

THE NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF RHYTHM IN

THE POETRY OF

SIR THOMAS WYATT

(with transcripts of two principal manuscripts)

by

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SYNOPSIS

The contention of the essay which follows is that the presumption that Wyatt's rhythm can be judged by standards which are impervious to the actual performance of his poetry, to the actual affects achieved and the 'meanings' thereby imparted, leads ineluctably to the rejection of Wyatt's poetry by prosodists and that the rejection of that presumption leads as rigourously to the conclusion that prosody (as that term is widely understood) has no role to play in the assessment of Wyatt's poetry.

Evidence in favour of this conclusion is provided by the slight and previously unacknowledged testimony of the punctuation of two principal Wyatt manuscripts (transcripts of which are provided in vols. 2 and 3) and slightly reinforced by attention to the phrasal rhyme-scheme of some of the poems. The evidence is considered suggestive rather than conclusive, but by following through the suggestion of a non-quantitative rhythmical principle an attempt is made to show that in Wyatt's poetry there is a creative and dramatic

significance indicative of a pervasive though limited set of preoccupations - metaphysical, political and psychological - within the poems.

In conclusion it is maintained that, although no final placing of Wyatt can rest purely upon his rhythmical accomplishment, the approach to Wyatt's rhythm which has been proposed is important in that it reveals a presence of such basic and important preoccupations in the poems and these, set within but transforming the conventions of amour courtois, are finally adduced to establish Wyatt's place in relation to the sixteenth century.

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Abbreviations.

The following abbreviations are used within the text:

1. Editions:

Nott; G.F. Nott (ed.), The Works of Henry Howard Earl of Surrey and of Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder, I and II (1815-16).

Foxwell; A.K. Foxwell (ed.), The Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt, I and II (1913).

Muir (M); Kenneth Muir (ed.), Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt (Second impression, 1955).

P.L.P.L.S. (PLPLS); Kenneth Muir, "Unpublished Poems in the Devonshire MS," Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, VI (i), 1944-47.

Blage (B); Kenneth Muir (ed.), Sir Thomas Wyatt and his circle Unpublished Poems (Liverpool, 1961).

A; Ruth Hughey (ed.), The Arundel Harington Manuscript of Tudor Poetry, I and II (Columbus, Ohio, 1960).

2. Manuscripts:

D; The Devonshire Manuscript (Additional MS. 17492, British Museum), Volume Two of the present work.

E; The Egerton Manuscript (Eg. 2711, British Museum), Volume Three of the present work.

3. Studies:

Foxwell^t, Study ; A.K. Foxwell, A Study of Sir Thomas Wyatt's Poems (1911).

Preface.

It is the purpose of the present essay to attempt a statement of the rhythmical principles and significance of the poetry of Sir Thomas Wyatt. The statement falls naturally into four main sections. It begins with a three-part sketch of the traditional attitudes towards Wyatt's rhythm, presents and assesses some hitherto neglected evidence relevant to a judgment of that rhythm and then attempts to formulate an empirical account of it. Finally, the statement is extended to provide an account of Wyatt's life as revealed by his poetry, believing with Plutarch and presumably with Wyatt that

he that wyll obey the poesy of
Appollo / must first knowe him
self / and so take aduyse of his
owne nature / & as she ledeth to
take an order of lyfe /⁽¹⁾

(1) Thomas Wyat (tr.), Plutarch's Quyetē of Mynde (Cambridge, Mass., 1931), f.c.

Specifically, this last section deals with the metaphysics, politics and psychology of Wyatt's conception of movement as revealed to us in the poetry and maintains that the hope expressed by Professor Lewis - to find among the successors of Chaucer and Gower "both the impulse and the power to paint the inner world without the help of allegory" (2)

(2) C.S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love
(Oxford, 1938), p. 238.

- is not a vain one. It is scarcely credible that this hope could have been satisfied by the author of "La Belle Dame Sans Merci", but unfortunately Miss Seaton's Sir Richard Roos, Lancastrian Poet, with its contention that "all but a few of the lyrics and shorter poems now attributed to Sir Thomas Wyatt --- are basically or entirely the work of Sir Richard Roos," (3)

(3) Ethel Seaton, Sir Richard Roos, Lancastrian Poet (1961), p.454.

appeared too late for consideration here. A preliminary rejoinder to Miss Seaton is, however, given in Appendix A.

Nearly every stage of the argument which follows is possessed of its own uncertainties and allows ample room for intelligent judgement. The contemporary influence of the traditional view of Wyatt's rhythm is, to begin with, difficult to gauge, it has already been adversely criticised and it may be that its proponents are no longer with the living. Even so it is strange to find Rubel treating classical prosody as a purely sixteenth and early seventeenth century phenomenon. For whilst it is true that later proponents of this, the basis of the traditional view of Wyatt's rhythm, did not commit the excesses of their sixteenth and early seventeenth century predecessors, it was rather because their battle had been won than that the field had been conceded. And certainly that optimism, though commendable, is surely ill-founded which led Rubel to believe that

It is difficult today to evaluate a movement that was so artificial as that favouring classical meters (4)

(4) Veré L. Rubel, Poetic Diction in the English Renaissance (New York, 1941), p. 119.

Although the traditional view has been challenged and although it may have no living champion it will be treated as a still living attitude on the grounds that it still commands a great deal of the printed material to which the student must turn for assistance and because it has affected, to some extent, even the texts of the poems available.

Plainly any argument about Wyatt's rhythm is intimately dependent upon the organisation of 'the words on the page' and the need for an accurate text becomes a top priority. What is needed, of course, is a text which is as faithful as possible to the poems as these are to be found in the manuscripts, for Wyatt, so far as is known, had no hand in preparing his poems for print. In editing the fragments of The Court of Venus, Russel Fraser has speculated upon the possibility of Wyatt having supervised the publication of the first edition of that anthology (which contained several of Wyatt's own poems) and concluded that

No doubt it is safer to assume that Wyatt had nothing to do with the issuing of his poems. (5)

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- (5) Russell A. Fraser (ed.), The Court of Venus, (Durham, N.C., 1955), pp. 42-43.
-

There remains, therefore, the principal authority of the manuscripts and in particular of the Egerton manuscript in which Wyatt's hand is prominent. (6)

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- (6) The only published transcript of the Egerton manuscript is that by Flugel in Anglia, XV111 (1896), X1X (1897). Flugel accepts the later unauthorised corrections of the first few poems, gives a number of minor misreadings, generally ignores nunation signs and does not reveal the full extent of the manuscript punctuation. For ease of reference in reading volume one, therefore, it was thought necessary to set out the actual transcript of the manuscript used by the present writer.
-

Whilst the text of the two manuscripts which comprise volumes two and three of the present work (the Devonshire

and Egerton manuscripts respectively) is not without its own problems, from the point of view of Wyatt's rhythm their important feature, and one which has been disregarded hitherto, is their punctuation.

Since the publication of Simpson's book Shakespearian Punctuation in 1911, Shakespearian scholars at least have treated punctuation seriously. And the seriousness alluded to here has been of a kind militating against the caricature of scholarship which such preoccupations frequently give rise to; it is of the kind met with in Pollard's interpretation of Simpson's thesis:

My own way of restating the facts as I understand them, is that in Shakespeare's day, at any rate in poetry and the drama, all the four stops, comma, semicolon, colon, and full-stop, could be, and (on occasion) were, used simply and solely to denote pauses of different length irrespective of grammar and syntax. On the other hand the normal punctuation was much

nearer to normal speech than is the case with our own, which balances one comma by another with a logic intolerable in talk. Thus the punctuation we find in the plays omits many stops which modern editors insert, and on the other hand inserts others, sometimes to mark the rhythm, sometimes to emphasize by a preliminary pause the word, or words which follow, sometimes for yet other reasons which can hardly be enumerated. The only rule for dealing with these supragrammatical stops, is to read the passage as punctuated, and then consider how it is affected by the pause at the point indicated. In the same way, if there is no stop where we expect a colon or even a full stop, we must try how the passage sounds with only light stops or none at all, and see what is the gain or loss to the dramatic impression. (7)

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- (7) A.W. Pollard, Shakespeare's Fight With
The Pirates And The Problems Of The
Transmission Of His Text (Cambridge,
1937), pp. 90-91.
-

Until such times as the principles (if any) directing the allocation of sixteenth century punctuation have been discovered, such empiricism as Pollard here proposes provides the only sound approach to the subject. This, however, presents the student of Wyatt's rhythm with two main tasks. Firstly, he must establish the manuscript punctuation and distinguish it in its principles, if this is at all possible, from modern editorial punctuation. Secondly, he must consider what punctuation is to be found in the manuscripts as indicative of the speech of 'voice' of the poem, or rather of the movement of the 'voice', which is the rhythm, of the poem.

With regards to the punctuation of the manuscripts the absolutely minimal claim has to be proven and the opening chapters (and the transcripts in volumes 2 and 3) perform the minimal task of demonstrating the existence of manuscript punctuation. Simultaneously, Professor Harding is shown to have been wrong when, in

an otherwise excellent essay, he maintained that "Wyatt and his scribes did not use the pause mark." (8)

(8) D.W. Harding, "The Poetry of Wyatt" in The Age of Chaucer (ed. Boris Ford, Pelican Guide to English Literature, 1954), p. 203. Flugel's transcript clearly shows some of the pause marks used by Wyatt and his scribe.

Not only do Wyatt and his scribes use the pause mark, they do so in a fashion which substantiates Professor Harding's speculations about Wyatt's understanding of rhythm! Wyatt's understanding was not disciplined by the precepts of classical prosody. Nott, in introducing his edition of Wyatt, had already pointed out that Wyatt did not subscribe to the rules of classical prosody but to a "rhythmical verse" which was well-established in England. Nott, however, used the term 'rhythmical' very loosely indeed, so loosely that he seems to have overlooked the fact that classical prosody is itself a rhythmical dogma. Professor Harding greatly

refines and intelligently sophisticates Nott's account of "rhythmical verse", calling it more aptly "pausing verse". But both Nott and Professor Harding thought of Wyatt's verse as quantitative, syllabic verse and, what is more, Nott did not allow his perception of Wyatt's rhythmical peculiarity to influence the presentation of the text of the poems which he ordered as befits "our standard writers". To this the present essay opposes the view that if punctuation has any creative importance in poetry it lies in its ability to create phrases in a poetry in which the phrase is the primary significant unit of rhythm. It is because it reveals this kind of poetry that the disposal of punctuation in the two manuscripts chosen provides the basis for an understanding of rhythm wider than that offered by observing the close quantitative confines of feet and syllables.

It is beyond the scope of the present work to discuss all the ramifications which this view of rhythmical organisation gives rise to, but one major one must be mentioned here as it is mentioned later only in passing. There is obviously a close connection

between attention to the rhythmical phrasing of a poem and its musical setting or accompaniment and many early-Tudor poems appear to have been sung: John Harington, writing to Prince Henry in 1609, quotes a sonnet reputed to be the work of Henry VIIIth and by him commanded to be sung to Anne Boleyn [see Thomas Park (ed.), Nugae Antiquae, I (1804), 388.] What Thomas Wythorne wrote of his own practice in the late forties of the sixteenth century was therefore probably typical of the Wyatt 'circle' ten or twenty years earlier:

I yuzed to sing my songs and sonnets
sumtym to the liut and sumtym the
virginals, wherby I miht tell my
tal with my vois aswell az by woord
or wryting, and sumtym it shiuld
bee the better hard bekawz that the
miusik zoined therwith did sumtym
draw the mynd of the hearer to bee
the mor attentyu to the song ...
for singing of such songs & ditties
was A thing kommen in thoz daiez. (9)

(9)

James M. Osborn (ed.), The Autobiography of Thomas Wythorne (Oxford, 1961), p.51.

A musical tradition rooted in liturgical chant and plainsong would direct rhythmical attention towards phrasing rather than towards the counting of syllables or the arrangement of metrical feet. The carol and lyrical traditions appear to be integrally connected with such musical traditions and one would expect that integrity to be maintained in rhythm long after the initial impulse was finding fresh outlets in new subject matter. But the phrasal conception of rhythm is not limited to those forms of verse most intimately related to music. It is more properly argued that liturgical chant and plainsong provide evidence of an understanding of rhythm quite different from that founded either upon syllable-counting or upon foot-counting and that in so far as it does so it enables us to see the movements of earlier verse in a perspective other than that of "our standard writers".

Having ascertained what might be called the rhythmical context of Wyatt's poetry it becomes not

only possible but pertinent, in pursuit of that deeper seriousness which should control all literary studies, to consider the character of the life thereby revealed. Are we confronting, in the poetry of Wyatt, the product of a placid, assured civilization, relatively unquestioning in its allegiances and, hence, conventional and artificial in spiritual impulse? Or, on the other hand, are we faced with the work of the turbulent and self-questioning spirit which appears to be peculiar to civilizations caught in a crisis of consciousness? To what extent did Wyatt himself "obey the poesy of Appollo ... knowe him self / and so take aduysse of his owne nature / & as she ledeth ... take an order of lyfe"? Although the final section of the argument presented in the following chapters may appear 'sociological' it will be seen to bear directly upon the estimation of Wyatt and upon the concluding attempt to 'place' Wyatt in the sixteenth century.

Chapter One

Criticism

1. By Misrepresentation.

When, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, Saintsbury expressed his disgust at Wyatt's versification and his approval of Surrey's he was writing as a scholar who had inherited very clearly defined standards of metrical propriety, one of which was forthrightly expressed in his assertion that

Every English metre since Chaucer at least can be scanned, within the proper limits, according to the strictest rules of classical prosody: and while all good English metre comes out scatheless from the application of those rules nothing exhibits the badness of bad English metre so well as that application. (9)

(9) G. Saintsbury, A History of Elizabethan Literature (1890), p.14.

And there can be little doubt that it was the same belief that convinced Miss Foxwell

that Wyatt consistently secured pentameters in his pentameter verse, and that the departures from the strict iambic pentameter line are in accordance with a body of recognized prosodic variants. (10)

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- (10) F.M. Padelford, "The Scansion of Wyatt's Early Sonnets," Studies in Philology, XX (Jan., 1923), 1, 139.
-

The list of variants Miss Foxwell supplied, especially after they had been rearranged and (in the words of Padelford) "supplemented somewhat" by Padelford, provides a striking reductio ad absurdum of this kind of approach to Wyatt's rhythm. Padelford listed the variations as follows:

1. Initial trochee
2. Initial monosyllabic foot
3. Trochee after caesura

4. Monosyllabic foot after caesura,
preceded by regular foot
5. Caesura in the middle of a foot
(perhaps almost too universal to
be recorded)
6. Epic caesura: additional weak
13. syllable before caesura, followed
by normal foot after caesura
7. Monosyllabic foot elsewhere than
at the beginning of a verse or
15. after the caesura
8. Anapaestic foot
(11) a. First foot
 b. Other than first foot
9. Final es (and perhaps final e)
pronounced
10. Alexandrine verse
11. Hendecasyllabic verse: additional
weak syllable at end of verse
12. Slurred syllables, of which the
most frequent are :

- a. R, l, m or n (usually unaccented)
followed by a weak syllable
 - b. Suffixes, such as eth, en, on,
er or ing
 - c. Vowels in juxtaposition
 - d. Unimportant syllables
13. Long vowels or diphthongs treated
as dissyllabic
14. Vowel sound inserted between
consonants
15. Four stressed line (11)

(11) Padelford, pp. 139, 140.

Foxwell's plan was to regard these
practices as permitted deviations
and to suppose that once you have
called them this you can go on
believing that he wrote metrically.

D.W. Harding, 'The Rhythmical Intention
in Wyatt's Poetry,' Scrutiny, XIV,
2 (December 1946), 91.

This places a very heavy price upon regularity, but it is a price which has to be paid as long as the belief so well formulated by Saintsbury is allowed to guide the reader's response to and judgment of rhythm. Fortunately, Saintsbury's conception of "good English metre" is not, nor was it then, as universal as he would have had it appear. It needs to be recalled, in the first place, that it was Saintsbury's tenacious belief in the universal provenance of classical prosody that led him to

entirely differ with those persons who have sought to create an independent prosody for English verse under the head of 'beats' or 'accents' or something of that sort. (12)

(12)

Saintsbury, p.14.

and it helps us to appreciate the limitations of such a belief to observe that one of these persons was Gerard Manley Hopkins. Hopkins's 'sprung rhythm' was itself created out of an awareness of the limitations

of classical prosody which it sought to overcome by turning to

the native and natural rhythm of speech, the least forced, the most rhetorical and emphatic of all possible rhythms. (13)

(13) W.H. Gardner (ed.), Poems and Prose of Gerard Manley Hopkins (1953), p.243.

Such an attempt appears to have been more comprehensible to a poet and musician of the mid-sixteenth century than to Saintsbury. Thomas Wythorne suggests, in his autobiography, that it is as classical as classical prosody itself, for, he remarks, it is Aristoxenus who

speaketh of that muzik which standeth in sound and voys, and not of that which konsisteth in meeterz, rithms, and verses. (14)

(14) Wythorne, p. 236.

There is a second observation which favours the view that, in the words of Puttenham's editors,

we read early- and mid-Tudor verse from too modern a standpoint and judge it by largely irrelevant standards. (15)

(15)

G.D. Willcock and Alice Walker (eds.),
The Arte of English Poesie
(Cambridge, 1936), p. lxvii.

For whilst the bulk of critical and scholarly material dealing with Wyatt's poetry is preoccupied with his prosody (I use the term as Saintsbury, Foxwell and Padelford would), prosody itself was an interest which did not make itself felt in England until the middle of the sixteenth century; in the early sixteenth century, as Puttenham's editors observe, prosody was non-existent (p. lxxxvi). Puttenham, whose The Arte of English Poesie was begun no later than the late fifties and who shows a greater acquaintance with the early-Tudor poets than any other Elizabethan critic,

considers himself in this respect an innovator.

