Fauns and the Nymphs. And even as up to this point you have fruitlessly spent the beginnings of your adolescence among the simple and rustic songs of shepherds, so for the future you will pass your fortunate young manhood among the sounding trumpets of the most famous poets of your century, not without hope of eternal fame (Sannazaro, pp. 74-5)."



For this reason the poems and plays in the pastoral tradition do not lack art. Since the pastoral elegy is essentially an artistic test for the novice craftsman, two things happen to the Arcadian countryside. The poet neglects all of the traditional symbolic values, such as, the ideal of the simple life or the ideal of the spiritual healer, and concentrates instead upon the physical properties of the place. Secondly the poet invests these physical details with those qualities which prove to others that he is a poet. He has to show others that his heart is sensitive to the deepest emotions and therefore noble and that he commands the necessary rhetorical and metrical skill. The young poet then molds the simple landscape into a highly refined artistic object that reflects the sorrowful emotions in his own noble soul.

The landscape, therefore, receives a great deal of embellishment from Sannazaro. As Mr. Kalstone comments:

He magnifies the role of the setting. It draws attention to itself almost with the force of independent lyric poems.<sup>14</sup>

A good example of this technique appears in the first chapter. When Sannazaro describes the trees in Arcadia, one does not suffice. He has to include at least fifteen. Along with their beauty and shade, he mentions any relevant mythological associations. The texture of the landscape, which in Theocritus and Virgil suggested the

---

<sup>14</sup>Sannazaro, p. 25.

simplicity of life with its sparseness, now thickens as Sannazaro tries to convey the beauty and the harmony of this scene. In fact, art and nature mirror one another so well that his description of a picture resembles the descriptions of Arcadia itself:

There, when we had climbed a few steps, we saw painted above the entrance some woods and hills, very beautiful and rich in leafy trees and a thousand kinds of flowers. A number of herds could be seen walking among them, cropping the grass and straying through the green meadows, with perhaps ten dogs about them standing guard, their tracks most realistically visible in the dust.<sup>15</sup>

All the elaborate descriptions of the woods, the temples, the tombs, and the activities transform Arcadia into a picture itself. Sannazaro has taken Theocritus' suggestion of the pastoral eclogue as a little picture quite literally, making Arcadia a picture frozen forever in loveliness. What activity occurs does not receive nearly as much descriptive detail. Tranquility is the dominant mood, and it is made more appealing by the beauty and the harmony carefully worked into the descriptions.

When the mood of the shepherds changes, the entire scene also shifts. In chapter five, Opico leads the shepherds away from their usual haunts to a place that he knows well. From here to the end of the book the tone

---

<sup>15</sup>Sannazaro, p. 42. Longus in Daphnis and Chloe is the classical precedent for describing pictures in Arcadia.

becomes less tranquil and much more sorrowful. The description matches the increased perturbation of the spirit:

We had gone not much over two miles when we came to the head of a stream called Erymanthus. Through a fissure in the natural rock at the foot of a mountain it hurls itself forth with a mighty and fearful uproar, and with a kind of boiling of white spume, onto the plain, traversing which it wearies the neighboring wood with its murmuring.<sup>16</sup>

Even this description, intended to suggest the fear of the shepherds, does not destroy the decorum and harmony of the work.

Sannazaro's use of allusion also calls attention to his artistic endeavor rather than to the meaning of his work. Not again until John Dryden and Alexander Pope will so many allusions to other writers be woven into one work. His laments, singing contests, festivals, and games have analogues in either the pastorals of Theocritus or Virgil. He even includes a discussion of magic similar to Theocritus' second idyll, called The Sorceress. After chapter eleven, he begins to allude to the heroic poetry of the classical world,<sup>17</sup> devoting a good deal of space to funeral games suggested by the Iliad and the Aeneid. Boccaccio and Petrarch are the referents of the allusions in chapter twelve. Sannazaro uses the pastoral motifs to discuss his own life and to describe himself as the

---

<sup>16</sup>Sannazaro, p. 57.

<sup>17</sup>Sannazaro, p. 21.

Petrarchan lover. In the epilogue, he follows the Petrarchan tradition by promising to transform the misery that is his life into beautiful poetry. Mr. Kalstone believes that these many allusions provide one of the pleasures of the work:

The sheer pleasure in harmony and in outdoing any single classical pastoral by echoing many--and this pleasure is a strength of the Arcadia--is also enough to overshadow, to absorb and render pointless, the conventional lover's lament.<sup>18</sup>

The failure that Kalstone mentions is the failure that should be expected in a work of art that exists for the pleasure that can be derived from appreciating the ingenuity of the artifice. Meaning becomes the handmaiden to aesthetics. Sannazaro bequeathed to the writers who were about to dramatize the pastoral an example of pastoral motifs combined into a self-conscious, sophisticated, elegant, and varied masterpiece. These qualities were so fascinating that Tasso and Guarini wrote their pastoral tragicomedies completely under their spell.

At the same time that the Arcadia was being composed, the pastoral drama was slowly developing at several courts in Italy. The precise history of the pastoral drama remains a mystery and consequently has occasioned a great deal of controversy.<sup>19</sup> Vittorio Rossi contends that the

---

<sup>18</sup>Kalstone, p. 32.

<sup>19</sup>Mia I. Gerhardt, La Pastorale (Assen, 1950), p. 89f.

pastoral drama evolved naturally out of the pastoral eclogue. Carducci believes that the pastoral drama was created at the Court of Ferrara, using only Cinthio's Egle as a model. Theocritus and Virgil, he contends, played no part in its development. Greg follows Rossi and maintains that the eclogue had a direct influence upon the pastoral drama.<sup>20</sup> According to Greg, the dialogue of the pastoral eclogue was recited by actors at the various courts as part of the pageants and spectacles surrounding the ceremonies of state occasions. Like Theocritus' idylls, the pastoral drama developed at the courts of the aristocracy and was designed to satisfy their taste. These early performances combined a scenic background, which contrasted sharply with the decor of the court, with the dialogue and action of the regular drama.<sup>21</sup> As Greg points out, there are very few examples of these early performances remaining.<sup>22</sup> It is thought that at the court of the Estensi in Ferrara actors took the parts of the shepherds and recited the speeches and songs of the traditional eclogue. In 1490 at Rome under the patronage of Cardinal Giovanni Colonna an eclogue that criticized the corruption of the Curia was

---

<sup>20</sup>Greg, p. 169f, and pp. 424-5.

<sup>21</sup>J. A. Symonds, Renaissance in Italy, Vol. IV: Italian Literature (New York, 1888), pt. II, p. 110.

<sup>22</sup>Greg, p. 170.

performed.<sup>23</sup> In 1506 Castiglione and Cesare Gonzaga wrote and performed an eclogue called Tirsi for the Duke Guidobaldo at Urbino.<sup>24</sup> This production combined songs, pastoral complaint, and court panegyric into a pleasing whole. The pastoral imagery was not used to criticize the court; rather it was intended to be a pleasing veil that only pretended to hide a compliment. When the pastoral appears in the Italian courts, more often than not, it pays a compliment to the luxurious world of the court instead of offering itself as a contrasting and preferable ideal. This probably helps to explain why dramatic eclogues were included in the festivities of two of the three marriages of Lucrezia Borgia.<sup>25</sup> The guests were entertained by them in 1493 when she married Giovanni Sforza of Pesaro and in 1502 when she married Alfonso d'Este of Ferrara.

Politian's (Angelo Poliziano) Orfeo, usually considered to be the first pastoral drama, is worth a few moments' attention because it blends with the pastoral eclogue a death and revival theme taken from mythology. Politian wrote this play in two days for Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga of Mantua in 1471.<sup>26</sup> When it was printed in 1494,

---

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Greg, p. 31.

<sup>25</sup>Louis E. Lord, A Translation of the "Orpheus" of Angelo Politian and the "Aminta" of Torquato Tasso (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), p. 56.

<sup>26</sup>Lord, p. 70.

it lacked act and scene divisions but included a few stage directions. In 1776, Antonio Tebaldeo revised the drama by dividing it into five acts and by removing most of the topical allusions.<sup>27</sup> Greg believes, because the stage directions indicate some kind of stage similar to that used for religious plays, that this play is really a sacra rappresentazione on a pagan theme. The pagan theme is the story of Orpheus as outlined in book ten of Ovid's Metamorphoses.<sup>29</sup>

In this brief work, Politian creates a world of harmony and art beyond the grasp of common sense. Neither practical common sense nor the higher teleological powers of the intellect that determine the ends and means of human existence reside here.

Orpheus is the proper mythological subject of this world. In the middle ages the mythographers associated him with the pastoral tradition.<sup>30</sup> Unlike Sannazaro's *Sincero*,

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Greg, pp. 156-7.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>30</sup> Caroline W. Mayerson, "The Orpheus Image in Lycidas," PMLA, LXIV (1949), p. 190. Miss Mayerson lists several other qualities which may have contributed to the choice of this symbol. (1) He was looked upon as a prophet who harmonized and civilized nature (p. 189). (2) He was thought to have been a type of Christ (p. 192). (3) He symbolized the poet who possesses the powers to penetrate the unknown and sing of creation and of the gods (p. 198). (4) His story and that of Adonis are virtually the same, and Adonis was the subject of the first elegies (p. 192).

he belongs to the pastoral world, and his power to tame the beasts, to move stones, and even to open the gates of Hades became the symbol of the powers of the poet who draws his energy and inspiration from nature (as Boccaccio suggested) and then uses these powers to bring order, harmony, and peace to those very same irrational forces of nature.

Orfeo begins with a pastoral scene whose simplicity rivals that found in any of Theocritus' Idylls. Two shepherds meet upon a hillside. The one, Mopsus, is looking for a lost calf, and the other, Aristaeus, is deeply in love with the nymph Euridice. The two discuss their problems for a while; then each sings a song. When they finish, a third shepherd, Thyrsis, enters and reports that he has found the calf and also seen the nymph. Mopsus and Aristaeus depart, the one going to his cattle and the other in search of the nymph.

Politian uses these two shepherds to contrast two ways of life. Mopsus, the older shepherd, is more concerned with his practical duties to his animals than he is with love. The younger shepherd, Aristaeus, has fallen hopelessly in love with Euridice, becoming a Petrarchan lover who knows only the pains of love and none of its joys. His attention is totally taken up with the torment caused by the passion of love; the emotions of love have gotten



the better of common sense. Mopsus can see exactly what has happened and warns Aristaeus:

For, Aristaeus, if once he [Love] holds thee in his cruel sway, straightway thou wilt forget thy bees, thy gardens, and thy vines, thy tilth, thy pastures, and thy flocks and herds.<sup>31</sup>

Aristaeus scoffs at this admonition, saying that he does not want to relinquish the sweet pains of love. He is completely committed to the life of the emotions. In fact, Aristaeus sings the usual lover's complaint so sweetly that Mopsus, in spite of himself, is briefly won over to his position. He thinks that if the nymph hears his poetry she will "come to thee like a little dog."<sup>32</sup> Before leaving to look for his cattle, Mopsus asks Thyrsis, the third shepherd and servant of Aristaeus, what he thinks of his master's madness. Thyrsis' answer recognizes the limits and the lowly status of the world of common sense:

O Mopsus, 'tis for a servant to obey, and he is mad who would fain rule his master. His wisdom far surpasses ours, that I know. For me suffices it to tend the cows and bulls.<sup>33</sup>

The world of emotions is higher and beyond the comprehension of the realm of common sense. After Euridice dies and Aristaeus becomes the complete courtly lover, devoted

<sup>31</sup>Lord, pp. 77-8.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 84.

to a love who has died, several more powers of the world of the emotions are revealed.

Orpheus appears in the play, singing the praises of the Cardinal of Mantua. After the compliment, Orpheus learns of Euridice's death and his mood changes to grief, which he expresses in a short lament. Feeling that conventional mourning is not enough, he decides to descend into Hades and bring her back to earth. His singing, he thinks, is the proper instrument to retrieve her with because prior to this: ". . . we have moved stones by our song. We have made the deer and the tiger herd together, the forests follow us, and the rivers flow backwards in their channels."<sup>34</sup>

The power of Orpheus' song stops the punishments in Hades, and even Pluto marvels at the sweetness of the music. Orpheus kneels before Pluto and begs him for the sake of love to return Euridice to him. At this point Proserpine says to Pluto:

I did not believe, my sweet lord, that pity would e'er come to this realm. Now I see it triumphant in our midst. I feel my heart filled with it. I behold not only those in torment but even Death weeping for his unmerited woes. Now mayst thou for him let bend thy law inflexible, for the sake of his song, his love, and his just prayers.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

Orpheus' music has had its intended effect. He is exuberant in his triumph: "Euridice is won--my life restored." He sings several songs as he leads her out of Hades. Of course, he looks back and then watches hopelessly as she returns to Hades. Orpheus returns to earth alone and a bitter man. In his despondency, he swears that he will no longer seek or honor woman's love and urges married men to flee from the company of women. In retaliation several Bacchantes kill him. The play ends with the drunken followers of Bacchus commanding everyone to follow their example and worship Bacchus. Orpheus, the poet who can order and control his emotions through art, is killed by the unorganized and uncontrollable fury of the Bacchantes. He derived his power over nature from love. When transformed into art, his emotions can cause pity in the hearts of the coldest people and can alter the inflexible laws of nature.

Politian believes that emotion not reason rules the life of the artist, which is just another way of saying that the pastoral world is a sentimental world. Politian dramatized the difference between the world of common sense and the world of sentiment; preferring the latter even though it, more often than not, leads to unfulfilled love and death. The rest of the Italian dramatists make the same choice; only they do not believe that it is as tragic a place as Politian has made it out to be.

In employing the myth of Orpheus, Politian was the first to blend the Ovidian mythological world with the pastoral. The blending was not as difficult as it sounds because the emotional development of the Orpheus story and of the pastoral elegy are the same. Both progress from sorrow to defiant bitterness. Only, in this play the short-lived joy disrupts the steady progression of sorrow and makes the final anguish that much more bitter. The theme of rebirth, however, does not dominate the structure of this play as it does in Boccaccio's elegy. The progression of the emotions supplies the sense of structure in the performance; the action has intentionally been slighted. As Symonds and Greg have pointed out, Politian is more interested in the lyrical qualities of his play than in the dramatic. This, of course, is only fitting in a world devoted to emotion. The sadness begins on a slightly melancholy note as the lover sings his complaint. It increases considerably, becoming a distressed cry of woe when Orpheus learns of Euridice's death and intensifies into a plea when Orpheus plays before Pluto. Then it bursts out into a rage after Euridice returns to Hades. The play ends with the frantic yells of the drunken Bacchantes--almost exactly contrary to the restrained emotions of the beginning.

The mythological stories from Ovid provide the kind of action that is harmonious with the pastoral background.

The pastoral eclogue didn't have any action or even any hints that could be ingeniously developed into plots. Because of the obvious violation of decorum, the playwrights couldn't include the ambitions of kings or the foibles of city dwellers in Arcadia. It is to Politian's credit that he saw that Ovid's deities and nymphs would provide action that was essentially of the same spirit as that of the pastoral. Several of the stories that compose The Metamorphoses share at least two qualities with this pastoral world. First, they are complete in themselves; the audience does not need any special knowledge or experience to understand what they are seeing. Secondly, they remain pleasing fictions, delicate and beautiful artistic creations for all to behold and admire. Many of the stories pretend to relate the origin of trees and flowers, but everyone who knows the stories accepts them not as science but as art. As Mia Gerhardt has noticed, Politian has imagined these stories not to be about gods and goddesses but about real human protagonists.<sup>36</sup> There is no real difference between the personalities of Aristaeus and Orpheus and Pluto and Proserpine. All are equally moved by music and therefore capable of the finer emotions. While the characters are given a slight bit of life, there

---

<sup>36</sup>Gerhardt, p. 78. "Le monde mythologique est pour lui une réalité présente et contemporaine, sur le même plan que les protagonistes humains."

is still not enough to allow the audience to identify with them or to even begin to think that they have anything in common with these characters. As in the pastoral the sense of life, of vitality, and of reality is kept strictly under control, so that the audience is continually aware that these characters are part of an artistic creation. Politian's drama does not hold a mirror up to human nature. It tries to reflect beauty, the goal of artistic perfection.

Beauty, attained by the conscious refinement of the story, pervades the work. All the actions that could be violent and theatrical are ignored or turned into narration. Euridice's death is very briefly described; even the chase that led to her death is closer to the symbol of a chase than to any representation. Orpheus' death is also briefly handled. His head is brought on stage as proof of his dismemberment. The drunken Bacchantes' actions are highly stylized and intended only to suggest frenzy, not represent it.

The few descriptions suffer the same process of refinement. They are just the opposite of Sannazaro's. Where his were detailed and pictorial, these are abstract and suggestive. They concentrate upon the beauty of Euridice and the sadness of Aristaeus and Orpheus, her two lovers, and not upon the landscape. Politian did not want the audience to get too much of a whiff of the actual

world; he preferred that they experience the ideal world of created beauty.

Politian and his followers' conception of beauty, drama, and art have been fairly consistently misinterpreted by modern critics. For example, Mia Gerhardt correctly sees the relationship between Orfeo and the Hellenistic Idylls, but she refuses to see that these same qualities can be part of the aesthetics of a successful work of art:

Toute cette mythologie, qui faisait un si convaincant appel à l'imagination des Italiens, est une mythologie de décadence, plutôt alexandrine que grecque, dans le goût des Idylles pseudo-anacréontiques et de l'Anthologie--gracieuse, claire, sans profondeur et un peu efféminée.<sup>37</sup>

To begin to understand the works that are discussed in this chapter, we must realize that these qualities were looked upon as virtues and that they were consciously incorporated into the work of art by the artist.

These qualities--grace, clarity, simplicity, and delicacy--blended well with the pastoral world created by Virgil and developed by Sannazaro. The blending of the pastoral and the Ovidian settings created a world completely devoted to the emotions. Against the artificiality

---

<sup>37</sup>Gerhardt, p. 78. She is not the only one who disparages this style. Here is Douglas Bush's opinion of the pastoral Ovidian verse: "In their pictorial richness, artificial rhetoric, erotic themes, and general slightness of content, they were typical young men's poetry . . . ." Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry (rev. ed. New York, 1963), p. 75f.

of a pastoral and mythological scene the emotions of the Petrarchan lover could be displayed, reflected, and sometimes even analyzed. This sentimental world was also ideally suited to the development of the motif of death and revival. Although this motif is latent in the Orpheus story, Politian did not emphasize this aspect; he preferred to concentrate upon the emotions of the characters. It was left to other dramatists to exploit the possibilities of this motif.

Nicolò de Correggio (c. 1450-1508) first adapted the motif of death and revival to the mythological drama in his play called Cefalo. This play, based upon the story of Cephalus and Procris found in the seventh book of The Metamorphoses, unfolds against the same blend of pastoralism and mythology that Politian invented.<sup>38</sup> In the fourth act, Cefalo wounds an animal in the bushes who turns out to be his wife, Procri.<sup>39</sup> Prior to this the two had been sundered by the insidious gossip of two self-serving creatures. But now that Procri is dying, the two resolve their differences, and as she dies, Cefalo pledges his love to her. In the last act, Diana, to whom Procri had pledged herself in a moment of anger, comes on the scene, raises Procri off her bier, and restores her to her husband and

---

<sup>38</sup> Greg, p. 168.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 166-8. My discussion rests upon his resumé of the plot.



lover. This last act, which does not derive from Ovid, appears to be the secularization of the theme of rebirth in Boccaccio's eclogue, Olympia because it ends with the joyous revival of the hero's dead loved one. Correggio was the first to dramatize the complete motif of death and revival, allowing his audience to experience the sorrow of loss and the joy of revival that are common in the Renaissance pastoral eclogue.

This play shares more than its emotional rhythm with the pastoral eclogue; it includes many conventions from the tradition. Three acts end with the shepherds and nymphs assembling to sing eclogues and songs. In the second act an old shepherd forces Procri to listen to the pleas of her husband. When he finishes, the act ends with an eclogue. A chorus of fauns and satyrs end act three, and the fourth act concludes with the Muses and the nymphs singing a lament for Procri. These songs in honor of Procri's death include several of the conventions of the pastoral elegy. The mourner asks the muses to help him mourn his beloved; the mourners assemble around the bier; the deities pass by; the singers tell how all nature mourns for Procri; and Cefalo himself despairs at her death. This play demonstrates the intimate relationship between the pastoral elegy and the pastoral tragicomedy better than the later and more refined examples of the genre.

Guarini fails to mention Cefalo in his discussion of the origin of the pastoral drama. According to him Agostino Beccari's Il Sacrificio (1554) was the first pastoral drama.<sup>40</sup> The period between the Cefalo and the Il Sacrificio produced many experiments, but none of them were as complete and as polished as Beccari's play,<sup>41</sup> which presented a complicated plot that was full of action centering around three pairs of lovers. So much dramatic action constituted a decided improvement over the earlier plays, such as Cefalo, which substituted songs and eclogues for dramatic action. The difficulties of the plot are resolved by miraculous means which, while not instances of the fully developed motif, still maintain the same spirit and cause the same results. Callinome, condemned to be a sacrifice to Pan because she attended his festival

---

<sup>40</sup>"The first of the moderns who had the courage to do it [write a pastoral drama] and succeeded was Agostin de' Beccari, a respected citizen of Ferrara, to whom alone the world should assign the happy invention of such a poem." As I have shown here and as Greg demonstrates in his Appendix I, the origin of the pastoral drama is not as simple as this. Guarini ignores completely Ovid's role in the formation of the pastoral drama (Gilbert, p. 531.)

<sup>41</sup>None of these plays used the motif of death and rebirth in any significant way. Torrsillo's Due Pellegrini (1528) comes the closest to using it. A miraculous voice saves two lovers who were contemplating suicide. Casalio's Amoranta, Epicuro's Mirzia, Cozza's Erbusto and Cinthio's Egle experiment with different combinations of elements, but they are not interested in the motif. See Greg, p. 173.

which was forbidden to followers of Diana, escapes death by smearing a magic ointment, which makes her invisible, over her body. While invisible, she kills the boar which the priests of Pan hoped would kill her. Erasto, who loves her, gave her the ointment, and in return she falls in love with him.<sup>42</sup> Again near death causes a conversion from indifference to love. Another couple is saved by a miraculous metamorphosis. Carpalio loves Melidia, and she secretly returns his love. Melidia's brother, Pimonio, refuses to sanction the marriage, and to prevent her from disobeying his will, he keeps her under guard. While Pimonio attends the games held at Pan's festival (cf. Sannazaro's Arcadia, ch. 11.), the two lovers consummate their love and are able to escape Pimonio's wrath because he falls into an enchanted lake and reappears as a boar.

Agostino Argenti's Lo Sfortunato (1567) tries to effect the conversion without recourse to the miraculous. Sfortunato, a shepherd who has intentionally let his love escape from his grasp, decides to die since he now will be unlikely to experience the pleasures of love. His love, Dafne, who hears him make this vow of death, finally falls in love with him.<sup>43</sup> This is only one of three pairs of lovers, and this conversion doesn't receive the emphasis in the structure of the play that it receives in later

---

<sup>42</sup>Greg, pp. 174-5.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., pp. 175-6.

works. These early playwrights experimented with various combinations of the pastoral eclogue, the Ovidian mythological tale, and the classical Latin comedy, but none of them approached the perfection of Tasso and Guarini.

Torquato Tasso wove these various traditions into a pastoral drama, Aminta, which became one of the most celebrated works of art of the Italian Renaissance. The astute critic J. A. Symonds has called this play, along with Il Pastor Fido, "the climax of dramatic art in Italy."<sup>44</sup> More recent critics, such as Greg, Gerhardt, and Brand spare few adjectives when discussing its perfection.<sup>45</sup> Perhaps, John Shearman's comparison describes its qualities most precisely of all:

It is like a bronze by Giovanni Bologana: tiny, polished, exquisitely interlaced yet balanced and gracefully at ease. As one turns the bronze in the hand so one may read and re-read Aminta, continually satisfied by the discovery of new formal felicities.<sup>46</sup>

Tasso partially adopts Sannazaro's and Politian's view of Arcadia. He too believes that the pastoral world belongs to the emotions, but whereas they centered their worlds around the sorrow of the Petrarchan lover, Tasso centers his upon the fulfillment of love. Aminta, of course, is the typical Petrarchan lover, hopelessly in

---

<sup>44</sup>Renaissance in Italy, p. 114.

<sup>45</sup>Greg, p. 192. "The effect produced is one and whole, that of a perfect work of art, . . . "

<sup>46</sup>Mannerism, p. 92.

love, sorrowful, shy, modest, despairing, theatrical, and suicidal. Tasso allows him to win the love of the shepherdess that he worships and thereby denies the tragedy in the traditional pose of the worshiping lover. All Sincero and Orpheus had was the memory of their beloved to immortalize in verse; Aminta discovers that his love was not dead, as he thought, and so he attains the enjoyment of his desire. In addition to motivating the action, love comes in for a good deal of discussion by the characters and the chorus of the play. These discussions determine the nature and importance of love and stress its intimate connection with the pastoral world. In the prologue Cupid, who has decided to go among the shepherds, begins the discussion of love by boasting about its ennobling powers. In effect, love overcomes the social distinctions imposed on people by raising shepherds to the level of heroes. The belief that love purifies and refines the base nature in man so that even the lowly perform deeds of valour and the untalented sing songs pleasing to hear belongs to the courtly love tradition that began in the twelfth century. From the beginning, then, this world assumes that the emotions can alter for the better and that they are the only practical means available.

The lover, if he wants to win the heart of the girl he loves, has to appeal directly to her emotions. Traditional chivalrous deeds, which are part of a rational code

of honors, duties, and protections, will not suffice. Aminta saves his beloved Silvia from the Satyr; but instead of falling in love with him, she runs off into the forest without a word of thanks. It takes a much more drastic action to convince her of his love. When the despair, caused by the realization that he will never possess his love again, forces him to attempt suicide, she realizes just how sincerely he does love her. Love dominates his entire existence; he cannot live without it. This fact, like a bolt of lightning, flashes straight into her breast and ignites the dry husk that had been her heart. Only sincere love could have had such a miraculous effect upon the maiden.

Love can be either pleasurable or sorrowful, depending on whether or not it is fulfilled. In this pastoral world, which differs from Sannazaro's and Politian's on this point, all desires are fulfilled; none are doomed to perpetual frustration. The chorus in a famous speech at the end of act one makes just this point about the pastoral world. This world was the ideal and deserved to be called the Golden Age, but not because it was innocent, simple, or fruitful. It merited the title because the people living there knew no restraint upon desire. They obeyed a law ". . . *aura e felice / che Natura scopli: S'ei piace,*

ei lice" (ll. 590-1).<sup>47</sup> Honor, the symbol of the public life that restrains passions in the name of custom, reason, and taste, has destroyed this once beautiful world. The chorus prefers the world of the libertine to the world of the courtier and wishes only to live according to its desires, because life is so short and death so permanent.<sup>48</sup> The advice that Daphne and Tirsi dispense is based upon this same law. Daphne tried to get Silvia to abandon Diana by recounting how she, as a young girl, found much more pleasure in life after she had given in to her lover than she did before. Tirsi tries to get Aminta to find a woman who will be more easily persuaded than Silvia so that he doesn't have to suffer so much frustration. Aminta, despite falling over a cliff, and Silvia, despite being chased by a wolf, enjoy each other's love and thus fulfill their own deepest desires.

---

<sup>47</sup> Torquato Tasso: Poesie, ed. Francesco Flora (Milano, 1956). All quotes are from this work.

<sup>48</sup> The more prevalent humanist viewpoint is expressed well by Spenser in his Faerie Queene: "But temperaunce," said he, "with golden squire/betwixt them both can measure out a meane,/ nether to melt in pleasures whott desyre,/ Nor frye in hartlesse grief and dolefull tene./ Thrise happy man, who fares them both atweene!" (Book II, Canto 11, lviii). Hiram Hayden in The Counter-Renaissance (New York, 1950) sums up his discussion (pp. 308-20) of the subject with: "Hence volition while making the soul's decisions, is typically checked and limited by understanding: nothing is more alien to the Christian-humanistic tradition than the concept of a life directed by the autonomous and unlimited will. Indeed, if the will revolts from the guidance of reason, it is simply to fall victim to 'inferior' irrational powers, and hence to lose all true freedom (p. 319)." Needless to say Tasso advocates precisely the opposite viewpoint.

The motif of death and revival is the only means that will convert their potentially tragic situation into joyous fulfillment. It denies the possibility of death and also the frustration of longing and sorrow. Death-and-revival is necessary to this pastoral world because it reveals that love does triumph in Arcadia--even over death. For those who feel that this motif is proper to this world and believe this conclusion to be natural, love has also triumphed over common sense. Tasso adds this motif to the pastoral world to show the power of love and to deny the tragic implications of courtly love. Regardless of how the contradiction in the motif appears to common sense, it will still feel natural to those who believe that the world should be arranged to fulfill all desires.

To complete his conception of the pastoral world, Tasso has to make two more alterations in the traditional Arcadia. In the Renaissance, Virgil's Arcadia came to symbolize the ideal of otium, the life of contentment, free from all perturbations of the spirit.<sup>49</sup> Tasso believes that this style of life, which he calls ozio or

---

<sup>49</sup>What Hallett Smith writes of Elizabethan England applies equally well to Italy: "Whatever may be said of other times and places, Elizabethan England saw a meaning in pastoral. This meaning was, or constituted, a positive ideal. It was an ideal of the good life, of the state of content and mental self-sufficiency which had been known in classical antiquity as otium." Elizabethan Poetry (reprinted Ann Arbor Paperback, 1968), p. 2.



leisure (II, l. 269), is the proper soil in which to nourish love. Towards the end of their discussion, Daphne says to Tirsi:

contento vivi  
 piu che mia fossi, o tirse: in ozio vivi  
 e ne l'ozio l'amor sempre gemoglia  
 (II, 268-70).

The chorus, at the end of this same act, amplifies this hint. It wonders where and from whom one learns the art of loving well. The answer is a little surprising. Only love itself can teach the mysteries of love. Love is too intense and flies too high to be discussed by those who have not experienced its ecstasies. There really is no such thing as the art of loving. The books, such as The Art of Courtly Love by Andreas Capellanus, that state the rules and regulations of courtship and love are completely superfluous and even wrong-headed. But this passion which enobles and transports the soul to other realms can hardly be called contentment. In fact it is just the opposite: a madness. For Tasso the madness called love is a natural growth in the ideal country of leisure and pleasure.

It follows then that the poet's relationship to the pastoral world differs from that described by Boccaccio and Sannazaro. The former believed that the quietness of the forest was a healing balm that soothed and mended the tormented spirits of the poet, so that, soon after arriving there, he would again be inspired to write poetry. The latter believed that the poet belonged to the city and that

he could only briefly visit Arcadia. The peaceful setting of the woods only served to set off his inward torments; in Arcadia the poet learns just how deeply the image of his love has dominated him. The poet leaves Arcadia a wiser man but still suffering from the same malady. Tasso sees the pastoral world as the source and nourisher of the poet's love. The poet is no stranger passing through; he grew up and fell in love in Arcadia. The poet is, thus, a natural part of the forests and the fields, living his life in accordance with a beneficent nature which permits the fulfillment of desires that in other more realistic settings would be frustrated.

Tasso transformed the pastoral world into a garden of delight from which reason and common sense were excluded. He also denied that sorrow and suffering were permanent aspects of the Petrarchan lover's condition. The motif of death and revival demonstrated that the Petrarchan lover's love was not hopeless and, in so doing, reaffirmed the basic assumption of this world: Where the emotions reign, everything that is pleasing is permitted.

Tasso's success consisted in creating an image of this idyllic world which could be presented upon the stage. The delicate aesthetic qualities, so much more appropriate to lyric poetry than to drama, which Tasso invented to harmonize with this world, were borrowed from the classical drama, the pastoral elegy, and Ovidian mythology. The

simplicity, beauty, symmetry, and elegance of these genres combine with the motif of death and revival to produce an artificial work which was admired for its artificiality and not for its approximation to reality. In this respect his play is a development of Politian's Orfeo.

Like Politian, Tasso reproduces the simplicity of classical drama by imitating many of its conventions. Beccari had used three pairs of lovers, but Tasso prefers only one pair and gives each a confidant to discuss his problems with. Also the conventions of the nuntio and the chorus increase the frozen sophistication of the play. They turn all potentially violent and intense action into narration, thus removing the play even further from the immediate experience of the audience. The representation of any violent or emotional action would destroy the langorous and sensuous mood so necessary to the presentation of the world of desires. The three unities, borrowed from classical examples, increase the decorum of the play even more by inhibiting the movement of time, space, and action upon the stage. The simplicity of the plot, the unity of action, place, and time, and the continuity of emotion create the formal beauty and perfection of this work. Tasso was one of the few to appreciate just how much the rules of classical drama, which were formulated by applying reason to the classical drama, could help to suggest the langorous, subdued, and sensuous realm of the emotions.

The pastoral elegy contributes a great deal to this atmosphere. Although no action takes place before the audience, there is still enough emotional rhythm to engage its attention and to give it the sensation of action. The rhythm of the Renaissance pastoral elegy provides this movement that structures the play. The emotions belong to Aminta and move from the melancholic and even tender opening lament, through his sadness, fear and dejection when Silvia runs away, through his complete despondency caused by before hurling himself from a cliff, to the absolute joy when he opens his eyes and sees his love bending over him. At the same time he strikes the emotional balance of sadness and joy, which Theocritus, the shepherd in the "November" eclogue, called "doleful pleasaunce" when he felt the same movement in the lament sung by Colin Clout. This balance becomes part of the work's symmetry which, in turn, is part of the formal perfection which leaves so strong an impression. In this manner the motif of death and revival makes another important contribution to the aesthetics of the play.

The "little pictures" or idylls of rustic life which Theocritus included in his pastoral poetry also contribute to this aesthetic impression. Each act has at least one of these short pieces of narration and description that one character recites to another. Aminta's early youth with

Silvia, the circumstances of his falling in love with her, Silvia's rescue from the Satyr, and Aminta's suicide attempt are good examples of these small set pieces. Each of these scenes is complete in itself, and yet none of them clashes with any of the others. They form a series of miniatures that complement one another at the same time that they maintain their individuality. All of these miniatures share a sense of immobility, of time having stopped while the idealized descriptions were copied, the same sense of tranquil pastoral simplicity, and the same sense of artistic craftsmanship. Tasso leaves no doubt in the audience's mind that an artist made these scenes to be appreciated them.

The characters also owe their origin to the pastoral elegy. The few characters that appeared in the scene surrounding the elegy itself were types which didn't exist beyond the bounds of the poem. These types were not intended to develop into recognizable human beings; they were meant only to illustrate a mood or an emotion. The dramatis personae function in the same manner in this play. Aminta is the love lorn shepherd-poet and Silvia is his cruel mistress. They don't become realistic personages even though one of them, Silvia, changes her attitudes completely in the last act of the play. Actually these stock characters function exactly as the human figures in a pageant called tableau vivant. In a pageant of this

kind the situation defines the identity of a figure for the audience; no actions are necessary to reveal the characters' identity. Since the audience reads the characters in such a pageant, it does not become actively involved with the emotions of those in the scene. The same thing happens at a performance of Aminta; the audience uses its eyes and its reason and not its emotions. Accordingly the audience always views the play as a work of art and the characters as something other than themselves. Of course, the death and revival of one of the characters increases the gap already existing between the production and the audience. What the audience admires in the characters are their beauty, elegance, and sophistication, in other words, their manufactured qualities.

Tasso borrowed the sensuous beauty found in Ovid's mythological world and wrapped the motif of death and revival in it, so that the audience's response was controlled by this ornamentation. At first glance Ovid would seem to be an odd poet from whom to borrow since his theory of love directly contradicts the Petrarchan theory described by Cupid. David L. Stevenson succinctly contrasts the two theories in the following manner:

In Ovid's two witty discussions of the subject (Love) he denies all transcendental notions of sex. Desire is all, and its purpose is served by formulating techniques of seduction and capture (as in the Ars Amatoria and techniques of escape (as in the Remedia Amoris.) Amor is not an emotional experience

deeply rooted in the personality, as it was to the Renaissance Petrarchan, but an affair of the nerves.<sup>50</sup>

Tasso only borrowed the background of Ovid's poems for the Aminta. This polished texture composed of nymphs, sylvan deities, boar hunts, attempted rapes, and metamorphoses kept the audience very much aware that they were watching a work of art. The descriptions of the naked Silvia appeal to the connoisseur who delights in the beauties of the senses and especially in the pleasures of the flesh. Tasso, like the connoisseur, knows how to keep his pleasure under control. The attempted rape of Silvia while she is bathing in a forest fountain could have been obscene. Tasso, however, provided just enough detail to suffuse the scene with erotic pleasure and still not offend anyone in the audience. He accomplishes this by not having anything happen to Silvia and at the same time lavishly describing her body in terms of sensuous pleasures.

The characters help to keep the audience at a distance from the work because they are slightly amusing in themselves. No one accepts the actions of a nymph or satyr as real. They just don't belong to any world that the audience could consider real. These creatures weren't meant to develop personality traits; they were only intended to contribute to the artifice and they ornament the scene by adding variety to the stage setting. The more the

---

<sup>50</sup>The Love-Game Comedy (New York, 1966), p. 19.

playwright could find for them to do, the more inventive he appeared to his audience.

It is very difficult to characterize exactly the subtle atmosphere that the Ovidian mythology possesses. It approximates to a sophisticated and amused irony. The eyes of experience watch the intense actions of youth plunge into experiences that they have never had before. The author knows what is in store, so he remains detached from the action and at times--especially in the most intense moments--finds their seriousness very amusing.<sup>51</sup> Silvia's and Aminta's exaggerated emotions probably received a cynical grin from the more experienced members of the audience. The irony, the characters, and the controlled sensuality of the Ovidian atmosphere help to prevent the audience from being imaginatively drawn into the action of the play. While watching the Aminta the audience never loses its poise, its sophistication, and its awareness that it is an audience watching a play. At the end of the performance, the audience knew that it had not participated in an experience centering around a conflict of character, but rather that it had observed a beautiful work of art, balanced, graceful, elegant, and conscious of itself as a work of art and not life.

---

<sup>51</sup>Gerhardt sees this same quality; only she calls it skepticism: "Sceptique à l'égard de bonheur arcadien comme de toute chose, désenchanté d'avance, il a créé une pastorale où domine le désenchantement" (p. 123). I think this last description is a little too strong. The ending certainly confirms the pastoral world.



Tasso presented what was, in effect, a lyric poem to the court of the Estensi, and Guarini, his conscious rival, turned the pastoral back in the direction of the drama with the publication of Il Pastor Fido in 1590.<sup>52</sup> Greg believes that the excellence of this work resides entirely in the two ingeniously complex plots which give his play such a strong feeling of dramatic action:

In the construction of a complicated plot, apart from the dramatic presentation thereof, he achieved a success not to be paralleled by any previous work in Italy, . . . .<sup>53</sup>

In the previous chapter we noticed how the motif of death and revival became an intimate part of these complications. We saw also how the ingenuity lavished upon the suspense of the near death came to be an end in itself, which consequently changed completely the moral and aesthetic purposes of tragicomedy. Viewed from the vantage point of the pastoral world, the motif of death and revival serves another, perhaps even more interesting, purpose. It connects the pastoral and the heroic worlds and also is the means of passage from one of these worlds to another.

Guarini's Arcadia is a very different place from Tasso's. The latter's was the world of the emotions; no emotion is restrained, and no desire, unfulfilled. The restraints of reason, custom, and law are completely

---

<sup>52</sup>Greg, p. 210.

<sup>53</sup>Greg, p. 201.

absent; everything lives according to nature. Guarini praises the life of unrestrained naturalness and honesty, but for him this ideal no longer exists. Arcadia, like the golden haired maiden of romance, is threatened by powerful forces. A wild boar ravages the Arcadian countryside, and Diana's curse requires a human sacrifice and prevents the two lovers from enjoying each other. After these evils are destroyed, Arcadia will be able to revert to its old unrestrained ways. Two characters, Corisca and the satyr, help to keep the plot boiling by using the despicable ways of the court, i.e., lying, artifice, gossip, hypocrisy, and revenge. These two must also be stopped before the Arcadians can once again consider themselves free.

Threatened Arcadia requires the heroic services of a noble champion. It gets two, and they come from a most surprising place: Arcadia itself. The hero, who defines himself in noble deeds, not in intense emotions, finds a home in Guarini's Arcadia. The poets leave the scene and the heroes who are also lovers take their place. Silvio, a young man of royal blood, is one of these heroes.<sup>54</sup> He kills the wild boar, thus earning the applause of the

---

<sup>54</sup> Guarini said that he patterned Silvio after Euripides' Hippolytus (Herrick, p. 130). The Satyr came indirectly from Euripides' Cyclops (Herrick, p. 131). The recognition scene is obviously patterned after Oedipus Rex. Oedipus was raised as a shepherd, so this association is not so absurd.