Now peradventure with vs Englishmen
it be somewhat too late to admit a
new inuention of feete and times
that our forefathers neuer vsed
nor neuer obserued till this day,
either in their measures or in their
pronuntiation, and perchaunce will
seeme in vs a presumptuous part to
attempt. (16)

(16)

Puttenham, p.119.

But Puttenham does not consider his "new inuentions"
with the seriousness of later writers, "but to be
pleasantly scanned vpon, as are all nouelties so
friulous and ridiculous as it." (p. 119). His
seriousness, we are led to presume, was reserved for
the practice of his "forefathers". Puttenham is
equally explicit as to the purpose of his work,
affirming that

our chiefe purpose herein is for

learning of Ladies and Gentlewomen,
or idle Courtiers, desirous to
become skilful in their owne mother
tongue, and for private recreation
to make now & then ditties of
pleasure (17)

(17) Puttenham, p. 158.

and honestly declaring

the authors owne purpose, which is to
make of a rude rimer, a learned and
a Courtly Poet. (18)

(18) Puttenham, p.158

The highly conspicuous and self-conscious ornamentation
of this period, the need to place so much emphasis upon
an outward and mannered cultivation, may probably be
related to the social rise of the nouveaux riches.
Certainly, when Puttenham writes of a "rude rimer" he
is not thinking purely in literary terms, as becomes

apparent when he warns his hypothetical would-be poet

that being now lately become a
Courtier he shew not himself a
crafts man, & merit to be disgraded,
& with scorne sent back againe to the
shop, or other place of his facultie
and calling (19)

(19) Puttenham, p.299.

What Puttenham offers his readers then is a book of manners; he presents his prosody as a means by which ladies and courtiers, and especially new courtiers, can polish up their English, especially their English verses, with an eye to acquiring a certain social finish. But Puttenham himself understood well enough that the methods proposed did not apply in the case of poets writing "till this day". If, after the mid-Tudor period, English verse conforms more closely to the demands of prosody than does earlier English verse this is to be accounted for by the effect which prosody had once it had been introduced.

This last observation suggests that classical prosody is not a reliable guide to the verse of the early-Tudor period; classical prosody along with the expectations to which it gives rise will therefore be set aside. As a consequence of this renunciation a new picture of Wyatt's rhythm emerges, revealing Wyatt as an essentially English poet, a poet whose problems spring from the character of the English language on the one hand and the character of his own situation on the other, and whose success largely depends upon his ability to create the sense of a, more or less, passionately apprehended situation by means of rhythm and not

in transplanting into our language
the forms of the Spanish, French, and
Italian writers

nor in

'correcting the ruggedness' of English
poetry (20)

(20) R. Bell (ed.), Poetical Works of Sir Thomas Wyatt (n.d.), p. 60 and pp. 53, 54.

And if, at present, in reading Wyatt,

Some of the lines irresistibly suggest
a man counting the syllables on his
fingers, as indeed, the reader is
often compelled to do on a first
acquaintance (21)

(21) H. Child, "The New English Poetry,"
in The Cambridge History of English
Literature (1932), III, 170.

it is hoped that the present essay will go some way
towards exposing the inappropriateness of such an
approach to Wyatt's verse, an inappropriateness which
Miss Foxwell and Padelford have made only too apparent.
In its place a less narrow and pedantic sense of rhythm
is preferred.

There is yet a third, although peripheral,
observation which must be allowed some slight force in
discounting those criticisms of Wyatt based upon the

conventions of quantitative verse. It is an essential prerequisite of such criticism that available texts should reproduce accurately the syllabic length of Wyatt's lines. However, up to the present no text of Wyatt does this. The opening lines of the first poem in the transcript of the Egerton manuscript (see vol. 3) read :

Behold, love, thy power how she dispiseth :
my great payne how litle she regardeth .

and the precise significance of the line above eth is not at present known. It is not arbitrary, for it appears with considerable consistency above th, gh, ght and ch, and it is not idiosyncratic as it occurs in a number of different hands. The use of this mark is, as may be seen from the transcripts, very frequent indeed. Similarly, the last stroke of final ll which curls back over the letters or alternatively the horizontal stroke through the final ll, the elongation of the last stroke of some final rs, one form of the final d, and (in Wyatt's hand particularly) the final k, h and t, these may variously signify an abbreviated or poorly formed final e. The situation

in the manuscripts is much as Ker has stated it in a preparatory note to Examples of English Handwriting 1150-1750:

By the late fifteenth century it had become a well established custom in vernacular writing to draw a horizontal stroke through or above the h in all words ending in th, gh, ght, ch, to draw a similar stroke through every final double l, to extend the last stroke of every final r, m and n in a flourish above the line and to extend the loop of every final d in a downwards direction ... Some of the strokes cannot mean anything, for example when they are used with such words as well, on and for. Others may, or may not, indicate the omission of a letter. (22)

(22) H.E.P. Grieve, Examples of English Handwriting 1150-1750 ([Chelmsford] 1954), p. 11.

Whether we are to understand a suspended final e (which could be indicated by an apostrophe) or whether we are to give a final e and also to give it a syllabic value is an unsolved problem. (Since it is unsolved Miss Foxwell has no grounds for her certainty that Wyatt "made use of the syllabic 'e' to give the full number of syllables to the line." Foxwell, Study, p.38.). Had the problem confronted critics of Wyatt's verse in the texts upon which they relied their pronouncements would surely not have had that air of finality they so frequently possess. Such uncertainties as to the syllabic length of the lines does not, of course, affect in any important way considerations of rhythmical phrasing

There seems to be little evidence, therefore, to justify the view that Wyatt was fumbling with classical prosody. Yet although critical opinion with regard to Wyatt's work is now changing in his favour, it still appears true to say that the usual, and certainly the traditional, view of it is that it represents an attempt to reform (to quantify) English numbers which were then in a state of chaos for which changes in

pronunciation have generally been held to be responsible. In this task, the general view insists, Wyatt was not altogether successful and a great many of his lines resist every attempt to scan them. Nevertheless we are not to believe that his efforts were altogether wasted; he introduced Italian (and especially Petrarchan) influences into English poetry and, furthermore, he prepared the way for that successful reformation which is claimed (along with the introduction of blank verse) as the outstanding achievement of his younger contemporary, Surrey. This view of Wyatt's achievement, inadequate though it is, cannot be discounted out of hand. It is true that in Wyatt's poetry lines which appear to observe all the proprieties of classical prosody jostle with others which, by such a standard, are outrageous. It is also true that Wyatt translated from the Italian and in particular from Petrarch. And it is certainly true that Surrey laid a basis for regular quantitative verse, a basis which was not provided by Wyatt except, as it were, in patches.

However, having admitted so much, we are still not committed to the traditional view of Wyatt as

this is outlined above. Whilst Wyatt's poetry gives offence to a classical prosodist such as Saintsbury, it is highly unlikely that Wyatt was writing within the conventions which the classical prosodist expects and, hence, judgments based upon such expectations are irrelevant. Secondly, although Wyatt translated from Petrarch and the Petrarchans he did not introduce their regular metric (some of his greatest irregularities appear in just such translations) nor did he introduce their vocabulary, which must have been familiar to every reader of earlier English lyrics (such as those in Harley MS. 2253) and of Chaucer. And

there is no question that the courtly makers took inspiration from Chaucer, both for percept and for example. Even if we did not have the statements of Braham and Wilson on the vogue of Chaucer's language among the courtiers, examination of the poems of Skelton and Hawes, Wyatt and Surrey, of Grimwald, and of the undated group

who attained anonymous immortality
in Tottel's Miscellany would furnish
ample testimony of Chaucer's influence
on the language of poetry. (23)

(23) Rubel, pp. 29, 30.

Finally, it is even possible to show that Wyatt's
attitudes are incompatible with those of Petrarch and
his followers and, in fact, this has recently been
done. (24)

(24) By Patricia Thomson, "Wyatt and the
Petrarchan Commentators," Review
of English Studies, X (Aug. 1959),
39.

How then, one is prompted to ask, did Wyatt come to be
thought of as one of the first reformers of English
numbers and one of the first of our Italianate poets?
Whatever the answer to this question may be, such
presumptions have to be set aside in order to arrive
at a serious assessment of Wyatt's poetry.

2. By Presentation.

A close reading of Wyatt's verse suggests that rhythmically it is not based upon the metrical foot, nor even upon the syllabic line, but upon the phrase; that is to say, that it is not quantitative but phrasal in construction. The major objection to this interpretation is that in the various editions of Wyatt the pointing of the lines is generally grammatical and ignores distinctions between phrases except where these occur in the course of ordinary grammatical usage. Thus, for instance, the following lines from No.26 in Professor Muir's edition suggests a rhythmical division into phrases marked by a slight pause, but this suggestion is counteracted by the actual punctuation of the lines.

I FYNDE no peace and all my warr is done;

I fere and hope, I burne and freise like yse;

I fley above the wynde yet can I not arrise;

And noght I have and all the worold I seson;

That loseth nor locketh holdeth me in prison

And holdeth me not, yet can I scape nowise; e.c.

The rhythmical phrasing of these lines may be intimated roughly by using the virgula to indicate a pause:

I FYNDE no peace / and all my warr is done /
I fere and hope / I burne and freise like yse /
I fley above the wynde / yet can I not arrise /
And noght I have / and all the worold I seson /
That loseth nor locketh / holdeth me in prison /
And holdeth me not / yet can I scape nowise / etc.

But there is here a possible conflict between the grammatical sense of the lines in Professor Muir's version and the rhythmical sense of the lines as set out above. With Professor Muir's text it is difficult to understand the line "That loseth nor locketh holdeth me in prison"; we are led to expect grammatical sense where in fact there doesn't appear to be any. But in the rhythmical version "That" is not prevented by grammatical pointing from referring back to "the worold"; the sense of the lines being 'the world will neither release me nor yet hold me, it imprisons me and yet it does not'. The same complaint is encountered in E 106 (transcript).

At such a point as this, and this is but one of the most striking of many such points, it becomes necessary to consider the evidence of the manuscripts which contain Wyatt's poems. Having discovered that the editorial pointing is not altogether compatible with the rhythmical principle underlying Wyatt's verse the veracity of editorial punctuation requires some examination. The results (the actual punctuation is fully recorded in the transcriptions given in volumes 2 and 3) cannot of course prove that Wyatt's rhythm is fundamentally phrasal but can, and I believe do, strengthen such an interpretation of it. Simultaneously, the pointing of the poems becomes of critical and not simply technical or editorial importance.

When the editions of Nott, Foxwell and Professor Muir are compared in the light of the manuscript versions of Wyatt's poems, they provide a certain amount of evidence illustrating the extent to which the taste of an age affects the editorial presentation of manuscript sources. This is not altogether surprising if it is borne in mind that an essential part of the editor's task is to achieve some kind of compromise between what he finds in his sources and

what he believes the public he has in view is in a position to understand and to appreciate. But, allowing this, the comparison of Nott's edition with that of Professor Muir suggests that we have to-day an audience for Wyatt which is prepared to attempt to consider him as an early-Tudor poet writing early-Tudor poetry. Nott's edition implies the existence of an audience prepared for poetry only in so far as it appeared in the garb of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Two observations may serve to explain this last remark. Firstly, it will be observed that Nott's edition proliferates in exclamation marks. And, secondly, that the typographical arrangement of the lines suggests the neatly modelled constructions of the eighteenth century.

The overall impression which is communicated by Nott's organisation of the 'words on the page' is that of well-regimented exclamatory verse. This impression once communicated creates certain other expectations in the mind of the reader, as for instance that such verse will be easily declamatory. In other words, the physical appearance of the verse in Nott's edition

subtly insinuates critical standards that are not appropriate to Wyatt's poetry. Wyatt's poetry is not formally well-regimented and neither is it exclamatory. The dominant mood of the poems is one of unease and hesitation and as a consequence his rhythm is uneasy and hesitant; this and the strong reflective strain in his poetry makes against the neat exclamatory verse which is offered to the reader in Nott's edition. The result is that Nott's reader, taking his cue from the physical appearance of the text, soon finds himself in difficulties: Wyatt's verse refuses to be read, or rather to be declaimed, as though it were a production of the eighteenth century. Frustrated in his efforts the reader is inclined to believe that Wyatt has failed to abide by his agreement to maintain certain standards.

The same kind of charge, but in a more diluted form, can be brought against Miss Foxwell's edition. Between Nott and Foxwell lies the whole of nineteenth century literary development and this, naturally, makes itself felt. (25)

(25)

It makes itself felt when, in a burst of Georgian enthusiasm, Miss Foxwell justifies Wyatt's introduction of terza rima:

"If nothing else in this measure had been written, Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind' would have secured for it imperishable fame, while his magnificent fragment of the 'Triumph of Life' shows not only a complete mastery of terza rima but a conception of its power unequalled by any Italian since Dante. William Morris's 'The Defence of Guinevere', Swinburne's 'Century of Roundels,' and Browning's short-metred terza rima in the 'Statue and the Bust', all show in different ways what beauty may be got out of this form in English verse."

Fowell, Study, p.102.

The exclamation marks so freely sprinkled throughout Nott's text have been considerably reduced by Miss Foxwell and the neat modelling of the lines has been toned down. The physical appearance of the Foxwell text, therefore, is more appropriate to William Morris or Houseman, say, than to the poets of the late eighteenth century. A great deal of sophistication still remains in both the punctuation and the lay-out of the text as, indeed, it still does in Professor Muir's text. In Muir although the punctuation and lay-out of the lines is generally fictitious we have a serious contemporary attempt to represent Wyatt's poetry as it is to be found in the manuscripts. Professor Muir, however, still appears to have felt the need to compromise between the poetry of the manuscripts and the poetry he considered his public was prepared to accept. This is not intended as an adverse criticism of Professor Muir's edition which was intended rather for the general reader than for the smaller and more informed public to which the Nott and Foxwell editions were obviously addressed.

There still remains, therefore, a need for an

unadulterated text of Wyatt's poems. What is required by the student of early-Tudor poetry is such an edition as Nott and Foxwell seem to have proposed. It is plain that what such a student requires to-day is not a text edited as Wyatt's text has been in the past, but one which strives to reproduce as closely as is possible the poems as these are set out in the manuscript sources. The compromise which such an edition will have to make will not be between the manuscripts and the public, but rather between the manuscripts and the printer. That is to say, there are typographical difficulties which must be taken into account and which will obviously require some editorial compromise, but these can, of course, be noted along with such things as doubtful punctuation and doubtful readings. In such an edition it is essential that the pagination of the manuscripts should be carefully observed. C.S. Lewis has noted that in several of Wyatt's poems the poem sets off and reaches an apparent conclusion only to set off anew and in such cases (e.g. E 55, 56) the pagination may suggest that we have two poems that have been run together because of the similarity of stanza form.

For present purposes a transcript of the Devonshire manuscript and of the relevant section of the Egerton manuscript is employed. Not all of the poems transcribed are by Wyatt and the authors, where known, are listed in the indices of volumes 2 and 3. The lineation and pagination, capitalisation and punctuation, are reproduced as faithfully as possible from the manuscripts. It has not been possible to note previous editorial practice with regards to such matters in the case of individual poems. However, in all the editions of Wyatt referred to (namely, Nott, Foxwell and Muir), there is no attempt to reproduce such features of the manuscripts. The analysis of manuscript punctuation, as has already been remarked, is undertaken not with a view to proving that Wyatt's poetry was based upon phrasal rhythms, but rather with a view to strengthening that contention and attempting to demonstrate that it is consistent with the only piece of direct evidence which is in our possession.

3. By Association.

The attempt to prove the present thesis is reserved for the final section of the argument in which the

matter is considered not as a dispute concerning the evidence but as a matter of judgement. Like the attitudes towards Wyatt's poetry implicit in the editorial presentation of his poems, criticism of Wyatt has largely been based upon the presumptions of the age, but the most important ones can be traced back to the eighteenth century. Both the editorial and the critical principles which have been applied to Wyatt have a common source in this age of strong and classically-minded conventions.

Wyatt was not alone amongst our older poets to elude the categories of the eighteenth century, although he certainly has not received as much publicity in this respect as have the metaphysical poets. Wyatt and the metaphysical poets were neglected, and where they were not neglected were disapproved of, because they failed to conform to the regulations which were thought to be implied in the work of those to whom Nott refers as "our standard writers". I place Wyatt and the metaphysical poets together in this way not merely because of this common bond but also because so many previous critics have, both overtly and covertly, done so. Nott, in his edition of Wyatt, could not avoid

a reference to the metaphysical poets in arguing that

the laws of English versification, such as they were established by Surrey, have been adopted by our standard writers, with hardly any variation, ever since. At particular times, indeed a particular taste has for a short season prevailed. Thus in the reign of James and of Charles the First, quaintness, and a love of antithesis gave a new turn to our versification, and made it abrupt and irregular. But in the two best epochs of our poetry, during the reign of Elizabeth and after the Restoration, those principles of versification alone were observed which Surrey had introduced. (26)

(26) Nott, I, clxxxii.

The suggestion is that, as far as versification is concerned at least, eccentricity is best avoided and

this sets the tone of Nott's text; the shape or layout of Wyatt's poems was determined by the practice of "our standard writers."

Unlike Nott, we no longer look upon metaphysical poetry as quaint. We choose to think - and with some degree of justification - that our own tastes are disciplined by standards a little less dogmatic than those of our forefathers. Certainly, however rigid our standards may appear at times, we have gradually become aware during the course of the present century of the existence of alternative canons of artistry and, as a result, we are less inclined to dismiss "The Wasteland" for not living up to expectations formed in reading "Paradise Lost" than a critic of the eighteenth century would have been. In so far as literary criticism is concerned, this new awareness has, very largely, grown out of a renewed interest in the work of the metaphysical poets and the virtual discovery of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Professor Harding has drawn attention to these new ranges of interest and has observed that

In the period that separates us from
the time when Saintsbury was writing

and forming his taste there have been the free verse movement and all its derivatives, the appearance of Hopkins' poems, a new appreciation of Donne, and Graves' insistence on the interest of Skelton's verse (which Saintsbury instanced as fifteenth century doggerel). By all these means, and no doubt others, we have been led away from the assumption that smoothly flowing metrical verse is the standard for all poetry. (27)

(27)

Harding, "The Rhythmical Intention in Wyatt's Poetry" etc., p. 101.

The importance of such relatively new critical interests to a revaluation of Wyatt can be seen, if obliquely, by bearing in mind the reassessment of the metaphysical poets whilst observing the parallelism, of phrase and judicial presumption, between past criticism of Wyatt and past criticism of the metaphysicals.

Historically speaking, we may say that the most incisive criticism of the metaphysical poets is that of Johnson which is contained in his life of Cowley; it has been accepted, and deservedly, as the classic criticism of metaphysical poetry. In a now notorious passage of that essay Dr. Johnson characterises the activities of the metaphysical wits:

The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together; nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparison, and allusions; their learning instructs, and their subtilty surprises; but the reader commonly thinks his improvement dearly bought, and though he sometimes admires, is seldom pleased. (28)

(28) Samuel Johnson, The Lives of The English Poets (1925), I, 11, 12.

With one or two exceptions - George Herbert appears always to have received favourable attention - the metaphysical poets lay under the cloud of Johnsonian

disfavour for over a century and a half. The break in the clouds must be dated from the appearance of Grierson's edition of Donne in 1911, two years previous to Miss Foxwell's edition of Wyatt.

The disfavour into which 'conceited' poetry had fallen affected Wyatt. According to Miss Foxwell he

introduced the sonnet form and the conceited style into England at the same time. The conceit was destined to permeate literature for over a century. Sidney, in his Arte of Poesie, deplored it, but could not keep free from it. Shakespeare's early style is saturated with it, and it continued its course among the metaphysical writers (whom Johnson describes as "pursuing an idea to the last ramifications of thought"), and finally culminated in Cowley. (29)

(29)

Foxwell, Study, pp. 81, 81.

If the metaphysicals fell below par because they indulged in conceits, what is to be thought of the poet who introduced the conceit and who can 'persecute' the body-ship metaphor to the extent to which Wyatt does in "My galy charged with forgetfulness"? It must be emphasised, however, that the conceits which Rubel also claims "become English through Wyatt" and which "are, of course, in the Italian originals" - namely "Combinations of sweet and bitter, honey and gall ... The amatory ague ... Sighs and tears" - may all be found in the amatory verse of his English predecessors. Rubel in fact cites (in footnotes) Chaucerian illustrations of the last two conceits. (30)

(30)

Rubel, pp. 55, 56.

Irrespective of the source of Wyatt's conceits, however, if conceits are thought to be 'unpoetical' Wyatt's reputation comes under the same cloud as that of the metaphysicals. Bell at least thought so when, in the introduction to his edition of Wyatt, he wrote of Wyatt that

He is said to be overcharged with
conceits; but, taking into consider-

ation the sources from which he borrowed, and the age in which he wrote, it would be more just to say that he is singularly free from conceits. After the manner of Petrarch, he persecutes an image, now and then, to extremity, and sometimes involves it in obscurity; and, after the fashion of the day, which he himself helped to bring into contempt, he occasionally condescends to indulge in alliteration. (31)

(31) Bell, p. 60.

Bell's attempt to procure a new hearing for Wyatt was necessarily a half-hearted affair; he shared in the presumption which placed Wyatt as, at best, a writer of verses, the presumption that conceits and poetry are very uneasy bedfellows. Thus Bell sought to enhance Wyatt's merit by arguing that he used fewer

conceits than might be expected, only infrequently "pursuing an idea to the last ramifications of thought."

Dr. Johnson's strictures were to be called into question by Grierson's now famous preface to his selection of metaphysical poetry and then, in the same year (1921), by T.S. Eliot in his influential essay on the metaphysical poets. And yet, such was the staying power of Johnson, only twelve months previously Professor Berdan, writing not of a metaphysical poet but of Wyatt, claimed that

his love serves merely as the
occasion to make far-fetched
comparisons (32)

(32) J.H. Berdan, Early Tudor Poetry
(New York, 1920), p. 484.

Until the actual check has been made it is difficult to believe that this is not a quotation from Johnson's essay on Cowley. To such criticisms it is now possible to reply that a 'conceited' poem may be a perfectly successful poem, that in many such poems

the extended comparison is used with perfect success: the idea and the simile become one. (33)

(33) T.S. Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets", in Selected Prose (1953), p. 113.

In fact, it can be argued that many of Wyatt's poems are successful because, like King's "Exequy" (one of Eliot's remarks upon which is that just quoted), they fully justify the carriage of such far-fetched material as they bring together. The mind in which such poems were conceived is now likely to be seen as properly suited to its task. For, to quote again from Eliot's famous essay,

When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do

with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking; in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes. (34)

(34)

Eliot, p. 117.

The conceit is an attempt to form one such new whole. Wyatt's conceits, as can most plainly be seen in "The longe love", are occasioned by "his love" only in the sense that they serve to define it and to realize it; the conceit in "The longe love" produces for us a dramatic definition of the kind of love which is there being celebrated.

This vindication of the conceit was not by any means readily accepted. Hyder Edward Rollins ignored it completely when, in 1929, he noted that

have

Because Wyatt had a fondness for elaborate conceits, for grotesque imagery, his reputation has suffered greatly. (35)



- (35) Hyder Edward Rollins (ed.), Tottel's Miscellany, II (Cambridge, Mass. 1929), p. 77.
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Acclimatised to Donne, the modern reader has great difficulty in locating Wyatt's elaborate conceits and grotesque imagery. This great gap which separates the attitude of the modern reader from that represented here by Rollins had opened eight years before Rollins wrote those words when Grierson declared John Donne to be "the greatest master of English poetry in the seventeenth century." (36)

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- (36) H.J.C. Grierson, Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century (Oxford, 1921), p. xvi.
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Donne and Wyatt, however, have more in common than a liking for far-fetched comparisons, they also deviated in the principles of their versification from the practice of those whom Nott called "our standard writers." The versification of the metaphysicals is, to quote Nott again, "abrupt and irregular". Dr. Johnson also

criticised the metaphysical poets for want of ear.

According to Dr. Johnson,

The metaphysical poets were men of learning, and to show their learning was their whole endeavour; but, unluckily resolving to show it in rhyme, instead of writing poetry they only wrote verses, and very often such verses as stood the trial of the finger better than of the ear; for the modulation was so imperfect, that they were only found to be verses by counting the syllables. (37)

(37) Johnson, p. 11.

And, coming to deal with Wyatt's versification in his contribution to the Cambridge History of English Literature, Harold Child observed that,

Some of the lines irresistibly suggest a man counting the syllables on his fingers, as indeed, the reader is often compelled to do on a first acquaintance (38)

(38) Child, p.170. The volume was first published in 1907.

In this matter as with the conceits, truly a great re-estimation must have taken place before Grierson's contention that a metaphysical poet is "the greatest master of English poetry in the seventeenth century" could have met with the measure of acceptance which it now enjoys. But even with regards to versification, critics could continue to think in the Johnsonian fashion as though unaware of the fact that the very basis of his judgment had been called into question. Professor Muir quotes an anonymous reviewer who, writing in the Times Literary Supplement (1929), obviously thought the above Johnsonian generalities, as honoured in the Cambridge History, were still safe when he wrote of Wyatt that

At one time he is the equal of the greatest in his command of rhythm and metre; at another he seems to be laboriously counting syllables on his fingers - and getting them wrong sometimes (39)

(39)

Muir, p.xlvi, from "Wyatt and
Raleigh", Times Literary Supplement,
Sept. 1929.

And Dr. Tillyard, writing in the same year, treated
Wyatt's versification in the same aloof and Johnsonian
fashion when he wrote:

Only once in the rondeaus does he
leave off writing English verses
and create poetry, namely in the
last lines of 'What no, perdie!' (40)

(40)

E.M.W. Tillyard, The Poetry of Sir
Thomas Wyatt (2nd. imp., 1949),
p. 26.

It is plain that a great deal of past criticism of
Wyatt is derived from Johnson's criticism of the meta-
physicals. The charge that "Only once in the rondeaus
does Wyatt leave off writing English verses and create
poetry" is reminiscent of Johnson's criticism of the
metaphysicals, that "instead of writing poetry they

only wrote verses." The charge that Wyatt sometimes "seems to be laboriously counting syllables on his fingers," or, a slightly different version, that "Some of the lines irresistibly suggest a man counting the syllables on his fingers," has its Johnsonian counterpart in the contention that the metaphysicals produced "such verses as stood the trial of the finger better than the ear" and "that they were only found to be verses by counting the syllables." With the modern respect for metaphysical poetry and the change in taste and attitude which accompanied the establishment of such a respect, such criticisms of Wyatt as these have been seriously, perhaps fatally, injured.

The taste and, hence, standards of propriety which have been shared in by Johnson, Saintsbury, Foxwell, Padelford, Berdan, Rollins, Tillyard and Child, and which, as has been seen, have supported much past criticism of Wyatt have slowly passed into history. In their place, new tastes and standards have appeared demanding a reassessment in every branch of literary studies. The ready-made solutions which

dismissed metaphysical poetry are no longer acceptable and, at least in so far as rhythm is concerned, a more empirical and initially unprejudiced response has now won general favour. The textual value of such an approach lies in the emphasis it places upon authenticity, upon an unprejudiced view of the original text, and simultaneously upon the ineluctable 'interpretation' which accompanies the preparation and acceptance of any text. Thus, in the case of Wyatt's poems, textual presentation must rely upon a critical estimation of the character of the poetry. In the chapter following an attempt is made to demonstrate something of this relationship between textual matter and critical assessment.

Chapter Two

The Punctuation of the Devonshire Manuscript

1. Tables and Analyses.

The following is a survey of the punctuation in the Devonshire manuscript. It will be noticed at once that, by modern standards, punctuation is used sparingly and that of the various forms of pointing used the most common is the virgula (an oblique stroke) and the point (or full-stop). There appears to be no actual grammatical value, such as we are accustomed to in modern punctuation, given to the virgula or the point; they occur in positions where we would employ a comma, a semi-colon, a colon and a full-stop and on occasions they are to be found in positions where punctuation would appear grammatically out of place. The only satisfactory hypothesis is that the principal function of punctuation was to mark a vocal rest or pause and therefore that punctuation was allocated by ear. This does not mean that where there is no punctuation there are necessarily no pauses, but rather that, although slight, the pointing is neither modern nor yet entirely random.

Of the 183 poems contained in the manuscript 78 are without any form of punctuation whatsoever. Since

Many manuscripts [of the Middle Ages] with verse texts written as verse have no punctuation at all. (41)

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- (41) A.C. Baugh, "A Medieval Survival in Elizabethan Punctuation," in Studies in The English Renaissance Drama (ed. J.W. Bennett, O. Cargill, V. Hall, Jnr., 1959), p. 12.
-

the absence of punctuation from so many of the poems in the manuscripts is probably vestigial. Certainly it should not be thought of as indicating the work of a slovenly scribe as in many instances punctuation is not necessary to an understanding of the poems whilst in others it would only serve to remove ambiguities which may be an essential feature of the purport of the poem.

Table 1. Unpunctuated Poems.

Nos. 1	Nos. 22	Nos. 44	Nos. 84
2	23	57	86
3	24	58	88
4	27	59	91
5	29	60	94
6	30	61	95
7	31	62	96
9	31 (a)	63	97
10	32	67	98
11	33	68	99
12	34	70	100
13	35	71	114
14	36	72	118
15	37	73	130
16	38	74	148
17	39	75	156
18	40	76	170
19	41	77	178 (a)
20	42	80	
21	43	83	

There remain 105 poems which contain some punctuation.

These are the subject of the following tables. The

notation below and in future tables is as follows:-

firstly, the number of the poem in the transcript;

secondly, the number of punctuation marks in the poem;

thirdly, the number of lines in the poem.

Table 2. The Frequency of Punctuation.

8.	1:35	50.	32:42	66.	1: 42
25.	3:21	51.	2:32	69.	1:100
26.	18:21	52.	12: 8	78.	2: 42
28.	2:14	53.	22:14	79.	14: 12
45.	4:28	54.	17:20	81.	3: 7
46.	16:30	55.	10: 8	82.	1: 8
47.	36:35	56.	20:24	85.	2: 3
48.	19:14	64.	11:23	87.	2: 7
49.	20:24	65.	53:50	89.	10: 22

90.	7:15	126.	5:30	154.	2:47
92.	1: 6	127.	3:28	155.	2:60
93.	4:14	128.	3:24	157.	4:51
101.	1:39	129.	3:24	158.	4: 7
102.	6:25	131.	6:35	159.	1:14
103.	3: 8	132.	5:44	160.	3:24
104.	8:16	133.	5:14	161.	7:14
105.	5:15	134.	3:15	162.	5: 6
106.	6:21	135.	3:14	163.	8:35
107.	9:14	136.	4:13	164.	5:35
108.	6:42	137.	14:21	165.	14:24
109.	7:48	138.	10:14	166.	3:32
110.	3:24	139.	21:51	167.	17:40
111.	6:24	140.	2:32	168.	40:100
112.	1: 8	141.	1:26	169.	5:19
113.	6:36	142.	4:53	171.	3: 7
115.	8:21	143.	6:36	172.	3:14
116.	4: 8	144.	4:14	173.	2: 7
117.	1:35	145.	2:4	174.	2: 8
119.	4:24	146.	10:32	175.	1: 8
120.	4:20	147.	5:37	176.	2: 7
121.	4:12	149.	1:20	177.	1: 9
122.	5: 8	150.	1:10	178.	1: 7
123.	1: 8	151.	5:42	178(b).	5:7
124.	2: 8	152.	2:14	178(c).	3:7
125.	6:36	153.	14:32	178(d).	5:7

Table 3. The Frequency of the Virgula.

8.	1:35	92.	1:6	126.	5:30
25.	3:21	93.	4:14	127.	2:28
26.	2:21	101.	1:39	128.	2:24
28.	2:14	102.	5:25	129.	1:24
45.	2:28	103.	3: 8	131.	3:35
46.	16:30	104.	5:16	132.	5:44
47.	36:35	105.	4:15	133.	2:14
48.	19:14	106.	6:21	134.	1:15
49.	20:24	107.	7:14	135.	3:14
50.	32:42	108.	5:42	136.	2:13
51.	2:32	109.	6:48	137.	14:21
52.	12: 8	110.	3:24	138.	3:14
53.	22:14	111.	4:24	139.	8:51
54.	17:20	112.	1: 8	140.	1:32
55.	10: 8	113.	1:36	141.	1:26
56.	20:24	115.	7:21	142.	3:53
64.	11:23	116.	4: 8	143.	6:36
65.	51:50	117.	1:35	144.	2:14
66.	1:42	119.	3:24	145.	2: 4
69.	1:100	120.	4:20	146.	8:32
81.	3: 7	121.	4:12	147.	5:37
85.	2:3	122.	3: 8	150.	1:10
87.	2:7	123.	1: 8	151.	3:42
89.	10:22	124.	1: 8	152.	1:14
90.	7:15	125.	5:36	153.	1:32

154.	2:47	164.	5:35	173.	2: 7
155.	1:60	165.	13:24	174.	2: 8
157.	4:51	166.	3:32	175.	1: 8
159.	1:14	167.	14:40	176.	2: 7
160.	2:24	168.	26:100	177.	1: 9
161.	7:14	169.	3:19	178.	1: 7
162.	2: 6	171.	2: 7	178(b).	5: 7
163.	5:35	172.	3:14	178(c).	3: 7
				178(d).	5:7

Table 4. The Frequency of the Point.

26.	9:21	122.	2: 8	146.	2:32
45.	2:28	125.	1:36	149.	1:20
78.	2:42	127.	1:28	151.	2:42
79.	6:12	128.	1:24	152.	1:14
82.	1: 8	129.	2:24	153.	13:32
102.	1:25	131.	3:35	155.	1:60
104.	2:16	133.	3:14	156.	4: 7
107.	1:14	134.	2:15	160.	1:24
108.	1:42	136.	2:13	162.	3: 6
109.	1:48	138.	7:14	163.	3:35
111.	2:24	139.	13:51	165.	1:24
113.	5:36	140.	1:32	167.	3:40
115.	1:21	142.	1:53	168.	12:100
119.	1:24	144.	2:14	169.	2:19

Table 5. The Frequency of Other Punctuation.

a.	the frequency of the :	b.	the frequency of the /.
26.	1:21	26.	4:21
65.	2:50	107.	1:14
105.	1:15	171.	1: 7
124.	1: 8		
c.	the frequency of the ./	d.	the frequency of the ,
26.	1:21	79.	8:12
104.	1:16		
e.	the frequency of the :.	f.	the frequency of the ./.
100.	2:100	26.	1:21

An Analysis of Table 3.

A. Poems using the virgula simply to terminate the poem:
Nos. 112 and 159, also
No. 124 (which employs : elsewhere in the poem) and
Nos. 140, 152 and 153 (which employ . elsewhere in the poem).

B. Poems using the virgula simply to terminate the stanza:

Nos. 117 and 141, also

No. 142 (where . occurs once to terminate a stanza) and
Nos. 155 and 163 (which also employs .).

C. Poems using the virgula simply to terminate the line:

Nos. 50, 51, 54, 56, 64, 110, 121, 132, 143, 147, 154 and
164, also

No. 105 (which also employs :) and

Nos. 108, 109, 111, 113, 127, 129, 131, 133, 134, 146,
162 (which also employ .).

D. Poems using the virgula simply within the line:

Nos. 8, 25, 28, 46, 66, 69, 81, 87, 90, 92, 101, 123,
150, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 178(b), 178(c)
and 178(d), also

No. 26 (which also employs /. and ./ and ./ and : and .),

No. 171 (which also employs /.) and

Nos. 45 and 169 (which also employ .).