Arcadians. Infatuated with honor, he boasts that he owes his success to his chastity. This certainly was true of Gawain, but Silvio is in Arcadia; he must join the pastoral world. The near death of Dorinda causes him to forsake the world of honor and become a member of the world of love. The breaking of his bow symbolizes his repudiation of the heroic and his complete acceptance of the Arcadian world of the emotions. Love conquers honor.

The other plot moves in the opposite direction. Mirtillo is a pale reflection of Sannazaro's Sincero. He is a recent arrival in Arcadia and is obsessed with his unrequited love but is more fortunate than Sincero because he has his love before him, while Sincero only has an image of his in his mind. After learning that Amarillis must marry someone else and consequently longing for his own death, Mirtillo offers to die in the place of his love, Amarillis; this selfless action establishes beyond a doubt that he belongs in Arcadia. Now all that has to be shown is that he is a member of the heroic world. This the strangers do for him by reconstructing his birth and early life. Mirtillo really belongs to the priestly upper class of Arcadia. This piece of information wins him his love, and his marriage removes the curse from the land--the perfect blend of the heroic and the pastoral. His life and Arcadia are saved in the same moment that he wins his love. The motif of near death and revival was an important

part of his passage from Petrarchan lover to Arcadian hero and prince. Guarini adds another ingenious touch of irony. Becoming the hero allows Mirtillo to become the successful lover. Even though he is heroic he still ends up with the same reward as Aminta.

The Ovidian mythological-pastoral background that Guarini inherited has one advantage that would make it the ideal setting to use for a play that combined both tragedy and comedy. Traditionally the pastoral was not associated with either comedy or tragedy. Comedy was an affair of the city and required realistic urban settings. When it eventually moved to the country, it took its need for realistic detail with it. Tragedy was an affair of kings and therefore required stately and noble backgrounds, such as castles, courts, and battlefields. So the pastoral world was a neutral ground where the heroic and the rustic could mingle without making each other appear too ridiculous.

Arcadia, however, exacted a heavy price from tragedy and comedy before it allowed them to join hands on its hillsides. This pastoral world has its own decorum, which, as we have seen, gradually developed from Arcadia, through Orfeo, through Il Sacrificio, to Aminta. This decorum imposes harsh limits upon the kinds and amount of action that is permissible. Since the inactivity of the pastoral world is one of its essential qualities, Greek drama is

much better suited to it than any that tried to imitate the struggles and battles of the tragic hero. Greek drama was essentially a drama of recognition, enlightenment, and revelation. This inward action is made to order for the pastoral world. Guarini, in his lengthy annotations to the play, points out the many parallels that he constructed between the Greek dramas and Il Pastor Fido. The recognition scene in Guarini's play, wherein Mirtillo discovers his true identity, prevents the tragedy rather than causes it. It has no significance for the audience and remains for them just a device that resolves the plot. All it has to recommend it, is its ingenuity. The earlier experimentors in the pastoral drama discovered the kinds of actions appropriate to the pastoral, and none of them include anything the least bit heroic. The shepherds can indulge in games, dances, songs and religious festivals, centering around Pan, the chief deity in Arcadia. Guarini includes an example of each of these in his play which greatly contribute to the variety and grace in this world. To provide some action that will resemble the heroic, he adds, by means of narration, a boar hunt (cf. Cefalo). This refined, very stylized, activity is all that Guarini can think of which won't violate the decorum of Arcadia. This example of the heroic, and consequently of the tragic (since only the aristocracy can suffer tragic falls) never becomes a convincing part of the play. It doesn't fit,

so no one can take it seriously. The failure of both plots stems from the incompatibility of the pastoral and the tragic.

The unconvincing representation of the heroic and the tragic in the pastoral world invites a amused skepticism from the audience. This skepticism is reinforced by the same sophisticated irony found in Aminta. Guarini can't capture any of Tasso's sensuousness, but he does manage to recreate the Ovidian atmosphere of graceful inconsequentiality so characteristic of the Metamorphoses. The intense involvement of the characters (especially Dorinda and Mirtillo) in their own love problems helps to sustain this skepticism throughout the play. The audience, which has experienced the same emotions without approaching death, can only smile at the simplistic utterances of these love-lorn creatures. As with Aminta, the members of the audience keep their distance from the world of the play. Only from a distance can they experience the play as a work of art and not as a reflection of life. Only when they are detached and rational can they admire the grace of the characters, the beauty of their speeches, the variety of incident, the difficulty and the ingenuity of the plots, and the harmony of the entire play. The Ovidian atmosphere insures that pastoral tragicomedies will be experienced as art and not life.

When the aesthetics becomes the end of the play's activity, it, of course, loses all moral significance. Heroic actions, when they are tragic, have such moral significance. But when they appear in a play without moral significance, they only vitiate the real chivalric ideals. Thus when the heroic and the pastoral blend together, the heroic threatens to become a ridiculous caricature of itself. In any pastoral tragicomedy, the danger is always present; it is solely up to the playwright whether he wants to emphasize the risibility of the heroic or the beauty, grace and delight of the pastoral.

Giraldi, Tasso, and Guarini each put the motif of death and revival to a different use. Cinthio, in accordance with his theory of drama, used it didactically to illustrate his particular religious belief of the beneficent nature of Providence. Cinthio also kept it confined to the romance tradition where it thrived until the end of the sixteenth century. Tasso adapted the motif as it was developed in the pastoral eclogue to his lyric drama. There it structured the emotions of the play, as it had in the eclogue. Also it struck the necessary balance between sadness and joy, and finally denied any of the tragic implications in the plight of the Petrarchan lover. Guarini used the motif to transform the heroic world of Chivalrous deeds into the pastoral world of love. It had no didactic function--which at least made the play

consistent with his theory--and it did call attention to his own ingenuity and to the aesthetic qualities of the work.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE MOTIF OF DEATH AND REVIVAL IN RENAISSANCE THEORIES OF LOVE

In the pastoral plays examined in the last chapter, love dominated the lines of the characters. Orpheus' love for Euridice sent him into Hades; Aminta, completely absorbed in his beloved, tried to kill himself when he thought that she had died; and Mirtillo, because he was faithful to his love, volunteered to become a sacrifice. These characters are not exceptional; most Italian poets and dramatists of the Renaissance looked upon the pastoral as a natural setting for affairs of the heart. For them, shepherds and shepherdesses thought of nothing other than their loves. In earlier centuries Dante and Petrarch had used the pastoral mainly to conceal personal messages and to disguise their criticisms of the church. But through the influence of writers, such as Sannazaro and Politian, the Italian pastoral ceased to dabble in politics and gradually devoted itself to the subject of love. By the time Tasso and Guarini had adapted the pastoral to the stage, no one thought it strange that shepherds should be more concerned with their emotions than with their herds.

The conception of love dramatized in Arcadia did not come from any classical source as Hallett Smith, following W. W. Greg, suggests in his discussion of the English pastoral.<sup>1</sup> The pastoral tragicomedy borrowed its characteristic rhythm and several of its conventions from the classical pastoral elgy, but Theocritus and Virgil did not provide examples of love that these Italian dramatists could adapt to the stage. The conception of love that these dramatists use finds its source in the romances and the love lyrics that the troubadours and minnesingers sang in the various courts of southern France, Germany, and northern Italy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The songs of these itinerant bards were preserved in Italy where, in the thirteenth century, Guinicelli, Dante, and Cavalcanti transformed the troubadour's theory of sensuous love into a religious and quasi-mystical worship of the lover's mistress. Petrarch and the Stilnovisti refined and repeated this religious theory of love throughout the next century until Ficino, Pico, Politian, and Lorenzo de' Medici transformed it again--this time into a cosmology and a metaphysics. In their hands, the theory of courtly love became a beautiful veil that partially obscured their

---

<sup>1</sup>Smith, pp. 15-16. Smith believes that Longus' Daphnis and Chloe is the source. The history of love in Arcadia is more complicated than this. As we shall see below, Plato's Phaedrus is a more likely source for the example of love in a pastoral setting.

exposition of the mysteries of nature, man, and God. These cosmological speculations, called Neoplatonism, when they assumed beautiful forms in painting, drama, poetry, and prose, enchanted many Europeans. Commentaries upon poems and treatises upon the nature of love circulated through the European courts in the sixteenth century, and, while they simplified and diluted the original theories, they still contributed to their popularity and prestige. The last and in many ways the most interesting of these treatises is Giordano Bruno's De gli Eroici Furori. In this series of dialogues he transforms the theory of courtly love into a description of the Renaissance Magus' heroic struggle to acquire knowledge, wisdom, and power.

At the same time that the love treatises were disseminating these theories, Politian, Tasso, and Guarini incorporated these theories of love, which dovetailed so beautifully with the rhythms of the pastoral elegy, into the first pastoral tragicomedies of the Italian stage. Now the motif acquired an anagogical purpose; it pointed beyond itself to the central Neoplatonic mystery of death and revival. In presenting this mystery, these playwrights turned the pastoral drama into a rite of art, which was completely self-conscious and ceremonial.

In this chapter we are not concerned so much with the general history of the theory of courtly love.<sup>2</sup> Our attention will be focused only upon the role that the motif of death and revival plays in this theory. From its first appearance in the romance literature of the twelfth century, the motif was an integral part of courtly love and therefore suffered the same basic changes in the course of the Renaissance. This chapter seeks to trace these various changes in the meaning of the motif and to describe the various images in which it is presented to the reader. This motif belongs to a long tradition which, through its repeated use over the course of centuries, gradually established a variety of responses in those watching it upon the stage. These meanings, some esoteric and some metaphysical, were the reasons why the playwrights used the motif in their plays. They also hoped that the audience, which was already familiar with the Neoplatonic mysteries, would appreciate these references to the popular theory.

In the Middle Ages Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan (C.1210) is the first major work of art of any length to dramatize the motif of death and revival. This poem, a

---

<sup>2</sup>For a detailed history of the development of courtly love see Maurice Valency, In Praise of Love: An Introduction to the Love-Poetry of the Renaissance (New York, 1958). For its history in England see Lu Emily Pearson, Elizabethan Love Conventions (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1933).

mixture of the ancient Celtic romance traditions and the conventions of courtly love, describes the nature of love and its role in the world.<sup>3</sup> For Gottfried, the tale of the young warrior hero, Tristan, his adulterous love of his uncle's wife, Isolde, and their eventual discovery and banishment, symbolized a desperate struggle between the emotions of the individual and the laws and customs of the court. Although Gottfried did not live to finish Tristan, it is a fairly safe assumption, based on hints scattered throughout the text, that he would have followed his acknowledged source, Thomas, and ended his tale with the death of the lovers. The structure of the entire work, then, could hardly conform to the motif of death and revival. Gottfried, in fact, usually limits the motif to his images and rhetoric. Only one chapter, the first, completes the pattern of death and rebirth.

This chapter, which tells of the birth of Tristan, introduces many of the themes that appear later in Tristan's own history. Rivalin, a knight of courage and courtesy, fell in love one day with Blanche-flor, the sister of King Mark, at a festival where she watched him joust. Neither knew what love was, but both were swept along in its wake

---

<sup>3</sup>According to A. T. Hatto, a translator of Gottfried's poem, nothing positive can be said about the early Celtic versions of the tale because the first versions that we have date from C. 1150 A.D. See Tristan by Gottfried von Strassburg, trans. A. T. Hatto (Baltimore, 1960), p. 8 of Intro.

until neither had control of his life. Once love had taken possession of Rivalin's heart and will, he became a new man:

. . . Love, the one and true incendiary, came and kindled her flames of desire, the flames that set his heart on fire and revealed to him in a flash what keen sadness and lovers' pining are! For now he laid hold of a new life, a new life was given him; so that he changed his whole cast of mind and became quite a different man, since all that he did was chequered with strangeness and blindness.<sup>4</sup>

The fires of love illuminated the mysteries of his own being for his consciousness. He now realized that he had an inner emotional life that was as important as his outward life of honor and courtesy. Blancheflor felt the same torment of desire for Rivalin, and their love exploded into a consuming passion which was consummated outside of the laws of church and state. Soon after the consummation of their love, Rivalin was called away to fight his old enemy, Morgan. Before the battle, he validated their marriage by announcing it in church. It was fortunate that he did because he was killed defending the honor of his king. When Blancheflor heard of his death, she lay on the ground in agony for four days. Then:

She twisted and turned and writhed, this way, that way, to and fro, and continued so until, with much labour, she bore a little son. But see, it lived, and she lay dead.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>Tristan, p. 53.

<sup>5</sup>Tristan, p. 63.

Gottfried juxtaposes the joy of new life with the sadness of death to emphasize that the two qualities are interconnected and that they are necessary aspects of the world. The appearance of one of these emotions entails the appearance of the other. The death of Blanche-flor brings forth Tristan, who becomes the joy of Mark's court when he grows up, but, as his name suggests, he also brings more than his share of sadness to himself and to the court. Gottfried used this motif in his structure to adumbrate the fate of the hero and, at the same time, to state the metaphysical truth which underlies the events in the poem.

Marie de France (fl. 1150-1200) is the first writer to use this motif in the structure of a complete poem, but she does not develop the metaphysics latent in it. In the lai called the Deuz Amanz, the pattern of death and revival completes itself and then returns to the theme of death again.<sup>6</sup> Before a young squire can marry the woman of his dreams, he must carry her to the top of a mountain. As he trudges up the slope, she sees how hard he is struggling and offers him a magic potion to ease his pain, but he refuses it. Just as he reaches the top of the mountain, he dies. In deep mourning his love pours the

---

<sup>6</sup> John Steven, "The granz biens of Marie de France," in Patterns of Love and Courtesy, ed. John Lawlor (London, 1966), p. 2. My description of the lai is based upon Mr. Steven's summary because I was unable to obtain a modern translation.

magic potion over the ground. Every place that it touches immediately brings forth new life in the form of a great number of plants. The girl then falls on the body of her dead lover and dies. When the two dead lovers are discovered, they are buried with a great deal of ceremony.

In Eliduc, Marie uses the motif to harmonize adulterous passions with the world of law.<sup>7</sup> When Guilliadun learns that her prospective bridegroom is already married, she falls into a deep swoon and appears to be dead. Then, writes Steven:

Eliduc lays her out in front of the altar in a hermit's chapel deep in the forest. Eliduc's wife noticing his extreme melancholy, finds out his secret; but when she visits the chapel with a squire she is completely overcome with Guilliadun's beauty. By observing the behaviour of two weasels, she hits on a miraculous flower-cure for Guilliadun. The latter, joyfully restored to life and to love, is united to Eliduc, whose wife equally joyfully surrenders her claims and retires to a nunnery.<sup>8</sup>

Marie de France obviously doesn't feel the deep tensions between the individual's passions and the public world of law and custom.

Steven, in his comments upon Marie's artistic ability says that:

---

<sup>7</sup>Steven, p. 21. Again I rely upon his summary of the lai.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.



Her great talent is to concentrate, to crystallize emotion in a single image or in a sequence of dramatic images.<sup>9</sup>

This statement is equally true of Gottfried. His dramatic images, even more than hers, concentrate his philosophy of love into unforgettable symbols. The most powerful of these dramatic images rely for their effectiveness upon the motif of death and revival. The motif first appears in the scene that describes the conception of Tristan. While Rivalin was defending King Mark's estates, he was severely wounded in the side and brought home, a dying man. Many mourned for him, but Blanche-flor's was by far the most intense; she surreptitiously entered the chamber where he lay dying. She swooned when she saw him, and lay next to him as though she were dead:

And when she had rallied a little from this extremity she took her darling in her arms and laying her mouth to his kissed him a hundred thousand times in a short space till her lips had fired his sense and roused his mettle for love, since love resided in them.<sup>10</sup>

Gottfried tells us a few sentences later that God helped him to live again. Really, however, as he clearly states, the miraculous kiss of his beloved was what revived him and transformed him into the living man who in the next moment made love to Blanche-flor.

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153) in a famous series of sermons on the Song of Songs blended the mystical

---

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Tristan, p. 58.

and the erotic, so that he could imagine the Mother Church as the bride of Christ excited on her marriage bed to a passionate frenzy by the zeal of God.<sup>11</sup> Joseph Campbell believes that Gottfried:

. . . threaded echoes of the celibate saint's seraphic rapture through many verses of his own inspired work . . . .<sup>12</sup>

Although Campbell doesn't include the resuscitating kiss among his examples, Gottfried probably had the saint's symbolic use of the kiss in mind when he wrote the scene.

Bernard believes that one of the conditions for divine union is that the Lord must pass as an intermediary between our spirit and God's.<sup>13</sup> Christ is such an intermediary, and as such he becomes the kiss of the Song of Songs. He opens our soul to the favors of the mystical life. As Gilson explains:

Christ therefore, in Whom human nature is assumed by the divine nature, is Himself the Divine kiss. Man can hope for no more than to receive the kiss of this Kiss; . . . Christ is the model and the source of all ecstasy, and any other is a mere participation.<sup>14</sup>

Gottfried has changed the sex of the intermediary and has interpreted the source of love differently, but he still conceives of this kiss as a sacred and miraculous experience

---

<sup>11</sup>Joseph Campbell, The Masks of God, Vol. IV: Creative Mythology (New York, 1968), p. 245.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid. Hatto agrees with him; see p. 17f.

<sup>13</sup>Etienne Gilson, The Mystical Theology of Saint Bernard, trans. A. H. C. Downes (London, 1940), p. 110.

<sup>14</sup>Gilson, pp. 110-11.

which opens the heart to the joys of divine love. Blanche-flor has been called divine throughout the chapter. Now, after assuming her humanity by lying next to him in a death-imitating swoon, she awakens and opens Rivalin's dying soul to the desire for the joy and pleasure of union. As the intermediary, she prepares him for his new life of true love. Their becoming one has a significance that transcends the mere conception of a child. It represents the ultimate oneness that separates true love from the mundane varieties. Gottfried describes their union this way:

Her heart, her mind, her desire were centered entirely on Rivalin, and his in return on her and on the passion she inspired in him. Between them they had in their minds but one delight and one desire. Thus he was she, and she was he. He was hers and she was his. There Blanche-flor, there Rivalin! There Rivalin, there Blanche-flor! There both, and there true love!<sup>15</sup>

These two opposites, male and female, these two distinct individuals, these two unique psyches have blended into one another and, defying all laws of nature and logic, have become one. True love is the name of such a sacred and complete union of opposites, and death and revival is an essential part of the means to this end.

Gottfried repeats and elaborates this doctrine of love in a series of closely related images in the story of their son. When the wound Tristan receives from Morold refuses to heal, he resolves to go to Morold's sister, the Queen Isolde, to get it cured. After hearing his inspired

---

<sup>15</sup>Tristan, p. 58.

performance on the harp, she promises to cure him if in return, he will teach her daughter, Isolde, to play the harp. Since Tristan killed her brother, she should have hated him, but Gottfried says that this woman, so wise in the ways of medicine, did not realize that he was her brother's killer:

Had she known on whom she was lavishing her care and whom she was helping from death's door, if there is anything worse than death, I assure you she would have given it him far more gladly than life. As it was, she knew nothing but good, and good will was all that she bore him.<sup>16</sup>

After twenty days, Tristan has recovered well enough to begin to teach Isolde how to play the harp. Out of this association, unbeknownst to them, grows that love which was to be both their joy and their sorrow. As in the first image, the motif of death and revival indicates that the young hero has been prepared to receive the higher mystery of true love. His wound, the symbol of foul impurity, was healed with the arts of medicine, and his rebirth indicates that his spirit has been purified enough to participate in true love. In this incident, the intermediatrix is the source of all good and the sister of evil. Her knowledge of medicine, not her love, purifies his soul and makes him worthy of the gift of her daughter.

Gottfried repeats this same situation when Tristan returns to bring Isolde back to King Mark of Cornwall.

---

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 146.

Queen Isolde's husband had decreed that if anyone killed the dragon disturbing the neighborhood, he would allow him to marry his daughter. Tristan slew the beast and cut out its tongue as evidence. The tongue exuded a foul poison which caused Tristan to fall senseless into a shallow pool when he placed it next to his skin. The two Isoldes and their maid, while looking for the slain dragon, found him close to death in the pool. After they pulled him out, the Queen discovered that it was the tongue that caused his death-like swoon. She revived him with the skilled application of her medicines. This time when he awakes he knows where he is and upon whom he is looking:

Ah, merciful lord, thou hast not forgotten me! Three lights encompass me, the rarest in all the world, joy and succour to many hearts, delight of many eyes-- Isolde, the bright Sun; her mother Isolde, the glad Dawn; and noble Brangane, the fair Full Moon!<sup>17</sup>

He has been purified enough to recognize the divinity working through the three women. After he revives and tells them his name is Tantris, they transport him to the castle for further treatment.

While Isolde is caring for him and beginning to admire his body, she discovers that the splinter found in Morold's head belongs to Tristan's sword. She flies into a rage and decides to kill him while he is in his bath. She calls him a dead man, but before she can slay him, her mother enters and reminds the girl that the object of her

---

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 166.

wrath is under her protection. No matter how he deceived her to win that protection, he still is entitled to it. At this point, Tristan says that if they will treat him amicably, he will tell them some good news. The two women now don't know what to do. Brangane enters and after hearing the details advises them to make peace with him. The women allow him to rise out of the bath, and he tells them of King Mark's desire to wed Isolde. Three times Tristan was saved from death by the Queen. Each time his revival resulted in a love match. Only this time Tristan doesn't know who is going to fall in love; he thinks that it will be Mark.

While Isolde and Tristan are sailing from Ireland to Cornwall, they pass the time by talking to each other. She professes to hate him, and he tries to mollify her. She persists in countering any moves that might lead to friendship. Then, one of the ladies-in-waiting accidentally gives them a drink of the love potion prepared by Queen Isolde for Mark and her daughter's wedding night:

No longer were they at variance: Isolde's hatred was gone. Love, the reconciler, had purged their hearts of enmity, and so joined them in affection that each was to the other as limpid as a mirror. They shared a single heart. Her anguish was his pain: his pain her anguish. The two were one both in joy and in sorrow, yet they hid their feelings from each other.<sup>18</sup>

The love potion has caused a great deal of comment among the critics of this poem. Some, such as, A. T. Hatto think

---

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 195.

that it caused their love. Professor Gottfried Weber of Cologne sees the potion as a metaphor for the moment in a love affair when two people lose control of their sense of free will.<sup>19</sup> Weber continues:

This psychological process--and here is the important point--is elevated by the poet into an objective experience of an existential absolute and described as an independent force, more than human, opening out to the transcendent.<sup>20</sup>

This is a very pedantic description of the function that St. Bernard gave to the Divine Kiss which was Christ. The potion opens the soul, already predisposed to love, to the possibility of transcendence which, for Gottfried, is the higher synthesis of the two lovers into one soul. The potion, working as an intermediary, changed Isolde's hate into love and forced their unconscious love into consciousness. These young people have been transformed again, this time into a symbol of the divine synthesis. But the synthesis is not complete because they have not yet told each other of their love. The world of law, represented by Mark, still inhibits them. Once they have transcended the force of law, they will be ready to partake in the higher divine synthesis. After a brief inner struggle, Tristan overcomes honor and duty to Mark, and they realize their deepest desires. They continue to meet after Isolde

---

<sup>19</sup>Quoted in Campbell, p. 241. For Hatto's remarks see Tristan, p. 29.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

marries Mark, whose gradually increasing suspicions force them to leave the court. They only attain the divine union far away from the court in the privacy of la fossiure a la gent amant.

The cave of the lovers condenses most of Gottfried's theory of love into a few concrete symbols. In the middle of a wasteland is a small forest with a stream, many flowers, and many singing birds. In the midst of this pastoral splendor rises a mountain in which is hollowed the cave of lovers, containing a bed of crystal dedicated to the Goddess of love. Here Tristan and Isolde live. Gottfried assures us that they have everything that they will ever want. Their mutual love is their food, their court and their servitors. They have fulfilled all of their desires.

The structure of the cave symbolizes the qualities requisite for true love. Gottfried's description of the significance of the height of the cave is the same concept dramatized in the various occurrences of the motif of death and revival:

Height is Aspiration that mounts aloft to the clouds: nothing is too great for it so long as it means to climb, up and up, to where the molten Crown of the Virtues gathers the vault to the keystone. The Virtues are invariably encrusted with precious stones, inlaid in filigree of gold and so adorned with praise, that we who are of lower aspiration--whose spirits play and flutter over the pavement and neither settle nor fly--we gaze up intently at the masterpiece above us, which stands amid the Virtues and descends to us from the glory of those who soar in the clouds and send their refulgence down to us!--we gaze at their Virtues



and marvel! From this grow the feathers by which our spirit takes wing and, flying, earns praise for its virtues.<sup>21</sup>

This passage applies to more than the images of death and revival in Gottfried's poem. It looks forward to the poets and artists of the Renaissance, providing a rational and explicit theory for the inclusion in their works of so many women and goddesses who descend from on high, amid all their perfections, to revive their dying knight and awaken in him the urge to achieve these virtues for himself.

Up to this point in the story the motif has been used to dramatize the awakening spirit which then discovers love. In the cave of love, Gottfried reverses the significance of the motif. In this beautiful earthly paradise, sensuous love exists for its own sake. The bed made of crystal indicates its purity, which brings neither children, honor, land, money nor status. It has its own rewards and exists solely for these:

Whatever frolics or pastimes had been pursued in this grotto before, they did not equal this; they were neither so pure nor so unsullied in spirit as when Tristan and Isolde disported themselves. These two beguiled love's hour in a way no lovers surpassed--they did just as their hearts prompted them.<sup>22</sup>

The world of complete fulfillment of desire was not to be theirs for long. Mark, out hunting one day, discovered the cave. Tristan had heard the hounds and, fearing capture, had worked out a plan meant to deceive

---

<sup>21</sup>Tristan, p. 264.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 267.

Mark. They lay on the crystalline bed far apart from one another with a sword between them. Mark looked in on the sleeping lovers through one of three small windows, through which the sun shone, while they were in this estranged position.<sup>23</sup> Mark this time is the intermediary; he blocks the windows with leaves and grass and goes away. Upon awakening, they notice that the sunlight of Honour no longer shines upon them, marking the beginning of their end. By deceiving Mark, they were not true to their desires and sullied their love. Death is the only reward for such behavior.

In the dramatized images the motif brought together in the same person two opposites: death and life. A rhetorical device that does the same thing is called oxymoron; it is Gottfried's chief stylistic embellishment. Joseph Campbell reminds us that this word came from a Greek word meaning "pointedly foolish" and that it:

denotes a mode of speech commonly found in Oriental religious texts, where it is used as a device to point past those pairs of opposites by which all logical thought is limited . . . .<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup>Gottfried explains the significance of the windows: "Through these three (windows), the sweet light, that blessed radiance, Honour, dearest of all luminaries, smiled in and lit up the cave of earthly bliss (p. 265)."

<sup>24</sup>Campbell, p. 188. One particularly good example he gives comes from a Zen Buddhist work, The Gateless Gate, "and there read of 'the endless moment' and 'the full void': Before the first step is taken the goal is reached. Before the tongue is moved the speech is finished."

Campbell calls such speech "anagogical" because "it points beyond itself, beyond speech."<sup>25</sup> Gottfried uses his oxymorons in just such a manner. He wants to point past the individual manifestations of love which are imperfect to the ideal of true love which is the goal of all desires for union in the world. In the prologue he describes the world of the heart, which he wants to live in, as just such a world where opposites are conjoined:

I have another world in mind which together in one heart bears its bitter-sweet, its dear sorrow, its heart's joy, its love's pain, its dear life, its sorrowful death, its dear death, its sorrowful life.<sup>26</sup>

The world that he has in mind is exemplified by Tristan and Isolde; accordingly he looks upon their story as the intermediary between us and the mystery of love-death towards which the anagogical speech points:

Their life, their death are our bread. Thus lives their life, thus lives their death. Thus they live still and yet are dead, and their death is the bread of the living.<sup>27</sup>

The readers are to be shocked by the seeming paradox of the oxymoron and the death and revival motif into awakening to the mystery of love revealed in the images and the rhetoric. Gottfried believes that true love is really a coincidence of opposites and, as such, is beyond the bounds of logic,

---

<sup>25</sup>Campbell, p. 189.

<sup>26</sup>Tristan, p. 42.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

reason, and common sense. Nicholas Cusanus (1401-1464) tells us in his Apologia doctae ignorantiae that

God is the simultaneous mutual implication of all things, even the contradictory ones . . . .<sup>28</sup>

In this sense then love is divine. True love is such an appearance of the divine harmony of opposites in the world. Rivalin and Blanche-flor first attain this union, and Tristan and Isolde follow suit. These epiphanies are rare because not many people are pure enough to partake of the divine. Only those of noble heart are capable of ever experiencing the complete and ecstatic union with the beloved. The union of opposites, the creation of the mystery, the epiphany is reached through the senses, the will, and the bodily desires. The final paradox unites the divine and the mundane in the physical union of two people completely controlled by love.

Once the two lovers are aware of their unity, they cannot be sundered again. When Tristan prepares to leave Mark's court Isolde reminds him of this:

Our lives and very souls are so interwoven, so utterly emmeshed, the one with the other, that you are taking my life away with you and leaving yours with me. No two lives were ever so intermingled. We hold death and life for each other, since neither can really find life or death unless the other gives it.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup>As quoted in Campbell, p. 189.

<sup>29</sup>Tristan, p. 285.

These two lovers have become one, and the oxymoron is the only rhetorical device that can begin to describe such a paradox. This, then, is the mystery to which the coincidence of opposites points.

The opposites, joy-sorrow, pleasure-pain, love-hate, male-female, will-reason, desire-honor, and life-death occur so frequently in the poem that the reader soon realizes they are part of the very marrow of the story. The motif of death and revival is just the dramatization of one of these pairs of opposites. Because this motif contradicts common sense so neatly and so completely, it can point to a world beyond the reach of reason better than any other device. Its anagogical possibilities are always waiting to be exploited by a writer.

The other pairs of opposites present in this work assume some very interesting shapes. Isolde and Tristan must appear to each other as both good and bad, as a source of both joy and sorrow, and as an object of both love and hate before they can be united by the mystery of the potion. To Isolde he is Tantris-Tristan, her saviour and slayer of the dragon and the killer of her uncle. To Tristan, she is both the beautiful young girl that he once taught to play the harp and the revenging fury who wants to kill him while he bathes. These same opposites extend to the very speech the characters use to describe their own desires. Both Rivalin and Blanche-flor believe their newly

discovered emotions to be an agony, a suffering, a tormenting pain, and a living death; at the same time they find love joyous, happy, sweet, and festive. Since these lovers are capable of containing these opposites in their heart at the same time, they are capable of experiencing true love. The use of the oxymoron verifies, as it were, the fact that these noble hearts are more sensitive and have a touch of the divine in them. The possessor of the noble heart welcomes the coincidence of opposites even though he knows that any easing of his pain is only temporary and that the new life his love inspires entails its opposite, death, as well.

The troubadours<sup>30</sup> kept the relationship between the lady and the suffering knight alive in many of their lyrics, but they felt that the sexual union of the lovers was completely superfluous. In fact, the lovers' separation and not their union became the essence of their relationship and the source of inspiration for the poems of the lover. In the role of the poet-knight moved by his love to write of his agonies in beautiful verses, the troubadour sang of a love called amor. Joseph Campbell points out that amor is the third kind of love to appear in the Occident.<sup>31</sup> It differs from agape and eros because

---

<sup>30</sup>The first troubadour was the Count of Poitiers, William IX (1071-1127). The last were silenced in the last Albigensian War (1240). See Friedrich Heer, *The Medieval World*, trans. Janet Sondheimer (New York, 1963), pp. 177-8.

<sup>31</sup>Campbell, p. 177.

the poets neither sublimate it into the charity of the community of men nor celebrate it as an indiscriminate orgy or love feast. For these poets love was a selective and discriminating principle that responds to the eyes and the heart. The poet-knight falls in love because of the perfections and virtues that he perceives in his liege-lady.

When the poet-knight falls in love with a woman possessing such perfections, he enters into her service, a relationship that forces him to remain at a great physical distance from her. The true lover humbly seeks permission from her to enjoy a state of perpetual desire, and, after suffering for some length of time, he hopes to receive the reward of blessedness from her. But, if the lady is pre-disposed to mercy and is moved by the lyrics he has written to acknowledge his complaints and agonies, then she destroys the purity and beauty of their relationship; consequently the lover is forever supplicating and she forever withholding her mercy. The frustration of his desire enables him to write the lyrics that describe the agonies of his heart and upon which he relies to elicit some sign of mercy and concern.<sup>32</sup>

These cruel liege-ladies lacked all divine powers. They could not revive a moribund knight or heal his wounds; they could only inspire poetry and a single minded devotion

---

<sup>32</sup>The above description comes from: Valency, pp. 26, 92, & 167.

from their true lovers. Also these poets did not develop the metaphysical implications of their situation. They were content to imagine their ladies as members of the courts before which they performed. Gradually the poet's own internal agonies replaced the importance of their mistress' life; hence in the later troubadour poetry the woman becomes just a name.

The poets, called the stilnovisti, inherited the traditions of the troubadours; only they changed the themes from the celebration of the sensuous and the actual to the worship of the abstract and the ideal. The crusaders from the north of France in the name of orthodoxy extirpated the troubadours along with the heresy of the Cathars and the culture of the Provençal courts in the Albigensian wars (1209-1229-1240).<sup>33</sup> Only Italy preserved the texts of the Provençal poets, and only the Sicilian school kept alive the sensuous tradition of love.<sup>34</sup> But as the repressive forces of the age grew stronger, most poets were compelled to compromise with the ecclesiastical authorities if they wanted to continue to write. They compromised by altering the referents of their images and descriptions. The Italian poets, writing after Guido Guinizelli, converted the sensuous conception of love into

---

<sup>33</sup>Heer, p. 178.

<sup>34</sup>Robert S. Briffault, The Troubadours (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), pp. 160, 164.



an abstraction that was closer to philosophy than to the chivalric ideals of the courts of love.<sup>35</sup>

Guido Guinizelli (c. 1235-1276) was the first to change the liege-lady into a goddess. His canzona, Al Cor Gentil, summarized the doctrine of true love as he knew it. In it the lady, by means of a witty conceit, becomes an angelic lady with the powers of the Virgin Mary. Although this poem was not meant to be taken as serious philosophy, it was studied and commented on as if it were a dialogue by Plato.<sup>36</sup> Guinizelli explains how the noble lady turns the gentle heart towards love. The gentle heart is made by nature not art, and in it love burns for its own sake. The lady remains the intermediatrix, but instead of a kiss awakening the knight and kindling a blaze in his heart, a look in his direction suffices:

Up in the Intelligence of Heaven shines  
 God the Creator, more than to our glances  
 The Sun: He knows all its deep-hidden signs;  
 And as that sky, obeying Him, advances,  
 From God Himself it showers  
 Upon the first, complete and proper bliss.  
 A lovely lady with her sunlit glance  
 Must so reveal the powers  
 Of inborn gentleness  
 To one who never scorns obedience.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup>N. A. Robb in her Neoplatonism of the Italian Renaissance (London, 1935) summarizes the change well: "The liege-lady of the troubadours, becomes a being of more than earthly perfection who raises the lover towards the bliss of Paradise" (p. 177).

<sup>36</sup>Valency, p. 232. He adds: "For Dante it was the corner-stone of the new style."

<sup>37</sup>Medieval Age, ed. Angel Flores (New York, 1963), p. 230. This poem is trans. by Joseph Tusiani.

She derives her powers from God and directs them into the gentle heart. In a religious context, this is usually called sympathetic magic. Guinizelli, however, replaces the magic with a piece of scholastic doctrine which makes the mystery appear intelligible. Valency presents this complicated theory as clearly as possible, so I will quote two passages from it:

God moved the world through love by means of intermediate substances created for the purpose, and these intelligences worked simply by knowing the Creator's will. Gazing upon the light of God, they transmitted it in action, themselves radiant with the light they received. In the same way, the spirits of the human organism moved the flesh in accordance with the soul's desire. When this soul in its turn contemplated a higher spirit, and, through love, obeyed it, it reflected the working of the cosmic mechanism all along the chain of being. The lady who thus dominated the lover's soul might properly be compared with an angelic intelligence . . . . She touched them [her lovers] only with her spirit, but it was enough; they were moved. Then, ablaze, with desire, pleading for pity, sighing and weeping, and full of the joy of love, they revolved about the angelic figure which controlled them.<sup>38</sup>

As Guinizelli happily notes in the last stanza of his poem, God could hardly consider it a sin to love such an angelic substance. Obviously this poem pleases both the poet and the church. Guinizelli was the first to state the relationship between the lover and his lady in abstractions borrowed from scholastic philosophy. Other stilnovisti struggled with the problem of breathing life into these abstractions. They wanted to make the relationship convincing. Borrowing

---

<sup>38</sup>Valency, p. 244.

the troubadour's role of the anguished lover and his oxymoron-filled complaints, they adapted them to the much more subdued life of the philosopher-poet who devotes his life to study and wisdom.

Guido Cavalcanti (1250-1300) enthusiastically adopts this role in his sonnets and ballata. He concentrates his poetic skills upon the moment when the lover makes the double discovery of the anguish of being separated from his love and the sheer joy of being in love itself (Sonnet XXXI). His torment becomes so severe that in Sonnet XXXIII he would welcome death if it appeared and often asks love why he tortures his favorites. Cavalcanti enjoys expressing the paradox that the noble heart, which few possess, is the only heart capable of such excruciating pain. An anonymous commentator upon Cavalcanti's poems calls this play of opposites within the soul an obscurity:

. . . which is the melancholy agitation [conturbatione] that arises in the soul after love has been generated, and always accompanies love.<sup>39</sup>

The oxymoron is necessary to the expression of true love simply because the noble heart contains the coincidence of opposites.

Cavalcanti becomes more infatuated with the variations that can be worked on the theme than with his mistress who has inspired the need for them. Consequently, she fades

---

<sup>39</sup> John C. Nelson, Renaissance Theory of Love (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 41.

from his sonnets and ballata as quickly as a summer flower in the autumn. In the famous canzone, Donna Mi Priegha she becomes merely a convention that allows him to open an abstract explanation of the processes of the mind in the conventional concrete manner. The courtly lover has disappeared, and a philosopher has taken his place.

Dante (1265-1321) continued the philosophical and technical concerns of the Dolce Stil Nuovo with a sincere passion that has never been equaled. De Rougemont believes that the only time Dante reaches the heights of passion is when he is singing of philosophy.<sup>40</sup> In the Vita Nuova and again in the Divina Commedia Dante's liege-lady, Beatrice, leads him out of his spiritual turmoil caused by ignorance, error, and sin into the new life consisting of the vision of and the devotion to God, the source of harmony, peace, and love in the universe. As Isolde prepared Tristan for the union of love by healing his stinking wound, so Beatrice prepares Dante for the union and knowledge of God by saving him from death. There is only one difference: Beatrice herself had to die. Dante's new life springs from Beatrice's death; thus Dante with the use of the oxymoron

---

<sup>40</sup>"For such was the paradoxical secret of courtly love; stilted and inanimate when addressed to woman, it became all ardent sincerity as soon as it was directed to the Wisdom of love. Dante is never more passionate than when philosophy is the theme of his song, unless it is when philosophy has turned into holy science." See Denis de Rougemont, Love in the Western World (New York, rev. ed. 1956), p. 188.

thrusts us into the heart of the mystery of life in death and death in life which is central to the use of the motif of death and revival.

Dante transfers the role of Tristan from its setting in the medieval courts and chambers of the aristocracy to the urban life of the late thirteenth century commoner. Dante, indeed, has the noble heart, but he still remains the poet-scholar, walking the streets of Florence. He does not perform in public. His sonnets, the proof of a noble heart, were supposedly called forth to express the emotions of the moment. They are encrusted, however, with narrative and commentary, the signs of the scholar. Both of these are necessary, because without them, we would think that he was just the ordinary troubadour singing of his love.