E. Poems using the virgula within the line and to terminate the line:

Nos. 47-49, 52, 53, 55, 85, 89, 93, 103, 106, 116, 120, 126, 135, 137, 145, 157, 161 and 166, also

No. 65 (which also employs :),

No. 104 (which also employs ./ and .),

No. 107 (which also employs . and /.),

No. 168 (which also employs . and :.) and

Nos. 102, 115, 119, 122, 125, 128, 136, 138, 139, 144, 151, 160, 165 and 167 (which also employ .).

An Analysis of Table 4.

A. Poems using the point simply to terminate the poem:

Nos. 108 and 125 (which also employ /).

B. Poems using the point simply to terminate the stanza:

Nos. 127 and 142 (which also employ /).

C. Poems using the point simply to terminate the line:

No. 79 (which also employs ,) and

**Nos. 109, 111, 113, 119, 122, 129, 134, 139, 140, 144, 155
and 167 (which also employ /).**

D. Poems using the point simply within the line:

Nos. 82 and 149, also

No. 26 (which also employs / and /. and ./ and ./ and :),

No. 104 (which also employs / and ./),

No. 107 (which also employs / and /.) and

**Nos. 45, 102, 115, 128, 136, 152, 160, 163, 165 and 169
(which also employ /).**

**E. Poems using the point within the line and to terminate
the line :**

Nos. 78 and 158, also

No. 168 (which also employs / and :.) and

**Nos. 131, 133, 138, 146, 151, 153 and 162 (which also
employ /).**

An Analysis of Table 5.

a. Poems using ,

No. 79, in half and terminal line positions (but also employs .).

b. Poems using :

No. 26, within the line (but also employs /. and / and ./ and ./ and .) and

Nos. 65, 105 and 124, within the line (but also employ /).

c. Poems using /.

No. 26, within the line (but also employs / and ./ and ./ and : and .),

No. 107, within the line (but also employs / and .) and

No. 171, within the line (but also employs /).

d. Poems using !.

No. 168, within the line (but also employs / and .).

e. Poems using ./

The ...

No. 26, within the line (but also employs : and . and ./ and / and /), and

No. 104, within the line (but also employs . and /).

f. Poems using ./.

No. 26, within the line (but also employs ./ and / and . and / and :).

Table 6.

Poems using / as the only means of punctuation:

Nos. 8, 25, 28, 46-56, 64, 66, 69, 81, 85, 87, 89, 90-93, 101, 103, 106, 110, 112, 116, 117, 120, 121, 123, 126, 132, 135, 137, 141, 143, 145, 147, 150, 154, 157, 159, 161, 164, 166, 172-178, 178(b) - 178(d).

Poems using . as the only means of punctuation:

Nos. 78, 82, 149 and 158.

Poems using / and . as the only means of punctuation:

Nos. 45, 102, 108, 109, 111, 113, 115, 119, 122, 125, 127-129, 131, 133, 134, 136, 138-140, 142, 144, 146, 151-153, 155, 160, 162, 163, 165, 167 and 169.

2. The Function of Punctuation.

The tables and analyses provide a comprehensive picture of the distribution of punctuation in D. It is plain that the punctuation in several of the poems is unimportant and, once they have been noted, they may be dismissed as unpunctuated. These are:

(i) Poems which use the virgula only at the termination of the poem and which are otherwise unpunctuated, viz.

Nos. 112 and 159.

(ii) Poems punctuated only at the end of the stanza, viz.

Nos. 117 and 141.

and of which the following stanza is an example

what shulde I saye
sins faithe is dede
and truthe awaye
f̄ro yon ys fled
shulde I be led w^t doblenesse
naye naye mistresse /

As with many stanzas in the manuscript, the one above stands in little need of punctuation and yet Nott

decided to punctuate it thus:

What should I say!

Since Faith is dead,

And Truth away

From you is fled?

Should I be led

With doubleness?

Nay! nay! Mistress.

The exclamations and the capitalisations ('Faith' and 'Truth') turn attention away from the probability of a musical setting and, what is more important, away from the general hesitancy of the manuscript version and suggest instead the more confident and exclamatory poetry of a later period. Foxwell toned down Nott's punctuation to:

What shulde I saye,

Sins faithe is ded,

And truth awaye,

From you is fled,

Shulde I be led,

With doblennesse?

Naye, naye, mistresse!

Whilst this eliminates the abstractions Faith and Truth, it reflects a frigid conception of the verse line which is not justified in the manuscript. In Muir's edition the punctuation has been reduced almost to the minimum required by modern usage:

What shulde I saye
Sins faithe is dede,
And truthe away
From you ys fled
Shulde I be led
With doblennesse?
Naye, naye, mistresse!

The minimum required by modern usage would permit the elimination of the comma at the end of line 2 and the substitution of a point for the exclamation mark. However, the best solution of the punctuation 'problem' here is supplied by the manuscript version: punctuation is not necessary and as used by the editors serves often to insinuate that the pointing of the poetry is a matter of grammatical propriety.

Setting aside those which are to be counted as unpunctuated there remain three principal groups of

poems: those which are pointed at the end of the line, those which are pointed somewhere within the line and, finally, those which are pointed both somewhere within the line and at the end of the line.

A. The Use of the Virgula.

1. Of the punctuation in D of which it is necessary to take note the virgula is the commonest form, as may be seen from the tables above, and its most straightforward use is that of pointing a line-ending. Baugh, in the article previously referred to, considers that a great deal of such end-stopping is a vestige of a much earlier practice. In this he overlooks the probability that end-stopping by means of punctuation (and independent, as it were, of grammatical sense) had considerable importance as a means of emphasising rhyme. Baugh's suggestion is that in such cases we have to deal with a vestige of the medieval practice of setting out verse as prose and marking verse from verse by heavy pointing a practice which continued, he argues, when verse was lineated. (See later remarks upon the function of rhyme, pp.). In the following

poems the virgula is used solely as an end-stop and the poems are otherwise unpunctuated. If Baugh's argument carried complete conviction these poems could be placed amongst the unpunctuated ones.

End-stopping by means of the virgula is heavy in poems No. 50 (32 of the 42 lines), No. 54, (all except the final three lines of this 20 line poem) and No. 56 (all except lines 19, 20, 22 and 23 of this 24 line poem). The opening stanza of No. 50 illustrates this heavy use of the virgula as an end-stop:

The knott whych ffyrst my hart dyd strayn
whan y^t yow^r servant I be cam /
doth bynde me styll for to Remayne /
all was yow^r owne as nowe I am /
and yff ye fynde y^t I do ffayn /
w^t Just Judgement my selffe I dam /
to haue dysdayn /

This particular poem would justify the kind of end-stopping which Miss Foxwell applied in the case of "what shulde I saye", but on this occasion, in fact, she reduces the end-stopping provided by Nott. Nott points the poem:

The knot which first my heart did strain,
When that your servant I became,
Doth bind me still for to remain,
Always your own as now I am;
And if you find that I do feign,
With just judgment myself I dam,
To have disdain.

and Miss Foxwell removes the end-stop (the comma) from lines 3 and 6 and places a comma in the middle of line 4. Except that Muir substitutes a colon for the semi-colon at the end of line 4 he follows Foxwell. The ambiguous value of the virgula in the eyes of modern editors is here apparent; it is interpreted as a comma, a semi-colon, a colon and a point.

Poems moderately light in this use of the virgula are No. 64 (in this poem of 5 stanzas - two 4-lined, three 5-lined - the end-stopping decreases 4, 3, 3, 1, 0), No. 121 (4 of the 12 lines), No. 143 (6 of 36, 4 of which terminate stanzas), No. 147 (5 of 37, 3 terminating stanzas) and No. 164 (5 of 35). Poem No. 121 shows this moderately light use of the virgula as an end-stop:

Yf w^t cop^laint the paine might be exprest
 that inwardely dothe cause me sigh & grone /
 yo^r harde herte and yo^r cruell brest
 shulde sighe and playne for my vnreste
 and tho yt ware of stone /
 yet shulde Remo^rse cause yt relent and mone /
 But sins yt ys so farre out of mesure
 that w^t my wo^rdes I can yt not cotayne
 my oulye truste my herteses tresure
 alas whye doo I still indure
 this resteles smerte and payne /
 sins yf ye list ye maye my woo restraine

This is completely alien to what we find provided in
 Nott's version of the poem:

If with complaint the pain might be express'd
 That inwardly doth cause me sigh and groan;
 Your hard heart, and your cruel breast
 Should sigh and plain for my unrest;
 And though it were of stone
 Yet should remorse cause it relent and moan.
 But since it is so far out of measure,
 That with my words I can it not contain,
 My only trust! my heart's treasure!

Alas! why do I still endure

This restless smart and pain?

Since if ye list ye may my woe restrain.

The differences between Nott's punctuation and that of Foxwell and Muir amounts to quibbling. Foxwell and Muir do, however, mute Nott's exclamatory tone. Foxwell replaces the first exclamation by a comma, keeps the second and completely rejects the third. Muir takes this a step further by also replacing the second exclamation by a comma.

Finally, there is only one poem which makes a very light use of the virgula as an end-stop, No. 51 (2 of 32). It would be a lengthy and unnecessary business illustrating this use of the virgula.

2. The second use of the virgula to be noted is more significant than its use as an end-stop. The virgula in the following poems occurs only within the line, the poems being otherwise free of punctuation. This, I believe, is not the same kind of pointing as we associate with Anglo-Saxon verse (See Baugh, p.9). It is perhaps distantly related, but plainly here the internal pause is more flexible with regards to its position. This internal use of the virgula is also obviously related

to the Chaucerian usage:

Chaucer manuscripts are for the most
part lightly pointed, such punctuation
as there is being mainly to mark the
caesura. (42)

(42) Baugh, p.12.

There is a fairly heavy use of the virgula within
the line in poems No. 46 (in 16 of the 30 lines), No. 81
(in 3 of 7), No. 90 (in 7 of 15), 178(b) (in 5 of 7),
178(c) (in 3 of 7) and 178(d) (in 5 of 7). This
fairly heavy use of the virgula is illustrated in No. 81:

O myserable sorow w^towten cure
yf it plese the lo / to haue me thus suffir
at lest / yet let her know what I endure
and this my last voyse cary thou thether
wher lyved my hope now ded for ew^r
for as ill grevus is my banyshement
as was my plesur / whan she was present

Once again it is the simplicity and economy of the
punctuation of the manuscript version which is revealed

by comparison with Nott, Foxwell and Muir. Nott is, of course, characterised by his infatuation with the exclamation mark :

O! MISERABLE sorow, withouten cure!'

If it please thee, lo! to have me thus suffer,
At least yet let her know what I endure,
And this my last voice carry thou thither,
Where lived my hope, now dead for ever;
For as ill grievous is my banishment,
As was my pleasure when she was present.

In Foxwell's version the first line is unpunctuated; the second line is only punctuated by the comma at the end of the line; the fourth line is unpunctuated; the fifth line is only punctuated at the end by the colon and the remainder of the poem is completely unpunctuated. Muir follows Foxwell in leaving the opening line unpunctuated but in his version he adopts Nott's punctuation for the second line, simply substituting a comma for the exclamation mark; throughout the rest of the poem Muir, apart from terminating the poem with a point, adopts Foxwell's punctuation. None of these three editorial versions give even a distorted reflection of the manuscript punctuation of the poem.

The virgula within the line is lightly used in poems No. 87 (in 2 of 7 lines), No. 172 (in 3 of 14) and No. 173 (in 2 of 7). This light usage can be seen in No. 87:

for thylke grownde y^t bearyth the wedes wycke
beareth eke these holsome herbes as ful ofte
nexte the foule nettle / rough and thycke
The rose vexeth soote / smoth and softe
and next the valey ys the hyll a lofte
and next the darke nyght the glade morewe
and aliso Joye ys next the syne off sorowe

(The poem is not Wyatt's and is not, therefore, to be found in the Nott, Foxwell or Muir editions). And finally, the virgula is used very lightly within the line in Nos. 8 (in 1 of 35 lines), 25 (in 3 of 21), 28 (in 2 of 14), 66 (in 1 of 42), 69 (in 1 of 100), 92 (in 1 of 6), 101 (in 1 of 39), 123 (in 1 of 8), 150 (in 1 of 10), 174 (in 2 of 8), 175 (in 1 of 8), 176 (in 2 of 7), 177 (in 1 of 9), 178 (in 1 of 7).

3. The fullest use of the virgula takes place in the group of poems employing end-stops and divisions within

the line. The following poems use the virgula in both positions and use it as the sole means of punctuation.

A very heavy use of the virgula is made in poems No. 47 (36 times in the poem's 35 lines), No. 48 (19 in 14), No. 52 (12 in 8), No. 53 (22 in 14), No. 55 (10 in 8) and No. 85 (2 in 3). The virgula is used heavily in poems No. 49 (20 times in the 24 lines) and No. 137 (14 in 21). It is used moderately in No. 89 (10 in 22), No. 105 (3 in 8), No. 116 (4 in 8), 145 (2 in 4), and No. 161 (7 in 14); lightly in Nos. 93 (4 in 14), 106 (6 in 21), 120 (4 in 20), 126 (5 in 30), 135 (3 in 14). Finally, the virgula is used very lightly in poems No. 157 (4 in 51) and No. 166 (3 in 32).

4. The principles of distribution which govern the use of the virgula can be seen in representative poems of group 2, such, for example, as No. 46 (the introductory couplet is by Thomas Howard, the stanzas are from Chaucer):

And now my pen alas / wyth wyche I wryte
quaketh for drede / off that I muste endyte

O very lord / o loue / o god alas

etc.

(The poem is not in Nott, Foxwell or Muir, of course)⁽⁴³⁾

(43)

In P.L.P.L.S. the lines are punctuated -

And now my pen, alas, wyth wyche I wryte,
Quaketh for drede off that I muste endyte.

O very lord, O loue, O god, alas!

or No. 66 in which the virgula occurs once only, in the penultimate line of the poem:

I love youe more then I declare
But as for hap / happyng this yll
hap shall I hate hape what hap will

(The poem is not in Nott, Foxwell or Muir).⁽⁴⁴⁾

(44)

In P.L.P.L.S. the lines are punctuated -

I love youe more than I declare,
But as for hap happyng this yll,
Hap shall I hate, hape what hap will.

The virgula is generally used for this purpose, that of pointing and emphasising the rhythmical phrasing. On

some occasions it is, rhythmically, an indispensable guide, as in No. 69 where, again, it is found in only one line:

the flowds the sees / the land & hills y^t doth y^{en}
ent^rmet

(Nott, Foxwell and Muir base their versions upon the one in E). Without this indication we would be tempted to give emphasis to the pauses between "the flowds" and "the sees", "the land & hills" and "yt doth y euer Intermet". And the consequence of such a natural phrasing would be rhythmically clumsy in the context of the whole poem.

Apart from a mid-line use which actually denotes an error in lineation ("what shulde I saye" contains a similar but unmarked error) - in No. 101:

desyar to be dede / my mescheffe to fforgoo
i.e. desyar to be dede
my mescheffe to fforgoo

- there is only one other noticably interesting use of the virgula in the second group of poems, namely to give emphasis to an antithesis. This will be found illustrated

in No. 92, where the virgula is used only this once:

I speke by that / And mene by this

and in No. 172

that spake so fayre / & falsely inward thought

(Neither poems are, however, by Wyatt and are therefore not in the editions). (45)

(45)

In P.L.P.L.S. the lines are punctuated

I speke by that And mene by this.

and

That spake so fayre and falsely inward thought,

The function of the virgula to mark the rhythmical phrasing of the poem is even more marked in the third group, presumably because we have there a far heavier use of the virgula. The final stanza of poem No. 47 illustrates this point :

Itt lastyth not y^t stondes by change /
 fansy doth change / fortune ys frayle /
 both thes to plesse / the ways ys strange /
 therfore me thynkes best to prevayle /
 ther ys no way y^t ys so Just /
 as trowgh to lede / the tother fayle /
 And thereto trust /

This phrasing is destroyed by Nott's version:

It lasteth not, that stands by change;
 Fancy doth change; Fortune is frail;
 Both these to please the way is strange.
 Therefore methinks best to prevail
 There is no way that is so just
 As truth to lead; the 'tother fail,
 And thereto trust.

It will be noted that Nott's version completely distorts
 the purport of the manuscript poem by making one simple
 error of transcription. In the manuscript poem the
 phrase "the tother fayle" refers to "way" and the advice
 being tendered is that one should prevail in the way of
 constancy and truth although the other way (the "strange"
 way of fancy and fortune) fails. When Nott substitutes

the phrase "the 'tother fail" he makes the poem say in affect - follow the way of constancy and truth because the other way (of fancy and fortune) fails. In other words, Nott transforms the poem's moral imperative into a council of expediency. How serious this distortion is will appear more fully later when Wyatt's basic preoccupations as a poet are dealt with. It will also be noted that Nott's second 'sentence' hardly makes sense and it is difficult to decide upon what exactly "tother" is intended to abbreviate. Whilst free of these particular criticisms, Foxwell and Muir both destroy the rhythmical phrasing of the lines. The Foxwell version is:

Ytt lastyth not that stondes by change;
Fancy doth change; fortune ys frayle;
Both thes to plesse the way ys strange;
Therefore me thynkes best to prevayle,
There ys no way that ys so just,
As trowgh to lede, the tother fayle,
And therto trust.

And the Muir version is :

Itt lastyth not that stondes by change;
Fancy doth change; fortune ys frayle;
Both thes to plesse the way ys strange.

Therefore we thynkes best to prevayle:
Ther ys no way that ys so just
As trowgh to lede, the tother fayle,
And therto trust.

Apart from destroying the rhythm of the lines, the attempts to clarify the meaning by punctuating are not successful and, indeed, appear to be misguided, there is something essentially ambiguous in the lines (for instance, the 'therefore' of line 4 reads both as 'because the way is strange (of fansy and fortune)' and 'because Itt lastyth not y^t stondes by change'. We do not know whether the decision is to prevail in the strange ways of fansy and fortune or whether it is to ignore their change until line 6). In the manuscript version it is fairly obvious that the pointing serves to mark the significant pauses in the 'voice' of the poem (Wyatt's characteristic 'tone', as will later be seen, is hesitant and perplexed and thus this particular stanza is typical of Wyatt); the pointing is, that is to say, primarily a speech or rhythm indicator rather than a grammatical or logical one, although this suggests an opposition which is rarely in evidence. It is to be observed, for instance, that

the presence of the virgula within a line alters the pace and emphasis of the line and, hence, its logic. Roughly speaking, the punctuation occurs only at the termination of a phrase and it needs to be born in mind that in so far as articulation and hence rhythm is concerned the phrase is the basic unit of spoken English. Presumably, therefore, punctuation assumes the peculiar rhythmical function which it has by being allocated by ear; it does not reflect the 'silent' grammatical habit of sentence analysis as does our own modern use of punctuation. Fundamentally it is this difference in the principles of distribution which vitiates previous editorial attempts to punctuate the poems of Wyatt.

The phrasal disposal of punctuation gives to the poems a peculiar rhythmical lilt often to be met with in spontaneous, unsophisticated English speech. This see-sawing will be examined later, but the relevance of the pointing of the poems in this respect is intimated in the following lines: from No. 49,

nor what to seke / nor what to fynd

(Nott and Muir replace the virgula by a comma; Foxwell ignores it),

No. 53,

so call I for helpe / I nott when ne wher /

No. 107,

w^t faynid visage /. now sad now merye /

(Editors have preferred the versions of Nos. 53 and 104 given in E) and, finally, No. 167,

Who Judgith well / well god him sende

(Nott, Foxwell and Muir replace the virgula by a comma).

The poems in group 3 provide additional evidence of the particular use of this rhythmical phrasing to give emphasis to antitheses of a conceptual and an empirical kind. Examples of the latter, the empirical antithesis or sense of a contradiction in the world, are provided from poems No. 116 and No. 161 respectively:

and In the flowde / for thurste to deth I drye

and,

w^tout yes I see / and w^tout tong I playne

I desire to perishe / and yet I aske helthe

(Nott, Foxwell and Muir ignore the virgula in the line

from No. 116. They make use of the version of No. 161 which is in E). The conceptual antitheses are those in which the pointing is used to emphasise something of a balance of opposites and contraries, as 'plesure' and 'woo' here (No. 167):

some of plesure / and some of woo.

(Nott, Foxwell and Muir ignore the virgula altogether) or in a line from the same poem,

be yt evill be yt well / be I bonde be I fre

(a line which Nott and Muir decide to punctuate,

Be it evil, be it well, be I bond, be I free,

ignoring the major rhythmical break in the line) and, from No. 161:

I fere and hope / I bourne and freis lyke yse/

(the editorial version is taken from E). But by far the heaviest and most explicit use of the virgula for this purpose is to be found in poem No. 137, in such lines as :

tho tyme doth passe / yet shall not my love

the I be farre alwayes / my hert is nere

(in repunctuating which Nott, Foxwell and Muir make an alteration in the sense of the last line:

The tyme doth passe, yet shall not my love;

The I be farre, alwayes my hert is nere; Muir)

and,

the other care not / yet love I will & fere

the other hate / yet will I love my dere

(Nott transcribes the first virgula as a comma, ignores the second and places a semi-colon at the end of each line. Muir and Foxwell follow Nott except that they recognise the second virgula with a comma.) and, in the final stanza:

when other laughe / alas then do I wepe

when other sing / then do I waile & crye

when other rune perforeyd I am to crepe

when other daunce / in sorro I do lye

when other Joye / for paine welnere I dye

thus brought fro welthe / alas tendles paine /

that undeseruid / causeles to remayne /

Nott, of course, has found it necessary to place an exclamation mark after each 'alas' and has ended each

line with a semi-colon with the exception of the penultimate line which he ends with a comma and the final line which he ends with a point. Of the virgulas occurring within the line, he ignores the second and transcribes the remainder as commas. Foxwell's version is as follows:

When other laugh, alas then do I wepe,
When other sing, then do I waile and crye;
When other runne, perforcyd I ame to crepe;
When other daunce, in sorro I do lye;
When other joye, for paine welnere I dye;
Thus brought from welth alas to endles paine,
That undeservid, causeles to remayne.

(I believe that the comma which ends the opening line is in all probability a misprint and should be a semi-colon). Muir's version is :

When other laughe, alas then do I wepe;
When other sing, then do I waile and crye;
When other runne, perforcyd I am to crepe;
When other daunce, in sorro I do lye;
When other joye, for paine welnere I dye;
Thus brought from welthe, alas, to endles paine,
That undeseruid, causeles to remayne.

This is plainly a more consistent version of Miss Foxwell's system of punctuation.

B. The Use of the Point.

1. The point is used less frequently in D than is the virgula and there are very few poems which use the point as the only means of punctuation. Unlike the case with the virgula, there are no poems in which the point supplies the sole means of punctuation and in which it is used only as an end-step.

2. There are only two poems (Nos. 149 and 82) which use the point within the line and which contain no other form of punctuation. In No. 149, where the point occurs only once in the 20 lines of the poem, the refrain at the conclusion of the opening stanza reads:

a my herte a. &c

but this can hardly be treated as a serious use of punctuation. In No. 82, however, the point marks a fairly heavy pause:

yt on my fayth yf yow wel . belowf me

3. There are, finally, only two poems which rely solely upon the point and employ it both within the line and as an end-stop, poems No. 78 and No. 158. Of these No. 158 is moderately punctuated, the point being used four times in the poem's seven lines:

Dryven bye desire I dede this dede
to daunger my silf w^tout cause whye
to truste the vntrue not like to spede
to speke . and promise faithfullie
but nowe the proof dothe verifie
that who so trustithe or he kno.
Dothe hurte himself . and please his ffoo.

Nott's sophistication of this particular poem, especially of the final two lines, is ludicrous:

Driven by desire, I did this deed,
To danger myself without cause why;
To trust th'untrue, not like to speed;
To speak and promise faithfully.
But now the proof doth verify,
That, "Whoso trusteth ere he know,
"Doth hurt himself, and please his foe."

Foxwell amends this considerably although, of course, she does not return to the manuscript:

Dryven bye desire I dede this dede,
To daunger myself without cause whye,
To trust the untrue not lyke to spede,
To speke and promise faithfullie.
But now the proof dothe verifie,
That who so trustithe ere he kno,
Dothe hurte himself and please his ffoo.

Muir, in his version of the poem, removes the commas from lines 5 and 6, replaces the point by a semi-colon at line 4 and places a comma after "vntrue" in the middle of line 3. It will be noticed that all three editors agree to ignore the pause marked in the manuscript version after "speke" in line 4. What is lost sight of here is the character of the rhythm of that particular line

to speke . and promise faithfullie

The point marks quite a lengthy pause after which the second phrase has the force of an ironic after thought. Foxwell and Muir also ignore the similar pause which occurs in the final line.

The second poem in D which employs the point in both positions is No. 78, a poem by Surrey. This poem is very lightly punctuated, the point is used only twice in the 21 lines of the poem, in the last line of stanza 3:

alas howe offte in dremes I ssee
thous yees that were my ffoode
wyche ssumetyme soo dellyted me
that yet they do me good
wherew^t I wake w^t his retourne
whoosse absente flame dootht make me boren
but whan I ffynde the lake lorde . howe I mouren.

In both cases it is plain that the punctuation serves to mark the rhythmical and rhetorical phrasing and, especially in the first case (No. 158), has little of the grammatically grounded significance of modern punctuation. In general the use of the point here accords with its use in an early fifteenth-century copy of Nicholas Love's Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ, in which

it recognizes the general rhythmical make-up of the passage, indicating, whether to those reading privately or to others, the brief

pauses in sense and sound necessary for
the achievement of total effect ... (46)

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- (46) Elizabeth Zeeman, "Punctuation in An Early
Manuscript of Love's Mirror", Review of
English Studies, VII, 25 (Jan. 1956), 14.
-

Other remarks by Miss Zeeman upon the use of the point
in this earlier manuscript suggest the well-established
usage which lies behind the punctuation of D (and, as
will be seen, of E) :

The point is the most frequent mark of
punctuation and serves many purposes. From
the varied positions in which it occurs,
it appears that its function cannot be
described in terms of grammar and syntax
only. When it is found alone, it seems
to demand a pause, but not a long pause.
Thus it may separate phrase from phrase,
clause from clause, main statement from
qualifying clause, or it may end a sentence
... the point occupies positions which
would be taken, in our strictly grammatical
usage, by the comma, the semicolon, and the

full-stop; it also occupies positions
which we should leave unpunctuated. (47)

(47) Ibid, p.14.

C. The Parity between the Virgula and the Point.

There remains a fairly large group of poems in D which make use of both the virgula and point. An attempt to sub-categorise these would be of little value. The use of the virgula and of the point has already been illustrated and this does not change in the poems in which the two appear together. They only require renewed attention here with respect to their relative values; what these are taken to be is expressed in the heading above - the virgula and the point appear to be interchangeable to perform the same general functions and can be considered, therefore, generally equivalent. The poems which use both are listed in Table 6 and all that remains is to remark that the equivalence between the virgula and point is plainly illustrated in such a use as that to which they are put in poem No. 162 :

patiens for I have wrong /
 and dare not shew whereyn.
 patiens shalbe . my song
 sins truthe can no thing wyne
 patiens then for this fytt
 hereafter comis . not yett /

The use of the point in line 3 might be thought the error
 of a scribe but a comparison of line 3 and line 6 suggests
 that the pointing is significant and part of the pattern
 of the stanza: 2 lines and a broken line, 2 lines and a
 broken line. The poem is printed in Nott:

Patience! for I have wrong
 And dare not shew wherein;
 Patience shall be my song;
 Since Truth can nothing win.
 Patience then for this fit;
 Hereafter comes not yet.

Plainly this completely garbles the sense of the original.
 "Hereafter comes not yet" is a truism which rounds off
 Nott's stanza very neatly, but unfortunately the manu-
 script reading is not such as to give the sense 'The

hereafter comes not yet' as Nott suggests. The sense of the lines is that 'this fit does not come now but later' and hence the need to exercise patience. By way of comparison, the truistic use may be found in Alexander Montgomerie's poem "The Cherrie and the Slae" (ed. H. Harvey Wood, 1937) Stanza 43:

God speid zou, they leid zou,
That has not meikill wit:
Expell us, and tell us,
Heirefter comes not zit.

and also in one of the poems in the Blage manuscript (No. XLVI). This sense may well be thought to be present, but only as part of an ambiguity. Foxwell and Muir both follow Nott in destroying this ambiguity. In Foxwell the version is

Patiens for I have wrong,
And dare not shew whereyn,
Patiens shall be my song,
Sins truthe can no thing wyn.
Patiens for this fytt,
Here after comes not yett.

Muir replaces 'then' which has dropped out of line 5 (Foxwell), and adds a comma in the opening line after

"Patiens" and replaces Foxwell's point at the end of line 4 by a semi-colon. Again it must be noted that all of this editorial punctuation is unnecessary if not, in fact, harmful. For instance, the manuscript punctuation of line 3 suggests not only a statement about the character or purport of the song but also takes on something of the nature of an oath or an affirmation made to the song. This, however, may be fanciful.

A second example of the parity of virgula and point, this time in use within the line, may be found in No. 115 (the editorial version of which is taken from E):

that arte so cruell / cou^rd w^t the/
there is no grace . fro^u the that maye procede

In such cases the preference for the one form of punctuation rather than the other appears to be a matter indifferent, although in this last instance the point does appear to mark a slighter pause than the virgula.

Conclusion

There is sufficient evidence in D to suggest that

the strong pointing produced by the virgula and the point is being used to emphasise the essentially phrasal construction of the poetry. This, of course, reveals a habit of attending principally to phrases and only secondarily to lines, of building lines from phrases rather than from feet. As a consequence, judged as quantitative linear verse, it will often appear "hopelessly rough". There is little difficulty with verses employing only one phrase but in those which employ two or more the effect upon an ear attuned to classical prosody is that of a broken-backed line. Commenting upon two lines from Bale's King Johan cited by Saintsbury as examples of pseudo-alexandrines, Professor Harding has remarked that,

The effectiveness of this vigorous writing depends on our accepting the principle of a pause or rest between rhythmical units. This is what Saintsbury particularly disliked, as giving what he called the 'broken-backed line'. (48)

(48)

Harding, "The Rhythmical Intention in Wyatt's Poetry", p. 101.

This feature of early-Tudor poetry has not as yet been properly appreciated; critics have agreed, in general, that the infamous fourteener, for instance, has a broken back and have wondered why such a measure could ever have become as popular as it did in the middle sixteenth century. The answer is not, as has frequently been suggested, that mid-sixteenth century poets were peculiarly obtuse in matters of measure. An answer must be sought not in our own superiority but in a difference of habit, a difference in aural adjustment, such as is revealed not only by the fourteener but by the bulk of Tudor verse. Most early-Tudor verse suffers from the same 'ailment' as the fourteener, suffers, that is, from a broken back. One reason that this has not been obvious to critics is that modern punctuation does not (as, for instance, does the virgula) sufficiently emphasise the break between phrase and phrase and, furthermore, the comprehensive repunctuation of the poems by editors has hidden from critics the significance of so much of the manuscript punctuation.

It is highly probable that the importance of the caesura later in the century grew out of this characteristic of early-Tudor poetry. Futtonham's editors remark

that

It was a further proof of Art to secure that no indivisible polysyllable fell just where the rule prescribed a pause; a break, moreover, helped to organise the welter of syllables and gave some design to the interior of the line. Puttenham is dogmatic on this point. He prescribes exactly where the caesura must fall in every 'measure'. He exalts it into a test of Art: 'in euery long verse the Cesure ought to be kept precisely, if it were but to serue as a law to correct the licentiousnesse of rymers'. This heavy pause is to us a part of the obviousness of early-Elizabethan versification. ... Puttenham's words ... show that for the strong internal pause, as for the heavy final rhyme, there once existed a reason. (49)

(49)

Puttenham, p. lxviii.

But Puttenham understood that the short line did not require the pause;

In a verse of sixe sillables and vnder is
needefull no Cesure at all, because the
breath asketh no reliefe: yet if we giue
any Cesure, it is to make distinction of
sense more then for any thing else ... (50)

(50)
Puttenham, p.75.

A few examples from D will serve to illustrate this
phenomenon of the broken line and comparison with the
lines as edited by Nott, Foxwell and Muir will serve to
bring out the loss of emphasis and of purposefulness
which takes place when the virgula and point are inter-
preted in terms of modern punctuation. (Where lines
from the editions are not given they are either from
poems not by Wyatt or from poems the editorial version
of which is taken from E. Readings from P.L.P.L.S. are
not given.)

Thys infortune / or thys dysaventure

No. 46.

O very goste / that errest to and fro

No. 46.

for I leuyd eke / though I vnworthy were

No. 46.

nor what to seke / nor what to fynd

No. 49.

Nor what to seke nor what to fynd.

Foxwell.

Nor what to seke, nor what to fynd.

Nott and Muir.

nexste the foule nettle / rough and thycke

The rose wexeth soote / smoth and softe

No. 87.

brokin she hathe / & yet she bidith sure /

No. 104.

to the disdainefull./ her lyf she ledeth /

No. 104.

w^t faynid visage /. now sad now merye /

No. 107.

to serue / to suffer / & still to hold my peace

No. 119.

yn depe dispaire / & delye payne

boteles for boote crying to crave

to crave yn vayne /

No. 126.

In deep despair and deadly pain.
Bootless for boot, crying to crave;
To crave in vain.

Nott.

Yn depe dispaire and dedlye payne,
Beteles for boote, crying to crave
To crave yn vayne.

Foxwell.

Yn depe dispaire and dedlye payne,
Beteles for boote, crying to crave,
To crave yn vayne.

Muir.

She is the Rok . the ship am I
that Rok my dedelie ffoo /

No. 165.

She is the rock, the ship am I;
That rock my deadly foe,

Nott.

She is the rok, the ship ame I,
That rok my dedelie ffoo,

Foxwell.

She is the Rok, the shippe ame I,
That Rok my dedelie ffoo,

Muir.

My mothers maides. when they dyd sow or spin

No. 169.

To see the use of this broken backed line in the context of a whole stanza one final example has been chosen, a stanza from poem No. 47 which has already been considered above.

Itt lasty^tth not y^t stondes by change /
fancy doth change / fortune ys frayle /
both thes to plesse / the ways ys strange /
therfore me thynkes best to prevayle /
ther ys no way y^t ys so Just /
as trowgh to lode / the tother fayle /
And therto trust /

The versions of this stanza produced by Nott, Foxwell and Muir have been quoted and examined already (p. 86.).

There can be no mistake in this instance that the unit of construction is the phrase; it is significant that, as with so many of the poems, the last typographically complete unit of the stanza is not a line but a phrase: "And therto trust". This habit of phrasal construction, and not simply the possibility of a musical setting, is

in all probability what made the use of a refrain so popular.

The punctuation in D provides a clue as to how the rhythm of the poems is built up and, hence, as to how the poems are to be read. In English metrics the quantitative or classical convention which became dominant during the second half of the sixteenth century has insisted upon the line being taken as the basic complete unit of English verse and this has given rise to a misunderstanding of the rhythms of earlier poetry. In terms of the classical convention a great deal of this earlier poetry contains more than one metrical line per typographical line. For example, Skeat in his supplementary volume to the Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer prints the following 'virelai':

Alone walking, In thought pleyning,
And sore sighing, All desolate,
Me remembrebring Of my living,
My deth wishing Bothe erly and late. etc. (51)

(51) W.W. Skeat (ed.), Chaucerian and other Pieces
(Oxford, 1897), p. 448.