Dante, the poet-scholar, is struck one day by the beauty of Beatrice. Being the true courtly lover, he keeps it a secret. Occasionally he catches glimpses of her in public. Then, one day at the house of a friend, he sees her again. This time her nearness throws him into complete confusion and all of his senses are overpowered by love. He faints as love rushes into his soul. When he recovers, he tells a friend that he is now taking a path along which he will not be able to return. This momentary death and revival happened quite frequently to the noble heart, and, as Valency points out, was even theoretically justifiable:

When the vital spirit, anima, was driven from the heart by the fiery spirits which composed the lady's image, the heart was bereft of life, and it died. Such was the normal consequence of the separation of body and spirit. But the interruption was momentary. The lover felt faint, his heart missed a beat, then the spirits surged back and resumed their functions more or less as usual.<sup>41</sup>

The joy of love fills his soul until one day, he becomes so sick that he can't move. He broods upon his love and experiences a vision of her death. Still within the dream, he goes into deep mourning and appears to his friends as one who is dead. Then, after awakening, in a few days he again sees Beatrice on the street. Her beauty and his love immediately begin to heal his soul and lead him from this world to God, dwelling beyond the spheres.<sup>42</sup> When Beatrice actually dies, he confesses that his

---

<sup>41</sup>Valency, p. 232. Valency quotes Lapo Gianni's description of the same phenomenon: "Within your heart there arose a little spirit which issued from your eyes and came to wound me as I gazed at your lovely face, and it pushed its way through my eyes so rapidly and so savagely that it made my heart and my soul run away--the one had been asleep and the other was terrified--and when they felt it coming so proudly and the blow so strong they feared that death in that moment would exercise its power. But when the soul was reassured, it called to the heart, 'Are you dead then, that I don't feel you any longer in your place?' The heart, which had little life in it, wandering alone and comfortless, almost speechless for trembling, answered 'Oh, soul, help me up and lead me again to the castle of life.' And thus together they went to the place whence they had been driven (p. 232)." This little conceit contains the pattern of the Vita Nuova, Pericles, and Aminta.

<sup>42</sup>Dante explicitly compares her coming to that of Christ by showing how her companion's name, Joane, who walks first, comes from John, the one who prepared the way for Christ. Christ is the saviour and the mediator between God and man.

pen cannot do justice to his sorrow, and he wanders through the city sad and alone. A year later he happens to be drawing some angels on a sheet of paper, when they appear beside him with reassurances.<sup>43</sup> Soon after their appearance, he is attracted to the beauty of a woman whom he sees on a balcony. Her beauty and the thought of worldly pleasure tempt him away from Beatrice. One night, when the struggle between worldly pleasure and devotion to love is particularly intense, Beatrice appears to him in a vision. From that moment on, he thinks of her constantly. She has shown him the way, and Dante, reborn into the life of the pilgrim, begins his journey that leads to the beauty and splendour of the vision of God:

Beyond the sphere which spreads to widest space  
 Now soars the sigh that my heart sends above:  
 A new perception born of grieving Love  
 Guideth it upward the untrodden ways.  
 When it hath reach'd unto the end, and stays,  
 It sees a lady round whom splendours move  
 In homage; till, by the great light thereof  
 Abash'd, the pilgrim spirit stands at gaze.  
 It sees her such, that when it tells me this  
 Which it hath seen, I understand it not,  
 It hath a speech so subtile and so fine.  
 And yet I know its voice within my thought  
 Often remembereth me of Beatrice:  
 So that I understand it, ladies mine.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup>He was practicing a little magic. It is accepted practice to make an "image" of the spirit that the Magus wants to appear. Dante, however, is playing with the conceit and preparing us for the appearance of the angel, Beatrice.

<sup>44</sup>La Vita Nuova, trans. D. G. Rossetti, reprinted in The Portable Dante, ed. Paolo Milano (New York, 1947), pp. 617-18.

Dante's assertion that his liege-lady is a miracle, a manifestation of the divine in the temporal world, was a poetic commonplace among his fellow poets. All of their ladies dazzled the world, took the lover's heart away, and blessed them with a glance. Their death was a public calamity which caused universal mourning and oceans of tears in the faithful lover.<sup>45</sup> Only Dante, however, provided her with the theory of scholastic love, so that her death became an allegory and his rebirth, a conversion.

Behind the motif of death and revival in the Vita Nuova lies a great deal of scholastic philosophy.<sup>46</sup> All men have a sensitive and a rational soul. Dante first apprehended Beatrice with his sensitive soul. Since this soul serves the animal appetites, it cannot apprehend the purpose of its own actions but always acts blindly, and one who follows this soul can only end up in doubt, despair and confusion. Dante suffers through this frightening condition after Beatrice dies. Man's rational soul, which only apprehends ideas (also called essences or essential forms) can understand the purposes for the actions that it sees. After Beatrice's death, Dante could only apprehend her with his rational soul. Her death was allegorically

---

<sup>45</sup>Valency, p. 260.

<sup>46</sup>This is not the place to discuss this interesting psychology. See Valency, pp. 224-45 for an excellent discussion of the relationship of scholastic philosophy to the stilnovisti theory of love.



necessary to indicate which faculty or soul she controlled. The rational soul was the higher faculty, so to love intellectually was the highest activity of man. With this faculty he could see the essential beauty of his lady:

The highest quality of the beautiful woman would thus be her transparency, the quality which permitted the lover to glimpse the soul, the ideal, through the fleshly envelope; and the function of the beauty of woman would be to set man on the upward path, making manifest to him in the first place through his senses that beauty which his intellect could afterward follow upward to its source in the absolute.<sup>47</sup>

Her death indicates the movement from the world of the sensitive soul to that of the rational soul. His choice, which is his new life, amounts to a conversion from devotion to worldly beauty to devotion to heavenly beauty. This conversion is symbolized by his "death" and subsequent rebirth under the influence of Beatrice.<sup>48</sup> Like Proteus, the troubadour and liege-lady could change their shape to fit the circumstances, but their essential relationship, imaged so beautifully by Gottfried in Tristan, remains untouched by the various alterations.

---

<sup>47</sup>Valency, pp. 224-5.

<sup>48</sup>The pattern of conversion described by Herbert Weisinger in Tragedy and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1953), p. 22, includes all of Dante's actions in La Vita Nuova. First there is an "almost overpowering sense of chaos"; there is the sudden joy of seeing everything fit together; "and above all, the feeling of knowledge and power which comes from having ascended from ignorance to light" sweeps over the soul. Finally the converted cherishes the new vision of order and design in the world. Religious conversion is only one of many kinds of possible conversions.

In the one hundred years between the stilnovisti and the Neoplatonists, who were to produce the final change in the medieval love-traditions, the poetry of the courtly lover was not neglected. Francesco Petrarch (1304-1374) completely absorbed the tradition, giving a vitality to the ancient conventions which fascinated many of the Renaissance poets and insured the survival of the traditions well into the seventeenth century. He was familiar with the earlier romances and assumed the voice of Tristan occasionally in the Rime (v. Sonnetto CXXII).<sup>49</sup> Where Dante turned these conventions into philosophy, Petrarch turned them into rhetoric and style, putting them at the service of his own personal passions. For instance, as Miss Pearson notices, Laura retains her humanity throughout the Rime.<sup>50</sup> She never becomes an idealized abstraction nor an object of sensual gratification. He often describes her beauty, reflects upon its brevity, and promises to make her immortal with his verse.<sup>51</sup> As the conventions demand, she becomes the center of the poet's world. The sonnetti follow the same general narrative line invented by Dante,

---

<sup>49</sup>de Rougemont, p. 192. He quotes the trionfo d'amore: "Here be the erring knights in ancient scrolls, Lancelot, Tristan, and the vulgar souls That wait on these (n.2)."

<sup>50</sup>Pearson, p. 31.

<sup>51</sup>For beauty see Sonnetti XXXVII, CXXI; and CLV; for brevity see nos. I and XI; for immortality see CLXX and CLXXI.

which means that they follow the motif of death and revival. Laura, of course, plays the same role as Beatrice in the poet's death and revival. The only difference is that Laura is married to another--a return to the original romance motif (v. Sonnetto LCXXXVI).

Petrarch explored many of the stylistic possibilities of the paradox of the coincidence of opposites which resided only in the heart of the true lover. Two sonnets explain the lover's desire for death (XV and CCVIII). The oxymoron intrigues him; in fact, many of the sonnets just play with the various kinds of antitheses appropriate to the courtly lover. The lover fears and hopes, freezes and burns, and desires to perish and asks for health (sonnetto LXXXIX).<sup>52</sup> He doesn't know whether to live or die (X) or whether to love or hate her (CXVII). The bitter-sweet nature of love comes in for a good deal of comment as well (sonnetti XLIV, CXL, and CXLI). These rhetorical devices, which Gottfried used anagogically to indicate the mystery of love, exist for their own sake in Petrarch's poems. Their beauty ornaments his sonnets, and, if they call attention to anything, it is to the poet's own rhetorical skill and to his powers of invention.

Petrarch should not be held responsible for the excesses of his imitators, but the daring success of his use of the poses of the courtly lover coupled with his

---

<sup>52</sup>For further examples see CII, CIV, CIX, and CXI.

magnificent style, which appeared to be the perfect blend of art and nature, stimulated many poets to adopt the voice of the troubadours and sing of the bitter joys and the sweet agonies of love. Excessive use coarsened the significance and destroyed the rhetorical effect of these conventions so that today few can see the force and the beauty that the Renaissance poets divined in the oxymoron's pithy compactness and startling paradoxes. Many of those who imitated Petrarch borrowed only the fragments that appealed to them. They missed the total vision of the complete image, which Petrarch had absorbed from the romances and from Dante. Consequently they shattered the motif into many pieces, emasculating the power and dissolving the mystery of the image of the dying poet-knight being revived by the kiss of the woman whom he loves and whose beauty rivals that of a goddess.

The Neoplatonists and their friends reconstructed the image from the fragments found in the late romances, in the poems of the stilnovisti, in the canzone and sonnetti of Petrarch, and in the pastoral eclogues of Boccaccio and Petrarch. In the process of reconstruction, they expanded its significance, so that it harmonized with their cosmic theory of love. For them love was a cosmic force, a movement and a rhythm of the universe, emanating from the

One, dividing into the individual things in the world, and finally returning back to the One.<sup>53</sup> Most of the credit for the invention of this theory belongs to that Renaissance scholar, translator, commentator, priest, and magician, Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499). He was the trusted advisor to Lorenzo de' Medici and one of the most illustrious members of the group surrounding Lorenzo. He also founded the Florentine Academy, from whence issued the theory of Platonic love that had such a large impact upon the arts of Europe.<sup>54</sup> The Academy was an unofficial social club, research society, and promoter of the arts, which only half seriously looked upon itself as a revival of the earlier Platonic Academy.<sup>55</sup> When it held its famous banquet in Florence on the seventh of November, 1474 to celebrate Plato's birth, Ficino had already translated all of the Platonic dialogues into Latin.<sup>56</sup> Ficino's commentary

---

<sup>53</sup>Sears Jayne, "Ficino and the Platonism of the English Renaissance," Comparative Literature, IV (1952), p. 226.

<sup>54</sup>Other members of this society were: Christoforo Landino (commentator on Virgil, Horace and Dante); Lorenzo the Magnificent; Pico della Mirandola; Francesco Cuttoni di Dioiceto; and Angelo Poliziano (Politian). There were many others of less importance. See Erwin Panofsky, Studies in Iconology (New York, reprinted 1962), p. 130. Also see N. A. Robb, p. 57f.

<sup>55</sup>Robb, p. 57.

<sup>56</sup>John Vyvyan, Shakespeare and Platonic Beauty (London, 1961), p. 33.

upon Plato's Symposium,<sup>57</sup> which purports to report the actual discussions of the November seventh banquet, and his more comprehensive, Theologia Platonica, really amount to an original synthesis, which Plato would have difficulty recognizing.<sup>58</sup>

Ficino's theory, like the Platonic and the scholastic, posits two separate and opposite worlds, the spiritual and the material which are based upon the classical pair of opposites, form and matter.<sup>59</sup> Each of these worlds is bifurcated, making four distinct areas in the cosmos. Ficino arranges these in a hierarchy; immediately below God, who is distinct from yet intimately connected with the four levels of existence, is the Cosmic Mind, which possesses God's incorruptibility but lacks His unity. The Cosmic Soul, which is incorruptible but not stable, completes the spiritual world. This world of pure cause is identical with the familiar scholastic-Ptolomaic universe. The Realm of Nature, composed of form and matter and

---

<sup>57</sup> Commentarium in Convivium Platonis de Amore. Begun in 1469 and printed in 1484. He also translated it into Italian.

<sup>58</sup> Ficino used the phrase, "platonic love" (amore platonico) in a letter to Alamanno Danate. See Nelson, pp. 68-9. As the phrase increased in popularity, it had less and less to do with Plato.

<sup>59</sup> I don't intend to describe Ficino's complete metaphysics, only those parts connected with his theory of love. For a more detailed description see: P. O. Kristeller, The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino, trans. Virginia Conant (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943). A succinct description can be found in Panofsky, pp. 130-46.

corruptible for that reason, occupies the third level removed from God and lacks a great deal of perfection because of the distance between it and God. The last world, lifeless, formless, imperfect, and almost without movement Ficino calls the Realm of Matter. A circuitus spiritualis or "uninterrupted current of supernatural energy" flows from God through the four worlds and back towards him. The worlds are intimately linked together by this force, and it is by this flow that the higher worlds continually "influence" the lower.

On this theory of the universe Ficino grafts the doctrine of courtly love as it comes to him from Dante. Each of these worlds influences the other in the same way that Blanche of France revived Rivalin or Beatrice, Dante: with the power of its beauty. With the exception of God and the Realm of Matter each world becomes the mediator between the one above and the one below. Here is Ficino's own description of the process:

This divine quality of beauty stirs desire for itself in all things: and that is love. The world that was originally drawn out of God is thus drawn back to God; there is a continual attraction between them--from God to the world and from the world to God--moving as it were in a circle. This circle may be said to display three qualities: beginning in God, it is beauty [pulchritudo]; passing into the world, it is love [amor]; and returning to unite the creation with the Creator, it is pure delight . . . . God is the beauty that all things desire: By this their longing was kindled, and in the possession of it they will be

content. Here the ardour of all lovers comes to rest, not because it is spent, but because it is fulfilled.<sup>60</sup>

And again, only this time in terms closer to the courtly love tradition:

Finally, in all worlds, there is love within Chaos. Love precedes every world; it awakens what is sleeping, lightens what is obscure, gives life to the dead, form to the formless, and bestows perfection on imperfect things.<sup>61</sup>

This is certainly what the liege-lady had been doing for two centuries.

The Neoplatonists and Ficino adapt the rhythm of Dante's experience in the Vita Nuova to the circular flow of love. The beauty of the Gods overflows (emanatio) into the lower beings. This ignites a vivifying rapture or conversion (Ficino called it a conversio rapto or vivificatio) which draws the lower beings back to heaven where they rejoin the gods (remeatio).<sup>62</sup> Each created thing shares in some way in the great cosmic movement of death and revival that returns all creation to its source.

Ficino also borrows the lady on the balcony and Beatrice from Dante and refines them into symbols of the two kinds of love in the world. Beatrice becomes the

---

<sup>60</sup>As quoted in Vyvyan, p. 39. His translation, my parentheses. This is very close to the scholastic universe.

<sup>61</sup>As quoted in Vyvyan, p. 38.

<sup>62</sup>Edgar Wind, Pagan Mysteries in The Renaissance (Baltimore, rev. 1967), p. 37.



celestial Venus (Venus Coelestis); she has no mother, so she belongs to the immaterial sphere.<sup>63</sup> As Panofsky describes her:

She dwells in the highest, supercelestial zone of the universe, i.e., in the zone of the Cosmic Mind, and the beauty symbolized by her is the primary and universal splendour of divinity. She can thus be compared to 'Caritas,' the mediatrix between the human mind and God.<sup>64</sup>

She also represents the contemplative life, which advances from the contemplation of objects of sense to the knowledge of things divine. The lady on the balcony translates into the Terrestrial Venus (Venus Vulgaris), who is the daughter of Zeus and Juno. She inhabits the Realm of the Cosmic Soul and is a vis generandi, giving "life and shape to the things in nature,"<sup>65</sup> She particularizes beauty, thereby making it intelligible to our intellect. She inspires human love, called by Ficino the active life, which "delights in seeing and conversing with the person loved."<sup>66</sup> Both of these Venuses are good, but Ficino, being a priest, prefers the contemplative to the active life. Each Venus has a son (Eros and Amor), who inspires the kind of love appropriate to his mother. The one impels the mind to contemplate the

---

<sup>63</sup>Panofsky points out that mater (mother) was associated with materia (matter), p. 142.

<sup>64</sup>Panofsky, p. 142.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Nelson, p. 78.

beauty of God, while the other raises the desire in man to procreate a likeness of divine beauty in this world.<sup>67</sup>

He also mentions a third kind, bestial love, which is really an aberration of the other types. The bestial lover, forgetting his humanity completely, lusts after the pleasures of the flesh with uncontrolled passion.

The individual's relation to the two Venuses is the same as that of Dante to his two ladies. In order to participate in the flow of divine love which culminates in beatitude the individual must move from the influence of the sensual procreative Venus to the intellectual Venus of the Cosmic Mind. Ficino and the other Neoplatonists describe this turning from one Venus to another as a death and a rebirth. Ficino calls the renunciation of the active life of the physical world a voluntary death. The soul is dead to the world apprehended by the senses. But at the same time that the soul dies in one world, it is reborn again in the other. The lover lives again in God, and finds the object of his desire. He becomes a unity--at one with the world, himself, and God.

---

<sup>67</sup>As quoted in Vyvyan, p. 48: "Our mind corresponds to the first Venus; and because of the divine provenance of beauty, the mind is moved to a reverential love when the beauty of a human body is presented to the eyes; while the power of generation in us, which is the second Venus is stimulated to create a similar form. Love acts in both--in the one, as a desire to contemplate, and in the other to propagate the beautiful. In reality, each love is that of the divine image, and each is pure."

For the philosophers of the Academy, Orpheus was the type of this conversion.<sup>68</sup> His journey to Hades symbolized the death of the sensitive soul and the rebirth of the rational in the Realm of the Cosmic Mind. Orpheus also possessed the four divine madresses distinguished by Socrates: of the Muses or Poetry; of ritual mystery or Bacchus; of prophecy or Apollo; of love or Venus (Phaedrus, 244-245b). God above draws man into the spiritual world by the divine madness, and the divine madness leads to man's illumination. In this world man's soul labors under discords; each of the four species of divine madness helps to heal the soul and raise it that much closer to its longed for reunion with God. The music of poetry tempers the soul; the mystery of the Bacchic sacrifice unifies the parts of the soul; the Apolline vision discovers the transcendent unity behind the phenomena of life; and the passion for beauty unites the soul with God.<sup>69</sup> Orpheus is the complete man, and like Tristan, he only became complete after he came close to death and was reborn.

Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494) was the only other philosopher of the Florentine Academy to construct a theory

---

<sup>68</sup> He was also viewed as the originator of the mysteries of Platonism. Proclus fathered the error, and Ficino and Pico cherished it. The genealogy: Orpheus-Aglosphamus-Pythagoras-Plato is completely fanciful as history (Wind, p. 36).

<sup>69</sup> Richard Cody, The Landscape of the Mind (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 28.

of love. His theory derives from his teacher's (Ficino) doctrines, but he does make some additions relevant to our inquiry. Most of his speculations occur in his popular Commentary on Benivieni's "Canzona dello Amore Celeste et Divino."<sup>70</sup> Pico, who was not as rigid a Platonist as Ficino, connected the Venuses with the three psychological faculties: sense, reason, and intuition. To do this, he had to invent a third Venus. He identified the daughter of Uranus with Intuition, the daughter of Zeus with the senses, and his own invention, Celestial Venus II with reason.<sup>71</sup> Sharing the same delight as his master in the Neoplatonic rhythm of universal emanation and return, he went so far as to see it reflected in the structure of Benivieni's Canzona:

. . . which first describes celestial beauty and love in stanzas III and IV, then relates in the fifth stanza how from them arise their earthly counterparts, and in the concluding stanzas shows 'how from sensuous beauty one rises by ordered steps to intelligible beauty.' Pico writes that this process, known to but few, is what Plato in the Philebus calls 'deducing unity into multitude, and reducing multitude to its unity.'<sup>72</sup>

Pico lays greater emphasis upon the individual's ascent to intelligible beauty, bringing the process closer to traditional mysticism than to Ficino. The soul forgets the

---

<sup>70</sup>Girolamo Benivieni (1453-1542) wrote a verse summary of Ficino's theory. It contains nothing that Ficino would disavow; the same cannot be said of Pico's Commentary.

<sup>71</sup>See Panofsky, pp. 144-5, n. 51 for a chart making these comparisons.

<sup>72</sup>Nelson, pp. 60-1.

experience of intellectual beauty when it enters the body, and Pico believes that the soul must climb a six-rung ladder in order to return to its source, which is God or absolute beauty.<sup>73</sup> The six degrees are nothing more than scholastic psychology arranged in a series of steps, suggesting the Platonic ladder of love. Heavenly love is too pure to enter into man's soul, so it works from a distance, pulling man up to perfection.

On the way up to heavenly beauty, man's soul must die and be reborn twice. Stanza eleven (11, 9-14) of Benivieni's Canzona explains how man's intellectual life springs up after the death of his physical appetites. Pico comments that morendo el cor (the dying heart) means that man's human soul dies when he gives himself over to intellectual love. He dies as a man and lives as an angel, desiring the dimly perceived divine beauty in his own soul. As Nelson has correctly noticed, this transformation is an extension of the metaphors used by the stilnovisti when they described their liege-ladies.<sup>74</sup> Once the soul has managed to suspend all intellectual desires and activities, it undergoes another death; Nelson summarizes the event this way:

---

<sup>73</sup>The six steps are: 1. The soul is attracted to the beauty of a particular person. 2. The soul refines this image. 3. Further abstraction lets the soul behold the universal nature of corporal beauty. 4. It finds that Ideal beauty is in the intellect. 5. By turning within, the soul ascends to the Celestial Venus (I). 6. The journey terminates with the beholding of pure beauty and the soul remains fixed in contemplation (see Vyvyan, pp. 220-1).

<sup>74</sup>Nelson, p. 59.

To achieve complete union with the heavenly Venus a second death is necessary, in which the soul, kissing and embracing Venus in an indissoluble bond, becomes one with the soul of Venus.<sup>75</sup>

Here again is the divine kiss of St. Bernard and Gottfried, used as a symbol of the unity of being, which is the synthesis of the ego and divine beauty. In this union, the soul loses the ego and is transformed into divine beauty itself. It has reached the goal of its long quest. Pico liked to refer to this state as the "blindness of joy."<sup>76</sup> As the liege-lady disdained to return the troubadour's love, so this highest form of love, unlike friendship, is not returned. The lover must be willing to go blindly to his own self-destruction.<sup>77</sup> Pico thought that Plato had discovered a particularly apt symbol of this in the story of Alcestis:

. . . Alcestis achieved the perfection of love because she longed to go to the beloved through death; and dying through love, she was by the grace of the gods revived. . . .<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>76</sup>Wind, p. 63.

<sup>77</sup>This is where Ficino and Pico part company. Ficino never welcomed the loss of the ego. He felt that divine love was a kind of friendship where each remains himself and yet partakes of the other (see Wind, p. 66f).

<sup>78</sup>As quoted in Wind, p. 157. Plato's story is in the Symposium 179D. Lorenzo de' Medici has the same belief in his sonnet sequence. Explaining why he began with one on death, he writes: "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 (Wind, p. 157)."

Pico's definition of beauty is also closer to the troubadour tradition than is Ficino's. Ficino believed beauty to be the desire for perfection and for completeness. Pico felt the essence of Pulchritudo was:

. . . la contrarieta' unita, e la discordia concorde, il chi si può per vera definizione assignare di essa bellezza, cioè che non sia altro che una amica inimizizia e una concorde discordia.<sup>79</sup>

The coincidence of opposites or the concordia discors, which once indicated that the troubadour's heart was noble and worthy of the love that beauty inspired in it, now is the essence of that beauty itself. Between Ficino and Pico the complete theory of courtly love was expanded into a metaphysical system, which became the most popular theory of love in the Renaissance.

These Neoplatonic theories, emanating from the Florentine Academy, spread throughout Europe, until by the middle of the sixteenth century almost every courtier and sophisticate had at least a hazy notion of the subject. They circulated, not in the form of philosophical treatises, but in a form peculiar to the times called the Trattato d'Amore.<sup>80</sup> This genre accurately reflected the aristocratic ideals of the time. It was usually put in dialogue form,

---

<sup>79</sup>Wind, p. 78. ". . . the unity of contrariety, and the harmony of discord, that is the true definition of her beauty, namely nothing other than a hateful friend and a discordant harmony" (my translation).

<sup>80</sup>For a summary of the contents of most of the important treatises see Nelson, Renaissance Theories of Love. Robb also discusses them in her work.

either between two abstractions, as in Leone Ebreo's Dialoghi d'Amore or between several people, sitting in the privacy of their gardens or their apartments. Most professed to handle the topic in a learned fashion, inquiring into its nature, its origin, and its effects. The discussion of love carried on in these books, however, never was original or profound. The authors of the treatises did not wish to spoil the reader's impression of sophisticated elegance by taxing his brain with abstruse speculations on amore, so they merely summarized the mainpoints of "platonic love" and tried to present them in the most pleasing style that they could muster. The motif of death and revival found its way into these works because it was part of the tradition and because its oxymorons provided a dramatic rhetorical flourish which broke up the long and often emotionless conversations. As the Neoplatonic doctrines spread from one treatise to another the motif and the oxymoron lost all anagogical significance and became instead merely ornaments to the thought.

Pietro Bembo's Gli Asolani (1505), for example, records a conversation in a peaceful garden between a small intimate group of men and women. One of the characters, Perottino, knows that love is a torment and a suffering for the lover. With his eyes full of tears, he recites a poem which focuses on his wish to die and his soul's continual revival:



So living digs my grave;  
 So dying raises me again to life.<sup>81</sup>

And in a passage that would horrify Gottfried, Petrarch and Ficino, Perottino describes his heart in greater detail for the ladies:

For love having thrust my tortured heart betimes into the hottest fire, in which it was inevitable that I should die since my own powers were unable to resist such heat, the cruelty of that very lady with love of whom I burned made me fall to weeping so plentifully that my blazing heart was steeped in tears and by their help recovered from its flames; and yet these tears would of themselves have so relaxed the tendons of my life and made so deep a pool within my heart that I would have surely died, had it not been that everything my weeping softened the arid flames made hard again and so restored me.<sup>82</sup>

Bembo, in the person of Lavinello, refutes this kind of love and offers the chaste love of the intellectual and spiritual world in its place.

The fourth book of the Il Cortegiano (1528) by Baldassare Castiglione provides another good example of the popularization and the dilution of the motif. Castiglione has Bembo describe the love proper to the courtier by reciting a modified version of Pico's ascent of the soul. He describes the process of the soul's return to beauty without any of the references to death and rebirth found in Pico. The process has become a rational and effortless adventure. The kiss that awakened Rivalin and for Ficino

---

<sup>81</sup>Pietro Bembo, Gli Asolani, trans. Rudolf B. Gottfried (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954), p. 33.

<sup>82</sup>Bembo, p. 34.

signified the union of the soul with beauty has now been reduced to just the union of two souls:

Hence, a man delights in joining his mouth to that of his beloved in a kiss, not in order to bring himself to any unseemly desire, but because he feels that that bond is the opening of mutual access to their souls, which, being each drawn by desire for the other, pour themselves each into the other's body by turn, and mingle so together that each of them has two souls;  
 . . . .<sup>83</sup>

In all these discussions in the Trattato d'Amore the kernel of the theory was present, waiting to be revived by more sympathetic writers.

The last of the trattati to be written, De gli Eroici Furori (1585) by Giordano Bruno returns significance and force to the moribund motif. Bruno imitates Ficino and writes of divine things in the speech and similitudes common to ordinary lovers.<sup>84</sup> He describes the Neoplatonic ascent of the soul from the world of sense to the world of intelligible beauty, where, motivated by love, it beholds the absolute beauty and goodness of the universe. Bruno adds an interesting dramatic touch by telling part of the story through the eyes of the heroic lover who leaves a record of his torments and his ecstasies in a series of sonnets. The philosophy appears in the discussions of the

---

<sup>83</sup>Baldesar Castiglione, The Book of the Courtier, trans. Charles S. Singleton (New York, 1959), pp. 349-50.

<sup>84</sup>Giordano Bruno, The Heroic Frenzies, trans. P. E. Memmo, Jr. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1964), p. 63.

two characters who explain and amplify the symbols in the poems. Here is an example:

For love snatches me from life, she from  
Death, she gives me wings, he burns my heart;  
He kills my soul; she revives it; she is my  
Sustainer and he is my bereaved burden.<sup>85</sup>

The comment is rather superficial:

Therefore it is love that remains to deprive me of  
life, to burn me, to give me death and put all its  
weight upon my bones. As for her noble visage, it  
remains there to snatch me from death, to give me  
wings, to revive and sustain me.<sup>86</sup>

He does, however, understand the purpose of Blancheflor,  
Isolde, Beatrice, and Laura better than others who were  
influenced by the same tradition. He also repeats the  
Neoplatonic belief about the soul:

The body is as though dead and privative for the soul,  
which is its life and perfection; and the soul is as  
though dead and privative for the illuminating intel-  
ligence whereby the human intellect receives its  
proper character and actual form.<sup>87</sup>

Bruno transforms the courtly lover into the heroic philos-  
opher who seeks to become God.<sup>88</sup> Bruno and the other  
Neoplatonists insist that the world of the flesh, of the

---

<sup>85</sup>Bruno, p. 94.

<sup>86</sup>Bruno, p. 95.

<sup>87</sup>Bruno, p. 238.

<sup>88</sup>Francis Yates in Giordano Bruno and The Hermetic Tradition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 281, believes that there is a core of Hermetic philosophy underneath the Neoplatonism. Thus she believes that the real goal is the Hermetic gnosis; the love poetry is the mystical poetry of the Magus man who once was created divine and seeks to become divine again.

senses, and of matter has to be transcended in order to experience divine love. Death and rebirth symbolize the soul's movement from the natural to the intelligible world. Once in the spiritual world the soul's love became an inward contemplative exercise performed best by the priest or scholar alone in his cell. Gottfried, on the other hand, believes that the divine realizes itself in the world of the senses when a man and woman give themselves up completely to their desires. Their union is the union of opposites, which for a brief moment becomes a likeness of the divine unity in the temporal world.

Neoplatonism exerted such a wide influence upon the aristocracy and those who wrote for them for such a long time because its vocabulary and images could be adapted to express almost any theory of love. Even the prudish Christian writers emulating St. Jerome's misogyny could have used the imagery to express their beliefs. The deep ascetic strain in Neoplatonism lent itself very easily to denunciations of the flesh and marriage. Indeed, virtually everywhere a literate person looked he would encounter some fragment of the tradition.

Among the aristocracy, it was most prestigious to be acquainted with the theory. Those at court not acquainted with the symbols and doctrines found in the various works would have a difficult time surviving the conversations and the social banter, and they would have been most hard

pressed for formulæ with which to deliver a compliment. Love was always the center of court life, and this theory sanctioned the passion by making it the essence of God as well as of the noble lover. Beauty, one of the major interests of the ladies at court, no longer was a sign of vanity; now it was a faint resemblance of the divine splendor and was to be admired and worshiped instead of castigated as another snare of the devil. It must have been very flattering and a bit comforting to those at court to know that their world reflected the operations of the universe in every detail.

The artists, scholars, and the litterati, who themselves were often members of the courts, cultivated the theory for very different reasons. They looked upon it as ancient sacred lore, passed on down the centuries among those few initiates who could understand the truths hidden by this mystery. The word mystery had three basic meanings which were frequently confused by the Renaissance antiquaries when they rummaged through the rediscovered works of the Hellenistic culture.<sup>89</sup> The secret rituals of purification and initiation practiced among the Greeks from before the fifth century to the Hellenistic period were called mysteries. Plato and his followers borrowed their vocabulary and images to describe their particular philosophic habits of dialectic and contemplation. Plato

---

<sup>89</sup>Wind, pp. 1-13.

and Plotinus thus created the figurative or the literary use of this vocabulary. The members of the Platonic and the Neoplatonic schools continued to use these terms all through the Hellenistic age. As the hocus-pocus of magic again became ancillary to philosophical meditation, the word shifted to include the magical incantations of the quacks. All three uses of the word were mixed together in the works of Plutarch, Porphyry, and Proclus. But as Wind notes:

While they differed widely from each other in the degree to which they promoted, tolerated, or resisted a magical or ritual re-enactment of mysteries, they were unanimous in regarding the figurative understanding as basic. Whenever 'the mysteries of the ancients' were invoked by De Bussi, Beroaldo, Perotti, or Landino, not to mention Ficino or Pico della Mirandola, their concern was less with the original mystery cults than with their philosophical adaptation.<sup>90</sup>

So these humanists studied the sacred images, the spells, and the prayers, seeking the basic, unifying truth behind the various symbols.<sup>91</sup> Pico, for example, believed that the ancient sages went so far as to deliberately hide their knowledge with symbols at the behest of God:

But to disclose to the people the more secret mysteries, things hidden under the back of the law and the rough covering of words, the secrets of the highest divinity, what was that other than to give what is holy to dogs and to cast pearls among swine?

---

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>91</sup>As Wind points out (p. 9) they had the encouragement of both Plato and Plotinus. Both insisted that even though language is inadequate, it still is the basic tool to use to indicate the divine.

Consequently it was not human prudence but divine command to keep these things secret from the people, and to communicate them to the perfect, among whom alone, Paul says, spoke wisdom.<sup>92</sup>

Pico lists a series of ancient sages from the Egyptians and Pythagoras to the early Christian philosophers who staunchly upheld the custom. Again in his commentary on Benivieni's Canzona Pico affirms the principle of hiding the truth:

It was the opinion of the ancient theologians that divine subjects and the secret Mysteries must not be rashly divulged . . . . That is why the Egyptians had sculptures of sphinxes in all their temples, to indicate that divine knowledge, if committed to writing at all, must be covered with enigmatic veils and poetic dissimulation . . . . How that was done . . . by Latin and Greek poets we shall explain in the book of our Poetic Theology.<sup>93</sup>

Pico believed that the poets used their myths and tales in the same way that the theologians and philosophers used their incantations, spells, and symbols. The poets, such as Orpheus, disguised the wisdom of their beliefs behind the myths and fables that they presented as foolishness.<sup>94</sup> There was little that Pico read that did not have a meaning intentionally hidden by its author.

---

<sup>92</sup>Pico Della Mirandola, On the Dignity of Man, trans. Charles G. Wallis in Library of Liberal Arts (New York, 1965), p. 30.

<sup>93</sup>As quoted in Wind, p. 17.

<sup>94</sup>"But, as was the practice of ancient theologians, Orpheus covered the mysteries of his doctrines with the wrappings of fables, and disguised them with a poetic garment, so that whoever reads his hymns may believe there is nothing underneath but tales and the purest nonsense (On the Dignity of Man, p. 33)."

If all the most revered sages of the ancient world wrote this way, then a lowly student of their writings could hardly refrain from imitating them. Pico practiced the art of symbolic speech in his writings, and Wind notes that:

. . . these were regarded by his contemporaries as models of how to adumbrate an ineffable revelation through speech.<sup>95</sup>

Another humanist, Celio Calcagnini, struggled with the problems of communicating secret truths while still keeping them secret. He came to the reasonable conclusion that the man who wants to both 'publish' his mysteries and keep them secret must alternate between speech and silence. His own work shows how this can be done with the use of verbal ciphers and hieroglyphs. The riddle of these symbols both publishes and hides the secret at the same time.<sup>96</sup> Finally Dionysius the Areopagite seems to sum up what the later Renaissance humanists believed when he says:

All those who are wise in divine matters and are interpreters of the mystical revelations prefer incongruous symbols for holy things, so that divine things may not be easily accessible.<sup>97</sup>

It is Mr. Wind's thesis that many of the Renaissance artists hid the Neoplatonic and Orphic mysteries behind the

<sup>95</sup>Wind, p. 11.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 12. Dante and Petrarch used the pastoral eclogue to disguise their message in just this fashion.

<sup>97</sup>As quoted in Wind, pp. 12-13.



most simple of facades. The simplicity of the work opens into the complexity of the philosophical mystery, delighting those who know the mystery and misleading those unfamiliar with the truth. The artists connected with the members of the Florentine Academy ignored the images of the courtly love tradition and instead borrowed their symbols from the gods and goddesses of classical mythology. The deities symbolized the same doctrine as the images of courtly love, but in extremely different ways. Examples of how they adumbrated each of the three phases of the motif reveal that they felt the actual death and rebirth was part of the mystery and was not to be shown. They veiled it from the viewer with the beauty and the elegance of the figures and with the simplicity of the fable.

The Renaissance Florentines decided that the image of the Three Graces as described by Seneca and Servius and as rediscovered by the Renaissance adorning late Roman artifacts was the perfect symbol of the larger rhythm of the Neoplatonic universe.<sup>98</sup> Divine love, according to Ficino, went through three phases. It began with God as heavenly beauty, entered into the world as love, the desire that moved the noble heart to rapture, and finally it appeared as the joy of the return to the source of creation. On a medal stamped for Pico, appear the Three Graces; above their

---

<sup>98</sup>Wind reconstructs the history of this figure and its adoption by the Neoplatonists in great detail. See pp. 26-52.

heads, reading from left to right, are the three words:

Pulchritudo--Amor--Voluptas.<sup>99</sup> Wind interprets their postures in the following manner:

The converting power of Amor is illustrated by the Grace in the centre who, represented from the back, looks towards Voluptas on her right and stretches out her arm in her direction. Her left hand rests, as if for support, on the shoulder of Pulchritudo from whom she turns.<sup>100</sup>

The point is that beauty must be combined with desire before both can return to joy. Desire alone will not accomplish anything. The abstraction, Amor, has the same function here as the liege-lady in the courtly love tradition. Beauty and desire are usually considered opposites, but in the rapture of Amor they fuse together. Amor has her back to the viewer to indicate that only by turning to the beyond do these contraries fuse together into transcendent joy.<sup>101</sup> These three lovely figures, absorbed in their own dance, veil the essential elements of Pico's philosophy.

In Botticelli's Primavera, Ovid's fable of Zephyr and Chloris disguises the same theme.<sup>102</sup> Zephyr, as the breath of passion, transforms Chloris into the goddess Flora. Under the influence of Venus, in whose garden these transformations occur, love combines the opposites, chastity and

---

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., Fig. 10.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., pp. 43-4.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., pp. 113-27.

pleasure, into divine beauty, who, enraptured, gazes towards Mercury, the leader of the graces and symbol of the mystery of divine knowledge. As a mediator between man and God, he removes the clouds that obscure divine illumination. The Voluptas of divine illumination then returns into the world, appearing as the vivifying passion, Zephyr.

Titian painted a variation on the same theme.<sup>103</sup> His Sacred and Profane Love depicts two maidens, one on the left, clothed, and one on the right, naked, sitting on either end of a stone fountain. Exactly in the center between the two figures, the god Amor bends over the edge of the fountain (which resembles a casket) with his hand in the water. On the side of the fountain in bas-relief are a woman being dragged by the hair, a horse, and a man being scourged at a stake. These suggest the exorcising of the lower passions, which Ficino called bestial love (amore bestiale) and considered a form of insanity.<sup>104</sup> Both of the women sitting on the top of the fountain are above this agony. They correspond to Ficino's human love and his celestial love. Human love is clothed and sedate, while celestial love has only a long red flowing robe around her arm and a white

---

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., pp. 141-51.

<sup>104</sup> Wind remarks: "Both Ficino and Pico professed to know that in the pagan initiatory rites of love the first stage was a purge of the sensuous passion, a painful ritual of purification by which the lover was prepared for his communion with the god (p. 146 and n. 17 for the apposite passages in Ficino and Pico)."

cloth wrapped and knotted about her thighs. She is much less restrained than her companion, and she undoubtedly represents the purity and frenzy of the divine passion. Amor mediates between the two kinds of love, initiating beauty into divine love by purifying her in the waters of the fountain of love.

In all three examples, the transformations, usually rendered in terms of death and rebirth, hide behind the simplicity of the images. The dynamic rhythm of emanation-rapture-joy is not suggested by any movement of the figures or structure of the paintings. Nor are the profound emotions of the transformations and the very different lives that they entail suggested through the emotions and attitudes of the figures. All three works have instead an impression of balanced harmony. The symmetry of the design, the peaceful attitudes of the figures, and the quiet simplicity of the pastoral backgrounds emphasize restraint, proportion and a balance of forces. This balance points to one of the major doctrines of Neoplatonism that the artists particularly enjoyed illustrating: the coincidence of opposites.

As we have seen, the coincidence of opposites, reflected in speech with the oxymoron, indicated the capacity and nobility of the suffering lover's heart. Pico expanded this habit with the help of a few hints in Plotinus into a theory of Beauty, the definition of which we have

already quoted. Beauty cannot be simple; it has to have contrariety to be beautiful. Pico in his commentary gives an illustration of what he means:

. . . [it is] said by the poets that Venus loves Mars, because Beauty, which we call Venus, cannot subsist without contrariety, and that Venus tames and mitigates Mars, because the tempering power restrains and overcomes the strife and hate which persist between the contrary elements.<sup>105</sup>

Where the contraries meet, there will be balance, restraint, and temperance. This belief produced a series of pictures showing Venus tempering Mars' powers. She finally put on his armor so that her own image combines the fierceness of war with the gentleness of love. Her image, in effect, is a visual oxymoron. Eventually she becomes the conqueror in her war of love and displays her martial trophies as if she were Mars himself, and, indeed she is. As Edgar Wind concludes:

. . . Venus is not only joined to Mars, but . . . his nature is an essential part of her own, and vice versa . . . . In the perfect lover they coincide because he-or she-is the perfect warrior. But whenever their 'infolded' perfection is 'unfolded,' the argument requires two opposing images which, by contrasting the martial with the amiable spirit, reveal their transcendent unity.<sup>106</sup>

Another closely related pair that operates in the same way is love and death. This is the same rhetorical conceit

---

<sup>105</sup>As quoted in Wind, p. 89.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., p. 94. Wind mentions that even Savonarola used these contrasts in his images. God was both love and vengeance.

that Petrarch revived and his followers made into a commonplace. Love, as a voluntary death, had a metaphysical significance for the Neoplatonists. As mentioned above, it signified the agony of the soul as it tore itself away from the body and turned towards heaven. Lorenzo Lotto translated this into "Amor crowning a death's head that rests on a cushion."<sup>107</sup> Love as death also permeated the emblem literature of the time.<sup>108</sup> In one of Alciati's emblems with the motto, De morte et amore, Love and Death exchange their arrows, causing the young to die and the old to fall in love.<sup>109</sup> In this manner, this particular mystery shrunk to a game that tested the poet's wits.

The image of Tragedy that crowns the frontispiece of the first edition of Ben Jonson's works is only one of many in a long tradition that combined contradictory qualities in the same figure.<sup>110</sup> The skirt she wears belongs to the image of comedy, which is reproduced on the page, and her upper garments, designed in the Roman style, derive from

---

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>108</sup>The Emblemata of the Italian jurist Andrea Alciati was the most famous. It had a series of emblems arranged in three categories: the vices, the virtues, and miscellaneous subjects. Most are followed by a Latin motto and a gloss in verse. See Memmo, p. 52 n. 14.

<sup>109</sup>Wind, pp. 163-4.

<sup>110</sup>Reproduced from the title page of 1616 Jonson Folio in the Elizabethan Club, Yale University, in Eugene M. Waith, The Pattern of Tragicomedy in Beaumont and Fletcher (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), p. 41.

the figure of tragedy, which also is reproduced on the same page. In addition, she combines the serious countenance of tragedy with the relaxed and casual stance of comedy. These contraries joined in the same image indicate the greater perfection of the new hybrid, and when Guarini asserted that his mixture of tragedy and comedy was better than either tragedy or comedy alone because it combined the best of both forms,<sup>111</sup> anyone versed in the Neoplatonic doctrines of transcendence through the coincidence of opposites would have known immediately the reason why.

It was Pico's belief that "A myth gets its animation from a mystery,"<sup>112</sup> and the painters who were acquainted with his theories adopted the same attitude towards the myths they were painting. Politian (a member of the Florentine Academy) and Tasso also let the mysteries animate their dramas. Looking at these plays as fables that simultaneously hide and reveal a mystery discloses that most of the images in these plays have another level of meaning. In the first two chapters we studied these plays through the eyes of the uninitiated; now we will observe them through the eyes of an initiate. Most of the qualities of the play discussed above will remain what they were before; they will only have acquired an additional philosophical meaning.

---

<sup>111</sup>Gilbert, p. 512.

<sup>112</sup>Wind, p. 21.

Mr. Cody in his excellent discussion of these two plays describes the pastoral landscape as a metaphor for the inward life.<sup>113</sup> He cites Plato's Phaedrus as the most impressive example of the pastoral countryside being used for the discussions of love.<sup>114</sup> He needn't have gone that far back because the classical pastoral elegy always reflected the emotions of the shepherd-poet, and Politian continued the tradition that uses the pastoral as a metaphor of the inward life of the mind. The movement of the play depicts the characters harmonizing their conflicting passions, becoming one again with the pastoral landscape, and thus accomplishing the transcendence that indicates their oneness with God. Arcadia symbolizes the ideal unity of thought, feelings, and action away from which the characters have fallen and towards which they will return. It has all the qualities that Boccaccio's, Marot's and Spenser's "Elysium" had, except that now this reflects the ideal unity and harmony in the soul. The pastoral landscape becomes the mediator between man and God because it reflects the divine harmony and the harmony in the human soul at the same time. When the soul becomes one with the landscape, then it also becomes one with God. As any Christian Neoplatonist knows, the three are really one.

---

<sup>113</sup>Cody, pp. 23-28, and pp. 3-19.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., p. 24.



Love is the force that unites the contraries, motivates the soul towards unity, and inspires the poet to song. It is only natural then that love should be the subject of the plot and of most of the discussion among the characters. In the previous chapter we described how Aristaeus, the lover in the first part of Orfeo, was distinguished from the more pedestrian shepherds. In the Neoplatonic theory, his love becomes the desire of the soul for divine beauty, which is symbolized by Euridice, the nymph difficult to capture. His madness is that species inspired by Venus which belongs to the world of celestial love. The other shepherds belong to that world of human love presided over by the terrestrial Venus. Euridice dies, signifying that Aristaeus does not love the earthly corruptible part of her, but the pale image of the divine that shines through her body. His pursuit and her death complete the first movement of the play, the movement that imitates the emanatio of the Neoplatonists.<sup>115</sup>

Orpheus begins the movement that corresponds to raptio, the drawing of the creatures back to God. He had a special significance for the Neoplatonists. In addition to possessing those qualities listed by Miss Mayerson and

---

<sup>115</sup> This differs from Cody's division of the play into the same three movements. He includes Aristaeus' pursuit of Euridice in the raptio (p. 34).

being the originator of Platonism, he signified the central mystery of Orphic theology: the coincidence of opposites.<sup>116</sup>

As Cody summarizes:

The heart of his mystery is thus how the many pagan gods are one. This discovery is reputed to have occurred after he visited Egypt and learned the doctrine of Moses . . . . As a victim of dismemberment he personally embodies what syncretic rationalism always assumes, the One in the Many.<sup>117</sup>

His figure includes, among others, Bacchus and Apollo, i.e., emotion and art, whose powers to penetrate the underworld and suspend its operation were discussed in the last chapter. The play moves toward the unity of the many and the one which his death symbolizes.

The journey into the underworld was read by Pico as a parable on the necessity of dying in order to love.<sup>118</sup> Following Plato, Pico believes that this myth demonstrates the folly of trying to discover true love without dying. All Orpheus finds is a shadow.

Politian intends to initiate the audience into a mystery of Orpheus. The final movement of the play, that which parallels the remeatio or the returning into the unity of divine beauty, ends with the Bacchantes turning

---

<sup>116</sup>For a discussion of Orphic Theology see Wind, p. 198f; also Cody, p. 32 ff. "Whatever may be said against the divine hybrids, the curious crossbreeds that people the Orphic pantheon, they express the Orphic spirit at its fullest, . . . ."

<sup>117</sup>Cody, p. 32.

<sup>118</sup>Wind, p. 157,

towards the audience and inviting them to partake of the rite. This turning transforms the play into a rite and alters the relationship of the audience to the play. To follow the play, the audience have to be aware of their own position, i.e., as initiates and also to read the symbols so that they can understand what is happening. They cannot lose themselves in the story; they have to remain self-conscious participants in the rite. The playwright's use of pastoral and Ovidian mythological background helps to achieve this consciousness. The aim of the whole pagan rite is to purify the souls of the audience so that they can begin to comprehend the truth behind the world of phenomena.

This play unites the pastoral and the Ovidian mythological worlds to present an Orphic mystery to the audience. In the symbolic pastoral world, the emotions, when combined with art, suspend the laws of nature. When Bacchus and Apollo combine, they transcend the common-sensical world of Mopsus and Thyrsis and enter the region of divine love. But in order to unite with divine beauty in an ecstatic union one must first die.

Tasso also reveals this Neoplatonic mystery of death in order to live in Aminta.<sup>119</sup> The courtly lover, desiring

---

<sup>119</sup> Cody believes that Tasso practiced an Orphic theory of art and mentions Tasso's quote of Hesiod which defines the shepherds as keepers of the mysteries in support of this position (p. 62). He concludes: "Here once again

his own death, was a staple of the courtly love tradition popularized in the sonnets and the treatises on love. Tasso combined this motif with the image of the liege-lady revivifying her knight to veil this basic mystery. To the initiates, Aminta's death indicates that his soul has turned inward away from the world of the senses towards the region of celestial love. This is the death that Orpheus tried to avoid. Silvia, who has been purified before this by going through her own near death and revival, mediates between God, the source of divine beauty, and man. Her kisses and her purifying tears awaken him to the world of celestial love. His desire, purged of all impurities, fulfills itself by uniting with divine beauty. The audience in its mind's eye (the scene was narrated to them) sees in their embrace the reconciliation of opposites, i.e., of life-death, male-female, love-hate, and human-divine, which signalizes transcendence, by the divine, of the world of reason and common sense. The unity of their souls blends into the harmony of the pastoral landscape, signifying the fulfillment and the balance of their desires and their emotions. This hieros gamos also represented the joy of the soul to divine beauty, which Ficino called Voluptas.<sup>120</sup>

is the view of pastoralism as 'divine philosophy' informed by antique wisdom-an immanent view common to humanists of the Florentine persuasion (p. 63)."

<sup>120</sup>Wind, p. 156. Defines hieros gamos as "An ecstatic union with the god which was experienced by the neophyte as an initiation into death."

The Neoplatonists read other incidents in the story symbolically. The kiss that caused Aminta to fall in love with Silvia represents the moment of raptus when divine beauty enters the soul through the senses and awakens the desire to possess it. The scene at the fountain has the same meaning that the myth of Orpheus had for Plato; it shows that the lover must die before he can possess divine beauty. Silvia, the symbol of divine beauty, whose nudity reflects her contempt of worldly things,<sup>121</sup> has been tied up by the Satyr. He represents Amore bestiale, that lower kind of love which is a perversion of human love.<sup>122</sup> Aminta, the lover seeking divine beauty, after purging himself of the bestial imperfections, still can only briefly touch divine beauty. He is not pure enough to possess her yet; consequently, she runs off into the woods. Only after he dies, which reveals to her that he is a true lover of divine beauty, does she open her heart to him. Again a Neoplatonic mystery hides behind the simple incidents of a pastoral tragicomedy.

The pastoral landscape reflects the higher world of celestial love where the purified desires are fulfilled and

---

<sup>121</sup>See Panofsky, p. 151 on the significance of nudity in Titian's Sacred and Profane Love.

<sup>122</sup>"And he who is insusceptible even to visible beauty, or stoops to debauchery, or, even worse, abandons for sensual pleasures a contemplative state already attained, falls prey to a 'bestial love' . . . which, according to Ficino, is a disease rather than a vice: . . . (Panofsky, pp. 143-4)."

harmonized. In a very real sense the pastoral world becomes the symbol of the harmony toward which the mystery directs us. Cody does not believe that it means anything so specific:

it [the pastoral landscape] means the mind of love, erotic, impassioned, and viewed from within. Life in the woods means the acting out of certain inner states which for the Renaissance find their classic symbol in shepherdliness.<sup>123</sup>

As we saw in the last chapter, however, the poets used the pastoral to indicate this unity or, as in Sannazaro's case, the lack of unity in the shepherd-poet's life. The kiss forced Aminta to become aware of his separation from the ideal and of the discord that entered his soul as a consequence. The agony and the torment of the courtly lover's soul contrasts sharply with the ideal unity, simplicity, and concord of the pastoral. His revival means that he has once again attained the unity and harmony of spirit that all souls once possessed. It appears more clearly here than in the Orfeo that the Neoplatonists use the qualities of the pastoral tradition to symbolize the ideal state of mind that only the lover completely devoted to heavenly beauty ever attains.

The rhythm of the pastoral elegy has much in common with the three phases of divine love. Pulchritudo, which Ficino compares to a beacon, corresponds to that period

---

<sup>123</sup>Cody, p. 49.

when the woman was alive, e.g., Beatrice and Dido, or as in this play when Aminta and Silvia were growing up together. Amor parallels the increasing sadness and suffering of the lover who sings of the death of his beloved and wishes for his own death. Voluptas corresponds to the joy of rebirth and the recognition that the woman lives in Elysium, e.g., Beatrice, Olympia, and Dido. Tasso easily combined the two, so that even the pastoral rhythms suggested the Neoplatonic rhythm of divine love to those who knew the doctrine.

Balance, the quality of Mannerism that impressed Shearman the most, has a symbolic value for the followers of Plato and Plotinus. It is the result of the meeting of the opposites when strife is transformed into harmony. This new synthesis characterized by the balance of the opposites transcends the world of reason and indicates the divine. Tasso balances many opposites in this play, such as, life and death, love and hate, human and divine love, and purity and foulness. The most interesting of these opposites concern the work of art itself. Art and nature blend together in the pastoral background. The pastoral and the court blend together when the courtly lover becomes a shepherd. The sensuous and the divine balance each other, and at the same time the simple fable patterned after Ovid balances the complex Neoplatonic meanings.

The Neoplatonic mystery binds the pastoral elegy, the Ovidian mythological fable, and the courtly love tradition into a unified work of art whose perfection was often imitated in the following century.

Tasso's work was only one small contribution to the style that came to be called Mannerist and which eventually metamorphosed into the Baroque style of the seventeenth century. Unfortunately, those imitating Tasso more often than not were unaware of the nature of the mystery concealed by his fable. When the mystery disappeared, all the writers had to work with was the style created by the fusion of the three traditions. Il Pastor Fido demonstrates what happens to these stylistic qualities when the dramatist's imagination is not restrained by a poetic theology.

Guarini expanded one of the Neoplatonists' mysteries, the coincidence of opposites, into a stylistic and structural principle of Il Pastor Fido. As mentioned above, the Neoplatonists enjoyed combining the gods and goddesses into new combinations which expressed the belief that in the divine all the opposites are one. The painters and sculptors spread this passion for hybrids throughout the courts of Italy and Europe. When Guarini blends the tragic and the comic, he is simply adapting a popular fashion to the stage. The motif of death and revival forms the knot that binds the many opposites together. It unites the tragic with the comic, the hero with the lover, the lover with the hero,



and the courtly Arcadia full of discord with the pastoral ideal of harmonious simplicity. A clever example of this principle in the rhetoric is his description of the kissing war (II,i). The very name suggests the popular figure of Venus donning Mars' armor, discussed above. He describes their game to see who kisses the best in the terms of a battle. Of course, Amarillis wins and Mirtillo enters into the phase of love's suffering so familiar to the courtly lover. But the use of this principle in the style of the work calls attention to itself and consequently to the artistic skill of the dramatist. It no longer hides a mystery; rather it has become just another stylistic ornament which only contributes to the general artificiality of the play.

The pastoral landscape also lost its symbolic meaning. Arcadia merely signifies the conjoined worlds of the court and of nature. The "kingdom" of Arcadia reverts to its earlier function as a scene or backdrop. Guarini mainly uses it as a foil against which the heroic actions of Silvio and the agonies of Mirtillo are contrasted. Mirtillo's marriage to Amarillis, for which his near death has purified him, only removes the curse from Arcadia. A maiden will no longer have to be sacrificed to Diana. The marriage does not bring Mirtillo or Amarillis or the audience any closer to the harmony or the beauty of the pastoral world. Mirtillo's nobility, the quality that allows him to marry

Amarillis, insures that he will not become identical with Arcadia. Guarini's Arcadia operates as a compliment rather than as a symbol. The aristocratic audience sees their own fondest beliefs reflected in the mixture of the courtly and the pastoral. Arcadia is a combination of the ideals of nature or birth and the ideals of art or education. These two combine to create exquisite works of art, of which the audience is one of the finest examples. This has very little to do with Neoplatonism.

Since there isn't any mystery to reveal, it follows that the audience's relation to the play will differ from that to the other two plays. In Orfeo and again in Aminta the authors wanted to effect a change in the souls of the audience. Their hope was to illuminate a Neoplatonic mystery for the audience. They did this by bringing the audience to a state of self-consciousness. The goal was essentially didactic even though the means were designed to delight. Guarini only wished to purge the melancholy in the audience with pleasure. He did this by combining compliments, ingenious plots, and skillfully constructed speeches into a complicated surface which glittered and sparkled before the audience's gaze. The beauty, the style, the grace, and the ingenuity pleased the audience, and what was even nicer, they did not have to see beyond the action to discover the truths that the author had to communicate; they could attend to the surface of the play, knowing full

well that there was nothing behind the action. Guarini had created an artifice that existed solely for its own sake.

The Neoplatonists revived the moribund courtly lover by breathing the animating spirit of their mysteries into his body. Their esoteric art caught on among the aristocrats of Italy, and soon it was dispersed across Europe in treatises, poems, paintings, statues, medals and emblems. The mysteries soon disappeared, and a delight in the style for its own sake replaced the urge for illumination. Tasso's Aminta and Guarini's Il Pastor Fido reflect the change of emphasis from mystery to style. Both works combined the motif of death and revival with those qualities that the aristocracy found the most civilized, refined, and decorous, but the former used it to present a mystery, while the latter used it to bind together his disparate worlds. The motif contributed also to Guarini's style, artifice and ingenuity. In England, Shakespeare and Fletcher roughly reflect this same difference.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FUNCTION OF THE MOTIF IN THE PASTORAL PLAYS OF LYLY, SHAKESPEARE, DANIEL, AND FLETCHER

In England the motif of death and revival travels a parallel route to the same destination that it reached in Italy with the publication of Il Pastor Fido. The rest of this paragraph provides a map of this route, which the body of this chapter slowly retraces. John Lyly introduced the pastoral, Ovidian, and Neoplatonic conventions to the English court. In so doing, he adapted them to his own theory of love, which differs greatly from that of Ficino or even Tasso. His theory, grounded on common sense and fashioned out of Christian humanist materials, exists totally within the limits of reason, law and morality. It parallels the traditional Christian theories by oscillating between an ascetic renunciation of women and an ideal domestic bliss resulting from the marriage of two equally moral people living according to reason. The motif loses its metaphysical and anagogic significance and acquires in their place a humanistic moral meaning quite foreign to the Neoplatonic love conventions that circulated before Lyly wrote his plays. Shakespeare inherits this moral

significance along with the pastoral and the Neoplatonic love conventions from Lyly. In his early pastoral comedies, however, he gradually works out from under Lyly's humanistic view of love. Shakespeare does this by exploring Bembo's theory of love, recorded in Castiglione's Il Cortegiano, which, as we have seen, touched lightly upon the motif of death and revival. He gradually restores the symbolic and esoteric meaning to the motif and to the pastoral conventions. Samuel Daniel, writing towards the end of Shakespeare's career, harks back to the older moralistic tradition of Edwards and Greene. He criticizes aristocratic society and the court with the pastoral and tragicomic conventions derived from Guarini. The total absence of the coincidence of opposites and of any irony or sense of paradox indicates that even more of the mystery behind the motif has disappeared. Fletcher's The Faithful Shepherdess brings an end to the tradition of the didactic pastoral. This play makes the by now trite assertion that only a love free from lust can bring marital bliss. The actions and the poetic style, however, dampen any moral impact that this tale might have by distracting the audience's attention away from the lesson to be learned. The surface splendors exhibit the ingenuity of the author and the beauty of his poetry. As in Il Pastor Fido, the motif of death and revival only contributes to this ingenuity and

to the ornamentation of the play; its anagogic function has been completely forgotten.

Anyone browsing through John Lyly's (1554?-1606) plays after reading a few of the sixteenth century Italian pastoral tragicomedies immediately notices many similarities. In Sappho and Phao, Gallathea, Love's Metamorphosis, and The Woman in the Moon<sup>1</sup> he blends the Ovidian pagan deities with the shepherds and nymphs of the pastoral tradition in the same way as Politian in Orfeo or Correggio in Cefalo. The deities sometimes complicate the lives of the shepherds; more frequently, however, they resolve their difficulties and restore harmony to Arcadia. The same rural setting composed of trees, caves, and streams that the Italians borrowed from Ovid, Virgil, and Longus frames the characters in these stories. The unrealistic settings function in the same manner as in the Italian court dramas. As G. K. Hunter has noticed, Lyly's sets were designed to impress the audience rather than deceive them.<sup>2</sup> These impressive and unrealistic sets contrasted sharply with the court, forcing the audience to be aware of the play as a work of art that portrayed a world much more simplified

---

<sup>1</sup>The dates of composition are unknown. The dates of publication of the five plays mentioned here are: Sappho and Phao-1584; Endimion-1591; Gallathea-1592; The Woman in the Moon-1597; Love's Metamorphosis-1601. See Violet Jeffery, John Lyly and the Italian Renaissance (Paris, 1928), p. 73.

<sup>2</sup>G. K. Hunter, John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 107.

and idealized than their own--but one that was just as beautiful. Lyly's plays also neglect dramatic action, concentrating, instead, upon the emotional or lyrical movement of the poetry. This was one of the characteristics of the pastoral elegy that the dramatists adapted to their court presentations. Lyly carries it to such an extreme that there is almost no action at all in his plays. This has led Peter Saccio in a recent study of Lyly's dramaturgy to say of Endimion:

There are so many arrangements of characters for Lyly to establish that there is little time for anything in the way of a plot to happen. The central situation, indeed, is almost completely static.<sup>3</sup>

The same can be said of the rest of Lyly's plays and most pastorals. In the pastoral elegy and even more so in Lyly's plays the emphasis shifts from the plot to the refined dialogue and to the beautiful poetry of the character's soliloquies.

As insignificant as his stories are, he still borrows several incidents from the plots of the Italian pastoral dramas. The sacrifice in Gallathea is reminiscent of that in Il Pastor Fido and a little less so of that in Beccari's Il Sacrificio.<sup>4</sup> All three create suspense from a cruel

---

<sup>3</sup>The Court Comedies of John Lyly (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 170. He says the same about Campaspe and Gallathea.

<sup>4</sup>Jeffery, p. 79. Bond thinks that the play was written much too early (1584) to borrow from Guarini; the point has not been proven, however.

law which demands the sacrifice of the purest maiden in Arcadia, and in each of these three plays the maiden is saved from death. The motif of Cupid disguising himself as a shepherd in order to run away from his mother, which Tasso borrowed from Moschus, appears slightly altered in one of the minor plots of Gallathea. In this play, Cupid is disguised as a woman, and after causing trouble among Diana's nymph's, is caught and returned to Venus. Miss Jeffery lists several Italian parallels to this variation and development of the motif.<sup>5</sup> The Agia (1551) of Luca Contile is reported to have scenes that resembled this, and in Liberatione d'Amore (1576) Cupid is captured by two villains and finally released by a helpful shepherd. The third situation in Gallathea was also used by the Italian dramatists. In G. B. della Porta's Cintia, two girls and two boys fall in love with each other because one of them is disguised as a member of the opposite sex. Finally the sex of the disguised person is revealed, and the complications disappear. In Gallathea, Venus intervenes and changes one of the girls, who has fallen in love with another girl, into a man.<sup>6</sup> Love's Metamorphosis relies heavily upon a play called Mirzia by Antonio Epicuro de' Marsi (1463-1555).<sup>7</sup> In both plays three shepherds fall in

---

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 83-4.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.



love with three nymphs who scorn them. In Mirzia the shepherds sacrifice to Apollo, and he tells them how to solve their problems; in Love's Metamorphosis the shepherds go to Cupid's temple to find the answer to their problems. In both plays two deities hold a debate, and just to complete matters, in both plays characters turn into natural objects.<sup>8</sup>

Lyly did not just borrow situations for his plots from the Italians; he also adopted, as his own, their subject matter and their method of presenting it. Miss Jeffery shows, rather convincingly, that Lyly was intimately acquainted with the "treatises of love," which disseminated the diluted Neoplatonic ideas and conventions of love throughout Europe.<sup>9</sup> He drew from the famous ones, such as Castiglione's Il Cortegiano, Bembo's Asolani, and Guazzo's Civile Conversazione, and from those long forgotten, such as Benedetto Varchi's Lezione sopra alcune Questioni d'amore and Ortensio Lando's Quesiti Amorosi.<sup>10</sup> In these treatises cultured men and women, after an excellent dinner,

---

<sup>8</sup>Jeffery, p. 85. Mr. Uschald in his unpublished doctoral dissertation, "The Italian Tradition in John Lyly's Court Dramas: With Emphasis on His Characterization and Ideas of Love." (Dept. of English, Michigan State University, 1957), p. 84 lists three other qualities that Lyly had in common with the Italians: 1) the mingling of tragic and comic. 2) the use of the dumbshow, and 3) the use of ballet, singing, and dream.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 1-49.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

would retire to the garden or to the sitting rooms to discuss questions of love. Euphues and its sequel, Euphues and his England, in part reproduce for English readers the same style of after-dinner conversation. Lyly only covers a fraction of the questions discussed in the Italian treatises, but those that he does debate can all be traced to one or more of these books. The evening passes, and presumably the guests' dinners digest while Euphues and his friends try to determine if wit or beauty causes a man to fall in love, if a man or a woman is the more easily attracted to the opposite sex, or if the male or the female is the more constant. They even wonder if love can be aroused with the virtues of herbs, stones, or words.<sup>11</sup> The habit of conducting debates and discussions spills over into his plays. A debate between chastity and love appears in Sappho and Phao, between love and honor in Campaspe, between love and friendship in Endimion, and between piety and self-preservation in Gallathea.<sup>12</sup>

Although Lyly unhesitatingly borrowed the Italian subjects and imitated their style, he remained an Englishman, and his English humanistic studies at Oxford exposed him to theories that were quite hostile to those that we have analyzed in the Italian Neoplatonic tradition. The world of reason and common sense that Politian, Tasso, and

---

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>12</sup>Hunter, p. 123.

Guarini transcended reasserts itself in Lyly's plays as the proper governor of the emotions--even that of love. Lyly's plays are the Italian world of the emotions as seen from the viewpoint of right reason, established custom, and well-governed passions. The humanist's perspective shifts the meaning of the motif of death and revival from the mystical and metaphysical to the political and moral realms. A greater belief in the practicability of the passions described in the love treatises also accompanies this alteration in meaning.

The wish to see the courtly love conventions turned into moral precepts applicable to actual affairs of the heart was certainly encouraged by the continuing Protestant discussions of marriage. The early Protestant reformers had condemned the ascetic way of life and denied that marriage was a sacrament.<sup>13</sup> The sixteenth century humanists continued the attacks on both celibacy and virginity.<sup>14</sup> At the same time that celibate life was repudiated the ideal of a happy marriage was being triumphantly promoted.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup>Mark Rose, Heroic Love (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 27.

<sup>14</sup>Calvin thought the church suffered from "a superstitious admiration of celibacy." As quoted in Rose, p. 27.

<sup>15</sup>A good example comes from Daniel Rogers' Matrimonial Honour: "Marriage is the Preservative of Chastity, the Seminary of the Commonwealth, the seed-plot of the Church, pillar (under God) of the world, . . . ." (Rose, p. 28).

Rose concludes that marriage became a duty, a virtue and somewhat ironically "a kind of religious order."<sup>16</sup> Love became the desired means to this end. Hooker, for example, believed that love was "the perfectest ground of wedlock."<sup>17</sup>

The domestication of love provides the subject of the English courtesy books which imitated the Italian treatises on love. In Edmund Tilney's Flower of Friendshippe the ladies and gentlemen discuss the duties of the married woman and the married man.<sup>18</sup> Whetstones' Heptameron of Civill Discourses describes the joys of everyday married life and includes a great deal of advice on maintaining a happy union. Robert Greene's Morando: The Tritameron of Love closely resembles Bembo's Asolani,<sup>19</sup> but takes the Protestant position that love which is a means to marriage is virtuous, while the love that exists for itself is evil.<sup>20</sup>

The morality of the passion called love also interested Sidney and Greville. Sidney was familiar with many

---

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>18</sup>Rose (p. 25) continues: "Men are counseled to avoid gaming and rioting, to provide well for their households, to avoid jealousy, and to be careful about educating their children. Women are advised to be obedient, to avoid excess in apparel, to pass over their husbands' defects, to keep their houses in order, and to take care with meat dishes . . . "

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

of the Neoplatonic treatises, but he never subscribed to their celebrations of love. He does not trust the heroic frenzies or the mystical dissolution of self in divine beauty. The Arcadia shows that Sidney had both feet planted firmly on the ground. Arcadia has fallen from the ideal because Venus Urania has departed, and as Rose notes:

The vital fact about Urania was that she was able to throw "reason upon our desires," to give "eyes unto cupid."<sup>21</sup>

Reason must control the passions, and Pyrocles spends nearly his entire career learning how to do just this. Musidorus' reprimand of Pyrocles when he puts on the clothes of a woman in order to be with his love summarizes the Sidneian and humanist position:

Remember (for I know you know it) that if we will be men, the reasonable parte of our soule, is to have absolute commaundement; against which if any sensuall weakness arise, we are to yeelde all our sounde forces to the overthrowing of so unnaturall a rebellion, wherein how can we wante courage, since we are to deale against so weake an adversary, that in it selfe is nothing but weakenesse?<sup>22</sup>

Fulke Greville won't even admit that there is a real enemy to be overcome; the courtly lover merely cherishes vain insubstantial dreams. The dreams which the mind

---

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 45. This is a good example of a humanist appropriating images from the Neoplatonists and giving his own meaning to the symbols. For Ficino the heavenly Venus was above reason, not identical with it; and the blindness of Orphic love (and Cupid) was one of the highest Neoplatonic mysteries.

<sup>22</sup>The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney, ed. A. Feuillerat (Cambridge, 1962) I, p. 77.

engenders are completely specious, and if a man wants to escape their influence, he has to turn to palpable, immediate reality.<sup>23</sup> Caelica, a sonnet sequence which denies the Neoplatonic and idealistic conventions of earlier sequences, expresses Greville's skepticism of other worlds and his conviction of the permanence of the mundane:

Angells enjoy the heavens' inward Quires:  
 Starre-gazers only multiply desires.  
 (Sonnet XVII)<sup>24</sup>

Thus our delights, like faire shapes in a glasse,  
 Though pleasing to our senses, cannot last.  
 (Sonnet XLI)

Let no love-desiring heart,  
 In the Starres goe seek his fate,  
 Love is onely Natures art,  
 Wonder hinders love and hate.  
 None can well behold with eyes,  
 But what underneath him lies.  
 (Sonnet LV)

The last two lines quoted above amount to the same kind of blow that Samuel Johnson gave to Berkeley's philosophical theories when he kicked the stone. These two men of common sense hoped to tumble what they took to be a chimerical construction with a swift appeal to the obvious. Neoplatonism, however, did not collapse quite so easily.

Lyly belongs to both the Sidney-Greville and the Neoplatonic camps, and his plays and the consistency of his thoughts suffer greatly from this divided allegiance.

---

<sup>23</sup>Stevenson, The Love-Game Comedy, p. 134.

<sup>24</sup>All quotes are from Stevenson, pp. 134-5.

His style is at odds with his subject matter in the pastoral and mythological plays. Love dominates the discussions of the plays, and Telusa, the love-lorn maiden in Gallathea defines it:

O devine love, which art therefore called devine,  
because thou over-reachest the wisest, conquerest  
the chastest, and doost all things both unlikely  
and impossible, because thou art love. Thou makest  
the bashful impudent, the wise fond, the chaste wanton,  
and workest contraries to our reach, because thy selfe  
is beyond reason.<sup>25</sup>

This is not the reason why Gottfried, the Stilnovisti, or the Neoplatonists called love divine. The effects listed here amount to little more than social and moral embarrassments and are really just a witty summary of the effects of love discussed in the love treatises. While this is not among the most intelligent comments on love that we have encountered, it still is very important in Lyly's world, and this description accounts for many of the curious activities in his plays. Other characters recapitulate these phrases either with their actions or in their speeches. Endimion, in the play of the same name, falls in love with the moon. His love, doomed to frustration, makes him a courtly lover and a fool to boot. Endimion's friend, Eumenides, leaves no doubt that he belongs with that group:

---

<sup>25</sup>The Complete Works of John Lyly, ed. R. W. Bond. 3 vols. (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1902) II, p. 449. All quotes from Lyly's plays are taken from these volumes.

Without doubt Endimion is bewitched, otherwise in a man of such rare vertues there could not harbor a minde of such extreme madness (I,i).

Tellus loved Endimion so much that she had him put to sleep when she discovered that he did not love her. As she says:

Endimion, that Endimion in the prime of his youth,  
so ravisht my hart with love, that to obtaine my  
desires, I coulde not finde meanes, nor to resi(s)te  
them, reason (V,iii).

In Sapho and Phao Venus herself falls in love with Phao, whose beauty was her own creation, and her son Cupid falls in love with Sapho, who convinces him to force Phao to hate Venus instead of making him love her as he has been instructed to do. Cupid, disguising himself as a girl, overcomes chastity in Gallathea by causing Diana's nymphs to break their vows and fall in love. Two of them even fall in love with Gallathea when she is disguised as a boy. This foolishness comes to a head when Gallathea and Phillida fall in love with each other while both are disguised as boys. Only a metamorphosis can straighten out their emotional lives. Pandora in The Woman in the Moon displays all of the characteristics of love as all of the seven planets in turn influence her character. The victims of her kaleidoscopic emotions suffer the same rebuffs and the same enticing promises as the courtly lover at the hands of his liege-lady. The four simple shepherds only asked the gods for someone to help them increase their kind; instead they got the beautiful and divine Pandora. Even



so, when she first appeared among them, they were ready to pay her the correct compliments:

Melos. O eyes more fayre then is the morning Starre!  
Learchus. Nature her selfe is not so lovely fayre!  
Stesias. Let us with reverence kisse her lillie hands,  
 And by deserts in service win her love.  
 (I,i)

These shepherds have been reading the treatises on love while they tended their sheep; they are most accomplished courtiers.

The subject of the plays may be the effects that love, which is beyond reason and consequently irrational, has upon the emotions of the creatures of this world, but the style in which this subject is discussed belongs completely to the world of reason, logic, and law. The preceding quotation on love, as brief as it is, demonstrates just how thoroughly the techniques of right reason penetrate the Euphuistic style. This comment upon the effects of love assumes the shape of a definition (page--176 above) which also explains divine love's nature. The "because" and the "therefore" imply a process of reasoning that one does not expect to find in souls distraught by love. The repetitions of function and structure try to exhaust all the effects of a course of action or the possibilities of an event, which only a mind trained in logic would think important. Of course, the purpose of all these techniques is clarity of thought and expression--hardly the proper medium to suggest the ineffable. In addition to the formal debates



in each play, the characters indulge in a great many verbal exchanges which resemble the logic-chopping style of the debate. In Sapho and Phao Molus and Cryticus, two servants, conduct a lengthy discussion complete with formal proofs and syllogisms. Eumenides, in reply to Endimion's confession of love, tries to trap him with a distasteful dilemma:

If you be enamored of any thing above the Moone, your thoughts are ridiculous, for that things immortall are not subject to affections; if allured or enchanted with these transitory things under the Moone, you shew your selfe sencelesse, to attribute such lofty tytles, to such lowe trifles.

(I,i)

Endimion adroitly escapes this trap by saying that he loves the moon itself. This is a fair example of the way that logic and reason are used to belittle and ridicule the courtly love tradition.

Many of Lyly's characters adhere to the beliefs of the skeptical, rational, and clear-headed humanists. Eumenides reaches the point where he has to choose between his love for Semele and his friendship for Endimion. Geron, an ancient sage, counsels him with the following advice:

Eumenides, release Endimion, for all things (friendship excepted) are subject to fortune: love is but an eye-worme, which onely tickleth the heade with hopes and wishes: friendshippe the image of eternitie, in which there is nothing moveable, nothing mischievous . . . . Love is a Camelion, which draweth nothing into the mouth but ayre, and nourisheth nothing in the bodie but lunges: believe mee Eumenides, Desire dyes in the same moment that Beautie sickens, and Beautie fadeth in the same instant that it flourisheth.

(III,iv)

This description of love and beauty convinces Eumenides to help his friend instead of his love. At the end of the play, even though he prefers friendship to love, Cynthia awards Semele to him.

The inconstancy of woman and the perishability of beauty--both stock themes of the humanists--appear in almost every play. Endimion falls in love with the moon because even though it changes, the changes are regular and so provide a certain constancy. Pandora, in Woman in the Moon, is by far the best illustration of inconstancy. Her alterations sow discord among the shepherds and drive her shepherd husband to attempt to kill her. Pandora, the misogynists' ideal woman, can only cause trouble. Phao, in Sapho and Phao, infatuated with his own beauty, seeks advice from Sybilla, a priestess; he wants to avoid committing himself to one love. She tells him to forget that nonsense because beauty fades too quickly. He should be concerned more with virtue than with vanity. Finally, after suffering the consequences of disregarding her advice, he returns to her cave a much wiser man. Venus, the goddess he loved, has herself been inconstant. He concludes that:

Loves are but smokes, which vanish in the seeing,  
and yet hurte whilest they are seene.  
(V,ii)

His resolve to worship his first love, Sapho, as he poles his ferry, parallels the courtly lover's devotion to his dead loved one:

My life shal be spente in sighing and wishing, the  
one for my bad fortune, the other for Saphoes good.  
(V,ii)

Lyly, as opposed to his characters, never seems to make a choice between the Neoplatonic and the humanist views of love. He presents both theories with enough wit to avoid being saddled with either position. Judging, however, by his style, we can assert that he leans decidedly in the direction of the humanists. When his reason and common sense peer at the courtly lover through their objective and impersonal lenses, the lover is reduced to a few foolish actions and to a few absurd similes. The main purpose of the motif of death and revival is to expose the folly of the courtly lover; it also helps to state the humanists' case against woman, but this is not nearly as important as the exposure of folly.

Although Lyly was familiar with the Petrarchan oxymorons, he uses them very rarely.<sup>26</sup> He prefers the image of two opposites in one body, which in the Neoplatonists symbolized the concordia discors, but which in Lyly usually makes a moral point. Gallathea and Phillida, both girls

---

<sup>26</sup>In The Woman in the Moone:  
Her greatest wound is but a pleasing harme:  
Death at her hands is but a second life.  
(III, p. 256)

and both virgins, are very much in love with one another. As Saccio has noticed, this makes them devotees of both Venus and Diana.<sup>27</sup> They manage to reconcile the opposites, love and chastity, and, as a reward, Venus transforms their true but sterile love into a true and fruitful union. This is Lyly's version of Castitas-Amor-Voluptas, which points to a moral rather than to a metaphysical truth. Pandora blends the powers of the seven planetary deities within her body in order to show the inconstancy and folly of woman. The most interesting of the dramatist's images is the disguised person. In Lyly's plays men dress as women and women dress as men. The former has a significance different from the latter. In Gallathea Cupid dresses as a woman and in The Woman in the Moone Stesias briefly dons woman's clothes (IV,i). A man in woman's clothes signified passionate love, the kind of love that "turns a man into a woman," as Burton would have it.<sup>28</sup> The woman disguised as a man, on the other hand, indicates perfection because the two opposites, male and female, unite in one figure. Gallathea and Phillida share this perfection, which Lyly conceives of as a moral perfection. The disguise is

---

<sup>27</sup>Saccio, p. 147.

<sup>28</sup>Sidney, in the Arcadia dressed Pyrocles in skirts to show the effeminacy that results when his passions control his reason. See Mark Rose, "Sidney's Womanish Man," Review of English Studies, XV(1964), p. 357. It is quite possible that Lyly had the same thing in mind.

usually reserved for the heroine, who is thought of as divine, or for her close companion. Of course these disguises are also rather funny, so they help to contribute to the demonstration of the folly of love.

The metamorphoses that happen in almost every play contribute to this same demonstration. Nature transforms Pandora into the woman in the moon as the symbol of the inconstant nature of woman:

Now rule, Pandora, in fayre Cynthias steede,  
And make the moone inconstant as thyselfe;  
Raigne thou at womens nuptials, and their birth;  
Let them be mutable in all their loves,  
Fantasticall, childish, and foolish, in their desires,  
Demaunding toyes:  
And starke madde when they cannot have their will.  
(V,iii)

The three nymphs in Loves Metamorphosis prefer to remain a stone, a rose, and a bird. Cupid obliges them by letting them keep the quality of the object in their heart. The stone means that the nymph's heart will be cold as well as hot; the rose, that there will be prickles as well as sweetness in her heart; and the bird, that she may fly abroad and cause jealousy as well as stay at home. Only Gallathea's change, which is motivated by the demands of the plot, does not contribute to the humanists' ridicule of woman.