The typographical line here is "Alone walking, In
thought pleyning," but the metrical line - the clue
is provided not only by the punctuation but also by
the capitalisation - is "Alone walking," so that
metrically set out the poem would be

Alone walking,
In thought pleyning,
And sore sighing,
All desolate,
Me remembring
Of my living,
My deth wishing
Bothe erly and late.

There is a similar form in D in poem No. 16:

At most myscheffe
I suffer greffe
ffor off releffe
syns I have none
my lute & I
contynually
shall vs apply
to syghe & none

Both are stanzas of eight 4-syllable lines rhyming

AAABCCCB. If we set out Wyatt's poem as Skeat has set out the virelai we have the form

At most myscheffe I suffer greffe
ffor off releffe syns I have none
my lute & I contynually
shall vs apply to syghe & mone

or a stanza the measure of which is proximate to that of poem No. 30(D):

Sum tyme I syghe sumtyme I syng
sumtyme I lawghe sumtyme mornynge
as one in dowte thys ys my ssayyng
have I dysplesyd yow in any thyng

In a different measure, but revealing the same habit of verse construction we have Chaucer's own lines in "The Compleynt of Anelida the quene upon fals Arcite" (line 272 et seq.):

My swete foo, why do ye so, for shame?
And thenke ye that furthered be, your name,
 To love a newe, and been untrewe? nay!
And putte yow in sclaunder now and blame,
And do to me adversitee and grame,
 That love yow most, god, wel thou wost! alway? ⁽⁵²⁾

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- (52) W.W. Skeat (ed.), The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, I (Oxford, 1894), 375.
-

These examples clearly reveal the phrasal construction of early English poetry. They also show how, rhythmically, the single phrase comes to provide the basis for a longer line. The internal pauses which enable us to identify phrasally constructed verse will naturally lose a great deal of their importance in foot-counted verse where they become prosodic and not linguistic necessities; that is to say, they will be created to suit the needs of the artificer rather than recognised as an essential feature of phrasally constructed English speech.

There is a great deal of evidence other than the use of punctuation which indicates a habit of phrasal construction. Beside the large number of rhymed and alliterated phrases, e.g.

She that me lerneth to love, & suffre;
and will : that my trust, & lustes negligence
be rayned by reason ...

(E4)

there is, in many of the poems, a double 'line' scheme based upon rhyme. This scheme has been illustrated, but only in relation to the distinction between the rhythmical phrasing of a poem and its typographical lineation. What was there observed is, perhaps, more apparent when this rhythmical phrasing is emphasised by rhyme. The result is one rhyme scheme consistent with the typographical lineation and a more basic one arising from the poem's rhythmical phrasing. This is best seen in illustration. The typographical lineation of "Ffarewell, the rayn of crueltie" (E12) is

ffarewell the rayn of crueltie
 though that w^t pain my libertie
 dere have I boght: yet shall surete
 conduyt my thoght of Joyes nede

i.e. a rhyme scheme AAAB, but with the remaining three stanzas the rhyme scheme is AAAA. The rhyme scheme of the 'broken-backed' line however is

ffarewell the rayn
 of crueltie
 though that w^t pain
 my libertie
 dere have I boght:

yet shall surete
conduyt my thoght
of Joyes nede

i.e. a rhyme scheme ABABCBCD (in the other stanzas, ABABCBCB). The relationship between this stanza and the stanzas of "Alone walking" and "At most myscheffe" is simple.

The same double-rhyme scheme is to be observed in one of Wyatt's poems printed in The Court of Venus:

Dysdaine me not without desert
Nor leaue me not so sodeynly,
Sence wel ye wot that in my hart
I meane nothing but honesty,

Dysdayne me not.

(M 177)

(rhyme scheme ABABC):

Dysdaine me not
without desert
Nor leaue me not
so sodeynly,
Sence wel ye wot
that in my hart

I meane nothing but honesty,

Dysdayne me not.

(rhyme scheme ABACABCA).

There are many examples of the double-rhyme scheme in the Arundel manuscript, but one must suffice here:

Now all of Chaunge, must be my song
and from my bownd, now must I breake
Since shee so straunge, vnto my wronge
doth stoppe her ears, to heare me speake

(Hughey, No. 6)

(rhyme scheme ABAB). The phrasal rhyme scheme of this poem is revealed in the version of the poem in D:

now all of chaunge
must be my songe
and fr̄om mye bonde
nowe must I breke
sins she so strange
vnto my wrong
doth stopp̄ her eris
to to here me speke

(D 157)

(rhyme scheme ABCDABED).

There are a number of interesting examples in the Blage manuscript. Firstly, a slight difference in rhyme scheme may be noted between:

What wolde ye mor of me, your slav, Requyere
Then ffor to aske and haue that ye desyre?
Yet I Remaygne without recure.
I insuere ther ys no ffaythffull harte
That without cause causles that sufferth smart.

(No. XL11)

(rhyme scheme AABCC);

What wolde ye mor of me, your slav, Requyere
Then ffor to aske and haue that ye desyre?
Yet I Remaygne without recure.
I insuere
ther ys no ffaythffull harte
That without cause causles that sufferth smart.

(rhyme scheme AABBBCC). The difference between the following two stanzas is more pronounced (the second stanza of the poem is chosen, but only because the rhyme is truer);

Betrayed by trust and soo begyled,
By promes vnjust my name defyled;
Wherfore I graunt that I haue done amys.
Wyll I neuer do soo agayne, forgyue me this.

(No. XlII)

(rhyme scheme AABB)

Betrayed by trust
and soo begyled,
By promes vnjust
my name defyled;
Wherfore I graunt that I haue done amys.
Wyll I neuer do soo agayne, forgyue me this.

(rhyme scheme ABABCC).

In the final two examples the difference is very pronounced. Beginning with the less complicated example:

Myght I as well within my songe belaye
The thinge I wolde, as in my hart I maye,
Repentens shulde drawe frome those eyes
Salt tearis, with cryes, remorse, and grudge of
harte,
Causles by cause that I haue ssuffred smart.

(No. XLIX)

(rhyme scheme AABCC);

Myght I as well within my songe belaye
The thinge I wolde,
as in my hart I maye,
Repentens shulde
drawe frome those eyes
Salt tearis, with cryes,
remorce, and grudge of harte,
Causles by cause that I haue ssuffred smart.

(rhyme scheme ABABCCDD). In all of the examples chosen so far both rhyme schemes continue throughout the whole poem, but in the final example the double-rhyme scheme occurs only in the third stanza; it has been chosen for its complexity.

But yf youre wyll be in this case
To vphold me styll, what nedith that?
Seith ye or nay, my question was:
So long delay yt nedith not.
Yf I haue ye, than haue I that
That I haue sought to bryng to pas;
Yf I haue nay, yet reke I nat:
Where aught ys got, ther ys no lose.
(No. XIV)

(rhyme scheme ABABBBABA);

But yf youre wyll
 be in this case
 To vphold me Styll,
 what nedith that?
 Seith ye or nay,
 My question was:
 So long delay
 yt nedith not.
 Yf I haue ye,
 than haue I that
 That I haue sought
 to bryng to pas;
 Yf I haue nay,
 yet reke I nat:
 Where aught
 ys got,
 ther ys no lose.

(rhyme scheme ABACDBD / ABACDB / ABAC).

The reason for referring earlier to the phrasal
 rhyme-scheme as a more basic one than that of the typo-
 graphical line can be seen in the case of "Dysdaine me not
 without desert," "What wolde ye dor of me, your slav,
 Requyere" and "Myght I as well within my songe belaye"

where the phrasal rhyme-scheme is complete where that of the typographical line is incomplete. The existence of such double-rhyme schemes emphasises the habit of phrasal construction and the significance of the 'broken-backed' line revealed by the punctuation of the manuscripts.

In conclusion, therefore, it is to be admitted that if we treat the foot-counted line as the basic unit of early-Tudor poetry then the length of many lines must be considered intractable. It is, for instance, difficult to render the following as normal foot-counted lines:

My song y^u shalt ataine / to fynd y^t plesant place
where she doth lyve / by whome I lyve / may chaunce
the have this gce

But they produce quite a different affect if we dispense with the notion that they must be read as such lines and treat them instead as phrasally constructed and to be read in such a manner, e.g. :

My song y^u shalt ataine /
to fynd that plesant place
where she doth lyve /

by whome I lyve /

may chaunce the have this gce

The result is that instead of an almost rhythmically impossible poem we have one of some considerable rhythmical elegance. In brief, consideration of Wyatt's poems will disprove the contention that many of them are "hopelessly rough" and one of the keys to such a consideration is provided by the punctuation of the manuscripts. Finally, by observing the basic organisation of such poems many elements previously considered discordant will be found to have a necessary part to play in the poetry. The native alliterative strain, for example, will be found to add balance. It is a feature which early-Tudor poetry shares with Middle English poetry and one which is selected for special mention by Brook (53)

(53) G.L. Brook, The Harley Lyrics (Manchester, 1948), p.5.

as relating the Harley lyrics to such very early lyrics as "Fowles in þe frith" (MS Douce 139, f.5r) and "Mirie it is while sumer ilast" (MS Rawlinson G22, f.1v) both

of which belong to the early thirteenth century. It is well, perhaps, to keep such things in mind in view of the stress which will later be placed upon Wyatt's English roots. Alliteration of the kind met with in Wyatt is common in Chaucer and in the poets of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century. In the early-Tudor period and throughout the sixteenth century it came in for much adverse criticism, usually under the charge of "hunting the letter". But the more level-headed critics inveighed rather against "ouermuch repetition of some one letter" (54)

(54)

T. Wilson, The Art of Rhetorick (ed. G. H. Mair, Oxford, 1909), p. 167.

than against alliteration in principle. It was from the attempt to render the whole line without pause that alliteration was made to appear raucous, but we should read alliterative verse not in a headlong rush -

Sum tyme I syghe^æ sumtyme I syng

or

Fair is foul and foul is fair

but with more dignity, poise and intelligence -

Sum tyme I syghe

sumtyme I syng

- as indeed we generally do when reading Shakespeare's line. And so, by allowing our intelligence to guide us when our prosody deserts us and by attending a little more closely to the punctuation of the poems and the principles this seems to require, we discover a rhythmical basis for early-Tudor poetry which will permit us to reject at least two fundamental criticisms which have been levelled against it: firstly, the criticism that its measures are "hopelessly rough" and, secondly, that it is made even harsher by its frequent reliance upon alliteration.

Chapter Three

The Punctuation of the Egerton Manuscript

1. Tables and Analyses.

The Egerton manuscript is a far more complicated document than the Devonshire manuscript from the point of view of punctuation. However, the basic pattern so much more easily observed in D is maintained in E and can be seen supporting the sophistications of its more particular pointing. It is not intended to examine all the punctuation which is to be met with in E, but simply to tabulate and analyse it and then to direct attention to signs which suggest that the same basic principle of distribution is observed in E as is to be observed in D.

Table 1. Unpunctuated Poems.

Of the 128 poems contained in the manuscript 26 are without any form of punctuation whatsoever:

Nos. 11,	Nos. 26,	Nos. 43,	Nos. 70,
14,	29,	45,	74,
16,	36,	47,	92,
19, 138	37,	53,	94,
20, 145	40,	54,	98,
22,	42,	60,	101,
		66,	104a.

Table 2. The Frequency of Punctuation.

102 of the poems in the manuscript contain some form of punctuation :

1. 34:15	13. 1:14	32. 2:14	51. 5:7
2. 31:15	15. 3:14	33. 2:14	52. 2:7
3. 33:14	17. 1:14	34. 5:14	55. 1:24
4. 30:14	18. 2:15	35. 5:12	56. 4:20
5. 58:30	21. 2:15	38. 4:35	57. 11:8
6. 20:10	23. 7:21	39. 1:21	58. 1:28
6a. 3:4	24. 6:21	41. 1:24	59. 1:14
7. 31:14	25. 1:14	44. 10:8	61. 1:36
8. 18:8	27. 5:14	46. 6:8	62. 9:8
9. 272:125	28. 4:14	48. 14:8	63. 6:8
10. 28:14	30. 1:14	49. 5:14	64. 9:8
12. 4:16	31. 2:14	50. 1:8	65. 1:35

67.	8:8	83.	13:28	99.	3:22	113.	25:58
68.	1:28	84.	3:14	100.	3:48	114.	6:32
69.	1:40	85.	12:8	102.	5:42	115.	28:76
71.	13:8	86.	4:8	103.	8:36	116.	15:32
73.	1:20	87.	1:24	104.	4:8	117.	35:70
75.	1:35	88.	1:20	105.	4:14	118.	14:32
76.	3:36	89.	33:91	106.	70:97	119.	34:82
77.	3:24	90.	1:60	107.	1:8	120.	17:32
78.	5:52	91.	4:24	108.	3:8	121.	40:91
79.	7:8	93.	1:41	109.	15:20	122.	5:32
80.	2:8	95.	1:41	110.	4:8	123.	16:31
81.	19:112	96.	15:8	111.	2:14	124.	10:32
82.	2:25	97.	2:27	112.	22:72	125.	35:49
						126.	83:77

Table 3. The Frequency of the Virgula.

2.	1:15	63.	1:8	86.	4:8	108.	1:8
12.	1:16	64.	2:8	87.	1:24	109.	7:20
17.	1:14	67.	4:8	88.	1:20	112.	13:72
24.	6:21	68.	1:28	89.	13:91	113.	19:58
31.	1:14	72.	1:24	90.	2:60	114.	4:32
39.	1:21	75.	1:35	91.	1:24	115.	20:76
44.	6:8	76.	1:36	93.	1:41	116.	12:32
46.	3:8	77.	1:24	95.	1:41	117.	24:70
48.	8:8	78.	3:52	96.	15:8	118.	6:32
49.	2:14	79.	3:8	97.	2:27	119.	24:82
52.	2:7	80.	1:8	99.	3:22	120.	10:32
56.	1:20	81.	8:112	100.	1:48	121.	26:91
57.	7:8	82.	2:25	102.	4:42	122.	2:32
58.	1:28	83.	5:28	103.	3:36	123.	6:31
59.	1:14	84.	1:14	105.	4:14	124.	6:32
62.	4:8	85.	5:8	106.	49:97	125.	23:49
						126.	65:77

A number of virgulas have been cancelled (/) and others have had superimposed upon them a later system of punctuation (./ /, ./ /, :/ ,/); these have been retained in the transcript and are listed in Table 8.

Table 4. The Frequency of the Colon.

1.	14:15	15.	2:14	38.	3:35	73.	1:20
2.	9:15	18.	2:15	48.	3:8	76.	3:36
3.	11:14	21.	2:15	49.	3:14	77.	1:24
4.	10:14	23.	3:21	50.	1:8	78.	3:52
5.	23:30	27.	5:14	51.	5:7	81.	10:112
6.	8:10	28.	4:14	56.	1:20	83.	8:28
7.	12:14	30.	1:14	57.	1:8	84.	2:14
8.	14:8	31.	1:14	61.	1:36	89.	11:91
9.	106:125	32.	2:14	62.	1:8	91.	2:24
10.	12:14	33.	2:14	63.	1:8	106.	1:97
12.	2:16	34.	5:14	65.	1:35	109.	1:20
13.	1:14	35.	1:12	69.	1:40	123.	1:31
				71.	1:8	126.	1:77

In the manuscript it is difficult to distinguish between the cancelled virgula and the cancelled colon and it has been presumed that $\cancel{/}$ (see Table 8) generally marks a cancelled colon.

Table 5. The Frequency of the Point.

1.	4:15	25.	1:14	77.	1:24	113.	5:58
2.	3:15	35.	4:12	79.	2:8	114.	2:32
3.	3:14	38.	1:35	80.	1:8	115.	7:76
4.	5:14	44.	3:8	85.	4:8	116.	3:32
5.	8:30	46.	1:8	91.	1:24	117.	10:70
6.	2:10	48.	2:8	102.	1:42	118.	8:32
7.	8:14	56.	2:20	103.	3:36	119.	10:82
8.	1:8	57.	2:8	104.	4:8	120.	5:32
9.	42:125	62.	4:8	106.	17:97	121.	14:91
10.	4:14	63.	4:8	107.	1:8	122.	3:32
12.	1:16	64.	3:8	108.	2:8	123.	7:31
15.	1:14	67.	2:8	109.	4:20	124.	3:32
23.	2:21	71.	1:8	111.	2:14	125.	11:49
				112.	8:72	126.	18:79

Table 6. The Frequency of the Comma.

1.	15:15	6a.	3:4	64.	1:8
2.	14:15	7.	11:14	71.	3:8
3.	15:14	8.	3:8	89.	1:91
4.	14:14	9.	113:125	100.	1:48
5.	23:30	10.	11:14	103.	1:36
6.	10:10	48.	1:8	110.	4:8

Table 7. The Frequency of the Question Mark.

2.	3:15	44.	1:8	106.	3:97
4.	1:14	46.	2:8	109.	3:20
5.	2:30	79.	1:8	120.	2:32
9.	2:125	89.	8:91	123.	2:31
23.	2:21	100.	1:48	124.	1:32

Table 8. The Frequency of Other Punctuation.

<u>a. brackets</u>	<u>b. ,/</u>	<u>c. /</u>
9. 2:125	1. 1:15	3. 2:14
55. 1:24	64. 1:8	5. 1:30
103. 1:36	71. 2:8	9. 3:125
112. 1:72	85. 2:8	10. 1:14
115. 1:76		
117. 1:70		
<u>d. </u>	<u>e. :/</u>	<u>f. ./</u>
3. ^{4.} 1:14	64. 1:8	57. 1:8
5. 1:30	71. 2:8	64. 1:8
9. 2:125	85. 1:8	113. 1:58

Other forms not given above: /, (9. 1:125; 71. 3:8);
 ,/ (3. 1:14; 9. 1:125); /. (67. 2:8; 81. 1:112).