Endimion introduces the image of the knight being awakened to a new life by the kiss of his beloved. Endimion's new life at the onset is not very promising because he has aged forty years. Cynthia, however, rewards his pure

thoughts and his professed devotion to her by restoring his youth to him. He has won Cynthia's favor, and like the true courtly lover that he is, he will spend the rest of his days in her service. The motif shows how pure thoughts and constancy of emotion eventually are rewarded by the beloved one. This, of all his plays, most closely approximates the world of Tasso and Politian. Everyone realizes his deepest desires with the help of Cynthia. Endimion will be allowed to worship the moon and the other characters will marry the person of their choice. But unlike the Aminta and the Orfeo, this play does not ask the audience to look beyond the actions for more profound meanings.

The audience at Lyly's plays remain observers of the actions; he does not turn the play into a rite and so does not involve them in the meanings of his art. The morals of the audience concern him but not in the same way as earlier users of the motif. Edwards in Damon and Pythias tried to get the audience to change its moral habits by witnessing the near death and rebirth. The audience was supposed to reverse its notions of policy at the same time that Dionysius changed his. Lyly's plays are closer to satire because they ask the sophisticated audience to appreciate a witty point about the nature of their favorite subject: Love. On the one hand, Cupid is innocent, small, quite harmless, cute, and even a little foolish--after all, what harm can his tiny arrows do? Yet to the person struck by these arrows, his power is the greatest in the world.



Jove, Mars, Saturn and even Venus herself succumb. Mortals lose their will, suffer the agonies of love, and relish the favors of the beloved. Those into whom the shafts penetrate the furthest find their soul racked with discord, their complexion altered, and their mind obsessed with the image of their beloved. For those in whom love is purest, death is a desired experience. Lyly's audience never see things completely from this latter viewpoint. From time to time he lets them see it through the eyes of the former viewpoint, that of the humanist who prefers his passions controlled by reason, and who feels that to be enslaved by any passion entails a loss of dignity. The humanist looks upon love as one of the many kinds of folly that plague the human condition. The behavior it causes is very degrading to a creature placed midway between God and the animals. Lyly expects his audience to respect and to understand the irrational powers of love and to realize how foolish they make the man possessed by them. Understanding and laughing at the same time, the audience keeps its distance from the events in the play. The motif of death and revival and the metamorphoses drive home these beliefs in the audience, and the oxymorons and the contraries contribute to the wit, the ingenuity, and the artifice of the production.

In The Two Gentlemen of Verona (c. 1592) William Shakespeare begins to restore the original Neoplatonic

meanings to the motif of death and revival. He borrows many of his materials from Lyly's plays and adds to these the Neoplatonic meanings that he probably read in Sir Thomas Hoby's translation of Il Cortegiano (1561). In Endimion and this play true love is reconciled with friendship. The love story of Felix and Felismena in Diana Enamorada by Jorge de Montemayor could have suggested the story of Proteus and Julia to Shakespeare because in both the young men are sent to court where they fall in love with another lady while their first love follows them disguised as a page.<sup>29</sup> But Valentine's and Proteus' rivalry for the same woman is closer to Euphues than to the Spanish work. At the rising of the curtain Valentine chastises Proteus for being in love in terms familiar to Lyly:

Love is your master, for he masters you;  
And he that is so yoked by a fool,  
Methinks, should not be chronicled for wise.  
(I,i, 39-41)<sup>30</sup>

Proteus agrees, saying after Valentine leaves:

I [leave] myself, my friends, and all, for love.  
(I,i, 65)

As in Lyly, the foolishness of a love ungoverned by reason will be laughed at in many scenes of the play. The many

---

<sup>29</sup>Blaze O. Bonazza, Shakespeare's Early Comedies (London, 1966), pp. 78-9.

<sup>30</sup>All quotes from Shakespeare come from The Complete Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare, ed. W. A. Nelson and C. J. Hill (Cambridge, Mass., 1942).

metamorphoses of Proteus and Valentine, the many lies told to one another, and the disguise of Juliet reveal just how inconstant "true" love can be and consequently just how foolish those professing this emotion are. Throughout his plays Lyly poked fun at the conventions of courtly love, and Shakespeare follows suit in the scenes that feature the two servants, Launce and Speed. In scene III, for example, Launce complains that his dog, Crab, has not shed one tear over his departure. Just prior to this scene Proteus left Julia with many verbal flourishes and a brave promise to remain constant. The contrast provides the humor and an ironic comment when it turns out that the dog was more constant than Proteus. Shakespeare also indulges in the word play, the logic-chopping debates, the oxymorons, the parallel constructions and the hyperbole that are such outstanding characteristics of the Euphuistic style.

Shakespeare borrows the pastoral conventions from Lyly, but he puts them to an entirely different use. Lyly's pastoral was only a foil to the court and a place where the laws of common sense didn't apply. Shakespeare gives the woods the same meaning that it had for Boccaccio, Sannazaro, and Tasso.<sup>31</sup> The woods heals the divisions that

---

<sup>31</sup>Mr. Cody in The Landscape of the Mind says that the aesthetic aspects of the pastoral in Two Gentlemen derive from the Aminta. The pastoral world mirrors the shepherd's inner life, the play has the same three part unfolding as the Aminta, and the play is a highly self-conscious production which ultimately becomes the subject of itself. Mr.

have torn the individual's soul, creates a harmony out of the diverse elements contending within the shepherd's breast, and permits the shepherd to experience the knowledge of his true self so that he will be able to return to the world of the court a new man full of harmony and wisdom. This use of the pastoral which signifies the inward turning of the mind upon itself separates this play from the court comedies of Lyly. Lyly is all morality and social life. This world, however, is beyond the reach of custom, law, and authority, as was the cave of the lovers in Tristan.<sup>32</sup>

Valentine is the first to enter the woods and so the first to be reborn. He begins the play as a skeptical humanist with little time for the foolishness of love; Eumenides in Endimion is a close parallel. Then he meets Silvia. Her beauty metamorphoses him into the courtly lover sighing and praying for the possession of his beloved. Not content to worship at a distance, he tries to elope with her; unfortunately the Duke discovers his plot and

---

Cody develops these points so well (pp. 81-104) that I have omitted them from my discussion. His treatment of the meaning of the pastoral is too general, so I have concentrated on that subject.

<sup>32</sup>Valentine says that "Here (in the woods) can I sit alone, unseen of any . . ." (V, iv, 4), and Silvia, as she hurries into the woods feels there are spies lurking in the city (V,i). Sir Eglamore tells her not to be afraid because the woods are near. The implication is that the woods are free from the prying eyes of those in authority.

has him banished from the court.<sup>33</sup> His complete surrender to sensual love, which his desire to possess her body suggests, has led only to lies, conflict, and dishonor. Now in the woods, where he is completely isolated from the court, he can begin to be enlightened. The outlaws, some of whom "are gentlemen/such as the fury of ungovern'd youth/Thrust from the company of lawful men"(IV,ii, 4406)," make him their king because of his beauty, his "goodly shape" and his perfection. Reason has asserted its control over the passions and will now be able to lead him to the sight of divine beauty. When we next see Valentine, he is sitting alone in the woods in the attitude of the shepherd-poet of the Renaissance pastoral tradition, wishing for Silvia:

Repair me with thy presence, Silvia!  
Thou gentle nymph, cherish thy forlorn Swain!  
(V, iv, 11-12)

She appears to him as soon as he has uttered these words. The sight of divine beauty in all its radiance and goodness enables him to see the truth. He immediately recognizes the falseness of Proteus and forgives him for revealing his

---

<sup>33</sup> So far Valentine's behavior corresponds to what Bembo in The Courtier would call sensual love. To escape the tortures of this sensual love he "must firmly resolve to avoid all ugliness of vulgar love, and must enter into the divine path of love with reason as his guide (p. 347)."

plan to the Duke and wooing Silvia.<sup>34</sup> In order to show that his love is free, he next offers Silvia to Proteus. John Vyvyan, who first showed the relationship between Neoplatonism and Shakespeare's plays, makes the following comment upon the scene:

It is not a woman he is offering to give, or to share with his friend, but perfection. No man who has beheld the eternal beauty could imagine that it was his alone. The point of the line is to show that by the constancy of his friend's love--and of Julia's--Proteus is also able to open the eyes of his soul,<sup>35</sup> and to receive the heavenly vision as a pure gift.

When the Duke and Thurio appear in the woods, Valentine forces Thurio to expose his cowardice, and this show of spirit wins the Duke's approval. Valentine has reconciled all the diverse elements in the play, so that his soul and the court have become one:

One feast, one house, one mutual happiness.  
(V, iv, 174)

The presence of Silvia causes him to be reborn in the woods and begin his new life with his soul unified. She

---

<sup>34</sup>The critics have wondered why Valentine should forgive Proteus; perhaps Shakespeare had this passage from The Courtier in the back of his mind:

I say, then, that since human nature in youth is so greatly given over to the senses, the Courtier may be permitted to love sensually while he is young. But if later, in more mature years, he chances to conceive such an amorous desire, he must be very wary and take care not to deceive himself by letting himself be led into those calamities which in the young deserve more compassion than blame, and, on the contrary, in the old deserve more blame than compassion (p. 346).

<sup>35</sup>Shakespeare and Platonic Beauty, p. 71.

has the traditional role of the worshipped liege-lady; also she symbolizes the celestial Venus, who was Ficino's figure for divine beauty.<sup>36</sup> Of all the characters, she is the only one who doesn't change. Here Shakespeare and Lyly go their separate ways. Shakespeare believes that woman is capable of constancy; Lyly, that woman can only produce strife and sorrow because of her inherent inconstancy. But Silvia does not belong to the realm of becoming; rather she belongs to the realm of essences and pure spiritual being. When Proteus falls in love with her she sees through his screen of words immediately and offers him sound moral advice, which he cannot heed. The song that Thurio and the musicians sing to her stresses her three most impressive qualities: "Holy, fair, and wise "(IV, ii, 41)." Because all three qualities unite within her, she "excels each mortal thing/Upon the dull earth dwelling "(IV, ii, 51-2)." Silvia is a member of that species of heavenly figure which also includes Olympia, Beatrice, Blancheflor, and the two Isoldes.

Proteus is Silvia's contrary. He, as his name suggests, changes the most. In fact, he is the closest representation to Lyly's cynical beliefs about woman. As the quote above reveals, he readily forsakes everything,

---

<sup>36</sup>As Vyvyan says: "Silvia--like the Princess of France--is both a mortal woman and something more; and it is likely that a Renaissance audience would have seen at once that she is intended to reveal the celestial Love and Beauty (p. 69)."

including his self, for love, but his love is completely sensual. The pastoral landscape discloses his sensuality when he tries to rape Silvia. After his repentance, he wins back his friendship, his love, and, with the help of Julia, his self; thus the woods heal even the most inconstant and alienated soul in the play.

Julia helps him to discover his self. Her death and revival save Valentine's love and open Proteus' eyes to the truth:

What is in Silvia's face, but I may spy  
 More fresh in Julia's with a constant eye?  
 (V, iv, 114-15)

She foreshadows her role in Proteus' life when she reads the love note that he sent to her:

And here is writ "love-wounded Proteus."  
 Poor wounded name! my bosom as a bed  
 Shall lodge thee till thy wound be throughly heal'd;  
 And thus I search it with a sovereign kiss.  
 (I, ii, 114-16)

Arriving in Milan disguised as a page, she witnesses all of Proteus' duplicities. Even though he has betrayed her, she remains faithful to him, gradually revealing herself to be the paragon of constancy. Then after all her trials and just when it seems that she is finally going to win her beloved, Valentine offers Silvia to him. She faints. Proteus discovers the true identity of his page before he can accept the offer. Her constancy makes him aware of his own inconstancy, and so another facet of Proteus' real self is disclosed in the woods. When she rises, he accepts



her, repents his inconstancy, and discovers divine beauty in Julia. He has retrieved all that he had forsaken for love; once again his soul is whole and his life harmonious. Her symbolic death and rebirth have caused a corresponding rebirth in Proteus. The story of Proteus and Julia constitutes Shakespeare's rebuttal of Lyly's humanistic belief that all women are inconstant and that love is just a foolish weakness.

In Love's Labour's Lost (c.1594), which explores the theme of love in the same style as Two Gentlemen, the playwright fragments the motif of death and revival even more, but he continues to use it to reveal the Neoplatonic mysteries of love. No character dies or even faints in this play. At the end of the presentation of the Nine Worthies (V, ii), Monsieur Mercade enters with the news that the King of France, who is the Princess' father, has died, and she exclaims:

Dead, for my life!

(V, ii, 728)

This exclamation signals the reverse of the mood and the emotions of the play. Prior to this point the play had been full of gay banter, word-play, professions and mockery of love, which have culminated in a masque and the presentation of the Nine Worthies. Now the play shifts to a more somber key, as the lovers confess their errors and listen uneasily to their punishments. The marriage, which in Two Gentlemen signified union and renewal, remains only a

promise to be realized in the future. In effect, the Princess banishes the King and his three nobles for a year; they have yet to undergo the self-discovery and the rebirth that Valentine accomplished when he was banished to the woods by the Duke. The spiritual development of these four nobles has only reached the stage where the soul severs itself from the world of the body and turns inward upon itself. Reason has yet to guide the soul to the discovery of its true self, to the apprehension of divine beauty, and to the eventual union of the self with divine beauty which transcends both reason and the self and becomes a replica of the harmony and perfection of God.

We might ask of this woman who tries and sentences the offenders against love the same question that the musicians asked of Silvia: Who is the Princess? She is both a woman and a symbol of divine beauty; as a symbol of divine beauty she combines within her own body the two opposing deities Diana and Venus, chastity and sensuous beauty, which for Titian and Botticelli pointed to perfection. She becomes the mediatrix who awakens the souls of the knights to the vision of eternal beauty. She does not die and is not reborn, but her father does, and I suppose that her year of secluded mourning and eventual return could be looked upon as the suggestion of just such an experience. Like Sidney's Uranian Venus, who gives eyes to Cupid when she reigns over Arcadia, the Princess enlightens the court wits to the nature of true love.

The evidence of this view of the Princess as the combination of chastity and beauty appears throughout the play. When she agrees to camp in the king's park and goes hunting deer there, few in the audience would miss the allusion to Diana, the chaste huntress. After listening to the king's and Longaville's sonnets, Berowne whispers to himself:

This is the liver-vein, which makes flesh a deity,  
A green goose a goddess; pure, pure idolatry.  
(IV, iii, 73-5)

He can say this because he has not seen her full powers; he will change his tune when he encounters the Princess and her companions. The Princess, informed by Boyet of the nobles' disguises, assumes one of her own and mocks those who would mock love, by demonstrating to them just how blind their sensual love is. None of the suiters can see beyond the trinket that he has given to his beloved; so their love hardly penetrates to the soul of the lady they wish to woo.<sup>37</sup> She sees through their disguises, through their gifts, and through their gilded rhetoric into their souls and discovers that these are by no means pure. Confession and penance are necessary before they can begin to experience divine beauty directly:

---

<sup>37</sup>Vyvyan makes the point a little differently: "The second scene of the fifth act, from line 81 to 471, turns on the theme of disguise. The undermeaning, I suggest, is that love-sight must now pierce the disguise of the body--which is only a garment of the soul in Marsilianism--and behold the real self(p. 66)."

No, No, my lord, your grace is perfum'd much,  
 Full of dear guiltiness; and therefore this:  
 If for my love, as there is no such cause,  
 You will do aught, this shall you do for me:  
 Your oath I will not trust; but go with speed  
 To some forlorn and naked hermitage,  
 Remote from all the pleasures of the world . . . .  
 (V, ii, 800-6)

She is the liege-lady through whom the courtly lover begins to experience divine beauty and true love.

The pastoralism in this play hardly has any connection with the motif of death and revival. It does not function as a symbol of the inner life, nor does it possess the healing powers it had in Two Gentlemen. However, Walter Pater noticed that the pastoral landscape unifies the play, and Cody has elaborated this insight into a series of scenes in which the pastoral serves as an allusion to other well known pastoral themes in the Renaissance.<sup>38</sup> The pastoral, the symbol of the contemplative life, blends with the symbols of the active life to make several witty concordiae discordes on the order of the Mars and Venus pictures so popular in Italy. The king would like his court to become an academy without women devoted to the contemplative life, but the Princess who is more at home in the fields than the King, deflates that fanciful wish. The presentation of the Nine Worthies (the symbol of the active life) in the park continues the blend of the pastoral and the heroic until the end of the play. The Princess

---

<sup>38</sup>Cody, pp. 109-10 and 117.

combines Venus and Diana within herself, while the nobles pose as the melancholy shepherd-poets of the pastoral eclogues. Berowne's punishment, to exercise his wit in the hospital trying to make the sick laugh, does suggest a witty harmony of opposites, which outdoes anything Lyly wrote. Shakespeare knew the conventions of the pastoral drama well, and when he wanted to could use them with more ingenuity and wit than his predecessors in England.

Because the image of the motif is fragmented and squeezed into the last half of the fifth act, it does not have any chance to develop its proper rhythm. In fact, there is hardly any kind of movement in the play. Shakespeare spent all of his time exposing and ridiculing the pretenses of those, such as Lyly, who think that love is entirely sensual and a matter of rhetoric and witty conceits. The Princess's masque dramatizes the essential foolishness of the courtiers' posturings and professions of true love. Indeed, Shakespeare spends so much time ridiculing the mistaken lovers that he does not have time to present the true lovers and is reduced to hinting at what their experience might be in the last act. The mockery of those who think that love is folly in the terms that they themselves use to ridicule love also severely curtails the movement of the play. His verbal wit and stylistic ingenuity usurp the attention of the audience and almost reduce the play to a work of art that exists for its own sake. In his later

plays he learns how to use the motif to control and focus the audience's emotions, so that never again does the style come close to becoming its own end.

A Midsummer Night's Dream contains his first completely successful use of the motif of death and revival. This play, in fact, combines all the traditions that we have discussed so far, i.e., the pastoral eclogue, the pastoral drama, Ovidian mythology, courtly love, the folly of humans in love, and Orphic poetic theology, into a rite of art which reveals a Neoplatonic mystery. As Cody notes, this drama continues many of the themes introduced in the Two Gentlemen:

As in the Two Gentlemen, Euphuistic versions of the courtier and his lady are merged with figures from mythology in a celebration of the powers of love and poetry; only in this instance some of the immortals and demigods whom the young lovers prefigure stand among the dramatis personae in their own right.<sup>39</sup>

But all the disparate elements are circumscribed by a three-part movement, meant to suggest Ficino's threefold rhythm of love in the universe: emanatio (Act I), raptio (Act II-III-IV), remeatio (Act V). The deaths and revivals and the transformations are confined to the raptio--as, of course, they are in Aminta. If, however, we begin with the emanatio, we will be in a better position to understand why there are so many reversals and what exactly they signify.

---

<sup>39</sup>Cody, p. 128. Cody's chapter (pp. 127-50) on this play is the best in his book and my discussion borrows a good deal from it.

The play opens on a note of love, concord, and unity out of which unfolds all the hate, dissension, and duplicity of the lovers. After Titania and Bottom, who are enjoying the ecstasy of love, appear while the distraught lovers sleep, all their discord and divisions dissolve and flow back into the original love and harmony. In a real sense this play centers upon the marriage feast that Love's Labour's Lost lacked. The first marriage in the play, Theseus and Hippolyta's, constructs a witty union of opposites, which foreshadows the reconciliation of all the other opposites in the play. He personifies the warrior who devotes his life to activity:

Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,  
And won thy love doing thee injuries;  
(I, i, 16-17)

Oberon reminds Titania that Theseus has also been a false courtly lover and satyr:

Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night  
From Perigenia, whom he ravished?  
And make him with fair Aegle break his faith,  
With Ariadne, and Antiopa?  
(II, i, 77-80)

Hippolyta, his buskined Amazon bride, whose fondness for hunting and respect for the moon suggests Diana, represents the pastoral world of woods, hills, and caves and also those fierce maidens who seek to maintain their chastity by living there. Their marriage, then, unites the world of heroic action and vice and the world of pastoral inactivity and virtue together into an indissolvable whole.

Theseus, however, knows even less than Lyly about love. Lyly at least admitted that it is beyond human control. Theseus tries to make it obey his fiat, but only succeeds in causing defiance, disobedience, and discord. Cody points out that these commands could hardly constitute the voice of integrity.<sup>40</sup> In Neoplatonic terms, Theseus tries to impose Castitas and Voluptas without Amor. In a play of many strange and unexpected reverses, his action becomes a parody of Puck's. Where Puck can cause love, Theseus can only introduce the spectre of death, which becomes a major theme of the play.

The lovers know just a little bit more about the nature of love than Theseus, but unlike him they suffer for their ignorance. Out of this suffering and folly comes wisdom.

Hermia, Helena, Lysander, and Demetrius belong to the tradition of courtly love. Their actions, beliefs, and rhetorical conceits derive from the pages of the treatises on love. Lyly of course first ridiculed the exaggerated actions of young lovers in his plays, and Shakespeare had exposed their follies in Two Gentlemen. Once again he transforms a false conception of love into an experience of true love. A quotation from The Courtier helps to explain the situation of these young lovers:

---

<sup>40</sup>Cody, pp. 128-9.



If, then, the beauties which every day with these clouded eyes of ours we see in corruptible bodies (but which are nothing but dreams and the thinnest shadows of beauty) seem to us so fair and full of grace that they often kindle in us a most ardent fire and one of such delight that we judge no felicity able to equal what we sometimes feel when a single glance from a woman's beloved eyes reaches us. . . .<sup>41</sup>

The emphasis on clouds, dreams, and imaginings forces one to realize that the lovers flounder in the corruptible world of the body and that their love can only be sensual. Entry into the pastoral world forces them to turn inward and discover whom they really love. The discovery of self-knowledge which leads to reconciliation and union is only possible in the pastoral world because its simplicity strips away all fraud, and its quiet contentment heals the distraught spirit. The deaths and rebirths are an integral part of this discovery and healing process.

At first glance it would seem that Hermia and Lysander could hardly improve the truth and sincerity of their love. She readily defies the King and risks death for it, and he gladly leaves Athens and faces the unknown hazards of a strange land. Their brief discussion of love, however, discloses that they really know very little about this noble passion. Lysander says:

Ay me! for aught that I could ever read,  
 Could ever hear by tale or history,  
 The course of true love never did run smooth;  
 (I, i, 132-4)

---

<sup>41</sup>Trans. Singleton, p. 354.

Unfortunately the nature of true love can't be discovered in books. It only exists beyond words, which is why those who try to hint at it use the esoteric poetic theology. Hermia agrees with him, and both list a series of hurdles true love must leap. The parallel constructions, uniting contraries recalls Lyly, and the mundane obstructions in the path of true love could only have come from the love treatises. True love, that aspect of the divine in man is not as short as lightning, as Lysander thinks, nor is it responsible for dreams and sufferings, as Hermia thinks:

As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,  
Wishes and tears, poor Fancy's followers.  
(I, i, 154-5)

They have mistaken the love of one body for another for the divine love, which is the union of souls. Because of this confusion, Lysander's description of their union rings pathetically hollow:

I mean, that my heart unto yours is knit.  
So that but one heart we can make of it;  
(II, ii, 47-8)

As they are about to go to sleep in the woods, Hermia makes an equally egregious demand. She insists upon their separation in order to preserve their virtue and chastity (II, ii, 55-60). Divine love cannot be immoral; she has mistaken the nature of true love and brought the laws of Athens into the woods. When Tristan and Isolde put the sword, the symbol of the courtly world, between them, their love, their joy, and their happiness came to an end. The same thing

happens briefly to Hermia and Lysander after they wake up. Oberon describes the sleep that Lysander and Demetrius fall into as death-counterfeiting:

Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep  
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep.  
(III, ii, 364-5)

And Helena, when she happens upon Hermia and Lysander a few minutes later exclaims:

But who is here? Lysander! on the ground!  
Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.  
Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake.  
(II, ii, 100-2)

What knight hasn't fallen in love with the lady who has awakened him from his death-like trance? Of course, Lysander immediately pursues Helena. When Hermia awakes, she finds herself without her true love. She soon discovers how sensual love destroyed the happiness of her friendship, and since Lysander's love for Helena is the mirror image of her own love, she learns just how foolish these mortals in love can be. After witnessing the turmoil they have created, she exclaims:

I am amaz'd, and know not what to say.  
(III, ii, 344)

Then wandering in confusion, she is purged enough to be reunited with her lover:

My legs can keep no pace with my desires.  
(IV, i, 445)

And she falls asleep next to Lysander, who also has wandered in confusion and let love make an ass out of him.

Helena and Demetrius require the same kind of treatment. Demetrius' inconstancy obviously needs to be ridiculed and the foolishness of his actions revealed to the others. The reversal caused by his death-like sleep and revival and his confused wanderings prepare this Proteus to be reborn into a new life of constancy.

Helena appears to be similar to Julia in Two Gentlemen, a faithful maiden who follows the man she loves to the ends of the earth, even though he has rejected her. In her first speech, however, we see that her love is as sensual as the others. She envies Hermia's physical attributes, and sums it all up with the conceit:

Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,  
The rest I'd give to be to you translated.  
(I, i, 190-1)

Her wish to give everything except the one she loves contrasts sharply with Valentine's decision to give the one he loves away. Her love is still too material. She gets her wish in the woods and immediately discovers that she doesn't want to be Hermia. Her conceit turns out to be just the "sweet smoke of rhetoric (L.L.L., III, i, 64)." She also hopes to ingratiate herself with Demetrius by telling him of Hermia's plans. Her sensual desires even come between her and her friend, destroying the friendship which she herself valued so highly; consequently her purgation is that much more severe. At the end of her trials, she begins to see her behavior for what it is:

But he hath chid me hence and threatened me  
 To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too.  
 And now, so you will let me quiet go,  
 To Athens will I bear my folly back  
 And follow you no further. Let me go.  
 You see how simple and how fond I am.

(III, ii)

Her awareness of her past follies means that she too is ready for a rebirth, and her last words before she falls asleep are prophetic of the experience of all four of the lovers while they sleep:

And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,  
 Steal me awhile from mine own company.

(III, ii, 435-6)

All four have fallen asleep next to one another, but the anger, frustration, and dissention in their souls have isolated them from contact with any of the others. When they awake, however, their anger and strife will have disappeared; they will once again be full of love and friendship, but this time with a difference. If the scene with the lovers asleep at the feet of Titania and Bottom (IV, i) is looked at in terms of poetic theology, it appears to be a representation of Castitas-Amor-Voluptas, amounting to Shakespeare's version of Titian's Sacred and Profane Love. The young lovers, their profane love purified and chaste, are transformed by divine Amor into the harmony of Voluptas. Their final death-counterfeiting sleep and rebirth points beyond itself to a Neoplatonic mystery. This mystery is actualized in the union of Bottom and Titania, the perfect concordia discors.

Bottom and Titania also must be transformed before they can participate in the rite of this divine mystery. Bottom first appears as the Renaissance whole man, self-confident and capable of playing all and every part in the play.<sup>42</sup> And Cody very ingeniously makes a case for him representing Bacchus-Apollo in the poetic theology.<sup>43</sup> Just as important is the contradictory symbolism of the ass's head itself. On the one hand, it symbolizes the folly and foolishness that the humanists believed to be caused by man's animal nature. On the other, it indicates the humility necessary to perform sacred mysteries. As Cody summarizes:

Encomia of the ass as 'both absurd in essence and the carrier of divine mysteries' were too well known by the 1590's to escape implication in such scenes as these of Bottom and the Fairy Queen. And like every other figure in the play, Bottom translated means reverence as well as laughter, mystery as well as humour, wisdom as well as folly.<sup>44</sup>

The forest has again revealed the true nature of man; this time he appears as the union of the two contraries, folly and wisdom.

---

<sup>42</sup>Cody, p. 132. "Pyramus or Thisbe, Bacchic lion or Venus' doves, all is one to Bottom, the pan-erotic man wise enough to play his part over the full range between 'most obscenely, and courageously' (I, ii, 100)."

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., pp. 132-6. His interpretation is based upon a reference to the myth of Midas who also had asses ears. The myth which was looked at as hiding an Orphic mystery.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 138. The quotation comes from K. W. Scoular, Natural Magic (Oxford, 1965), p. 112.

Titania's sleep and revival indicates that she has ceased to represent the terrestrial Venus and has now become the celestial Venus, whose function is to lead the soul to divine beauty. Her long description of the effects of hers and Oberon's bickering upon the earth (II, i, 88-117) coupled with her description of her young votress make it difficult not to identify her with the earth and its fertility:

When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive  
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;  
Which she with pretty and with swimming gait  
Following, her womb then rich with my young squire,  
Would imitate, and sail upon the land  
To fetch me trifles, and return again,  
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.

(II, i, 127-134)

When Titania awakes, she leads the soul of man, part animal and part divine, to its union with divine beauty, which she represents. A comparison of a quote from The Courtier with a few lines of the play shows how exactly Shakespeare followed this description of the path to divine beauty:

Thus, when it has grown blind to earthly things, the soul acquires a very keen perception of heavenly things; and sometimes when the motive forces of the body are rendered inoperative by assiduous contemplation, or are bound by sleep, then, being no longer fettered by them, the soul senses a certain hidden savor of true angelic beauty, and, ravished by the splendor of that light, begins to kindle and to pursue it so eagerly that it is almost drunk and beside itself in its desire to unite itself to that beauty, . . . . Hence, the soul, aflame with the most holy fire of true divine love, flies to unite itself with the angelic nature; and not only completely abandons the senses, but has no longer any need of reason's discourse; for, transformed into an angel, it understands all things intelligible, and without any veil or cloud views the wide sea of pure

divine beauty, and receives it into itself, enjoying that supreme happiness of which the senses are incapable.<sup>45</sup>

When Bottom is left alone in the forest by his friends, he begins to sing of birds and awakens Titania, who calls him an angel and tells him that she loves him. Bottom satirically replies:

. . . and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep  
little company together now-a-days;  
(III, i, 146-8)

He is wiser than he thinks because at this point in his adventure his soul has to leave his reason behind. The celestial Venus assumes the role of reason in the life of the soul, guiding it toward the purifying divine union:

I am a spirit of no common rate;  
The summer still doth tend upon my state;  
And I do love thee; therefore go with me.  
. . .  
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so  
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.  
(III, ii, 157-64)

The union itself is beyond the realm of reason and discourse, so Titania fittingly has her sprites bind his tongue:

Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.  
The moon methinks looks with a wat'ry eye;  
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,  
Lamenting some enforced chastity.  
Tie up my [love's] tongue, bring him silently.  
(III, ii, 202-6)

In Titania's bower the human soul, properly purified, unites with divine beauty in the epiphany of raptio. This union, which unites the divine with the mortal, the

---

<sup>45</sup>Trans. Singleton, pp. 353-4.



beautiful with the ugly, the heavenly with the sensual, and wisdom with folly, points to the divine concordia discors which is the major Neoplatonic mystery of love enacted here.

The next appearance of Bottom and Titania (IV, i) demonstrates this unity. Shakespeare's use of the pastoral here parallels Tasso's use of it in Aminta. There Aminta became one with the pastoral world which symbolized an emotional realm beyond reason where everything was permitted. Bottom revels in the same luxury during his union with nature. The small benign sprites hasten to satisfy every whim. He is, indeed, the king of his world. This supreme felicity can only last for a few moments--like the appearance of lightning that Lysander mentions. Bottom and Titania again fall asleep and awaken in their customary roles. The magic of the last few hours remains only as an unbelievable and incomprehensible memory. But Bottom's and Titania's union effected the union in the lovers sleeping below them by purging all the strife and rancor from their hearts. When the young lovers awaken they join Theseus and his bride in the marriage rites of sacred and holy love.

But all these sacred truths are not presented in a serious manner. Bottom and Titania have their comic as well as their serious side. The informed know how to read the action, while the humor disguises the truths from the

ignorant. In the last act, the remeatio, Shakespeare travesties the significance of the motif of death and revival in the play within the play, Pyramus and Thisbe. This story of two lovers, separated from each other, who die for the love of the other and are reborn united in heaven, adumbrates the central experience of the play. It is presented so poorly by the "rude mechanicals" that the audience must join in the good natured mockery of the actors. At the same time, Shakespeare interposes Theseus, Hippolyta, and the lovers between the play and the audience.<sup>46</sup> He borrows this framing technique from the pastoral eclogue, where it isolated and objectified the emotions of the poem from the reader. Here the frame does the same thing. It makes the audience aware of the play as a work of art and forces them to become self-conscious of their own role in what they are observing. In the end, the audience should realize that the play has become the subject of itself. The ambiguities produced by this awareness puzzle and bewilder the audience as much as Bottom was when he tried to recount his vision. The audience enters into the self-conscious rite of the play when it assumes the same view point as Bottom. Perhaps the folly presented on the stage will induce some wisdom into the members of the audience who have become both participants in the action and observers of its results.

---

<sup>46</sup>Cody elaborates on this point on pp. 144-6 of his book.

As You Like It (1599) tries to accomplish essentially the same end without any of the magic of the midsummer night. The intrusion of realistic elements into an essentially symbolic landscape destroys the unity of the play by obscuring and confusing its anagogical purpose. Although the play fails artistically, it does foreshadow the way in which the motif of death and revival occurs in the later plays.

All the elements of the earlier works reappear in this play. The young hero is separated from his love by being banished to the woods. His love follows him there, disguised as a young man. Her own revelation of her true nature reconciles the difficulties of the plot and produces a much needed harmony and order in the world of the court. The plot also recreates the three part movement of court-woods-return to court, which corresponds to the Neoplatonic rhythm of emanatio-raptio-remeatio and to the pastoral eclogue rhythm of sadness-despair-joy. The pastoral woods is still a place where the troubled and distraught souls are healed. Oliver and Sir Frederick undergo drastic conversions here, and Orlando experiences divine beauty.

In the previous plays the revelation of divine beauty was accomplished by means of a death and rebirth. In this play Shakespeare tries to make the revelation more probable by having the disguised Rosalind leave the stage and reappear in a few minutes in her own beauty (V, iv). Her

exit and entrance are intended to suggest the death and rebirth. But the revelation of divine beauty is an epiphany, an intrusion of the supernatural into the natural, and some theatrical device is necessary to make this fact evident to the audience. Usually the death and rebirth suffices to indicate the epiphany; the exit and entrance, however, is too natural to suggest the supernatural. Accordingly Shakespeare adds dramatic techniques to impress the characters and the audience with this appearance of divine beauty. Hymen "from heaven brought her" (V, iv, 118) and presents her to her father, the banished Duke; her appearance sets in motion the series of promises which she had carefully requested before she left the stage. She unites the lovers and establishes concord in the world. Her union with Orlando symbolizes the union of the celestial Venus with the soul aspiring to divine beauty. Orlando's natural goodness and faithful love have survived the tests (the wrestler, the privations of the woods) and the temptation to revenge (allowing the snake to kill his brother). Rosalind purged the Petrarchan follies from his soul, so he is ready to become the complete and perfect man, which his union with divine beauty in part symbolizes. He is now ready to enter into society.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup>Vyvyan in his chapter on As You Like It develops this interpretation at great length (pp. 92-130). For his discussion of the meaning of Oliver's near-death see p. 116.

Shakespeare, in trying to make the play realistic and at the same time keep its anagogical meaning, has abandoned decorum and created a mixture that cannot even be called a concordia discors. His pastoral world becomes a mixture of all the pastorals familiar to the Renaissance. He mentions the Golden Age of contentment and contrasts its virtues with the vices of the court, and trying to be realistic, he reverses the complaints, balancing one kind of satire against another. Rustic England appears occasionally to remind everyone that there are uncouth farmers, smelly animals, and bellies that need filling. It becomes Sannazaro's Arcadia when Orlando nails his verses on the tree and Silvius tries to woo Phebe, the shepherdess who scorns him for the disguised Rosalind. To add to the confusion, he also wants the woods to symbolize the inner life of the soul. The presence of other modes of pastoral, however, prevents this symbolism from being as successful as it was in his earlier plays. He has also learned from this play that the presentation of divine beauty must be accompanied with a death and revival to make an impact upon the audience. Furthermore, he discovers that the pastoral is not really necessary, although it can always be used to suggest the inner life of the mind and to make the audience aware of the anagogical nature of the action.

Samuel Daniel (1563-1619) completely ignores the anagogical purpose of the motif of death and revival in his

two pastoral tragicomedies, The Queenes Arcadia (1606) and Hymen's Triumph (1615). In these two plays the motif assumes a truly didactic role, which is not found in any other pastoral tragicomedy. The mystery and ambiguity surrounding the epiphany that the motif symbolizes in Tasso and Shakespeare have disappeared. Daniel has little use for metaphysics, he is solely concerned with public and private ethics. He feels that if his older humanistic wisdom, based on the use of reason, is to be listened to, it must be presented in fashionable clothes. Since the pastoral tragicomedy is increasingly popular at court, he dresses his moral concerns in shepherd's weeds and places them in Arcadia. There is not the slightest trace of an awareness that he might have misunderstood an art form; Tasso, Lyly, and Shakespeare did not exist for him. Daniel by-passes them completely and joins Edwards and Sidney, two other writers who use the motif of death and revival for didactic purposes.

All three writers use the motif to reveal public truths about the nature of the state. We have discussed above how Edwards uses it to cause a change of policy in the tyrant, Dionysius, thus making a case for the use of friendship and love in the running of a state. In Sidney's Arcadia (1580) Basilius, the king thought to be dead, awakens from his bier to resolve the conflict between sacred justice, represented by Euarchus, and equity and

mercy, represented by Musidorus and Pyrocles, who are about to be killed for ravishing two princesses. The king suspends the law, allowing the two young men to marry the princesses. The king's rebirth signals a triumph of equity over law and the accommodation of justice to the weakness of human flesh.<sup>48</sup> Daniel, in The Queenes Arcadia, continues the humanists' lessons on the nature of public virtue.

Miss Rees generalizes the theme for us:

The Queenes Arcadia has, then, a serious theme, the contrast between the demoralising effects of sophistication and the wholesome goodness of simpler, less pretentious ways.<sup>49</sup>

The swirling turbulence of contemporary life distresses Daniel, and he believes the ideals of a former age will restore the semblance of order. His serious concern with the moral ideals of a previous age injects a moral earnestness into the pastoral tragicomedy that is completely foreign to its nature. The self-conscious mockery of its own attitudes completely disappears, and humor and folly give way to a sober moral exemplum. The vices of contemporary society destroy true love and bring Amyntas close to death, so the motif of death and revival exemplifies a moral instead of figuring a mystery.

---

<sup>48</sup>Rose, pp. 71-2.

<sup>49</sup>Joan Rees, Samuel Daniel (Liverpool University Press, 1964), p. 114.

Daniel's conception of Arcadia is in accord with his didacticism. As the curtain rises, Arcadia has already degenerated, and what it was is in many ways more important than its present condition. He envisions Arcadia as the land of innocence, ease, and simplicity. Ergastus, in the opening speech defines its essential qualities:

The gentle region of plaine honesty,  
The modest seat of undisguised truth,  
Inhabited with simple innocence:

(I, i, 6-8)

Much later in the poem Daniel has one of the villains, Lincus, compare Arcadia to the Golden Age:

This peace of theirs is not like others peace;  
Where craft laies traps t'inrich himself with wiles,  
And men make prey of men, and rise by spoiles.  
This rather seems a quiet then a peace:  
For this poore corner of Arcadia here,  
This little angle of the world you see,  
Which hath shut out of doore, all th'earth beside,  
And is bard up with mountaines, and with rocks;  
Have had no intertrading with the rest  
Of men, nor yet will have, but here alone,  
Quite out of fortunes way, and underneath  
Ambition, or desire, that weighes them not,  
They live as if still in the golden age,  
When as the world was in his pupillage.

(III, i, 1019-32)

Arcadia also possessed otium, the contentment which is the opposite of ambitious striving. Daniel has conceived of otium as one of those ideals that the poet feigns in order to communicate a higher moral truth to his audience. But the Arcadia of the play is in very grave danger. Forces are trying to extirpate the virtues of the land and replace them with modern sophisticated vices commonly found in more barbarous countries. Arcadia must be saved, and it



is an indication of how insensitive Daniel is to the motif of death and revival that he does not use it to restore Arcadia; rather he has two wise and honored shepherds save the country from modernity.

These two shepherds interpose themselves between the audience and the play, becoming a frame that constantly reminds them of the purpose of the action. They keep the audience at a distance, so that they don't get emotionally involved and lose the perspective necessary to make moral judgments upon the action. Also like the good teachers that they are, they point out to the audience the moral value of each act as soon as it ends. Finally they enter into the stage action at the most desperate moment and reveal the causes of all the suffering in Arcadia to its inhabitants. When the evil characters are expelled, all the lovers are united and the land once again lives up to its reputation.

Five characters represent these sophisticated vices, but only one of them has any direct contact with the plot. Techne introduces the nymphs of Arcadia to the joys of fine clothes cut in the latest fashion. Alcon, in order to sell his medicines, convinces the Arcadians that they are sick, thus putting them at odds with nature. He also has the dubious distinction of introducing tobacco into Arcadia. Lincus, a small time lawyer, manages to get the Arcadians to seek titles and property so that they will

bring litigation against one another. Pistophanax tries to subvert the traditional worship of Pan. The two ancient Arcadians expose these four and expel them from the state.

The most important of these disturbers of the peace is Colax, a rustic Don Juan. His flattery and his lies bring a great deal of suffering to the shepherdesses and swains of Arcadia. His polished courtier's mein disguises his nature from all the nymphs except Cloris, who can immediately see through his lies to the truth beneath. Poor Daphne is not so fortunate; he seduces her and then abandons her for more difficult game.

Silvia and Palaemon, a pair of true lovers, are taught by him to distrust each other. Their love story prior to Colax's interference foreshadows the major event in the plot. Although Silvia loved Palaemon, she will not acknowledge any of his sincere avowals of love. Finally in the deepest melancholy, he climbs a hill and walks over to the edge. Before he can kill himself, Silvia saves him. She leads him back down to the plain, and they sit under a tree where their tears reveal their mutual love (II, i, 408-480). Daniel transforms the symbols of the Neoplatonic mystery into a sweetly sentimental tale that ornaments his verse and causes tears to flow from the eyes of the audience. Emotional release rather than enlightenment that fuses the emotions and the intellect is the aim of this use of the motif. Soon after these lovers are

united, Colax manages to separate them. He tells each that the other has been seeing another secretly, and they believe him. It takes the two wise old shepherds to force the truth out of Colax and unite the lovers again.

By far the greatest mischief that he stirs up is between Amyntas and Cloris. Amyntas, completely possessed by love, tries desperately to get some sign from his beloved, Cloris. Her many rebuffs produce a deep melancholy that borders on despair. But Amyntas' love produces neither poetry nor ecstasy; it only points to a moral. Colax wants to ravish Cloris just for the thrill of ruining a virgin and enlists Techne's help. Techne persuades Cloris to meet her in a cave to try on some new clothes. When Cloris arrives at the cave, she finds Colax waiting for her. Immediately discerning his intentions, she runs out of the cave with Colax close behind her. Amyntas, by chance observing their exit, thinks that she has been meeting him inside. This notion pushes his melancholy to the brink of despair, and he resolves to kill himself. His friends find him senseless at the base of a cliff, surrounded by the symbols of his profession. His dog, his sheep hook, his pipe, and his farewell elegy carved on the near by beech tree remind us that a shepherd-poet-lover is dying here. The poison he has taken is having its intended effect, and his friends can't arouse him. Only Cloris' ministrations awaken him from death. Daniel

does not realize that the love of Cloris' pure heart is enough to revive the dying lover, and so he has Uranias, a woman of the woods familiar with herbs, aid in his cure. The purpose of Amyntas' death and revival is to show the "horrible effects/of Colax, and of Technes practices (ll. 2307-8)." After Colax and Techne and the others have been banished and all the lovers reunited, the old shepherd Melibaeus draws the obvious moral:

Be as we finde our selves, not as we are,  
 As if we had no other touch of truth  
 And reason, then the nations of the times,  
 And place wherein we live; and being our selves  
 Corrupted, and abastardized thus,  
 Thinke all looks ill, that doth not look like us  
 And therefore let us recollect our selves  
 Dispersed into these strange confused illls,  
 And be againe Arcadians, as we were  
 In manners, and in habits as we were . . . .  
(V, iv, 2570-80)

The Neoplatonists regarded the motif as a symbol of the most sacred union of the soul with the divine; Daniel only looks at it as another example of the corruptions of society.

In Hymen's Triumph the motif illustrates the horrible effects of personal rather than public corruptions. The prologue introduces the forces opposed to one another in the play. Hymen wants to make "Arcadia a world of glory (l.9)" by telling the world the story of its two most constant lovers, Thirsis and Silvia. Avarice, Jealousy and Envy promise to spoil Hymen's fun, and as the play progresses, they almost succeed.

Thirsis is constant to Silvia even though he thinks that she has been dead the past two years. Really, however, she fled to avoid the marriage that her father was forcing upon her and was captured by pirates. Recently she has returned disguised as a page and awaits the marriage of her betrothed to another nymph. Her father, in the course of the play, confesses his reason for forcing her to marry Alexis:

But ah my greedy eye, viewing the large  
 And spacious sheep-walkes joyning unto mine,  
 Whereof Alexis was possest, made me,  
 As worldings doe, desire to marry groundes,  
 And not affections, which have other bounds.  
 (III, ii, 1109-13)

So much for Avarice. The other two, Envy and Jealousy, bring Silvia much closer to death.

Phillis, a nymph loved by Montanus the rude forester, has fallen in love with the disguised Silvia. One day Montanus believes that he sees Phillis confessing her love to the young page. The sight of the two together enrages him, and he accuses Phillis of inconstancy. She denies his accusation. Believing the denial, he asks her to forgive his boorish behavior. As a sign of his good faith, he promises to do what she asks of him. Phillis wishes to get revenge upon the young page for refusing her offer of love, so she tells Montanus to frighten the page enough to stop him from spreading false rumors about her. When he sees the young man again, his rage gets the better of him and he stabs the disguised Silvia. Her wound leads to

the immediate discovery of her identity and to the eventual reunion of the two lovers. Yet Envy and Jealousy almost win, and the audience have been taught a good lesson in how dangerous these passions may be.

The motif does not have any real connection with the eventual reunion of the lovers, and all the marriage indicates is that the forces of strife were defeated. This becomes more evident from an inspection of the rebirth and the discovery of Silvia. Thirsis' true and constant love has absolutely no power to save her. He quickly calls for Lamia to bring her herbs and restore her to life (IV, iv). True love no longer has any of the divine about it; it is completely human. Before Silvia was wounded she had been trying to think of some way to tell Thirsis that it was she disguised as a page. After a few subtle hints fail, she tells him a tale which parallels her adventures. He sees the parallel but still fails to make the identification. After all this preparation, he still faints when he discovers who is wounded. If the maiden is to symbolize divine beauty, her revelation must be sudden and theatrical as in As You Like It. Here it has been the subject of so much conversation that, when it does happen, it hardly makes much difference.

John Fletcher's (1579-1625) well known The Faithful Shepherdess (1608) also takes itself more seriously than any of Lyly's or of Shakespeare's plays. The serious moral

points, however, come wrapped in a much more delightful and entertaining package than does Daniel's ethics. The critics repeatedly stress the Italian influence on this play.<sup>50</sup> The songs, the dances, the pastoral creatures and the variety of verse forms indicate that Fletcher was equally aware of the native examples of the pastoral. A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Faithful Shepherdess share a three part movement, but in the latter the movement is much less sharply defined, possibly because it has no symbolic significance. Fletcher's shepherds travel from the pastoral fields, to the dark and mysterious woods, and back to the safety and society of the shepcotes. He does not use this movement to contrast the ways of the country with those of the court or the ways of the past with those of the future as Daniel and so many other humanists do. Instead, he invents a new theme for the pastoral tragicomedy.

Fletcher adapts the image of the liege-lady awakening her courtly lover to the theme of chastity--with devastating results for the significance of the motif. Chastity had been one of the three members of the Neoplatonic triad that revealed the rhythm of love in the world and which hinted

---

<sup>50</sup> See Herrick, pp. 161-2 and Greg, pp. 266-7 for discussions of Guarini's influence on the play. See V. M. Jeffery, "Italian Influence in Fletcher's Faithful Shepherdess" Modern Language Review, XXI (1926), pp. 147-58 for a discussion of lesser known Italian works as possible influence.

at the mystery of creation with its harmony of opposites. Fletcher secularizes this quality by turning it into a moral concept opposed to lust and sin. True love descends from the celestial into the natural world and becomes subject to the moral precepts and strictures of society. Love no longer transcends the world of reason; Fletcher believes it is a vital part of our normal life. After curing all the lovers, Clorin gives them a great deal of free advice, which illustrates perfectly the practical moralistic nature of chastity:

Young shepherdess now ye are brought again  
 To virgin state, be so, and so remain  
 To thy last day, unless the faithful love  
 Of some good shepherd force thee to remove;  
 Then labour to be true to him, and live  
 As such a one, that ever strives to give  
 A blessed memory to after time.  
 Be famous for your good, not for your crime.<sup>51</sup>  
 (V, i)

He rarely mentions love at all in this play, whose genre is devoted to the exploration of the subject. When we do glimpse fragments of his thoughts they turn out to be the traditionally popular humanist beliefs. Noticeably absent is any mention of love as a divine madness beyond reason which has the power to make fools of us. For example, Clorin is picking and describing the virtues of the herbs and flowers:

---

<sup>51</sup> All quotes of Fletcher's come from: The Works of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, ed. A. Glover & A. R. Waller, 10 Vols., ("Cambridge English Classics" Cambridge University Press, 1906). They do not include line numbers.



Therefore foul Standergrass, from me and mine  
 I banish thee, with lustful turpentine,  
 You that intice the veins and stir the heat  
 To civil mutiny, scaling the seat  
 Our reason moves in, and deluding it  
 With dreams and wanton fancies, till the fit  
 Of burning lust be quenched; by appetite,  
 Robbing the soul of blessedness and light:  
 (II, i)

Love, Fletcher believes, which is the opposite of lust, must be the union of two souls and not the satisfaction of the sexual appetite. Love proceeds according to reason, while lust must be controlled because, if it breaks its bonds, it will disturb the harmony of the soul and cause widespread harm and suffering. This diluted Neoplatonism<sup>52</sup> struck a sympathetic chord in the Protestants, who believed in the sanctity of marriage which was supported by love. The purity of the bride and groom must certainly be demanded by those seeking to purify the established Christian churches. Chastity and its companion, constancy, become the moral qualities most desired in woman. This is especially true in the court and the town, where the two are in very short supply.

Fletcher's realistic bent, which whittled the already splintered Neoplatonism to fit the Protestant morality, also alters the pastoral world. No longer is it a symbolic landscape suggesting the inner life. Now it is just a

---

<sup>52</sup>The ethics of Ficino's Neoplatonism is entirely different. It had to do with choosing the contemplative life and all that that entailed. Fletcher's position is in many ways very different from Ficino's position.

beautiful and natural woods partly derived from the English countryside and partly from classical Roman literature. With the obvious exception of Sannazaro, the pastoral landscapes from Theocritus to Spenser, Tasso, and Shakespeare had always been abstract, simple and peaceful. The woods established a mood or symbolized a mystery. Fletcher breaks with this tradition, joining the ranks of those following Guarini and Sannazaro. He copies the ornamental variety found in Sannazaro's works by including among the characters, worshipers and priests of Pan, an old river god, and a friendly and gentle satyr. Other gods and their adventures, derived from Ovid, are alluded to throughout the play. In addition to these literary references, Fletcher includes many of the pastoral conventions found in the traditional pastoral literature in the rhetoric of the play, often elaborating them far beyond their accustomed length. For example, when Perigot, the young lover, tries to convince Amoret that he loves her, he uses the metaphor of the flocks, the lamb, and the wolves commonly used in the pastoral eclogue, but this is what happens to it:

By Pan I swear, and if I falsely swear,  
 Let him not guard my flocks, let Foxes tear  
 My earliest lambs, and wolves whilst I do sleep  
 Fall on the rest, a Rot among my sheep.  
 I love thee better than the careful Ewe  
 The new-yea'n'd lamb that is of her own hew;  
 I dote upon thee more than that young lamb  
 Doth on the bag that feeds him from his Dam.  
 (III, i)

He continues on for several more lines in the same manner. Throughout the play other characters frequently expand and ornament their thoughts in a similar manner with images, metaphors, and similes constructed from rural life.

His lists of flowers, animals, and reptiles commonly found in an English garden or meadow are his own additions to the imagery of the woods. The gentle satyr, representing this natural aspect of the woods, weaves these realistic details through all of his speeches:

Here be grapes whose lusty bloud  
Is the learned Poets good,  
Sweeter yet did never crown  
The head of Bacchus, Nuts more brown  
Than the squirrels teeth that crack them;  
(I, i)

. . . nor creeps  
That hardy worm with pointed tail,  
. . .  
In some hollow tree or bed  
Of seeded Nettles: not a hare  
Can be started from his fare,  
. . .  
(IV, i)

Shall I dive into the sea,  
And bring thee coral, making way  
Through the rising waves that fall  
In snowie fleeces; dearest, shall  
I catch the wanton fawns, or flyes,  
Whose woven wings the summer dyes  
Of many colours? . . .  
(IV, i)

The lists of nature's creatures beautify and adorn the imagery of the play, but they do not contribute to any symbolic meaning. They make the woods seem more natural and more real than any found in classical or Renaissance literature. Fletcher's sensuous and beautiful pastoral

background has only one purpose: its variety and music display the author's artistic skill.

In the story Fletcher uses the same basic image of death and rebirth found in Tristan, Vita Nuova, and Aminta. Only he separates the image into several distinct parts in order to illustrate his theme. Naturally this emasculates any anagogical powers that the image possesses. Clorin has some of the properties of the liege-lady who in the Neoplatonic theory leads the awakened soul to union with divine beauty. Like the elder Isolde and the Virgin Mary she knows the virtues of the herbs of the forest and only chooses those which will benefit man. She also immediately tames and controls the natural forces of the woods. The representative of these forces, the Satyr, falls in love with her at first sight and describes her as a goddess:

But behold a fairer sight!  
By that heavenly form of thine,  
Brightest fair thou art divine,  
Spring from great immortal race  
Of the gods, for in thy face  
Shines more awful Majesty,  
Than dull weak mortalitie  
Dare with misty eyes behold,  
And live:

(I, i)

Because she is a goddess, she reconciles opposites, and when she first appears, she is honoring her true love who died some time before. She remains in love and a virgin; both Diana and Venus blend into one form. Fletcher, however, is not interested in the possibilities of the

concordia discors. He has only reversed the traditional relationship to illustrate her perfect chastity and her unwavering constancy. Strangely enough, even though she is a goddess, she has very limited powers. Her medicines only work if the soul is already pure. She cannot heal wounds infected with lust:

With spotless hand, on spotless brest  
 I put these herbs to give thee rest:  
 Which till it heal thee, will abide,  
 If both be pure, if not, off slide.  
 See it falls off from the wounds,  
 Shepherdess thou art not sound,  
 Full of lust.

(V, i)

And so may Pan bless this my cure,  
 As all my thoughts are just and pure;  
 Some uncleanness nigh doth lurk,  
 That will not let my Medicines work.  
 Satyr search if thou canst find it.

(V, i)

Her treatment of Thenot is equally curious. He has fallen in love with her because of her constancy to her dead lover. After he decides to live near her bower and worship from afar, she resolves to cure him of his disease. Instead of leading him towards divine beauty, she turns him back to the world of sensual love. Her offer to make love to him disillusioned him so much that he will now fall in love, knowing that all women are inconstant. The same witty cynicism that produced Donne's Songs and Sonnets produced this episode. Clorin also lacks the power to bring peace and harmony into the world. She cures the wounds of the lovers caused by lust, and she corrects

Perigot's mistaken notion of Amoret, but she does not preside over the marriage of any of the lovers. After passing through the confusions of the night, the lovers do not get married; they only return to their sheep cotes. Clorin does not share Titania's power because Fletcher does not understand the mystery behind the image.

The same witty cynicism that delights in talking about sensual love in terms of divine love destroys the anagogical and the didactic significance of the motif of death and revival; the motif comes to exist as a witty addition to the other holy and miraculous elements in the play and does not refer to any thing beyond itself. The first instance is completely theatrical. After Perigot wounds Amoret, the sullen shepherd, who is the personification of lust, throws her into the well. Immediately the god of the river appears with her in his arms and restores her to life. Her virginity and her purity have impressed the god so much that he wanted to save her life. He asks her to live with him, but she refuses, saying that she already has a lover. The wounding was probably suggested by Guarini's minor plot, but the well was pure Fletcher. He took advantage of the trap door in the Elizabethan stage to make a delightful miracle happen before the audience. In all previous instances of the motif, the death and revival significantly changed the lives of the characters. This is the first instance where nothing of any consequence

follows the rebirth. It only surprises and two villains, Amarillis and the sullen shepherd, to see her alive, and Perigot wounds her again. The river god did little more than entertain the audience.

The other near deaths and rebirths are not nearly so dramatic and are intended to show the necessity of the purity of intention. The sullen shepherd wounds Alexis as he and Cloe are about to satisfy their lust. Perigot wounds Amoret again, but this time the blood won't wash off his hands. All of them finally arrive at Clorin's bower where their lustful thoughts are purified and their wounds are healed.

If the theme weren't so trite and if it were presented with integrity, it would be easy to say that the motif had a didactic purpose in this play. In fact, however, the motif is there solely for the pleasure of the audience. To use Guarini's terms, it is there to purge the melancholy from the audience. It shares with Il Pastor Fido all of the aesthetic qualities of the Italian culture which produced the style called Mannerism. The variety in the pastoral style is complemented by the variety in the motif. Unfortunately Fletcher does not subordinate his variety to a unity of purpose as well as Guarini. Also Fletcher does not use the harmony of opposites for stylistic purposes as well as Guarini. The oxymoron, either visual or rhetorical,

does not appear in the play, which is another indication that the meaning of this device was lost on Fletcher.

Although all of this variety calls attention to Fletcher's artistic skill, and a great deal of our pleasure in this play derives from appreciating this skillful and ingenious use of the pastoral and the motif of death and revival, yet the didactic and anagogical purposes found in Lyly, Daniel, and Shakespeare disappear from the motif in this play. In The Faithful Shepherdess the motif appears as an ingenious piece of theater that does not need to refer to anything beyond itself. In both Italy and England, the humanists and the Neoplatonists have been superseded by the self-conscious artist who has no nobler ends in view than the display of his own talent and the pleasure of the audience.



## CHAPTER V

### THE USE OF THE MOTIF IN SHAKESPEARE'S ROMANCES

In 1608, the same year that The Faithful Shepherdess was being performed, Shakespeare appears to have written Pericles, the first of the romances which compose the subject of this chapter. In the following year it is thought that he wrote Cymbeline, then in 1610, The Winter's Tale, and finally The Tempest in 1611. The world depicted in these four plays differs so noticeably from the dark vision of murder, frustrated ambition, and intense suffering found in his mature tragedies that one generation of critics felt that a deep psychic experience, perhaps even a trauma or a religious conversion, could only account for the disparity. Whether some kind of ecstatic personal experience accounts for the change or not, we will never know for certain, but the fact remains that he stopped portraying the destruction of fragmented and tortured souls and began to present the complete man, who, through his own severe suffering, has become spiritually whole and is now capable of confidently guiding his own life and the lives of his subjects. In these later dramas of completeness the motif of death and revival has a central role.

The new visions of the ideal man and king presented in these four plays rely heavily upon the conventions of the older traditions of the drama. As R. G. Hunter in his Shakespeare and the Comedy of Forgiveness notes, one of the oldest of these traditions is the romance of the wandering knight.<sup>1</sup> Pericles features the same kind of hero who is tested by fortune and then finally rewarded for his efforts and sufferings. In fact, since this same pattern appears in the other three plays in the persons of Posthumus, Leontes, and Alonso, we can say that it is part of the essential structure of the last plays.

Another tradition resurrected in these romances comes from the didactic tragicomedies of the early humanists, such as Damon and Pythias, Promos and Cassandra, and Altile. In these earlier plays a king's mercy and forgiveness dissolve all the conflicts in the plot, and in Shakespeare's romances the power of forgiveness reconciles a distraught king with the estranged members of his family. In each of the plays, the king's forgiveness is caused by his increased self-knowledge and his deeper understanding of the nature of the world. A death and rebirth induces this increased insight, and, in turn, the "rebirth" heralds the universal harmony that now reigns. Like the sixteenth century plays cited above, these last works can also be considered

---

<sup>1</sup>Hunter, p. 133.

didactic but only in the sense that the old humanist virtues of wisdom, loyalty, temperance, and justice are once again brought before the audience. All four plays go far beyond the simple promulgation of ideal virtues; they inquire into the basis of virtue itself and present their findings in dramas that culminate in enlightenment, peace, and inner harmony.

The romances also bear certain resemblances to Shakespeare's own earlier romantic comedies, and in particular to A Midsummer Night's Dream. Songs, dances, and music were always part of Shakespeare's comedy, but now these effects, together with the conventions of the masque which call for the introduction of divine forces, enter into the very structure of the play, so that these now contribute to the anagogic function of the action. They still are entertaining, but they have the more important purpose of helping to arouse the audience to apprehend the truths beyond the world of the play. Furthermore each play has a pair of lovers, who, like Hermia and Lysander, Silvia and Valentine, or Rosalind and Orlando, speak to each other within the traditions of courtly love. With the exception of Lysimachus and Marina in Pericles, the lovers are severely tested, and in all four, the young lovers hold the key to the restoration of harmony in the kingdom. The pastoral landscape appears in the three plays after Pericles, and, with the exception of The Winter's Tale, has the same

symbolic meaning that it had in the earlier works. The lovers still follow the same pattern that was established in Two Gentlemen; one is forced into the woods where he meets the other, and both then return to society to effectuate the reconciliation with the king. Only in The Tempest is the pastoral landscape the actual place of union and reconciliation with the figures of the court; in the others the lovers return to the court to heal the distraught souls of those leading the active life. Again only in The Tempest does the pastoral landscape symbolize the ideal of completely satisfied desires. Bottom and Titania would definitely be out of place in the more realistic woods found in Cymbeline and The Winter's Tale. In fact, in the latter play Autolycus and the other rustics, participating in the sheep shearing festival, have more in common with rural England than they do with Shakespeare's earlier romantic comedies.

The motif of death and revival appears at least once in each play, but its meaning has changed since Love's Labour's Lost and A Midsummer Night's Dream. As we shall reveal in greater detail below, the motif now points to the nature of the created world; it no longer points to the central mystery of Neoplatonism. Behind all of the events in these plays is the belief that nature is both a creator and a destroyer, a source of both life and death, and hence both good and evil. Furthermore the same polarity is found in

the diverse creatures who find the source of their being in nature. If man wishes to acquire perfection, he must himself experience the contradictory aspects of his nature. Once he manages to reconcile the opposites struggling within his breast, he will become part of the rhythms of nature, and his soul will have transcended the conflicts of these forces. In the new world into which his transcendence has delivered him, he will be master of his passions and of his destiny. This is the ultimate vision of the world which the king in each play only gradually comprehends after the most desperate battles with his own emotions.

Shakespeare also uses the motif to impress these truths upon the characters in the plays. Our playwright returns all the way to Boccaccio and Dante for his examples of the loved one returning from the dead to lead the confused and lonely sufferer to happiness and fulfillment. Marina, in Pericles, functions as Olympia did in Boccaccio's Olympia, bringing her father back to life with a vision of truth. The other plays make additional modifications to this image until in The Tempest it is completely reversed. Enlightenment, reconciliation and finally a purifying divine harmony, which humans call peace, characterize the new world into which the suffering and struggling humans are born. This beautiful vision of the unity of man, nature, and cosmos towards which the paradox of death and revival points goes far beyond the conventional Christian

dualism and really amounts to a more profound re-evaluation of Shakespeare's youthful Neoplatonic enthusiasms. Since Pericles introduces these new themes, we will now examine closely the role of death and revival in this play.

Pericles, Prince of Tyre recounts the young prince's quest for perfection. As the play begins, he thinks that he has discovered such perfection in the daughter of Antiochus. Antiochus, hawking his daughter as if she were a piece of silk, says:

The senate-house of planets all did sit,  
To knit in her their best perfections.  
(I, i, 10-11)

And Pericles himself tells how he longs:

To taste the fruit of yon celestial tree  
Or die in the adventure . . . .  
(I, ii, 21-2)

But as he discovers when he solves the riddle, his fount of perfection has been committing incest with her father for a number of years. Her beautiful face hides a corrupted soul, which he immediately shies away from. Pericles has made two errors here which can be attributed to his callow youth. He has thought that perfection is to be found in the flesh; it will take years of hard suffering to make him realize that true perfection is of a pure, immaterial nature. Secondly, he has refused the test of combat. When he solved the riddle and discovered the evil in the world, he should have made a heroic effort to expunge it from the earth. No knight runs from the challenge of the dragon;

yet the youthful Pericles refuses to fight Antiochus. Most critics are at a loss to explain the sin which causes so much suffering.<sup>2</sup> Actually his flight is his sin; he has been frightened by the evil Antiochus into fleeing for his life which amounts to cowardice and a loss of honor, one of Pericles' most treasured possessions. Only the knowledge of true perfection will transform him from one who is buffeted by the treacherous blasts of Fortune into a self-confident and knowledgeable person who acts upon the world.

The motif of death and revival plays a dual role in the revelation of true perfection; it is both the symbol of divine perfection and the means which awakens the moribund soul to knowledge of the nature of the world. Since spiritual perfection consists in the conjunction of opposites, the motif in the guise of the oxymoron is the perfect symbol to use to hint at this transcendent reality. Only a few times, however, does it appear in the rhetoric of the play; more frequently it occurs in the imagery and in the parallel and contrasting events of the story.

The sea, as the symbol of the substance that contains all the pairs of opposites, dominates the imagery and the

---

<sup>2</sup>Howard Felperin, "Shakespeare's Miracle Play" Shakespeare Quarterly, XVIII, Autumn, 1967, pp. 363-374: "Cataracts of ink have been spilled in the effort to find in Pericles' experience up to this point at least one specific sin which will explain his self-imposed penance. Needless to say, there is none, and that is the very point" (p. 369).

action of the play. It comes close to resembling the traditional pastoral landscape, but it encompasses much more because this sea both heals and destroys. The closest approximation appears in the pastoral landscape of A Midsummer Night's Dream, where the lovers are both sundered and united within the same woods by the same local spirits. Derek Traversi has observed the sea performing in the same way in Pericles and has vaguely connected it with the higher wisdom of the theme:

This deliberately poetical recalling of the body's consignment to the sea, destroyer and preserver, aims at giving the idea of death a transforming quality of remoteness, at making it, in the words of Ariel in The Tempest, 'suffer a sea-change' to which the supporting indication of expanding moral understanding will give the necessary substance.<sup>3</sup>

The sea does in fact nourish and destroy the same life, and Shakespeare relies upon this fact when he uses it to symbolize the basic substance underlying the diverse phenomena of nature.

After Pericles has saved the starving people of Tharsus with his shipload of grain, he encounters both aspects of the sea. A terrible storm splinters his ship and drowns his entire crew. Only he remains alive and then not by any of his own doing but by being thrown naked upon a strange shore. The sea shows her beneficent aspect again a few moments later when she washes his father's

---

<sup>3</sup>Derek Traversi, Shakespeare: The Last Phase (Stanford University Press, 1955, reprinted 1965), p. 28.



rusty armor ashore. Pericles is cognizant of her double nature, but its full significance hasn't registered in his mind yet:

It [the armor] kept where I kept, I so dearly loved it;  
Till the rough seas, that spares not any man,  
Took it in rage, though, calmed, have given't again;  
I thank thee for't.

(II, ix, 136-9)

The armor is not the only precious treasure of his that the sea washes ashore. The next time that he returns to the sea, his wife dies while giving birth to their daughter during a severe storm. The sea storm destroys his love, but it also preserves her, for, after Pericles buries her at sea, it carries the body to land where the skilled magician Cerimon can revive her. Pericles however, won't discover this for many years; all he knows is that the sea in its raging fury has taken away his wife. His daughter, who was born at sea in the storm, further illustrates the beneficent nature of the same substance that produced such deep sorrow in Pericles. In the last analysis the sea causes both his sorrow and his joy, and the appearance of these opposites together suggests the perfection of divine reality.

Other images and actions scattered throughout the play also suggest the coincidence of opposites. Those images, which portray an outer surface contrasting with a hidden inner substance, can be construed as blending the opposites together into a whole. Antiochus' daughter has

a beautiful and seductive appearance and a corrupt and evil soul. Marina just reverses this image in the brothel. The place and its denizens have an evil appearance, while Marina retains her pure and chaste inner nature. When Pericles courts Thaisa, he appears in rusty armor which belies the beautiful and manly prince within. On his shield is painted a "withered branch that's only green at top" (II, ii, 43), suggesting again the conjunction of death and life. When he approaches Tharsus with the grain that will save them, the king and queen, Cleon and Dionyza, think that he is an enemy come to destroy them, and later Pericles thinks that they can be trusted to raise his daughter for him. Finally Pericles himself combines sorrow and joy, life and death, and love and hate within his soul; moreover only when he does is he ready to assume the throne of Pentapolis.

Pericles' quest for moral perfection, the suffering that it entails, and its final triumphant realization unify the diverse elements in the play. His adventures share the motif of death and revival with many of the heroes of the courtly love tradition. But in none of these earlier appearances, not even in Dante or Tasso, does the rhythm of the motif play such a distinctive role in the structure of the play. This pattern is the keel of the ship to which the other incidents are attached as supporting ribs. His death and rebirth symbolize an initiation into the knowledge of the truths of the celestial sphere, and this new knowledge

of divine truths equips him to rule in place of his father-in-law at Pentapolis.<sup>4</sup> As mentioned above, Pericles refuses the challenge to fight evil. This refusal of the king to extirpate a gross violation of law causes his later suffering. After saving Cleon and Dionyza with his charitable gift of grain--which, by the way, is completely negated because he has to kill them later--he marries Thaisa. Like many a king before him, he did not earn the right to marry his queen. Her father, who admired Pericles, forced the marriage upon them (II, iii). The two lovers wanted to wait a year, but Thaisa's father insisted that they wed immediately. Whatever is so easily acquired is just as easily lost, and it should be no great surprise when Pericles soon loses the symbol of all the perfections that he has sought. Thaisa's death begins the long process of isolation and withdrawal that only ends with his rebirth. He separates himself from his wife by throwing her body

---

<sup>4</sup>The pentangle, or five pointed star, has always been a symbol of perfection in the near east. Brian Stone, who discusses its significance in Appendix Six of his translation of Gawain and the Green Knight says: "The Pythagoreans used it, probably because five is the perfect number, being the marriage of the first masculine number, three, with the first feminine number, two (unity not being a true number). In one of the Gnostic systems it was the passport to the Kingdom of light: the Virgin Sophia would admit to her realm only bearers of the seal of the Pentangle." In this context, then, the word, Pentapolis, acquires the connotation, perfect city, and when Pericles decides to rule there rather than in his native Tyre, he displays his own perfection. Thaisa is also a symbol of this perfection.

into the sea and from his daughter by giving her to Cleon and Dionyza to rear. When he returns to Cleon and Dionyza for Marina and learns of her death, his estrangement is complete. He has no longer anything of value in the world; despair and darkness have choked out the joy and brightness of his life.

Shakespeare dramatically symbolizes Pericles' complete alienation from the world at the beginning of the fifth act. As the curtain rises, the audience discovers Pericles lying on a couch behind a curtain. For more than three months he has refused to eat and drink anything that was not necessary to keep him alive. He won't speak to anyone, and he is not interested in what others have to say to him. Since his will is paralyzed, his appetite gone, and his honor diminished, he can be considered dead. Dante, Boccaccio's *Silvius*, and Tasso's *Aminta* have all reached similar depths of depression; in each case they were rescued from this horrible state by a young woman, and Pericles is no exception.

Once Marina begins to talk to him, he slowly opens up like the bud of a flower in the warmth of the sun. Lysimachus, who also has felt her charms, describes them in this way:

She, questionless, with her sweet harmony  
And other chosen attractions, would allure,  
And make a batt'ry through his deafen'd parts,  
Which now are midway stopp'd.

(V, i, 45-8)

Her sweet harmony begins to take effect immediately, and Pericles decides to listen to the story of her life because she does not look as if she would lie and because there is something familiar about her. Joy completely overwhelms him as he recognizes who she is. As soon as he receives his daughter with welcome arms, he hears heavenly music which puts him into a sleep, during which time he has a vision of the goddess Diana. He obeys her instructions, and proceeds to her temple to tell the assembled people how he lost his wife. As he speaks, one of the priestesses faints. Upon inquiry, he finds her to be his lost wife, Thaisa. When he finally realizes that it is his wife, he exclaims:

This, this. No more, you gods! Your  
Present kindness  
Makes my past miseries sports. You shall do well  
That on the touching of her lips I may  
Melt and no more be seen. O, come, be buried  
A second time within these arms.

(V, iii, 39-44)

Thaisa, a priestess of Diana, is something divine, holy, and chaste, and Pericles' desire to be dissolved in her recalls the purpose of the rebirth of the soul in Pico's version of Neoplatonism. The end of the soul's journey is its extinction in celestial beauty, the source of all life, goodness, and perfection.

Because he has directly experienced divine beauty which is the ultimate reality behind the appearance of things, his soul has been suffused with divine harmony and

wisdom. Only now can he return back into the world and govern his kingdom according to divine truth. Easily and skillfully he works his will in the world. As a new man, he has gained control of his destiny. Pericles' words, as he beholds Antiochus' daughter are again apposite:

That have inflamed desire in my breast  
To taste the fruit of yon celestial tree  
Or die in the adventure.

(I, i, 20-2)

Little did he realize when he uttered these words that in order to taste the fruit of the celestial tree of divine beauty, he would first have to die, i.e., he would have to purge himself of his inflamed fleshly desires. Once these have been purged through suffering, he experiences the unity and harmony of the coincidence of opposites and realizes that these elements conjoined constitute the very nature of the world. Both joy and sorrow, both life and death, both good and evil make up the contraries controlled by the divine harmony. In his own life he realizes that his suffering was necessary if he wants to experience divine beauty.

The death and rebirth of his wife and daughter help to illustrate this point. Thaisa, the daughter of king Simonides, the ruler of Pentapolis, has all the perfections that a young prince could ask for. He falls in love with her, but as with Antiochus' daughter, his love belongs completely to this world. Ficino called this the love belonging to the natural world, and its aim is to produce

children. Pericles soon does get Thaisa with child. Unfortunately he is not aware of the existence of the realm of celestial love. Thaisa's death and rebirth mark the transition from the natural to the celestial world. Accordingly, her resurrection is the same as Titania's. Shakespeare wants his terrestrial Venus to change her nature into the celestial Venus, and there is no more interesting way than with a death and rebirth. When Cerimon revives Thaisa, she goes straight to the temple of Diana where she remains until Pericles appears. He apprehends her in the guise of divinity and realizes that her rebirth indicates her altered nature. His reconciliation with her produces the longed for harmony and peace in his soul.

Marina's adventures contrast with Pericles' and underline the power and divinity of rigorous chastity. She also represents the divine perfections of celestial love. Actually since she marries Lysimachus, she could be looked at as a combination of Venus and Diana. Her perfection and goodness arouse the jealousy of her foster mother who decides to have her killed. Before she can be killed, pirates capture her and she eventually ends up in a brothel, where her real powers finally begin to shine. All the lecherous youths who come in contact with her renounce whoring. Her powers allow others to get control of their lusts and restore the lost harmony to their souls.

This is exactly what she does for her father. To show this working, Shakespeare uses the ancient image of the fair damsel awakening the dying knight. She also heals his wound, which in this case is completely internal. In the Neoplatonic metaphysics Marina has the same role as her mother. She leads the soul on to the divine beauty after it has torn itself away from its body.<sup>5</sup> For Ficino the celestial Venus is both the ends and the means of the soul's ascent into the celestial world. In this play Shakespeare has separated these two functions into two distinct characters to increase the power of the drama. The deaths and rebirth of both women help Pericles to be born anew, as a man worthy of the responsibility of kingship, and as one capable of governing Pentapolis.

In Cymbeline, Shakespeare dramatizes the nature of the heroic virtues needed to restore a degenerate and rebellious kingdom to its accustomed honor and glory. Since these virtues belong to nature, his inquiry retains some of the characteristics associated with the more metaphysical revelations in Pericles. These supernatural activities, i.e., deaths and revivals, visions, and appearances of the gods, share their aim of enlightenment and recognition with

---

<sup>5</sup>I can't help thinking that her emphasis on the fact that she was born at sea is intended to recall the birth of Venus. For the Neoplatonists, the celestial Venus had no mother; she only had a father, Uranus. See Panofsky, p. 142. Botticelli's painting, Birth of Venus, depicts the same myth.



the earlier didactic romances. Knowledge and identification of the disguised characters causes a complete reversal in the king, allowing the play to end harmoniously with joy and peace. Although King Cymbeline, the man whose vision should be clearest, is the blindest of all the characters, until the end of the play no one character knows all the facts; each only possesses his own particular fragment of the truth.

As in Whetstone's, Edwards' and Greene's didactic romances, the motif of death and revival causes the enlightenment of the king and the restoration of peace to his kingdom. Shakespeare confines the action of the motif to the second and third parts of the three part movement of this tragicomedy. The first part shows the court corrupted by the unbridled ambition of the Queen, who seeks the crown for her son. Her devious machinations remain undetected because of the king's moral blindness. His moral failure has also caused him to destroy the marriage of Imogen, his daughter, and Posthumus, a young man raised in his household, by banishing the young man to Italy and confining Imogen to her rooms. The king's heated exchange in the first act with his daughter over the true worth of Posthumus uncovers the nature of his flaw:

Cym. Thou took'st a beggar; wouldst have made  
My throne  
A seat for baseness.

Imo. A lustre to it. No; I rather added

(I, i, 141-3)

Without wealth, Posthumus can only degrade the royal family. Cymbeline makes the rather common error of judging nobility and worth by those characteristics associated with the visible exterior of a person: his family, his wealth, his clothes, and his status. Since he assumes that the surface trappings indicate the mettle and virtues of the spirit within, he can't observe the hidden inward motives and qualities that determine the nobility and loyalty of a prince or courtier; hence his court reeks of flattery and a hidden contempt for his stupidity. Cloten, the king's stepson, for instance is an inept swordsman and a coward, but his bluster, his status, and his worth hide his weak nature from the king. Because of his lack of vision the king has become merely a tool of the unscrupulous Queen and her son, who prefer war and strife to peace and harmony.

All the youths of the royal household leave this degenerate court and travel to the Welsh woods where, by means of a process of death and revival, they are made into people capable of restoring the lost honor and peace of Britain. This place of refuge, healing, and rebirth is very similar to the pastoral landscapes of earlier plays. Honesty, simplicity, piety, and a hearty, robust manliness characterize the inhabitants of the woods. But unlike the pastoral of the woods outside Athens or Arden this one does not reflect the mind of the shepherd-poet; indeed,

there are only two shepherd-poets to be found in the Welsh highlands--and then only for a moment. Shakespeare stresses the virtues of the active life rather than the contemplative in this play. Cymbeline, like Il Pastor Fido, blends the pastoral and the heroic together. Where once the courtly lover suffered, almost died, and was reborn through the love of his liege-lady, now the heroic man of princely virtue passes through a similar process.

The first youths to enter the woods were Guiderius and Arviragus, the sons of Cymbeline, who were stolen by Belarius in revenge for his banishment. Tended by Belarius, they have lived in a cave since they were two and three years old, completely ignorant of their parents and their status in life. Their father, Cymbeline, thinks that they have died long ago.

When the boys first appear, Belarius describes their innate nobility and love of honor. Their piety is simple and unaffected, but their instinctive ambition is beginning to chafe against the peace and quiet of the forest life. Eagerly thirsting for adventure and martial deeds, they look upon the woods as a prison rather than as the earthly paradise that Belarius keeps telling them it is:

Our valour is to chase what flies. Our cage  
We make a choir, as doth the prison'd bird,  
And sing our bondage freely.

(III, iii, 43-5)

When Belarius recounts his own youthful glories, both boys intensely hang on every word. Guiderius reveals a sanguinary temperament:

The princely blood flows in his cheek, he sweats  
Strains his young nerves, and puts himself in posture  
That acts my words.

(III, iii, 93-4)

And Arviragus follows these same adventures with his own fierce interpretation, acted out in pantomime. They definitely have the spirit necessary to perform deeds of valour and to acquire honor, but so far they have remained close to home, completely untested and without experience.

Their rebirth, which amounts to their passage from childhood into manhood and which completes their princely natures, involves three distinct phases. First they discover the exhausted Imogen disguised as a boy in their cave. Their mentor, old Belarius, first points her out to them by exclaiming:

By Jupiter, an angel! or, if not,  
An earthly paragon! Behold divineness  
No elder than a boy!