See note to Table 4.

An Analysis of Table 3.

A. Poems using the virgula simply to terminate the poem:

Nos. 17, 58, 75, 87, 88, 93, 95 and also

No. 31 (which also employs :)

Nos. 56 and 77 (which also employ . and :).

B. Poems using the virgula simply to terminate the stanza:

No. 76 (which also employs :).

C. Poems using the virgula simply to terminate the line:

No. 72 and also

No. 62 (which also employs : and .),

No. 64 (which also employs , and ,/ and :/ and ./ and .)).

D. Poems using the virgula simply within the line:

Nos. 24, 39, 52, 59, 68, 86, 97, 99 and 105, also

No. 2 (which also employs ? and , and : and .),

No. 100 (which also employs ? and ,),

No. 103 (which also employs () and . and ,),

No. 115 (which also employs () and .),

No. 120 (which also employs ? and .),

Nos. 49, 78, 83 and 84 (which also employ :),
Nos. 12, 63, 91 and 126 (which also employ : and .),
Nos. 80, 108, 114, 116, 118, 122 and 124 (which also
employ .).

E. Poems using the virgula within the line and to
terminate the line:

Nos. 82, 90 and 96, also

No. 48 (which also employs , and : and .),
No. 57 (which also employs : and . and ./),
No. 67 (which also employs /. and .),
No. 81 (which also employs : and /.),
No. 85 (which also employs ,/ and :/ and .),
No. 89 (which also employs : and ? and ,),
No. 113 (which also employs ./ and .),
Nos. 112 and 117 (which also employ . and ()),
Nos. 44, 46 and 79 (which also employ ? and .),
Nos. 106, 109 and 123 (which also employ : and . and ?),
Nos. 102, 119, 121 and 125 (which also employ .).

An Analysis of Table 4.

A. There are no poems in E using the colon simply to
terminate the poem

Poems

B. Neither are there any poems using the colon simply to terminate the stanza.

C. Poems using the colon simply to terminate the line:

No. 71 (which also employs ,/ and :/ and , and /, and .),

No. 106 (which also employs . and ? and /),

Nos. 109 and 123 (which also employ / and . and ?).

D. Poems using the colon simply within the line:

Nos. 13, 21, 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 34, 50, 51, 61, 65, 69, 73 and also

No. 23 (which also employs . and ?),

No. 48 (which also employs / and , and .),

No. 57 (which also employs / and . and ./),

No. 81 (which also employs / and /.),

No. 89 (which also employs / and ? and ,),

Nos. 31, 49, 76, 78, 83, and 84 (which also employ /),

Nos. 12, 56, 62, 63, 77, 91 and 126 (which also employ . and /).

E. Poems using the colon within the line and to terminate the line:

No. 18 and also

No. 1 (which also employs , and . and ,/),

No. 2 (which also employs ? and , and . and /),

No. 3 (which also employs , and ; and / and ,/ and .),

No. 4 (which also employs , and . and ?),

No. 5 (which also employs , and . and / and ; and ?),

No. 9 (which also employs , and . and ; and () and ? and / and /, and ,/),

No. 10 (which also employs , and . and /),

Nos. 6, 7 and 8 (which also employ , and .).

An Analysis of Table 5.

A. Poems using the point simply to terminate the poem:

No. 8 (which also employs : and ,),

No. 71 (which also employs ,/ and :/ and , and : and /,).

B. Poems using the point simply to terminate the stanza:

Nos. 114 and 122 (which also employ /).

C. Poems using the point simply to terminate the line:

Nos. 25, 107 and 111, also

- No. 1 (which also employs , and : and ,/),
No. 2 (which also employs ? and , and : and /),
No. 3 (which also employs , and ; and : and /),
No. 4 (which also employs , and : and ?),
No. 5 (which also employs , and : and / and ; and ?),
No. 6 (which also employs , and :),
No. 10 (which also employs , and : and /),
No. 38 (which also employs :),
No. 48 (which also employs , and : and /),
No. 57 (which also employs / and : and ./),
No. 64 (which also employs / and , and ,/ and :/ and ./),
No. 67 (which also employs / and /.),
No. 85 (which also employs ./ and / and :/),
Nos. 106 and 109 (which also employ / and : and ?),
Nos. 44, 46, 79 and 124 (which also employ / and ?),
Nos. 56, 62 and 63 (which also employ / and :),
Nos. 108, 116 and 121 (which also employ /).

D. Poems using the point simply within the line:

- No. 23 (which also employs : and ?),
No. 103 (which also employs / and () and ,),

Nos. 15 and 35 (which also employ :),

Nos. 80 and 102 (which also employ /),

Nos. 12, 77, 91 and 126 (which also employ : and /).

E. Poems using the point within the line and to terminate the line:

No. 104, also

No. 7 (which also employs : and ,),

No. 9 (which also employs : and , and ; and () and ? and / and /, and ,/),

No. 113 (which also employs / and ./),

No. 120 (which also employs ? and /),

No. 123 (which also employs / and ? and :),

Nos. 112, 115 and 117 (which also employ / and ()),

Nos. 118, 119 and 125 (which also employ /).

An Analysis of Table 6.

A. and B. There are, naturally enough, no poems in E which make use of the comma simply to terminate the poem or the stanza.

C. Poems using the comma simply to terminate the line:

No. 64 (which also employs / and ,/ and :/ and ./ and .).

D. Poems using the comma simply within the line:

Nos. 6a and 110, also

No. 4 (which also employs : and . and ?),

No. 48 (which also employs . and : and /),

No. 89 (which also employs : and ? and /),

No. 100 (which also employs ? and /),

No. 103 (which also employs () and /),

Nos. 6, 7 and 8 (which also employ : and .).

E. Poems using the comma within the line and to terminate the line: (but

No. 1 (which also employs : and . and ,/),

No. 2 (which also employs ? and : and . and /),

No. 3 (which also employs ; and : and / and ,/ and .).

No. 5 (which also employs ? and : and . and / and ;),

No. 9 (which also employs : and . and ; and () and ? and / and /, and ,/),

No. 10 (which also employs : and /),

No. 71 (which also employs ,/ and :/ and : and /, and .).

An Analysis of Table 8.

a. No consideration of the use of brackets is necessary.

b. Poems using ,/

No. 1, within the line (but also employs , and : and .),
No. 64, to terminate the line (but also employs / and ,
and :/ and ./ and .).

No. 71, to terminate the line (but also employs :/ and
, and /, and .).

No. 85, within the line and to terminate the line (but
also employs / and :/ and .).

c. Poems using /

No. 3, within the line (but also employs , and ; and
: and ,/ and .),

No. 5, within the line (but also employs , and : and
. and ; and ?),

No. 9, within the line (but also employs : and , and
. and () and ? and /, and ,/ and ;),

No. 10, within the line (but also employs , and : and .).

d. Poems using ;

No. 3, within the line (but also employs , and : and / and ,/ and .),

No. 5, within the line (but also employs , and : and / and . and ?),

No. 9, within the line (but also employs : and , and . and () and ? and / and ,/ and ,/).

e. Poems using :/

No. 64, within the line (but also employs / and , and ,/ and ./ and .),

No. 71, to terminate the line (but also employs ,/ and , and : and /, and ..).

No. 85, to terminate the line (but also employs ,/ and / and .).

f. Poems using ./

No. 57, to terminate the poem (but also employs / and : and .),

No. 64, within the line (but also employs / and , and ,/ and :/ and .),

No. 113, to terminate the line (but also employs . and /).

Table 9.

Poems using / as the only means of punctuation:

**Nos. 17, 24, 39, 52, 58, 59, 68, 72, 82, 86, 87, 88,
90, 93, 95, 96, 97, 99 and 105.**

Poems using : as the only means of punctuation:

**Nos. 13, 18, 21, 27, 28, 30, 32-34, 50, 51, 61, 65,
69, 73.**

Poems using . as the only means of punctuation:

Nos. 25, 104, 107 and 111.

Poems using / and . as the only means of punctuation:

Nos. 80, 102, 108, 114, 116, 118, 119, 121, 122, 124, 125.

Poems using / and : as the only means of punctuation:

Nos. 31, 49, 76, 78, 83, 84.

Poems using : and . as the only means of punctuation:

Nos. 15, 35, 38.

Poems using / and . and : as the only means of punctuation:

Nos. 12, 56, 62, 63, 77, 91, 126.

2. The Function of Punctuation.

In E the colon has largely ousted the point to come to share with the virgula in the task of providing the primary means of punctuation. The colon must, therefore, be added to the virgula and point as an essential feature of the basic organisation of the punctuation of the D and E manuscripts.

thy

(i) In E the parity between the virgula and point illustrated in D is extended to the colon as here -

Of one I stricken with dynt of lightening
blynded with the stroke / erryng here & there
so call I for helpe : I not when ne where

No. 49

Nott, Foxwell and Muir have replaced both signs by commas which, although they tend to make the rhythmically important pause insignificant, do stress the equivalence which obtains between the virgula and the colon in these particular lines.

(ii) The rhythmical importance of this punctuation has already been considered in examining the punctuation

of D; however, additional illustrations from E will perhaps serve to underline earlier observations.

a. In the following lines from poem No. 89 the colon and the virgula mark pauses which require emphasis:

In this also se you be not Idell

thy nece : thy cosyn : thy sister or thy doghter

if she be faire / if handsam by her myddell

Yf thy better hath her love besoght her

avaunce his cause & he shall help thy nede

it is but love : turne it to a lawghter /

With the exception of Muir who retains the final colon, none of the editors attempt to reproduce this punctuation

b. Elsewhere the virgula and point mark out the rhythmical shifts by means of which the poem creates the movements of self-debate; for example, David, pondering the Christian mysteries, pulls himself up short,

as who myght say . who hath exprest this thing?

I syhner I / what have I sayd alas?

yt goddes goodnes wold w^tin my song entrete

let me agayne cōsidre and repete.

No. 120

Nott, of course, seizes upon the opportunity to exclaim:

"I sinner! I! what have I said? alas!

a line which Foxwell and Muir punctuate with two and three commas respectively and a question mark.

c. Thirdly, the punctuation serves to emphasise the contrariness or contradictoriness of what is being reflected upon and, associated with this, to mark general reversals of statement and conjunctions of apparent opposites. The following exemplify this use of punctuation in E:

sonest he spedeth, that moost can fain.

true meanyng hert / is had in disdayn.

No. 2.

The disjunction created by the virgula is rhythmical and meaningful, by material implication it represents³ the disjunction of desert and reward. All three editors, however, leave the line unpunctuated. We find a similar reversal of nature, or of what we would naturally expect, in No. 13 (significantly this is the only punctuated line of the⁴ poem):

yf burning a farrere of : and frefeing nere

Unlike the other two editors, Muir does not acknowledge the rhythmical stress provided by the pause and so leaves the line unpunctuated. The remaining examples all fit roughly into the same category as the last.

I love an othre^u : and thus I hate my self

No. 27

(Nott and Muir substitute a comma for the more emphatic colon);

that spurreth^u with^u fyer : and bridilleth wth Ise

No. 30

(again, this is significantly the only use of punctuation in the poem. Foxwell ignores the colon completely and Nott and Muir replace it by a comma);

They fle from me / that sometyne did me seke

No. 39

(once again, the only use of punctuation in this poem. Nott and Muir ignore the virgula and Foxwell substitutes a comma for it);

Therefore^u farewell my liff : my deth^u

No. 56

(the editors replace the colon by a comma and Nott also inserts a comma after "farewell");

these plesant wordes / now bitter to my mynd

No. 113.

(Muir and Foxwell ignore the virgula and Nott substitutes a comma for it). In all the examples cited the pause marked by the colon and the virgula plays an emphatic and meaningful part in the line in which they appear. Nott, Foxwell and Muir generally diminish or ignore this functional importance of the punctuation in the manuscript version of the poems.

(iii) In every instance the quantitative affect is that of a broken-backed line. The application of this kind of rhythmically effective punctuation acts like a brake upon the pace of a line, halting the movement and creating fresh impetus:

now ioy / now woo / if they my chere distayne

No. 105

(Foxwell substitutes a comma for the first virgula and ignores the second. Nott and Muir substitute a comma for each virgula). The same principle but with the reverse effect is also to be met with :

with fayned visage, now sad, now mery.

No. 3.

(iv) This check upon the movement of the line is frequently used to counteract the affects of alliteration:

his rayne is rage . resistans vaylyth none

No. 104.

(Nott substitutes a semi-colon for the point and Foxwell and Muir a comma);

my plesure past / my present payne /

No. 106.

(Foxwell replaces the first virgula by a comma and ignores the second; Nott and Muir replace both by commas);

of peple frayle / palais / pompe / & ryches /

No. 113

(Nott substitutes commas for the first three virgulas and a point for the last; Foxwell follows Nott but prints a semi-colon instead of a point; Muir replaces

each virgula by a comma);

fforsak me not / be not farre from me gone

rtm.

No. 117.

(Foxwell substitutes a comma for the virgula and Muir a semi-colon. Nott punctuates the line :

Forsake me not! be not far from me gone!)

The baneful affects of much alliterative verse arise from the failure to attend to the pausing or broken utterance required by it and well-indicated above in the use of the punctuation. It is misleading to think of the above expressions as 'lines' without distinguishing between the rhythmical 'line' -

my plesure past /

my present payne /

- and the 'accidental' typographical line -

my plesure past / my present payne /

As has already been seen in the previous chapter the two are not necessarily the same in this kind of poetry and a great deal of the confusion about the rhythm of such verse probably arises out of the tacit equation of the rhythmical with the typographical line.

(vi) Finally, a similar use of punctuation frequently accompanies the presentation of an itinary, as for instance in poem No. 9:

thorough dyvers regions:
thorough desert wodes : & sharp high mountaignes:
thoroughe frowarde people : & straitte pressions:
thorrough rocky sees : over hilles, & playnes:
with very travaill, & labourous paynes:
alwayes in trouble, & in tediousnes:
in all errour, and daungerous distres.

and No. 62:

by see by land ; by water and by wynd.

and No. 115:

my fawt / my fere / my filthines I say
in mete / in drynk^y / in breth y^t man doth blow
In slepe / in wach / In fretting styll w^t in

Rhythmically speaking these last two examples from the Psalms are almost identical to the line quoted earlier:

now ioy / now woo / if then my chere distayne

As has been remarked already, it is best to think of each such typographical line not as a verse line but

rather in terms appropriate to its phrasing:

in mete/

in drynk/

in breth y^t man deth blow

In slepe/

in wach/

In fretting styll w^t in

Immediately the 'family' characteristics shared by the Psalms and the slightest of the lyrics will be seen. There is, at least in principle, no rhythmical gap in Wyatt's work.

(vii) Having already emphasised certain features of the use of punctuation in the D manuscript it has been unnecessary to cover the same ground in considering E. With respect to E it has only been thought necessary to point to the essentially similar use of punctuation in E and D. The punctuation in both manuscripts is directed by certain rhythmical considerations and these are restricted in number and an attempt has been made to list these and to illustrate them. E is, of course, a more complex manuscript than D, at least in so far as

its pointing is in question, but even where punctuation is at its heaviest the rhythmical intent remains plain enough. Rhythmically what it enables us to perceive is the phrasal construction of the verse and the affect of a broken-backed line which this produces in all but the very shortest lines. Poem No. 1 in E may serve by way of finally illustrating the presence of this basic rhythmical pattern, marked out by the pointing, in a poem in which the punctuation has been sophisticated. In this poem the commas are later additions, but it is possible that in some cases they have been imposed upon the original pointing and in one case, in the penultimate line, the imposition is apparent in the companionship of comma and virgula.

Behold, love, thy power how she dispiseth;
 my great payne how litle she regardeth.
 the holy oth, wherof she taketh no cure:
 broken she hath : and yet, she bideth sure,
 right at her ease : & litle she dredeth.
 wepened thou art : and she vnarmed sitteth:
 to the disdaynfull, her liff she ledeth:
 to me spitefull, wthoute cause, or mesure.

Behold, love:

I ame in held : if pitie the meveth:
 goo bend thy bowe : that stony hertes breketh:
 and, with some stroke, revenge the displeasure
 of y^{ee}, & him : that sorrowe doeth endure:
 and, as his lorde, / the lowly, entreat
 Behold, love.

It will also be seen that the basic punctuation
 (rhythmically, the key punctuation) is still that of
 the colon and virgula despite the attempt to sophisticate.
 Furthermore, the occurrence of this punctuation within
 the line marks the point (the pause) at which the line
 breaks, or has to be broken, if we are to render the
 rhythm correctly. To put the matter in another way,
 the key punctuation distinguishes the rhythmical lines
 of the poem from the typographical ones. In brief,
 following up the clue which is provided by the basic
 punctuation of the manuscripts, we are led to postulate
 an understanding of rhythmical organisation based upon
 the primacy of the phrase and generally indifferent to
 foot-counted metrics. The occurrence of foot-counted
 smoothness in this kind of verse has to be counted
 fortuitous.

Chapter Four

An Empirical Approach

The manuscripts themselves provide a certain amount of evidence to which we may turn for assistance in attempting to reach some understanding of Wyatt's rhythm. But although it has been necessary to present the evidence in the most unequivocal manner possible, the manuscript evidence is not in itself conclusive. Indeed, in itself that evidence only assumes the importance which has been given to it when the more informal approach towards rhythmical matters proposed throughout is preferred to that adopted by Saintsbury, Foxwell and Padelford. In the last resort, therefore, such a matter of preference has to be decided in the course of persuasive argument, demonstration and by the accumulation of additional, reinforcing evidence.