(III, vi, 43-5)

These words suggest the women, such as Silvia, the Princess, and even Thaisa, who were described in such terms and who also represented divine beauty and truth. Imogen carries on this tradition in this play. She elicits from them a reverence and love for divine beauty and truth, which until now had lain dormant within their souls. The naturally chivalrous Guiderius offers to be her servant:

Were you a woman, youth,  
 I should woo hard but be your groom.  
 (III, vi, 68-9)

Arviragus follows with:

I'll love him as my brother;  
 And such a welcome as I'd give to him.  
 After long absence, such is yours.  
 (III, vi, 71-3)

Once they have recognized and honored the divine beauty which lies beneath the disguise, they should have no trouble defeating falsehood. Valentine, after he had beheld Silvia, easily saw through Proteus. Now another Proteus, Cloten, appears hiding his cowardly spirit within the clothes of a noble and valiant knight.

The killing of Cloten is the second phase of the rebirth of the two boys into manhood. When Cloten enters the woods, one could say that he is returning home because he has more in common with the satyrs of the pastoral tragicomedy than with the courtiers of the court he has just left. Like Fletcher's Sullen Shepherd his base passions and ignoble visions encourage him to try to rape Imogen and to kill Posthumus, his rival. But before he finds an opportunity to satisfy his lust, he encounters Guiderius. Cloten's crude pride and barbarous bluster immediately arouse the spirit of Guiderius. He, however, has the advantage over Cloten because he can see his real character beneath the outward fierceness. Cloten tells him that he is the son of the Queen, hoping that his status will gain him respect, but Guiderius only says:

Gui. I am sorry for't; not seeming  
So worthy as thy birth.

Clo. Art not afeard?

Gui. Those that I reverence, those I fear--the wise;  
At fools I laugh, not fear them.

(IV, ii, 93-6)

His words incense Cloten, and they begin to fight.

Guiderius easily passes his test by lopping off Cloten's head. His fierce spirit keeps the unruly and insensible lower passions, which Cloten represents when he entered the woods, in order. They cannot successfully rebel against him.

Interestingly there is a ritualistic atmosphere surrounding his death which reinforces the theme of death and rebirth. Both leave the stage fighting; shortly afterwards Guiderius returns with Cloten's head as evidence of his prowess. When Belarius learns what happened, he is horrified and fears some retribution. He thinks that only absolute madness would have brought Cloten out into the woods alone; so there must be friends of his lurking in the woods. Belarius and Arviragus finally accept the deed and whatever consequences it might entail. Then Guiderius announces what he will do with the head:

I'll throw't into the creek  
Behind our rock; and let it to the sea,  
And tell the fishes he's the Queen's son, Cloten.

(IV, ii, 151-3)

This announcement parallels the death of Orpheus, the inspired poet, inventor of the Orphic mysteries and the Neoplatonists' symbol of the complete man. Here, according

to Ovid in the Golding translation, is what happened to his head after his death:

His members lay in sundrie steds. His head and harp  
 both Cam  
 To Hebrus, and (a woondrous thing) as downe the streame  
 they swam,  
 . . .  
 At length adowne theyr country streame to open sea they  
 Came,  
 And lyghted on Methymnye Shore in Lesbos Land.<sup>6</sup>  
 (XI, 53-60)

Since Orpheus was the ideal shepherd-poet who best symbolized the virtues of the contemplative pastoral life, Shakespeare uses him to suggest the union of the active and contemplative lives within the souls of the two boys. They blend the opposites together within themselves; thus they complete their characters and become worthy of their rank and titles.

The third phase of their entrance into manhood continues their association with the contemplative life. Arviragus carries in the seemingly dead body of Imogen, who has taken the potion which puts her in this death-like sleep. All three men begin to mourn for her, and soon their melancholy knows no bounds. They transform themselves into pastoral shepherd-poets, lamenting the deaths of their beloved liege-ladies. Arviragus promises:

With fairest flowers,  
 Whilst summer lasts and I live here, Fidele,  
 I'll sweeten thy sad grave.  
 (IV, ii, 218-20)

---

<sup>6</sup>Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: The Arthur Golding Translation 1567, ed. J. F. Nims (London, 1965), p. 275.

Although their voices have cracked, they decide to sing over Fidele's grave. And like quiet and peaceful shepherds, they spread flowers over her body after they have finished singing. The quiet pastoral virtues of reverence, tenderness, love, and mourning become them just as naturally as the martial vigor that they displayed before. The death of the queen's brutish son has caused two valiant and worthy sons of the king to be reborn in the womb of nature.

Their rebirth and return to the court saves the king from capture and the kingdom from defeat. After they rescue the king, they restore order to the ungoverned British troops and stand at the bridge shoulder to shoulder against the entire Roman army. Their courage and quick thinking save the day for the British. Their blood did indeed:

. . . fly out and show them princes born.  
(IV, v, 55)

As Cymbeline is about to reward them for his victory, he inadvertently discovers who they are. Gladly welcoming them back into his arms, he makes them heirs to his realm. The return of his sons, whose strength, courage, and virtue have been amply proven, contributes order and controlled strength to the vision of peace and harmony at the end of the play. The motif of death and revival has pointed to those contradictory qualities which Shakespeare feels are necessary in the perfect prince and has



helped to demonstrate how he must first be tested before he can actually assume the throne.

Imogen and Posthumus, the last pair to enter the woods, require the same kind of enlightenment as Shakespeare's other young lovers. They have mistaken their infatuation with exterior appearances for true inward love, which can only happen between two souls. Each must be enlightened, which means that each must undergo the process of death and rebirth. Posthumus displays the shallowness of his love when he believes Iachimo's slanderous report of Imogen, and Imogen, when she mistakes Cloten for her love, Posthumus, and buries him with reverence. Posthumus immediately feels the despair caused by a guilty conscience when he hears of her death. He begins to realize how foolish he was to listen to Iachimo; hence he thinks that only his own death will atone for hers. He goes "underground" by changing into the clothes of a common Englishman and fighting against the Romans. When the British win, he again changes clothes and manages to get thrown into a British prison as a Roman soldier. In prison he repents his crime, asks for mercy, and offers his life as punishment for his crime. Jupiter, appearing to him in a vision, promises to be merciful. Now, after his own repentance, he is ready to behold the divine beauty of his wife, Imogen. She for her part has also been suffering as the page of the Roman, Lucius. Both are ready to be enlightened and united again.

The long recognition scene assembles all the fragments of the story, the totality of which contributes to the knowledge of each character, who also contributes his share to the story. Posthumus contributes to Cymbeline's enlightenment because he fought so bravely and wore such poor clothes. As Belarius says:

I never saw  
Such noble fury in so poor a thing;  
Such precious deeds in one that promis'd naught  
But beggary and poor looks.

(V, v, 7-10)

Cymbeline now learns that there does not necessarily have to be a relation between the exterior and the interior of the person. As soon as he learns that mean apparel can disguise noble actions, he discovers that magnificent apparel can hide ignoble spirits. His wife and her son had both evil hearts and limitless ambitions. When he hears this, the king realizes that their flattery and his wife's beauty led him astray. Then Posthumus confesses his crime to the king, but before he can react, Imogen, disguised as a page speaks out, and Posthumus angrily knocks her down. Then Pisanio comes forward to say that this page is Imogen. The two lovers unite with the sincerity that only true love inspires. Posthumus, filled with ecstasy, shouts:

Hang there like fruit, my soul,  
Till the tree die!

(V, v, 263-4)

The return of his daughter brings tears to Cymbeline's eyes, and the two lovers, much wiser, enter into the peace and harmony of the realm. The many deaths and revivals have caused a complete reversal in the king. It can even be said that he has been reborn.

The deaths and rebirths continue to point to the same general truths in The Winter's Tale. In Cymbeline, both the world-destroying and the creative, life-producing aspects of nature are juxtaposed in the scenes before Belarius' cave; but in the following scenes Shakespeare glorifies the life producing elements of the heroic spirits of the boys at the expense of the more sinister destructive powers. In The Winter's Tale Shakespeare concentrates upon the two contradictory processes of nature herself instead of the heroic spirits she produces.

This play divides into the familiar three parts of court-woods-court, which, as we have seen, owes its origin to the rhythm of love in the Neoplatonic universe. Here, however, we can see more clearly just how the pastoral world heals the dissensions and turmoils of the court. As in A Midsummer Night's Dream the pastoral world reveals the harmony of opposites which the king must also experience before he can again be at peace with himself and his family.

Leontes' blindness, which causes all of the grief in Sicilia, differs from that of Cymbeline. Cymbeline's stems from a defect in judgment, while Leontes, from a defect in

his will and his emotions. His love for Hermione is a shallow, possessive uncertain thing. It cannot withstand the most innocent conversations with an old friend. Without the trust and certainty in his wife's love that she has in his, his mind begins to brood upon her actions and his jealousy demands revenge. Revenge and hate transform this benevolent and just ruler into an unpredictable and raging tyrant, a veritable agent of death. He orders the murder of his childhood friend and companion, Polixenes, and manages to destroy his own entire family. He has his daughter, whom Hermione bore in prison, while awaiting her trial, exposed on some deserted and distant shore. His son, the virtuous and noble heir to the throne, sickens and dies because of what Leontes takes to be the boy's shame at his mother's adultery. When Hermione realizes that he has already convicted her in his mind, she finds little to live for, and Paulina soon reports to him that she has died in prison. These two deaths, following hard on the heels of the Delphic Oracle's pronouncement of her innocence, awaken him to the enormity of his crimes. Alone and saddened, he sincerely begs forgiveness for his past crimes and begins twenty years of penitent suffering. His own contrition and penance do not suffice; he still needs the healing powers of divine love to repair his soul and to restore harmony and peace to his life.

Perdita and Florizel share just such a divine love, and the celebration surrounding the plighting of their troth presents nature as a coincidence of opposites with Perdita as the heavenly Venus, who possesses these contraries. Even twenty years before, when Antigonus landed on the coast of Bohemia with Perdita, both aspects of nature were operating. Bohemia is famous for its creatures that prey on man. Nevertheless Antigonus, obeying the harsh commands of Hermione, whom Apollo sent to him in a vision, deposits the babe on the hostile shore. As he leaves, he notices the sky and mutters:

The day frowns more and more; thou'rt like to have  
A lullaby too rough. I never saw  
The heavens so dim by day.

(III, iii, 54-6)

Immediately afterwards under this foreboding sky, he is chased and eaten by a bear; furthermore the ship and all hands perish in the storm. Apollo, working through nature, punishes those with death who helped carry out Leontes' command.

But life still thrives in the midst of all this death and destruction. A shepherd, looking for two lost sheep discovers Perdita and the bundle of effects left by Antigonus. He says to his son, also a shepherd:

Now bless thyself; thou met'st  
With things dying, I with things  
new-born.

(III, iii, 116-7)

They inspect the bundle and find some gold, which turns them into joyous rustics. While they congratulate themselves on their good fortune, they don't forget to do good deeds for the dead, and the clown hurries off to bury the remains of Antigonus. Their simple charity and goodness provide Perdita with a home and a decent up-bringing. Shakespeare juxtaposes both the destructiveness and the goodness of nature, both the bear and the shepherd, in this scene to show how nature is cruel and kind, death-dealing and life-preserving, at the same moment. At the sheep shearing festival twenty years later this same concordia discors is celebrated and in effect presented to the audience.

Shakespeare's earlier pastoral lovers provide the clues to understanding the nature of Perdita's and Florezel's love, which is at the center of the festival and which plays an important part in Leontes' own rebirth. Valentine had called Silvia divine, Berowne thought that the princess was a goddess, and Lysander praised the divinity of Hermia. When Florizel's opening speech identifies Perdita with Flora and makes her queen of the festival, we should realize that we are deep in the Neoplatonic traditions of love. Furthermore, their love does not require the purification and purification which the earlier couples' love had to undergo. Florizel could be speaking of those lovers in The Faithful Shepherdess when he proclaims that even the

gods never transformed themselves into animals for a purer love than he has:

Their transformations  
Were never for a piece of beauty rarer,  
Nor in a way so chaste, since my desires  
Run not before mine honour, nor my lusts  
Burn hotter than my faith.

(IV, iv, 31-4)

Perdita fears that the king may not approve of their love, and Florizel sounds like Tristan when he boldly replies that he would unhesitatingly defy the king because:

I cannot be,  
Mine own, nor anything to any, if  
I be not thine. To this I am most constant,  
Though destiny say no.

(IV, iv, 43-6)

After the songs and dances Florizel demonstrates that his love penetrates much deeper into his soul than the nobles' love did in Love's Labour's Lost. The disguised Polixenes mentions that when he was young he gave trinkets and "knacks" to his love and wonders if Florizel has done the same thing. The lover replies that Perdita does not think much of such gifts because:

The gifts she likes from me are packed and lock'd  
Up in my heart; which I have given already,  
But not deliver'd.

(IV, iv, 368-70)

He has already reached the vision of true love, which the nobles could reach only after a year's trial in a hermitage. Shortly after his declaration of sincere, true love, they each pledge their love to one another, which, while not a complete and legally binding betrothal, does provide a fitting close to the festival.

The object of Florizel's love, Perdita, combines both the opposites of life and death within herself and in so doing points to the divinity behind all the phenomena of nature. Florizel had called her Flora, and the old shepherd made her mistress of the feast, to which she is supposed to welcome all the guests and make them feel at home. Nevertheless she prefers to give them flowers of winter because there are none that belong to the season which is "not yet on summer's death, nor on the birth/Of trembling winter (IV, iv, 80)." In her next long speech she mentions Proserpina, the maiden who was captured by Pluto and who now spends half of the year above ground with her mother and the other half in Hades with Pluto, her husband. After mentioning the primroses which "die unmarried," she weaves these two themes of death and life into the image of a passionate embrace, which in the context, suggests the Neoplatonic paradox of the sacred love-death that the celestial Venus welcomes the aspiring soul into:

O, these I lack,  
To make you garlands of, and my sweet friend,  
To strew him o'er and o'er!

Flo. What, like a corse?

Per. No, like a bank for love to lie and play on;  
Not like a corse; or if, not to be buried,  
But quick and in mine arms.

(IV, iv, 177-32)

Perdita, as the symbol of "great creating Nature," (IV, iv, 87) has the power to destroy and to revive; still, since she possesses both opposites, she also represents



the celestial Venus, that symbol of divine beauty and love that quickens all the living things of this world. Her death, or absence from Leontes' court, has helped to destroy his world, and now when she and Florizel return there, she causes Leontes' own rebirth into peace and harmony.

Shakespeare sets off the Feast of Shearing, which displays the sacred mystery of true love, from the rest of the play by clothing it with conventions derived from the masque. This scene has an even greater ceremonial air about it than the cave scene in Cymbeline. Florizel presents her to the audience; the shepherds quickly surround her, and after she speaks, they dance and sing in a circle around her. She joins in, and the whole scene ends with the joyous harmony of the betrothal. All the formal activity reinforces the fact, which is made clear in the imagery, that she represents the sacred center of the play and that she and Florizel symbolize the mystery of the world that will change despair into hope, melancholy into joy, and suffering into happiness.

The mystery of Leontes' rebirth, which takes the entire last act to unfold, begins when he promises Paulina that he will not marry anyone unless it is Hermione. In other words, he will be faithful to her the rest of his life. Shortly after that, the two lovers appear in court, seeking refuge. His eager acceptance of them indicates that his soul is ready to receive the intuition of divine

love. This comes only after he has been reunited with his childhood friend and has discovered his heir to the throne:

Our king, being ready to leap out of himself for joy of his found daughter, as if that joy were more become a loss, cries, "Oh, thy mother, thy mother"; then asks Bohemia forgiveness, then embraces his son-in-law; then again worries he his daughter with clipping her . . .

(V, ii, 53-8)

The rebirth of his daughter increases his longing for the union with divine beauty, and until that happens he can only feel incomplete.

Of course the revelation of divine beauty occurs in Paulina's art gallery when the statue of Hermione turns into the living queen. Leontes witnesses the mystery of dead marble being transformed into living flesh; this is the same mystery that he himself is now passing through and the same process that his daughter has just recently completed. His vision of the coincidence of opposites points beyond itself to the divine beauty, transforming Leontes into the complete man who now is capable of ruling his kingdom with authority and wisdom. The divine knowledge revealed to him through these actions attunes his soul to the rhythm of the universe.

The Tempest presents these themes of divine love, forgiveness, reconciliation, rebirth, and enlightenment in a completely different form. This play expands the middle part of the familiar three-part movement into the entire play; it begins and ends on the mysterious island

far removed from the ambitious denizens of the court. No court ever appears on stage, but both the survivors of the wreck and Prospero mention the courts that they have left and to which they wish to return, often enough to supply to the audience the sense of movement away from and back to the world of the court. Prospero and his daughter were banished to this wilderness years before, and the plot focuses upon his successful attempts to regain his dukedom and return to Milan. The motif of death and revival, as in earlier romances, dominates the action. It has the central role in Prospero's machinations because he desires to gain back his property by altering the soul of the man who took it from him in the first place. As the spectacle of Damon and Pythias' near death and revival changed the tyrant Dionysius' hatred into friendship, so the near death of the entire population of the ship turns the hatred of his enemy, Alonso, into the friendship and love that is usually hoped for between equals. The motif also contributes to the general enlightenment of Miranda and the nobles in Alonso's company. Shakespeare handles these various revelations of truth and rebirth by adopting the structure of the masque to the romance. Prospero has the role of the presenter who reveals to the audience the important nature of divine love; surrounding and in a way complementing the true love of Miranda and Ferdinand are many lesser revelations, all staged by Prospero for the benefit of the suffering souls on the island.

This island, as befits the place of action away from the court, has all the qualities of the traditional pastoral landscape. Unlike Bohemia in The Winter's Tale, which represented the fecundity of nature, this pastoral represents the sacred place of healing, and since the pastoral world heals and revives the distempered soul, the action in the pastoral world becomes a metaphor of the mind. Prospero has the powers to control and to heal the distraught souls instead of a maiden or goddess, such as Boccaccio's Olympia, Shakespeare's Silvia, or Fletcher's Clorin. He acquired his knowledge that controls the powers of nature by diligently studying his books. The women, on the other hand, such as the elder Isolde, just seem to know how to control nature; they never have to study. Nevertheless the years of studying have repaid Prospero because his knowledge becomes the means to his own rebirth.

His knowledge, the fruit of his long contemplative life, creates the other characteristics which this island shares with the earlier pastoral worlds. He arranges the ideal love between his innocent daughter and the virtuous prince, which is the cement that binds the other souls together in the play. His skill also allows him to control Caliban, the natural force of instinct and bestiality. Caliban corresponds to the satyr of the traditional pastoral drama, and his attempted rape of Miranda only convinces us of his brutish nature. The attempted rape having

been unsuccessful, now Caliban is Prospero's slave, a condition which, when transposed into the metaphor of the mind, means that in the ideal man enlightened reason and will control the brutish instincts. Other purer spirits also obey Prospero's will and assist in presenting the marvels that he reveals to the stranded nobles. Furthermore, because he completely controls all the forces and the people on the island, he has converted the island into a realm where all desires are realized. Tasso's Arcadia and the woods in Bottom's dream have again appeared on this remote island. The emotions reign here, and all desires of the man of reason and knowledge are fulfilled. The motif of death and revival, the means to the fulfillment of his desires, finds a home here among the other pastoral marvels, wonders, and miracles produced by the imagination of this Renaissance magus.

As in Pericles, the sea is both destroyer and preserver, and as it surrounds and supports the island, so the truth which it symbolizes supports and surrounds the diverse phenomena on the island. Shakespeare invents what might be called a multiple perspective to show us both aspects of the sea at once. As the play opens, we observe the storm from Miranda's perspective. She watches its unmitigated fury split the helpless, floundering ship into numerous pieces. The suffering of those caught in the storm forces her to ask her father to ease the force of

the blast. Their misfortune brings forth all of her compassion:

O, I have suffered  
 With those that I saw suffer! . . .  
 O, the cry did knock  
 Against my very heart! Poor souls, they perish'd!  
 Had I been any god of power, I would  
 Have sunk the sea within the earth or ere  
 It should the good ship so have swallow'd and  
 The fraughting souls within her.

(I, ii, 5-13)

From Prospero's viewpoint, which we assume when Miranda falls asleep, the sea is a preserver and not a destroyer. Ariel, one of Prospero's servants, created the appearance of a storm, frightened all the passengers into the sea, and brought them safely to shore on the island along with the ship and its crew, which he hid in a quiet bay out of sight. Shakespeare does not want us to judge between these two views of nature, but to see that both are aspects of the same force called nature. The two types of magic practiced on the island are additional evidence that this is Shakespeare's view of nature. Prospero and Ariel practice a white or beneficent kind of magic, which will ultimately benefit those it touches. Sycorax, on the other hand, practiced the art of black magic; she only wished to cause harm and to destroy, as her treatment of Ariel proves. Her son, Caliban, who resists all attempts to educate him, illustrates the degenerate nature of these forces. But Caliban, Ariel, and Prospero and Sycorax are all products of nature and thus derive from the same "great

creating nature." The double aspect of nature has its reflection in human culture as well; accordingly Shakespeare stresses the necessity of suffering in the complete life. The moral point that Shakespeare makes, which is solidly grounded in the natural world, is that a man has to experience both suffering and joy before he can consider himself perfect and morally wise. This moral point has been one of the threads running through all of the romances, and in this play it receives its most complete presentation because not only one or two of the characters experience sorrow and joy but all of them without exception undergo some form of death and rebirth, which signifies the purification through suffering and the happiness of fulfilled desire that the suffering made possible.

Suffering alone, however, will not bind the souls of long-standing enemies together; only the vision of divine love can heal these severe wounds. Consequently the rebirths are attended by the revelation of love and joy which is really a pale reflection of divinity. Miranda and Ferdinand share such a true love; like Perdita's and Florizel's their love is divine from its inception and does not need the corrections of the lovers in A Midsummer Night's Dream. These lovers repeat the by-now familiar pattern of sudden discovery and profession of true love which culminates in the ceremony of their betrothal.

When they first behold each other, each thinks that the other must be divine, and each is completely satisfied just to look upon the other. While piling wood, Ferdinand thinks of himself as the knight whose work is brought to life by his liege-lady:

This my mean task  
Would be as heavy to me as odious, but  
The mistress which I serve quickens what's dead  
And makes my labours pleasures.

(III, i, 4-7)

Moreover both prove to be worthy of this divine love. Miranda, whose compassion was already elicited by the floundering ship, weeps at the sight of Ferdinand laboring with the wood. Her tears are analogous to Silvia's tears that fall on the body of Aminta; in both instances they signify a heart whose love is true. To his credit, Ferdinand reveals the proper control of his lower passions. Just before the betrothal ceremony, he tells Prospero:

As I hope  
For quiet days, fair issue, and long life,  
With such love as 'tis now, the murkiest den,  
The most opportune place, the strong'st suggestion  
Our worser genius can, shall never melt  
Mine honour into lust . . . .

(IV, i, 23-8)

Because Ferdinand is the son of the King of Naples, his love for Miranda helps to reconcile Prospero with his old enemy; Ferdinand's new life with Miranda helps Prospero to accomplish his own rebirth.

Prospero, with the aid of his magic, arranges several other rebirths as well. Alonso, the king of Naples, is



the most interesting of those reborn, and his rebirth, which occupies the fifth act, follows the pattern of death and revival found in Aminta. Prospero plays the role of Aminta, while Alonso enacts a part roughly equivalent to Silvia. After suffering through the terrors of the storm, after being condemned by Ariel in the shape of a harpy to starvation on a haunted island wilderness and to a madness "worse than any death/Can be at once" (III, iii, 77-8), and finally after being forcefully reminded that they are responsible for the death of Prospero and his daughter, the nobles are led into a charmed circle from whence they will emerge as new men in a new world. While their heads are clearing, Prospero presents himself to them, confronts them with their crimes, and magnanimously forgives them their past transgressions. The sudden rebirth of the long thought dead Prospero and the dissipation of his own madness shocks Alonso into resigning his dukedom and begging forgiveness from Prospero for his sins. Prospero also forgives his brother's sins and asks for his dukedom back, which his brother gives him. These guilty nobles have been led by Prospero's magic through death and the sufferings of purgatory, and now they are ready to emerge, after confessing their forgiveness, in a new world of life and happiness. Their own death and revival on this island foreshadows the journey their souls would have made if they would not have repented.

At this point Alonso laments the loss of his son, Ferdinand, rolling all his grief into a wish:

. . . I wish  
Myself were mudded in that oozy bed  
Where my son lies.

(V, i, 150-2)

Like the nymph Silvia, he has confessed his past errors and wished that he himself were dead. While the king despairs, Prospero reveals to him his son and Miranda playing chess, and again like Silvia when Aminta awoke, he is overjoyed. When the crew of the ship awakens from its sleep in the hold of the ship and joins the nobles, the rebirths, reconciliation, and rejoicing become universal. Even Caliban repents his past actions and promises to be a loyal servant. These deaths and revivals have restored the unity, the harmony, and the joy which were absent for so long for the hearts of the nobles. Prospero can now return to Milan with his property, his title and his honor restored. Perhaps the greatest wonder wrought by his art was his own rebirth and triumph after years of suffering and isolation.

The island which Prospero is leaving has also been transformed by his art into a pastoral landscape where emotion rules. In this play the emotions usually associated with true love, although present, have been subordinated to those belonging to Christian ethics. Sorrow, forgiveness, charity, contrition, pity, remorse, grace, wonder and joy influence the events in this world and help to

determine the success of Prospero's plan. These emotions and the deaths and revivals that accompany them always point back to the basic truth upon which they rest and which is symbolized by the sea. Nature destroys and preserves; consequently it is both good and bad, both sad and joyous. Furthermore the experience of both aspects of the world is necessary for one who wants to experience the world the way it is. This is the central truth that Prospero, the master of the motif of death and revival, presents to the audience of this play.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE DEGENERATION OF THE MOTIF IN THE TRAGICOMEDIES OF JOHN FLETCHER

While Shakespeare was developing the ethical implications of the motif in his last romances, John Fletcher (1579-1625) began to mold it into the final shape that it assumed in the tragicomedies written in the second quarter of the seventeenth century. Inspired by the popular success of Guarini, Fletcher transformed the motif into one of the many entertaining and pleasing elements in this increasingly popular genre. The motif appears in all twelve plays labeled tragicomedy by the editors of the folio edition, and when these are closely examined, they reveal many dramatic conventions in common with plays in the pastoral tradition.<sup>1</sup>

Although the four plays studied in this chapter depend upon different dramatic conventions and two were written with the help of different collaborators, they

---

<sup>1</sup>The twelve plays are: The Faithful Shepherdess (1608); Philaster (1609); A King and No King (1611); The Mad Lover (1617); The Queen of Corinth (1617); The Loyal Subject (1618); The Knight of Malta (1618); The Humorous Lieutenant (1619); The Laws of Candy (1619); The Island Princess (1621); A Wife for a Month (1624); The Fair Maid of the Inn (1626).

still share a remarkably similar style. This style has a great many affinities with Guarini's in Il Pastor Fido--even though Fletcher's later plays are not strictly pastorals. Guarini combines in the same play the two opposing worlds of love and heroic action by transforming the shepherd-lover into the heroic man of honor. Fletcher, who also combines the two worlds, does so by transforming the heroic man into the courtly lover. Guarini's Arcadian pastoral background emphasizes the inner emotions of the lovers; while in Fletcher's plays the heroic background of war and conquest stresses the honor of the protagonists. In each of the four plays studied here, i.e., The Mad Lover (1617); The Queen of Corinth (1617); The Loyal Subject (1618); The Laws of Candy (1619), the domestic problems of a great general or prince, usually, but not always, centering around the emotions of love and loyalty, are the dramatic center of the conflict. We could say that these plays are nothing but the old pastoral tragicomedy transposed into the heroic key. Inevitably, of course, they retain much of the pastoral tragicomedy.

Guarini's and Daniel's Arcadias were threatened from without by hostile forces, and the same threat of total destruction lurks in the very distant background of Fletcher's plays. The threat casts a tragic shade over the emotional problems of the characters and gives them the small importance that they have in the audience's

eyes. The central character must solve his emotional problems before he can devote his energies to saving his country; so in this tenuous way at least the fate of the country is bound up with the fate of the hero. But very few commoners appear in Fletcher's plays; hence there is no strongly developed sense of impending doom to the whole country, only to the class of aristocrats who rule it. Guarini's pastoral tragicomedy is also concerned only with the aristocracy of Arcadia; his shepherds trace their descent from the gods and not from the peasants of Arcadia. In Arcadia and Fletcher's heroic kingdoms little action transpires before the audience. In fact, Fletcher, by adapting the inactivity of the pastoral world to the ambitious and restless world of the court, imposes Politian's and Tasso's atmosphere of quiet harmony and outward calm upon the usually boistrous and active heroic man. No fights, no murders, and no on stage conquests mar the inner emotional conflicts which unfold in the various courts. Thus, Fletcher's practice differs greatly from that of his English predecessors, especially Marlowe and Shakespeare, who excel in showing martial activities upon the stage. As in the pastoral world, the lack of action forces the dramatist to rely upon the speeches of the characters for emotional movement and dramatic interest. Consequently, the rhetoric and the poetry of the speeches carry a greater dramatic burden than in other species of

drama and become that much more conspicuous in the total production. The audience quickly realizes that an accomplished artist has written the dialogue and the set speeches of the play. Finally, of course, both Guarini and Fletcher use the motif of death and revival as an element in the structure of the plot that is only meant to please and to entertain the audience. Its meaning no longer matters; the new and always ingenious uses which continually surprise the audience and make it enjoy the ending absorb the dramatist's total attention and artistic effort. Accordingly this chapter will examine the various ingenious appearances of the motif of death and revival in the four plays listed above. We have already seen in Chapter IV how Fletcher reduces the significance of the motif in the pastoral tragicomedy; now we will see how he does it in the other species, which I have called heroic tragicomedy.

Clifford Leech has noted that one of the major characteristics of Fletcher's style is the development of an unusual situation and the characters' response to it.<sup>2</sup> The improbable situation in The Mad Lover concerns Memnon's impassioned love for the young sister of the king, Calis. Memnon, Paphos' most puissant and illustrious general, returns home after a life of successful battles to spend the rest of his days in quiet retirement. Instead,

---

<sup>2</sup>Clifford Leech, The John Fletcher Plays (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 40.

he is smitten by the beauty of the king's sister. Because Calis will have nothing to do with him, he sinks gradually into a melancholic despondency which threatens his sanity. His friends and his brother are worried lest he become completely demented. Without him to direct the army, Paphos' soldiers would not be able to defeat her enemies. Consequently much of the plot deals with their attempts to help him regain his sanity.

Because this main plot is developed fairly straightforwardly, Memnon's madness could have become a matter of serious concern to the audience. Two elements in the design of the play prevent this from happening. The motif of death and revival ensures that all the conflicts will be resolved satisfactorily for the characters and for the audience, and the two subplots, which are devastating travesties of courtly love, ensure that no one will take the actions of the courtly lovers seriously. Since debunking of the courtly love conventions extends to some of the actions of Memnon's friends, the entire play becomes a mixture of the serious and the ridiculous. These two opposites, however, really don't blend as easily as others do. Seriousness must always give way before the onslaught of ridicule; hence the ideals of courtly love and the beliefs of the Neoplatonists lose all truth and significance in the hands of a dramatist such as Fletcher, who mocks in one plot what he presents seriously in another.



Memnon himself is a vestige of the courtly love tradition, but the motif of death and revival now helps him to escape from the tyranny of love instead of indicating that he has passed from the love of sensuous to the love of divine beauty. Memnon knows the difference between the two and, while berating Siphax for refusing to kill him, explains it thus:

. . . ; for the loves we now know  
 Are but the heats of half an hour; and hated  
 Desires stir'd up by nature to encrease her;  
 Licking of one another to a lust;  
 Course and base appetites, earths meer inheritours  
 And heirs of Idleness and blood; Pure love,  
 That, that the soul affects, and cannot purchase  
 While she is loaden with our flesh, that love, Sir,  
 Which is the price of honour, dwells not here,  
 Your Ladies eyes are lampless to that Vertue,  
 That beauty smiles not on a cheek washt over,  
 Nor scents the sweet of Ambers; . . .  
 (II, i)

Curiously enough this is the only direct reference to the doctrines of divine love, and if we are to judge by the rest of the actions, both serious and satirical in the three plots of the play, Fletcher does not think that the beliefs of the courtly lover can be literally true nor does he believe that they point to truths beyond themselves. They are just the expensive and beautiful trappings that clothe the common, bestial desires of men.

However, Memnon's madness is the inspired frenzy of the courtly lover, which ultimately derives from Plato via the Neoplatonists. We have encountered this phenomenon on the hillsides of Arcadia several times before. In Arcadia,

where the poet-shepherd lamented the cruelty of his mistress' heart, he was always thought to have justice on his side. There the claims of love took precedence over all other matters, and the woman always reversed herself. In Paphos, however, the woman who doesn't love the courtly lover is right. Memnon has to change his behavior, giving up love and returning to the wars of conquest.

Memnon passes through all three of the traditional phases in the career of the courtly lover. In the first phase the lover beholds the absolute beauty of his mistress and suddenly falls deeply in love with her. It will be recalled that Dante fainted as he observed Beatrice at his friend's dinner party and, upon awakening, was completely committed to the new life of love. Accordingly, Memnon is struck dumb when he first sees Calis and, after he recovers from his fit, is similarly committed to love. But Calis--hardly a symbol of divine beauty--is only interested in displaying her wit at Memnon's expense. Her jests strip his sudden passion of all its intense seriousness and force everyone to view it as a regrettable piece of senile foolishness. His rebirth into love is now just an absurd derangement of the heroic character.

Fletcher, who knows that something unusual becomes humorous if it is repeated enough, likes to use a motif such as this more than once. Siphax, a friend of Memnon, also falls desperately in love with Calis when he sees

her. Then, just to show that there is nothing to be taken seriously in this motif, Fletcher has Calis fall in love with Polydor, the general's brother, when he first appears before her to plead on behalf of Memnon.

The second phase in the career of the courtly lover represents this submergence in melancholy and his eventual death and rebirth. Fletcher expends most of his powers of ridicule on these aspects of the tradition of the courtly lover. Memnon makes the mistake of taking the courtly lover's traditional Petrarchan hyperbole quite literally. The blunt old general, who disparaged the use of rhetoric before he fell in love, emits great golden clouds of it after he recovers from his trance. He tells Calis that he wishes that she had his heart in her hand so that she could see just how full of love it is. The women, intending to ridicule him, agree that that is exactly what he should give her and even suggest the proper vessel to carry it in when he presents it to her. Much of his melancholy comes from pondering the consequences of this action. Determined to offer his heart to his lady, he tries to convince Siphax that honor lies in obeying his order to kill him. When Siphax refuses, he resorts to a doctor, who also can't bring himself to do Memnon's bidding. Finally his brother Polydor appears and, after reminding Memnon how foolish a soldier, a conqueror, and even a law-giver is in the throes of the debilitating

passions of love, suggests a plan that will get the results that he wants without the sacrifice of his life.

His plan is simply to make Calis believe that Memnon is dead and that he has sent his heart to her. According to the tradition, this should be enough to make her realize that he truly loved her and, in fact, open her own heart to his love; but Calis is no Silvia and Memnon, no Aminta. Polydor enters the court surrounded by funeral accouterments and confronts Calis with Memnon's heart. As he reproaches her for her cruelty, she falls in love with him instead of with the dead Memnon. Only when Polydor reads to her the Petrarchan complaint does she begin to cry, and then because she is aware that she has violated the courtly love tradition. Her guilt irritates her so much that, obeying her confidante's advice, she goes to the temple of Venus where she repents her violation of the customs of courtly love. Venus descends from on high, accepts her repentance, and forecasts the startling fact that she will someday enjoy a dead love. Nothing has come of Memnon's death; so his revival has no significance at all. When he appears on stage again, he is still the same Memnon, who now is beginning to feel his age. His realization that Calis does not love him only serves to increase his depression and adds an urgency to his associates' efforts to revive him.

The two devices that Polydor hopes will cure Memnon ridicule two other aspects of the Neoplatonic tradition. Polydor feels that music will soothe his brother's perturbed spirits. Accordingly he orders Stremon, who has a good voice, to try to drive away his melancholy. Disguising himself as Orpheus, Stremon sings and dances before Memnon and presents a masque of beasts for his edification. For the Neoplatonists, Orpheus was the symbol of the complete man who combined all four kinds of divine madnesses; consequently he hardly seems the one to cure Memnon of his ailment. From Orpheus' point of view, the madness caused by love is not a disease that one would wish to cure. Orpheus tries to frighten Memnon into sanity by telling him in an imagined dialogue with Charon that only the lovers who are beloved themselves pass into Elysium. Those whose love is unrequited cannot enter his boat. Orpheus then asks if time will relieve the sufferings of this unfortunate soul, and Charon replies:

No, no, no, no.  
 Nor time nor death can alter us, nor prayer;  
 My boat is destine, and who then dare  
 But those appointed come aboard? live still,  
 And love by reason, Mortal, not by will.  
 (IV, i)

When Charon tells Memnon to love by reason and not by will, Fletcher is reversing the tradition begun with Politian's Orfeo. A love controlled by reason was always dear to the humanists' hearts, and Fletcher in this play definitely sides with them on this issue. He expresses the same

belief that Sidney, Greville, and Lyly did before him; only he does not share their deep commitment to this ideal. His attitude is more a pose than a reasoned position. Furthermore, having Orpheus destroy his own beliefs demonstrates that Fletcher did not have a deep understanding of Neoplatonism. He picked up all the surface characteristics, but the essential doctrine escaped him.

The second device is intended to have the same effect as a plunge into icy water. A sudden and brutal glimpse of reality should produce more permanent results than the music, and it does. Memnon's associates bring the faithful camp follower, Cloe, to him, telling him that she is the princess, Calis. Memnon immediately sets sail on a Petrarchan sea of rhetoric, but the stench from her body sinks his ship. The odor from her body is so strong, that he doubts if she can be the princess. When the whore finally confesses that she is not the princess, Memnon wanders away still possessed by the madness. His love-madness made him look very foolish because he has a difficult time distinguishing between a whore and his true love. His friends, however, brought her to him, hoping that sexual activity would cure his madness. They believed that all his statements were mere bombast and that beneath the rhetoric they would find a rake devoted to the pleasures of the flesh. But Memnon is really devoted to the ideals of a pure and spiritual love, so his brother and his

friends have to resort to more drastic measures to return him to sanity.

The one example of true love which contradicts this cynical atmosphere is carefully concealed from the audience until the last scene of the last act. Only then does the audience realize that Polydor loves Calis as much as she loves him. The audience was misled back in the fourth act when Polydor refused the king's offer of marriage to Calis-- not because Polydor does not love her, but because he thought it would only increase his brother's sufferings. Of course, the audience doesn't know this at the time.

In this same scene Polydor begins his own death and revival, which will take him through phase two of the biography of the courtly lover. When Polydor discovers that the king knows that Memnon is still alive, he suddenly gets sick and quickly retires to his rooms. Shortly afterwards Stremnon announces that he has died by his own hand. Then as the king is trying unsuccessfully to get Calis to marry Memnon, Polydor's funeral procession interrupts the proceedings. Calis and Memnon discover that he is dead, and both listen in silence as Eumenides reads Polydor's last words aloud. He writes that he died so that Calis and Memnon could be happy together. The enormity of his sacrifice impresses both of them deeply, but it does not serve to bring them together. After delivering a fulsome eulogy, Memnon declares that Polydor's

death has made him realize just how foolish his love has been. He vows to throw all those "idle fancies" (V, i) aside and follow Polydor to his place of eternal glory. Calis likewise vows that she will shed tears over his grave and mourn him forever. Since Polydor is her true love, at this moment she becomes indistinguishable from Tasso's Silvia, whose tears revived Aminta, and from Fletcher's Clorin, whose constancy to her dead lover purified her heart. Before she actually has to shed tears and before Memnon has to kill himself, Polydor arises from his coffin. Again the motif of death and revival does not accomplish its stated purpose. Calis and Memnon do not fall in love; they both decide to die. Unintentionally the motif jolts Memnon out of his madness and thus leads to the happy ending of the play.

In this tragicomedy the third phase of the biography of the courtly lover, his reconciliation and union with his beloved, which precedes his happiness and joy, is reminiscent of the ending of Two Gentlemen of Verona. In that play Valentine, even though he loves Silvia, in a magnanimous gesture offers her to the repentant Proteus. But before Proteus can either accept or refuse her, he is distracted by the discovery of his own earlier love and so never confronts the problem of accepting the offer of his friend's mistress. Fletcher makes the happiness, which constitutes the third phase in the career of the



courtly lover, depend upon the resolution of this same situation. Usually happiness spontaneously floods the soul of the reborn courtly lover. Here, however, it is delayed as Fletcher's ingenuity develops a few unnecessary complications. When Polydor awakens, Calis immediately knows that the oracle which said that she would enjoy a dead love has been fulfilled. Instead of participating in the new joy by embracing him, she calmly says:

The Oracle is ended, noble Sir,  
Dispose me now as you please.  
(V, i)

After obtaining the king's consent to marry her, and exacting further assurances that she will obey his will, Polydor hands her over to his brother. This gift impresses the king and astounds Memnon, who asks what he can give in return. Polydor replies that his love will suffice. Memnon, not to be outdone, says that he will give his one and only first love, Calis, to him. Then almost in chorus they each insist that the other take her. The king leaves the choice up to Calis, who really can't choose between two such noble and virtuous men. At this point Memnon decides that he can serve Calis best in combat against his country's enemies. He calls for his armor and makes plans to return to the battlefield, leaving Calis to his courtier brother. His return to the wars satisfies all concerned; so the play ends happily with the union of the true lovers and Memnon's recovery of his sanity.

The subplots continue the parody of the Neoplatonic conventions of true love. Syphax, who has also fallen in love with Calis, is tricked into marrying the old whore, Cloe. He thinks that the girl he is marrying is Calis, but when he removes her veil after the marriage ceremony, he discovers the truth. The trick had been arranged by Chilax, an old soldier who occasionally beds with the wanton priestess of the temple of Venus. Cloe was only able to persuade Chilax to help her after she spent the night with him in the temple. Syphax easily accepts the outcome of the substitution because he has taken Cloe's maidenhead years before. Thus Cloe and Syphax are happily married, and his earlier professions of true love for Calis dissolve into the air. These subplots illustrate the cynical belief that the Neoplatonic profession of true spiritual love only masked a deep amoral lust and contradicts Memnon's earlier assertions of the possibility of a virtuous and pure love. These subplots certainly did no more than reflect the actual lack of morality at Jame's court. The love and marriage of Cloe and Siphax, for example has a close parallel in the relationship of Venetia Stanley and Sir Kenelme Digby. Venetia was a very expensive courtesan, whose beauty and fame attracted many admirers. Aubrey tells us what happened when Digby saw this divine creature:

Among other young sparkes of that time, Sir Kenelme Digby grew acquainted with her, and fell so much in love with her that he married her, much against the good will of his mother; but he would say that 'a wise man, and lusty, could make an honest woman out of a brothell-house' . . . Once a year the earle of Dorset invited her and Sir Kenelme to dinner, where the earle would behold her with passion, and only kisse her hand.<sup>3</sup>

It should be mentioned that she had at least one child by Dorset before she married Digby. If Sir Kenelme believed that sexual activity could reform a courtesan, then perhaps Polydor's belief that the satisfaction of Memnon's lust would cure his madness is not too far from the thinking of the courtiers surrounding James. These doings along with other similar affairs at court undoubtedly produced the cynicism that could only see the basest passions and vices behind the sincere avowal of the highest moral ideals. It should come as no great surprise, then, that the motif lost its meaning, since the ideals it expressed were destroyed by the actual behavior of those very people who often professed the ideals of divine love.

Yet all the Neoplatonic conventions were still used by Fletcher in his plays. The motif of death and revival appeared in all three phases of the life of the courtly lover depicted by Fletcher, and he showed more than a nodding acquaintance with the theory behind the conventions.

---

<sup>3</sup>As quoted in Philippe Erlanger, The Age of Courts and Kings: Manners and Morals, 1558-1715 (New York, 1970), p. 150. Jack Lindsay wrote the sections on England.

Still the motif had no anagogical function in this play; it was there merely to entertain the audience, which it did through its power to surprise and to amuse. Because two surprises are often better than one Fletcher frequently repeats the motif within the same play. This only helps to separate it from its meaning, transforming it into just a mechanical device that can be plugged into the ending of a play to reverse the course of the action. As we shall see in his later tragicomedies, no matter how often he used the motif it was always with a fresh ingenuity, so that even if it performed the same function in the play its appearance was always a novelty for the audience.

The Queen of Corinth (1617), written in the same year as The Mad Lover in collaboration with Massinger and Field,<sup>4</sup> returns to the older native species of tragicomedy, of which Whetstone's Promos and Cassandra is an excellent example. The authors use the motif in three ingenious ways in the course of the action, and in the final scene it saves the Queen's son from death and promotes the marriages which terminate the play.

The plot, which Waith believes derives from Seneca's Controversiae, those hypothetical and improbable cases upon which the Roman orators honed their oratorical skills,<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>Waith, p. 135.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 137. He quotes the case in point on p. 89.

has the usual improbable twists and turns, which just skirt the edges of catastrophe and melodrama. The Queen of Corinth incurs the enmity of her only son by destroying his intended marriage and showing more favor to a young courtier than to him. Instead of confronting her, he destroys the match by raping Merione, his proposed bride, on the night before her wedding to Agenor, the man the queen has chosen to be her husband. The discontented Theanor tries to place the blame upon Euphanes, the Queen's most recent favorite. Euphanes' own brother, another malcontent called Crates, instigated the rape and continues to help Theanor in his efforts to place the blame on Euphanes. To add to Euphanes' woes, Theanor mentions to Crates that he intends to rape Euphanes' intended bride, the beautiful Beliza. Unbeknownst to Theanor, Crates tells Euphanes of the impending rape, and he decides to catch him in the act and bring him before the Queen. When she learns of Theanor's crimes, she promises to enforce the laws of Corinth, which require the death of the rapist. Complications ensue because the two victims cannot agree on a punishment. Merione wants to marry him, while Beliza wants to see him dead. The contrite Theanor suggests that he marry Merione and then be executed. Before this compromise can be acted upon, Crates comes forward to say that Theanor really didn't rape Beliza. Merione took her place and was raped a second time by Theanor. Thus Theanor does



not have to die and is free to marry the often ravished Merione. Beliza, who all along knew that she wasn't raped, marries Euphanes, the jewel of the Queen's court.

The whole plot turns upon the motif of death and revival because it reveals the nature of Theanor's crimes to Euphanes. The revelation consumes the last half of the third scene of the fourth act. A loyal friend of Euphanes, Conor, challenges Crates to a duel to avenge the insults that Crates has inflicted upon Euphanes. Crates is wounded in the first exchange of blows. As he lies bleeding at Conor's feet, Euphanes and three other nobles enter and notice them. The sight of the wounded Crates awakens Euphanes' compassion. He asks forgiveness for the years of neglect and says that from now on he will help to support him as a good brother should. This offer of friendship and aid touches Crates deeply, and he begins to weep (something he hadn't done for thirty years). His love for his brother revives with his loss of blood:

Most dear Euphanes, in this crimson floud  
Wash my unkindness out: you have o'rcome me,  
Taught me humanity and brotherhood;

(IV, iii)

Overcome by the joy that this unexpected reunion creates, he tells Euphanes of Theanor's plot to rape Beliza. His new-found love for his brother has also saved Beliza and, because Euphanes is able to substitute Merione once he has learned of the plan, it has saved Theanor as well.

The pattern of the scene comes directly from the Italian tragicomedy, except that in this instance the characters are both male. As when Silvia thinks that Aminta is dead, or when Silvio realizes that he has shot Dorinda with his arrow, the sight of the hated one dying releases all the compassion locked in the heart of the other and makes a reunion based on love possible. In this play the reunion is more complicated because the brothers have disliked each other, but when one confesses his love, then the other's heart also opens to the revivifying force of compassion and love. Once again Fletcher has given a new twist to the old motif.

Unlike the earlier uses of the motif, the significance of Crates' near death is limited to this one scene, which is not the climax of the play. Prior to this scene the brothers' arguments had not been mentioned, so there was no need to present the reconciliation between the two. After this scene the brother's new found love and respect is not brought up again. The reconciliation is a needless justification for Crates' betrayal of Theanor and once it has rationalized this development in the plot, it disappears from the audience's awareness. When the motif has no meaning for the characters involved, it will hardly be able to do anything more than entertain the audience. This it does very well if the audience refrains from inquiring into the relevancy of the scene for the development of the



theme or the psychological natures of the characters. Many of the scenes of The Queen of Corinth, such as this one, have no connection other than plot with each other, and those in the subplot lack even this rudimentary link with the main action. Consequently the scenes are written for the immediate pleasure to be derived from the situation and intended to be forgotten after they end. The one just described depicts the novel reconciliation of two brothers through the near death and revival of one. The rhetoric is in no way intended to mock the characters, and the emotion it generates is still sincere even if a little exaggerated. But once the emotion has been enjoyed, the play moves on to other scenes, and everything that gave rise to the emotional interest in this scene is neglected.

The other scenes in this play in which the motif of death and revival appears are equally self-contained. The discovery that Merione was raped follows the lines of a death and revival. As the second act opens, she is bewailing her misfortune. After a long and emotional declamation on the loss of her virginity, she is put to sleep by a group of maskers who sprinkle water in her face. They carry her to her brother's house and leave her outside on the doorstep. Her prospective bridegroom, Agenor, and her brother discover the crumpled form on the doorstep and believe that some maid has fallen asleep there. Other discovery scenes involving women who have fainted,

e.g., Pericles' discovery of Thaisa, Posthumus' of Imogen, and Silvio's of Dorinda, have brought love, reunion, and happiness to the two people. But in this scene the discovery leads to just the opposite, to the abandonment of the proposed marriage and to the sorrow that ensues. Just as Agenor perceives that the sleeping woman is his mistress, the Queen, her son, and their attendants arrive. The revelation of Merione's condition becomes a public act. Gradually with many questions and a great deal of self-lacerating rhetoric, she tells the others what has happened to her. Her rebirth on her brothers' doorstep has ended in disaster rather than happiness. But once the scene ends, all of her shame and sorrow are forgotten. In fact in the last act, Theanor strongly suggests that they had slept together before he raped her, so she was not the virgin that she was pretending to be in this scene. I don't think that Fletcher was being witty or cynical here. It is just that for the dramatic purposes of this scene, she should be a virgin, whereas in Theanor's scene it is more convenient for him if she is not. Once the emotions of the moment have dissipated, so has the purpose of the motif of death and revival, whose only function is this scene was to provide suspense and drama for her revelation.

Theanor's near death after his repentance is also intended only to provide suspense and high drama at the conclusion of the play. From the moment that his villainy

is discovered, Theanor's life begins to change for the better. Once in jail, he sincerely repents his nefarious actions and even refuses the guard's offer to free him from his bonds. He feels that he is a ravisher and must now suffer like one. His moral stature continues to increase when, just before his death, he begs forgiveness from those he has harmed.

His repentance transforms him from the scheming malcontent characteristic of many Jacobean tragedies into the honest and noble prince. Fletcher now wants the audience to sympathize with Theanor. If they don't, then the threat of his near death will not create any suspense, and the scene will have failed. Theanor, once he is saved from death by the disclosure of the substitution, is allowed to marry Merione, his victim. The play ends happily for all concerned including the audience, which has had the pleasure of watching an aristocratic villain metamorphosed into the noble prince who is worthy of his birth. The motif of death and revival has indeed been very entertaining--just as Guarini said that it should be.

The deaths and revivals in The Loyal Subject (1618) are much more theatrical and grandiose than those in Fletcher's previous tragicomedies, and, as if he wanted to overwhelm the audience with sheer variety, he includes all the different types of motif that are found in earlier plays. The heavy emphasis on these two qualities ensures

that the audience will not be tempted to search for significance in the action; instead they will allow themselves to be caught up in the sentiments of the play. There is, however, the traditional contrast between the corruption and the materialism of the court (represented by the Duke and Boroskie) and the simplicity and innocence of the country gentry (represented by Archas and his sons and daughters); but Waith, who develops this contrast at some length in his discussion, decides that Fletcher is actually more interested in the variety and spectacle of the presentation of these themes than he is in social criticism.<sup>6</sup> There was a large body of native literature stemming from Spenser and Sidney which used the pastoral virtues to criticize the court. Fletcher has just transferred these values from Arcadia to the country house; consequently much of the satire belongs to the pastoral tradition that flourished in an earlier age.

One of the minor uses of the motif also comes from the pastoral tradition. Olympia, the sister of the Duke, acquires a beautiful lady-in-waiting, named Alinda, who is really Archas' (the loyal subject) son in disguise. The princess is impressed by Alinda's courage and calm when the Tartars threaten to destroy the court, and she confesses that if she were a man she would fall in love with her. Even so, this pure maiden does seem to be

---

<sup>6</sup>Waith, p. 143f.

unconsciously in love with Alinda because she becomes very jealous when she thinks that Alinda is showing more favor to her brother, the Duke, than to herself. In a fit of anger, she sends Alinda away from the court. A few days later a young man, who looks very much like Alinda and professes to be her brother, arrives at court and asks Olympia of Alinda's whereabouts. He begins by telling her that Alinda has always admired Olympia's virtues and would not think of being disloyal to her. After hearing this testimony, Olympia repents her hasty dismissal of Alinda. Olympia looks upon her as dead, which makes her that much more sorrowful over her departure:

Alin. Is she dead, lady?  
Olym. Dead, Sir, to my service.  
 She is gone, pray ye ask no further.  
Alin. I obey Madam:  
 Gone? now must I Lament too: said  
 ye gone Madam?  
Olym. Gone, gone for ever.

(V, ii)

Indeed Alinda has died, and when she returns, she appears as the young Archas. The two lovers marry with the permission of the Duke. The affair turns out better for Olympia than she expected; she has lost a beloved servant but gained a husband.

The "death" of Alinda, at once metaphorical and in a sense real, forced Olympia to realize how much she loved her. Her sincere guilt and sorrow, caused by Alinda's disappearance, permit her to enjoy the happiness of marriage to young Archas, who was once Alinda. Fletcher

borrowes the device of the man disguised as a woman from Sidney's pastoral romance, Arcadia. Of course, he ignores Sidney's moral point about the effeminacy of the man who is controlled by his passions. Fletcher's disguised man is just as heroic as always even though his skirts make its expression a little awkward. He combines the heroic with the older tradition found in the pastoral tragicomedy; again Silvia, Silvio, Mirtillo, or Daphne discover how much they really love someone when they think that their loved one has died. In this play all the interest centers on the variation that Fletcher introduced into the motif instead of on the plight of the lovers. His flirting with the possibility of homosexuality adds a naughty touch that would not be lost on the sophisticated audience.

Archas' much more dramatic near-death is a variation on the motif found in Damon and Pythias. The conflict between Archas, the loyal general, and the young Duke and Boroskie, his favorite, constitutes the action of the main plot. The young Duke has harbored a grudge against Archas for several years and, guided by the malicious advice of his favorite, seeks to humiliate him. Archas is the only man in the kingdom with enough courage and martial skill to defeat the Tartars, who threaten to destroy the kingdom. When he retires from the wars, the Duke refuses to pay him the honors due him for his life of devoted service and lets him quietly retire to his country



house. Only when the Tartars are outside the city gates and the other nobles have fled, does the Duke again turn to Archas, who immediately heeds his sovereign's call to arms. Boroskie fears that he will become too popular and a threat to the Duke, so again the Duke does not reward him for his deeds of courage. Under Boroskie's direction, he begins to add insult to injury. They pay a visit to his house where they discover the old Duke's wealth, which he gave to Archas for safe keeping. The Duke appropriates it for his own use and returns to the court. Before he leaves, he requests that Archas send his two daughters, Honora and Viola, to serve at court. Their father immediately complies even though it means sending his virtuous daughters into the immoral and degrading atmosphere of the court.

Once these two nobles return to court, they plan a final humiliation for him. Inviting him to a banquet held in his honor, they dramatically inform him that he is to die by giving him the cloak of death. The Duke and Boroskie contend that he forgot to purify the holy arms of war after he used them against the Tartar. For this breach of custom, he must die. They have finally exhausted Archas' patience, and this last piece of treachery releases a torrent of rhetoric, but to no avail; Boroskie still leads him away.



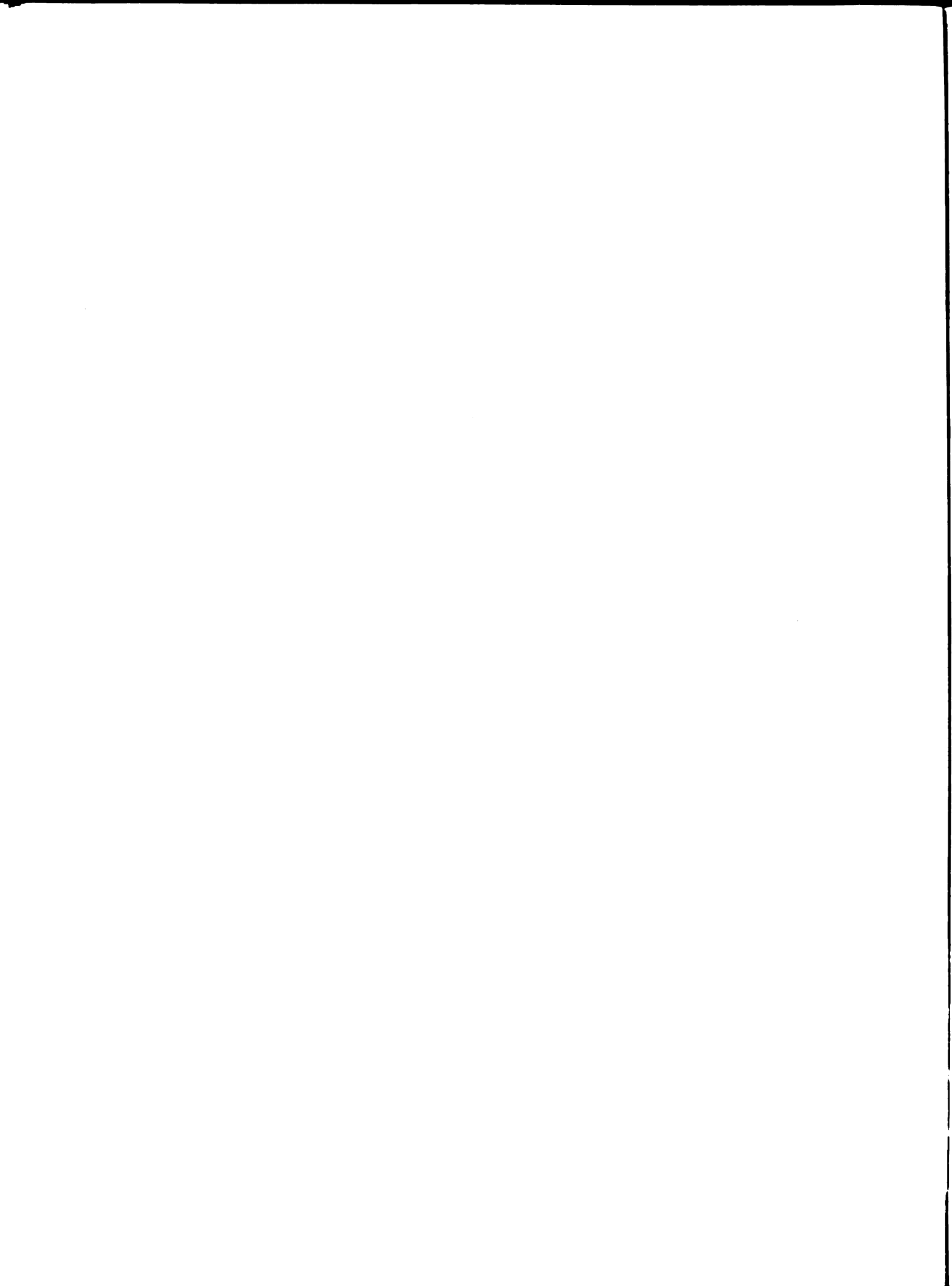
At this point the audience begins to see that the Duke is not really the villain that he appeared to be earlier in the play, but it takes Archas' near death to show just how noble he actually is. Boroskie has had Archas whipped, which is more than the Duke wanted him to do. After some gentlemen plead with the Duke to stop the torture, he orders Boroskie put under guard until he can think of a death for him. At this same moment Archas' loyal troops, who have heard about his capture, are threatening to burn down the palace if the Duke does not produce him alive and well. Archas suddenly appears on a balcony and commands the troops to desist. He tells them that the only honorable course for them is to remain loyal to their Duke. His revival after this final test also has a deep impression on the Duke:

Forget me in these wrongs, most noble Archas.  
(IV, v)

With a show of magnanimity, Archas accepts the Duke's repentance and proceeds to deliver a long lecture on the necessity of absolute obedience. This speech elicits unbounded admiration from the Duke:

Bring him to rest, and let our cares wait on him;  
Thou excellent old man, thou top of honour,  
Where Justice, and Obedience only build,  
Thou stock of Vertue, how am I bound to love thee!  
In all thy noble ways to follow thee!  
(IV, v)

The Duke has completely reversed himself, ending the scene on this witty conceit. Archas, by showing that he is the



ideal of obedience, is worthy of having his sovereign follow him.

In this scene Archas resembles Damon and Pythias and Dorothea, whose near deaths also reversed the emotions of a tyrant. In each case the willingness to undergo the trial of death changed hate into love and justice into mercy. Fletcher's scene is by far the most theatrical. Archas' bloody appearance, the angry troops brandishing torches in the courtyard below, and the frightened nobles huddled against a wall make an impressive scene that fills the stage with spectacle and noise. The villain is punished, the honest and righteous general is vindicated, and the Duke is humbled. On top of this the audience is treated to a moral on obedience, which is delivered in a very impressive manner. This is all very nicely done. But the play is not over; this is only the fourth act. Fletcher still has a few more variations of the motif that he would like to display before he ends the action. Also the moral, which was so nicely developed in the fourth act, gets lost in the sudden turns of the plot in the fifth and never does appear again. In the last act we are treated to variety and spectacle for its own sake.

The trouble in the fifth act starts when Theodore, Archas' son, refuses to obey his fathers' request for obedience to the Duke. Still smarting from the humiliation of his father's whipping, Theodore leads a group of rebel

soldiers against the palace. Archas assumes command of the loyalists and leads them into battle. When the two armies meet, the rebels surrender to the superior force. Archas, who had earlier sworn to have his son's head because of his disobedience, now proceeds to carry out his threat. In front of all concerned, Archas prepares to behead his son with his sword. Before he can, Theodore begs forgiveness and mercy from his father. This plea touches Archas, but he strengthens his resolve and raises his sword. Before he can swing his weapon, Archas' brother appears on stage with his other son (alias Alinda) and threatens to kill him if he kills Theodore. Faced with the prospect of losing both his heirs, Archas allows Theodore to live and welcomes the young Archas with open arms. Instead of his mistress, or a revelation saving Theodore from death, Fletcher cleverly invents a situation where another near death saves him. Young Archas' sudden appearance amounts to the rebirth of Alinda, which the Duke calls "a strange metamorphosis" (V, vi). Now Olympia will be able to wed him, and as a consolation the Duke gets Honora, and Burris, a loyal follower of Archas, weds Viola.

But there is still another near death. Boroskie returns on stage, and the Duke gives him to Archas to do with him what he wants. Archas quickly decides to decapitate him. Boroskie likewise repents before the sword can

strike, saying that death at Archas' hands is a much nobler fate than he deserves. When Archas hears this, he tells him to stand up and live; he doesn't want to take men's lives. Archas, in a complete reversal, says that he will make an excellent courtier; so he gives him back to the Duke, who gladly takes him. Thus the play ends happily for everyone concerned.

In this play Fletcher shows us how the repeated use of the motif of death and revival can destroy the moral sense of the work. Loyalty and honor are supposed to be moral absolutes, and the inflexible old Archas is supposed to show us how these virtues survive every circumstance that would justify the appearance of their opposites. But when he allows his disloyal son and the disloyal courtier to live just because they have repented, he nullifies the purpose of his own sufferings. As Guarini mentioned in his theory of tragicomedy, poetic justice is not as important as the pleasure of the audience; consequently, the more the motif is used, the more frequently the sentiments of the audience will be reached and the more they will enjoy the play. When the motif is combined with spectacle and variety, it provides an audience with an evening of pleasure without the intellectual strain of reasoning about the moral subtleties of the plot.

The last play to be examined in this chapter, The Laws of Candy, can attribute its failure to this same

concern for the pleasure of the audience. By the time Fletcher and his collaborators (Massinger and Field)<sup>7</sup> wrote this play in 1617 they had already begun to tire of the heroic tragicomedy. The often repeated plot reduced itself in their minds to the barest mechanical outline, covered only by an almost threadbare rhetoric and only momentarily saved from boredom in the last act by the strained ingenuity of the motif of death and revival. This play amply demonstrates that the artistic quality diminishes when the audience's pleasure is the sole purpose for its composition.

This play's larger structure is a combination of two conventions that have appeared before in tragicomedies. Guarini's Il Pastor Fido brought the threat of death to the young lovers with the inexorable inforcement of a bizarre law, the breaking of which resulted in death. Candy, or Crete, has two laws even more absurd than Guarini's, which place the spectre of death above the heads of the characters. The first law says that where an act of ingratitude has been committed, the offended can, if he so wishes, require the death of the offender. The second law states that the worthiest soldier in a battle, as determined by the approval of the people, may set the terms of his reward. This second law causes the

---

<sup>7</sup>Waith, p. 135.

friction between the two main characters of the play and leads to the use of the other law.

The other convention requires that the union of the young lovers helps to reconcile the conflicts centered upon the king. All four of Shakespeare's romances make this convention an essential part of the plot. We have discussed above just how Florizel and Perdita aid Leontes' recovery and how Ferdinand and Miranda make Prospero's desires come true. In The Laws of Candy also there is a pair of true lovers, but Fletcher has to provide his usual ingenious variation, which, in this case at least, destroys the effectiveness of the convention. A proud princess, named Erotia, falls in love with Antinous, the son of a famous general, Cassilanes. In order to pay his troops, Cassilanes, has borrowed money from Gonzalo, an ambitious lord from Venice. Gonzalo uses this hold over Cassilanes to humiliate and degrade the noble general. Antinous, testing the depth of Erotia's professed love for him, asks her to pay off the general's debts, which she does without a complaint. Her passing of the test entitles her to the love and devotion of Antinous, and at this point in the fifth act the audience would assume that true love has again prevented the destruction of a worthy man. But suddenly Erotia refuses the love of Antinous. She thanks him for humbling her pride with the test, but she does not think that he would make a good husband. He doesn't

worship women enough. She prefers Philander, a prince from Cyprus. In his only appearance on stage before being selected by Erota, Philander had proven himself to be a genuine courtly lover, who looked upon her as his liege-lady. He had proclaimed his love in a long and fulsome speech complete with a detailed description, or blazon, of her divine perfections and a confession of his own unworthiness. The whole speech was capped by his threatened death if she did not ease his pains of love. In short, he resembles the mad lover. When he first appeared, the audience probably laughed at the anachronistic postures and the trite rhetoric, but now the joke is on them. Erota prefers this idealistic lover to the more level headed Antinous because he worships women more. She thinks that this kind makes the better husband. If Erota had lived in the late middle ages, she would have chosen him because he would not make a good husband. True love then could only be adulterous. Fletcher has reversed the traditional pattern merely for the sake of variety. This turn of events, however, happens so quickly that there is no emotional involvement with the lovers; consequently the ending does not seem right, and the audience is left with the distasteful sensation of having been tricked.

The motif of death and revival suffers from the same egregious manipulation which panders to the audience's appetite for variety and novelty. No hint of its



applicability occurs before the closing scenes of the last act; but once it is introduced, Fletcher repeats it so frequently that it threatens to become a parody of itself. The difficulties of the plot which culminate in the threatened deaths center on Cassilanes and his son, Antinous. Both have exercised great valor in the recent war and the populace has had a difficult time deciding who was the bravest. It has finally decided that Antinous was the noblest, and he immediately proclaimes that a statue be erected to the glory and nobility of his father. Cassilanes, who is a proud old warrior with many years of devoted service to his credit, takes this as an insult from his son and immediately retreats to his country house to sulk. There he stays, grumbling about his son's disrespect, until finally he learns about Erota paying off his debt. Antinous has intended it as a good deed; his father, however, is outraged because he feels that he is now in a woman's debt. This final humiliation is too much to bear, so he goes before the senate and demands the death of his son for his lack of gratitude. Antinous concurs with his father, saying that he is guilty and deserves to die. The senate then says that he must die. At this moment Erota speaks up. Angered by Cassilanes' hatred of his own son, she accuses him of ingratitude and demands that he die also. Antinous, who doesn't like to see his father abused, in turn accuses her of the same

crime. She also pleads guilty; so it appears that all of the characters will have to forfeit their lives.

Three threatened deaths would certainly seem to be enough to excite the audience. Fletcher doesn't think so, however, and introduces one more variation. Annophel, the daughter of Cassilanes, enters the scene and accuses the entire senate of ingratitude. She pleads that they recognize her father's bravery. The senate asks her for mercy, saying that she will destroy the country if she persists in her law suit. The threatened destruction of Candy opens Cassilanes' eyes to his own folly. He forgives his son, which removes the sentence of death from his head. Antinous forgives Erotia, who in turn forgives Cassilanes. Finally Annophel forgives the senate. The play ends happily for all with the possible exception of Antinous. He thought that he was going to marry Erotia, but she brushes him aside for Philander. Antinous only has his father's love and forgiveness to comfort him as the play ends.

Fletcher can't even justify his excessive use of the motif by saying that he was ridiculing the convention. There is no indication that he had anything of the sort in mind. In fact, the happiness of the courtly lovers would prove just the opposite, namely, that the convention was used seriously here. Fletcher has just ceased to be troubled by any meaning that the motif once had. It is

merely a device upon which he can exercise his ingenuity. From a rich symbol suggestive of esoteric truths it has degenerated to an almost mechanically applied convention which brings the characters close to death and yet allows them to live happily ever after. The importance of the motif has diminished so much that it cannot even be considered a parody or burlesque of its appearances in the earlier humanistic and Neoplatonic plays. These tragicomedies of Fletcher signal the end of a tradition that began in the romances of the High Middle Ages and continued with many alterations into the late Renaissance, some four hundred years later.

## CONCLUSION

The great popularity of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays ensured the survival of the motif of death and revival as a novelty in the plot until the middle of the eighteenth century. By this time it had lost all connection with serious artistic work, becoming instead, in an even more reduced form, the staple of the sentimental melodrama. Its origins and ensuing development, however, were not as humble as its final appearances. Gottfried had used the motif to symbolize his quasi-mystical doctrine of true love, and had bequeathed it to the poets of the early Renaissance known as the Stilnovisti in the image of the liege-lady awakening her dying knight and in his chief stylistic ornament, the oxymoron. These poets used it to express their belief that true love was an adventure of the soul which entailed the death of the senses and a complete turning away from things of the flesh. At this same time Boccaccio combined this doctrine with the classical pastoral eclogue. The Neoplatonists, who flourished in the next century, borrowed both the pastoral and the image and refashioned them to symbolize the essential mystery of their school, i.e., the upward journey of the soul towards the source of divine truth, beauty, and goodness and its

ecstatic union and rebirth in the Celestial Venus. One of the members of the Academy, Politian, added the Ovidian mythology to the other two elements and adapted all three to the stage. Tasso's Aminta perfected the form of the pastoral tragicomedy which in a rite of art symbolized the Neoplatonic mystery of the death of the soul in the physical world and its rebirth into the spiritual realm of divine love. Finally, Guarini used the conventions developed by the others to construct a play whose sole purpose was to entertain the audience.

These three playwrights had a profound influence upon tragicomedy in England. Prior to John Lyly, the first playwright to adapt the Italian conventions to the English stage, the motif was used by the humanists to reveal the moral lessons of their plays. John Lyly approached the pastoral tragicomedy from the same humanistic viewpoint which asserted that the passions should always be controlled by reason; consequently he ridiculed those who believed that love was a divine madness superior to reason. Shakespeare inherited the conventions from Lyly, but he managed to transcend them altogether. In his early pastoral tragicomedies he shows a familiarity with and a sympathy in the Neoplatonic doctrines that were so popular in Italy. In his last romances he goes beyond the rite of art depicted in the earlier pastoral tragicomedies and uses the conventions to make inquiries into the nature of the world.

"Great creating nature" contains all the opposites, being both preserver and destroyer, both good and evil. Man, as a product of nature, must experience both of the aspects of nature before he can consider himself perfect, complete, and worthy of kingship. Shakespeare is the only English playwright to believe seriously in the Neoplatonic mysteries symbolized by the motif of death and revival. Those coming after him used the conventions without regard to their meaning. Samuel Daniel, in his two pastoral tragicomedies, invents a didactic purpose for the motif, hoping to educate the audience in the evils of contemporary society. While retaining the basic image of the dying knight being revivified by his liege-lady, he neglects the coincidence of opposites and the oxymoron, two essential aspects of the motif. John Fletcher, imitating Guarini, reduces the motif to a mechanical device that entertained the audience. The motif appears in all of his tragicomedies, and he never fails to provide ingenious new variations for the pleasure of those watching the action. From the symbol of a Neoplatonic mystery the motif has degenerated to nothing more than a dramatic convention which first presents the threat of death and then removes it, so that the play will end on a note of happiness and joy.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aristotle. Aristotles' Theory of Poetry and Fine Art with a Critical Text and Translation of the Poetics. Edited and translated by S. H. Butcher. New York: Dover Publications reprint, 1951.
- Beaumont, Francis, and Fletcher, John. The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher. Edited by A. Glover and A. R. Waller. 10 vols. Cambridge University Press, 1905-12.
- Bembo, Pietro. Gli Asolani. Translated by Rudolf B. Gottfried. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954.
- Bevington, David. Tudor Drama and Politics: A Critical Approach to Topical Meaning. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1968.
- Boccaccio. Boccaccio's Olympia. Translated by Sir Israel Gollancz. London, 1904. Reprinted in Scott Elledge, Milton's "Lycidas." New York, 1966.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Boccaccio on Poetry. Edited by Charles G. Osgood. New York: Library of Liberal Arts, 1956.
- Bonazza, Blaze O. Shakespeare's Early Comedies: A Structural Analysis. New York, 1966.
- Brand, C. P. Torquato Tasso. Cambridge, 1965.
- Briffault, Robert S. The Troubadours. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965.
- Bruno, Giordano. The Heroic Frenzies. Translated by P. E. Memmo, Jr. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1964.
- Bush, Douglas. Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry. 2nd ed. revised. New York, 1963.
- Campbell, Joseph. The Masks of God. Vol. IV: Creative Mythology. New York, 1968.

- Castiglione, Baldesar. The Book of the Courtier. Translated by Charles S. Singleton. New York, 1959.
- Cody, Richard. The Landscape of the Mind. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1969.
- Danby, John F. Poets on Fortune's Hill. London, 1952.
- Dante. La Vita Nuova. Translated by D. G. Rossetti. Reprinted in The Portable Dante. Edited by Paolo Milano. New York, 1947.
- De Rougemont, Denis. Love in the Western World. 2nd ed. revised. New York, 1956.
- Edwards, Richard. Damon and Pithias. in Early English Dramatists. Edited by John S. Farmer. New York, 1966.
- Erlanger, Philippe. The Age of Courts and Kings: Manners and Morals, 1558-1715. New York, 1970.
- Felperin, Howard. "Shakespeare's Miracle Play," Shakespeare Quarterly, xviii (Autumn, 1967), 363-74.
- Flores, Angel, ed. Medieval Age. New York, 1963.
- Gerhardt, Mia I. La Pastorale. Assen, 1950.
- Gilbert, Allen H., ed. Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1962.
- Gilson, Etienne. The Mystical Theology of Saint Bernard. Translated by A. H. C. Downes. London and New York, 1940.
- Greene, Robert. The Scottish History of James the Fourth. Edited by J. A. Lavin. London, 1967.
- Greg, W. W. Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama. London, 1906.
- Grimald, Nicholas. The Life and Poems of Nicholas Grimald. Edited and translated by L. R. Merrill. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925.
- Gottfried von Strassburg. Tristan. Translated by A. T. Hatto. Baltimore, 1960.
- Guarini, Giovanni Battista. A Critical Edition of Sir Richard Fanshawe's 1647 Translation of Giovanni Battista Guarini's Il Pastor Fido. Edited by Walter F. Staton, Jr. and William E. Simeone. Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1964.



- Hayden, Hiram. The Counter-Renaissance. New York, 1950.
- Heer, Friedrich. The Medieval World. Translated by Janet Sondheimer. New York, 1963.
- Herrick, Marvin T. Tragicomedy: Its Origin and Development in Italy, France, and England. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962.
- Horne, P. R. The Tragedies of Giambattista Cinthio Giraldi. Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1962.
- Hunter, G. K. John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1962.
- Hunter, Robert G. Shakespeare and the Comedy of Forgiveness. New York: Columbia University Press, 1965.
- Jayne, Sears. "Ficino and the Platonism of the English Renaissance," Comparative Literature, IV (1952), 215-40.
- Jeffery, Violet. John Lyly and the Italian Renaissance. Paris, 1928.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Italian Influence in Fletcher's Faithful Shepherdess," Modern Language Review. XXI (1926), 147-58.
- Kalstone, David. Sidney's Poetry. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1965.
- Kristeller, P. O. The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino. Translated by Virginia Conant. New York: Columbia University Press, 1943.
- Leech, Clifford. The John Fletcher Plays. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1962.
- Lord, Louis E. A Translation of the Orpheus of Angelo Politian and the Aminta of Torquato Tasso. London: Oxford University Press, 1931.
- Lyly, John. The Complete Works of John Lyly. Edited by R. Warwick Bond. 3 vols. Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1902.
- Mayerson, Caroline W. "The Orpheus Image in Lycidas," Publications of the Modern Language Association, LXIV (1949), 189-227.
- Nelson, John Charles. Renaissance Theory of Love. New York: Columbia University Press, 1958.

- Ovid. Ovid's Metamorphoses: The Arthur Golding Translation 1567. Edited by J. F. Nims. London, 1965.
- Panofsky, Erwin. Studies in Iconology. New York, reprinted in 1962.
- Pearson, Lu Emily. Elizabethan Love Conventions. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1933.
- Pico Della Mirandola. On The Dignity of Man. Translated by Charles G. Wallis. New York: Library of Liberal Arts, 1965.
- Rees, Joan. Samuel Daniel: A Critical and Biographical Study. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1964.
- Ristine, Frank Humphry. English Tragicomedy: Its Origin and History. New York: Columbia University Press, 1910.
- Robb, N. A. Neoplatonism of the Italian Renaissance. London, 1935.
- Rose, Mark. Heroic Love. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1968.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Sidney's Womanish Man," Review of English Studies, XV (1964), 353-63.
- Saccio, Peter. The Court Comedies of John Lyly. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
- Sannazaro, Jacopo. Arcadia and Piscatorial Eclogues. Translated by Ralph Nash. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1966.
- Schelling, F. E. Foreign Influences in Elizabethan Plays. New York and London, 1923.
- Shakespeare, William. The Complete Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare. Edited by W. A. Nelson and C. J. Hill. Cambridge, Mass., 1942.
- Sidney, Sir Philip. The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney. Edited by A. Feuillerat. 2 vols. Cambridge, 1962.
- Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Translated by Brian Stone. Baltimore, 1959.
- Shearman, John. Mannerism. Baltimore, 1967.

- Smith, Hallett. Elizabethan Poetry. Cambridge, Mass, 1952; reprinted Ann Arbor Paperback, 1968.
- Spenser, Edmund. The Works of Edmund Spenser, a Variorum Edition. Edited by Edwin A. Greenlaw, F. M. Padelford, C. G. Osgood, and others. 10 vols. Baltimore, 1932-49.
- Steven, John. "The granz biens of Marie de France," in Patterns of Love and Courtesy. Edited by John Lawlor. London, 1966.
- Stevenson, David L. The Love-Game Comedy. New York, 1966.
- Symonds, J. A. Renaissance in Italy. vol. IV: Italian Literature. pt. II. New York, 1888.
- Tasso, Torquato. Torquato Tasso: Poese. Edited by Francesco Flora. Milano, 1956.
- Traversi, Derek. Shakespeare: The Last Phase. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955; reprinted, 1965.
- Uschald, Willie. The Italian Tradition in John Lyly's Court Dramas: With Emphasis on his Characterization and Ideas of Love. Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, Michigan State University, 1957.
- Valency, Maurice. In Praise of Love: An Introduction to the Love-Poetry of the Renaissance. New York, 1958.
- Vyvyan, John. Shakespeare and Platonic Beauty. London, 1961.
- Waith, Eugene M. The Pattern of Tragicomedy in Beaumont and Fletcher. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952.
- Weinberg, Bernard. A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance. 2 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
- Weisinger, Herbert. Tragedy and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1953.
- Wind, Edgar. Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance. Revised. Baltimore, 1967.
- Yates, Francis A. Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIV. LIBRARIES



31293010016685