One such piece of evidence is provided by the study of Wyatt which introduces Dr. Tillyard's selection of Wyatt's poems. As will appear, Dr. Tillyard's essay

perpetuates those beliefs which have previously been expressed by Saintsbury, Foxwell and Padelford and which have dominated both English verse and English criticism of verse from the seventeenth century well into the present. But it is necessary before considering them and Dr. Tillyard's reliance upon them to re-emphasise the fact that these beliefs have not always been dominant. Puttenham, as has been seen, thought of himself as something of an innovator in this respect and, despite the implications of Saintsbury's remark, there seems good reason to believe that various lines of rhythmic possibility remained open throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth century even though regularity and order was being sought in italianate and classical cultivation, preached by Elizabethan critics and widely affected by the poets themselves. Puttenham's The Arte of English Poesie represents an initial stage of that "revolution in the prosodic apprehension of English metres" (Puttenham, p. liii) which was ultimately to result in "the Miltonic convention";

To the early-Tudor reliance on pause and rhyme succeeded an excessive feeling for mechanical internal regularity of a

ti tum ti tum pattern, still strong
in pause and heavy in rhyme. (55)

(55)
ibid, p.lxxii.

But for all this artful cultivation Sidney was still capable of achieving an occasional greater freedom and, more spectacularly, the metaphysical poets appear to have been en rapport with a less cultivated and more energetic vernacular rhythm. Indeed, it does not appear to have been until poetry came to be written under the awesome influence of John Milton, in "the Miltonic convention" as Professor Harding has called it, that the question of classical regularity was accepted as settled and the unquestioned supremacy of it to which Saintsbury referred was finally assured. There is some indication of the nature of Milton's achievement in this respect in the following quotation from Wren's book The English Language:

Milton, in the preface to his Paradise Lost, speaks of his own blank verse as observing 'fit quantity of syllable' though his real intention should have

been on the appropriate arrangement
of stress. (56)

(56) C.L. Wrenn, The English Language
(Oxford, 1949), p.46.

Wrenn, writing as a linguist, is assuming that a poet writing in English should exploit the resources of that language, in this case its rhythm. As a consequence of the adulation of Milton, 'fit quantity of syllable' was accepted as the sine qua non of verse by the succeeding centuries. The unnatural handling of our English usage which this view so frequently occasions is largely due to the fact that

English syllables have not in natural speech any consistent relation to each other in quantity. Sensitive ears have always recognized this; it has now been proved for us by recording with instruments more precise in stating, if not necessarily in detecting, variations in length than the human ear. (57)

(57) C. Ing, Elizabethan Lyrics (1951), p.195.

A fact which was well enough understood by Puttenham when, in denying the possibility of introducing classical prosody into English verse, he gave as the reason

the euident motion and stirre, which is
perceiued in the sounding of our wordes
not alwayes egall: for some aske
longer, some shorter time to be
vttered in. (58)

(58) Puttenham, p.67.

The response upon which most criticisms of Wyatt's rhythm depends is not only ill considered, therefore, but positively baneful in crudifying our perception of the rhythm of the English language. Thus, although in other matters it contains many acute insights, Dr. Tillyard's study is vitiated by remaining within the narrow confines of (what amounts to) the rhythmical stock response of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. We find "the Miltonic convention" still very much alive in this evaluation of Wyatt's sonnets:

Of the thirty-one sonnets, twenty may be criticised in the same way as the rondeaus. They are early works ... rough, interspersed with an occasional line of poetry. (59)

- (59) E.M.W. Tillyard, The Poetry of Sir Thomas Wyatt (2nd impression, 1949), p. 27.
-

The notion that it is sensible to break down a poem into lines (why not into words?), to select the occasional 'good' line and to reject the intervening 'bad' lines is itself part of the classical habit or convention. Furthermore, Dr. Tillyard has previously implied that Wyatt's work is rough when he is writing English verses and poetry when he leaves off doing so. The "English verses" here are, I believe, the English numbers which Wyatt along with Surrey is supposed to have reformed; they are, in other words, verses which lie outside 'the Miltonic convention'. (60)

Only once in the rondeaus does Wyatt leave off writing English verses and

create poetry, namely in the last lines
of 'What no, perdie!'

(60) Tillyard, pp. 26, 27.

The lines which Dr. Tillyard then goes on to quote are

Though that with pain I do procure
For to forget that once was pure,
Within my heart shall still that thing,
Unstable unsure and wavering,
Be in my mind without recure?
What no, perdie!

And we are left to speculate as to what exactly it is
in these particular lines that has earned Dr. Tillyard's
approbation. Certainly it cannot be a profundity of
thought or of imagery, metaphor or diction. Indeed,
E.K. Chambers could aptly have quoted the last lines
of 'What no, perdie.' to illustrate his contention
that Wyatt

makes little use of visual imagery.

His range of metaphor is restricted

and rather conventional. For the most part he is content with the plainest of words, and relies for his effect upon his rhythmical accomplishment. (61)

(61) E.K. Chambers, Sir Thomas Wyatt and Some Collected Studies (1933), p. 129.

Such speculations lead to the conclusion that it is in virtue of their "rhythmical accomplishment" that the lines above are selected for special mention. Truly the rhythm of the lines is straightforward enough and, not inappropriately, recalls to mind Tennyson's

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs fir ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.

In both cases the rhythm is obvious, metronomic in quality and rapidly becomes no more than a 'sing-song' chant quite indifferent to the content of the poems.

Metronomic rhythm, as will be seen, are put to far better use than this by Wyatt, and one of Wyatt's chief shortcomings (although this is not being fair to the magnitude of his achievement) is, as C.S. Lewis too forcibly remarks (62)

(62) C.S. Lewis, English Literature in the Sixteenth Century (Oxford, 1954,) p.225.

to be located in the exigencies of this type of rhythm.

However, despite the inaptness of the illustration, Dr. Tillyard's distinction between Wyatt's "English verses" and his "poetry" might serve to make a valid critical point if taken in a spirit totally different from that intended - the stress being placed upon "English" and the term "poetry" being understood to refer to that cultivation of the language proposed by Puttenham. But the spirit in which we are intended to take the distinction is one in which the superiority of 'smooth numbers' would naturally be assumed. This assumption continually betrays Dr. Tillyard into the kind of insensitive judgment illustrated earlier. So it is that Dr. Tillyard

having referred us to Barclay's "The Ship of Fools"
goes on to say,

Even the earliest of Wyatt's rondeaus
are metrically better than this, but
the existence of such writing must have
made him initially less critical and more
tolerant of harshness. The opening of this
sonnet, for instance, is hopelessly rough:

Each man me telleth I change most my devise;
And on my faith, me think it good reason,
To change propose like after the season;
For in every case, to keep still one guise
Is meet for them that would be taken wise. (63)

(63) Tillyard, p.19.

There is nothing at all "hopelessly rough" about the
lines once the attempt to reduce Wyatt's rhythm to
metrical feet has been abandoned. In deference to
a foot-searching scansion undoubtedly the lines will
appear rough, but even then this does not imply that

they are bad or that they are, in measure, inappropriate to the matter. However, it appears almost certain upon reading the lines that we have to assume the freer rhythms of speech. English speech rhythms, those presumably to which Wrenn refers in using the term 'stress', are phrasal and as a consequence (what Tillyard calls) "English verse" tends to fall into phrasal units separated by pauses, the values of which depend upon the general significance of the communication. As has already been seen this principle is observed by Wyatt; it is also strikingly observed by Donne and Hopkins, (64)

(64) Skelton's editor, Phillip Henderson, has commented upon the relevance of Hopkins to a consideration of early-Tudor poetry. The 'Skeltonic', he has noted, has its mainspring in

the accentual rhythm of ordinary English speech - the sprung rhythm which Gerard Manley Hopkins 'discovered' in the middle of the nineteenth century and used with such magnificent effect.

P. Henderson (ed.), The Complete Poems
of John Skelton (1948), p.v.

so that anyone fairly competent at reading these poets is likely to have little difficulty in reading Wyatt. In these poets, as in speech itself the value of the pause is of great rhythmical importance and is often made to carry considerable emphasis, becoming what we would normally call a 'pregnant' pause. As Coleridge seems to have realised with respect to Donne, silence is as rhythmically important as sound and plays its part in determining the purport of a poem. According to Miss Catherine Ing, Renaissance critics were not unaware of

the part that silence, whether as pause
or as rest, can play in organizing sound
into rhythmical arrangements of time (65)

(65)

Ing, p.64.

a point to which she returns in order to make the acute observation, first made by Gascoigne, I believe, that

However freely we vary the lengths of individual syllables, we tend to allow to each line a length of time roughly equal to that which we allowed the first. If the syllables themselves do not fill out the time we allow silences to make up the sum. (66)

(66)

Ing, p. 199.

for Gascoigne see Certayne notes of Instruction
in Arber's Reprints (1868)

Bearing such observations in mind and recalling the general patterns revealed in the last two chapters, suggestions as to how the lines quoted by Dr. Tillyard should be read may readily be made. These suggestions are straightforward and yet, it is believed, they remove the difficulties which, as a reader, Dr. Tillyard apparently found insurmountable. Instead of reading them as lines it is proposed that they should be read as phrases separated one from another by a pause (which is indicated below by means of the virgula). This itself is a speech practice and therefore familiar. Then, by noting that in speech an oath such as "on my faith" is usually emphatic as also, in self-justifying utterances, is the criterion to which we appeal, viz. "reason", and that for which we appeal, "change". (Note that the self-justification does not commence until the second line so that it is only the second "change"

which receives the justificatory emphasis). Marking the emphatic words by placing them in italics then, it is suggested that the lines should be read:

Each man me telleth / I change most my devise /
And on my faith / me think it good reason /
To change propose / like after the season /
For in every case / to keep still one guise /
Is meet for them / that would be taken wise /

This suggestion is purely empirical, that is to say, based upon observation rather than precept, and could not have been made without taking into account the general purport of the lines and certain characteristics of English speech.

To some extent each new poet has to rediscover the functional rhythm in the speaking voice of his time and in doing this the new poet sets himself apart from his lesser contemporaries as Eliot did in "The Wasteland" and Hopkins in "The Wreck of the Deutschland". The importance of this rediscovery was not understood by those who inherited 'the Miltonic convention'; by and large poetry was dominated by classical prosody and little, if any, consideration was given to the rhythm of the "language really used by men". Puttenham had understood the importance of this language: the poet should turn to contemporary speech, for "writing is no more than the image or character of speech" (p. 78) and

"not follow Piers plowman nor Gower nor Lydgate nor yet Chaucer, for their language is now out of use with us" (p. 145). Although the Romantics - Wordsworth with his "selection of language really used by men" and Keats rejecting Milton with the cri de coeur, "English must be kept up" - seem to have been aware of the need to 'rediscover' the rhythms of English speech it was not until the present century that any real challenge to the adequacy of classical prosody was made.

Although, in the twentieth century, the speaking voice has in a sense been granted some kind of recognition, in that Donne and Hopkins have been accommodated alongside "our standard writers", nevertheless not all the implications of this recognition have as yet been widely and properly appreciated. Dr. Tillyard acknowledges Wyatt's conversational tone and even presents what he takes to be examples of it without stopping to consider, without even suggesting that this might be necessary, in what this peculiar distinction of tone resides. Even Professor Muir, Wyatt's most recent and most enlightened editor, reveals unwittingly how deep are some prejudices against the

speaking voice, how little attention is in fact paid to it in reading. (In all probability "the Miltonic convention" has seriously affected our 'ear'; many readers still adopt a completely artificial and usually pompous tone when reading verse). In a footnote to the following stanza from "Ffarewell, the rayn of crueltie",

I fare as oon escaped that fleith:
Glad that is gone yet still fereth,
Spied to be caught, and so dredeth
That he for neught his pain leseth.

Muir, No.11.

Professor Muir writes, apropos the second line,

This line makes doubtful sense. Nott proposed 'Glad that he is gone'. Perhaps it should read: 'Glad he is gone'.

There can be no doubt at all about the sense of the line and both Nott and Muir's proposals are wrong. We are well enough accustomed, especially in speech, to elliptical expressions of the kind used here by Wyatt and if we are in this kind of rapport with spoken English, non-literary English perhaps, it appears mere

pedantry to make heavy weather of Wyatt's line. It is plain that the subject pronoun to be understood in the phrase 'Glad that is gone' is 'oon' and not 'he'. There are a number of such omissions in the above lines, mainly of pronouns, but these omissions are all still common in English speech. The sense of the lines in the expanded form is:

I fare as one (who has) escaped that flees,

(As one who is) glad that (which has been escaped) is
gone and yet (who) still fears,

(As one who is) spied to be caught and so (who) dreads
That he for nought his pain loses [or loses].

And in the early-Tudor period the omission of the subject pronoun was not elliptical as the pronoun would not normally be used in such phrases as 'Glad that is gone'. (67)

(67)

I am indebted to Mr. Eric Stanley for
this information.

Puttenham, however, deals with such ellipses in verse

referring them to the 'Figures', especially in this case to the Hypozeugma and the Sillepsis (Puttenham, p.165) and, more particularly, to the "Prolepsis or the Propounder";

Here ye see the first proposition in a sort defectiue and of imperfect scene, till ye come by diuision to explaine and enlarge it, but if we should follow the originall right, we ought rather to call him the forestaller, for like as he that standes in the market way, and takes all vp before it come to the market in grosse and sells it by retails, so by this maner of speach our maker setts down before all the matter by a brief proposition, and afterwards explaines it by a diuision more particularly. (68)

(68) Puttenham, p.168.

This we still do in our ordinary speech. The second of the lines quoted is, however, explainable in two ways, but ambiguity is common in speech also. The phrase 'Glad

that is gone' should be treated as ambiguous, referring simultaneously both to what has been escaped and who has escaped. It is not, therefore, uncommon even amongst respected critics and scholars to find, as we have done, on the one hand an acknowledgement of the importance of such things as conversational tone and, on the other, instances revealing a practical disregard of the principles, criteria and considerations involved in such an acknowledgement.

So far what has been proposed has been a rather broad approach to Wyatt which is not prejudiced by illicit, a priori, notions of rhythm. Here and there some matters of fact may be open to dispute, but the manner of approach, the empirical manner, seems to me to be beyond question. Even granting this, however, there is still a further problem of attitude to be resolved if we are to avoid the mystification of a reviewer writing in the Times Literary Supplement. For this reviewer

the mystery of Wyatt is simply whether he knew what he was doing or whether he did not ... At one moment he is the equal of the greatest in his command

of rhythm and metre; at another he seems to be laboriously counting syllables on his fingers - and getting them wrong sometimes ... (69)

(69) "Wyatt and Raleigh", Times Literary Supplement, Sept. 19, 1929.

The initial problem here is one of formulation. Posed as it is by the reviewer the problem requires for its solution greater biographical knowledge than we at present possess and this is a misleading way of raising what is in fact a question of Wyatt's critical acumen. The criteria of what Wyatt knew ("whether he knew what he was doing or whether he did not") in this instance would not be satisfied by the discovery of, say, a transcript of Wyatt's mental processes, and the 'would not' is a logical one. It is not a matter, that is, of what or how Wyatt considered the problem, for as Gilbert Ryle has taught us,

when we describe a performance as intelligent, this does not entail the

double operation of considering and
executing. (70)

(70) G. Ryle, The Concept of Mind (1949),
pp. 29, 30.

When we describe Wyatt's rhythmical performance as
intelligent, therefore, we not only reject the notion
of a 'mystery' but do so on the grounds of Wyatt's
actual performance. What is of interest critically
is what Wyatt did rather than what Wyatt knew (or
rather with what he did as the only relevant criterion
of what he knew) and we are, therefore, concerned with
the problem as a matter of 'know how' and not as a
matter of 'know that'; the only relevant evidence is
the execution, the work itself.

Bearing this last point in mind, we can judge
Wyatt's critical 'know how' by considering the kinds
of problem he solved. This kind of question is far
more manageable since it does not depend upon evidence
we do not possess (and are never likely to possess)
and can be formulated in such a way as to suggest some

kind of answer: what were the problems facing writers of English verse during the period? We know that critics following Wyatt thought of the problem - one it was believed that Wyatt did much to solve - as being that of polishing "our rude and homely maner of vulgar Poesie" and of so reforming "our English metre and stile". The model provided for such a reformation was the verse of the Romance languages: Puttenham refers, for instance, to the "schooles of Dante, Ariosto and Petrarch" (p.60) and there seems little doubt that the consequence, of course, was an aping of models which were in a very real sense alien, not only Italian, French and Spanish but, as Campion reminds us, Latin and Greek. For,

If the Italians, Frenchmen, and Spaniards, that with commendation have written in rhyme, were demanded whether they had rather the books they have published (if their tongue would bear it) should remain as they are in rhyme or be translated into the ancient numbers of the Greeks and Romans, would they not answer Into numbers? What

honour were it then for our English language to be the first that after so many years of barbarism could second the perfection of the industrious Greeks and Romans? (71)

- (71) Thomas Campion, Observations in The Art of English Poesy (in English Critical Essays, ed. E.D. Jones, 1947), pp. 58, 59.
-

Rhythmically the models are highly impracticable since the phrasal units of English speech cannot but break the back and so disrupt the classically measured quantities of all but the very shortest lines. This broken-backed characteristic has already been illustrated, but one of Puttenham's own examples serves to bring out afresh the related inadequacy of the pause as an end-stop in English verse:

Were it for grace, or els in hope of gaine,
To say of my deserts, it is but vaine:
For vvell in minde, in case ye do them beare,

To tell them oft, it should but irke your eare:
Be they forgot; as likely should I faile,
To vvinne vvith vvordes, vvhere deedes can not
preuaile. (72)

(72)
Puttenham, p.222.

If we consider the punctuation here as denoting the value of the pause, then there are pauses within each line as long and as heavy as any which mark the termination of the lines. If then we have to justify the typology of such a stanza we must have recourse to the rhyme scheme. Rhyme in earlier English verse has, therefore, the importance which quantity has in Latin. Perhaps Daniel, replying to Campion early in the seventeenth century, was dimly aware of this when he exclaimed:

But yet now, upon the great discovery of these
new measures, threatening to overthrow the
whole state of Rhyme in this kingdom, I must
either stand out to defend, or else be forced
to forsake myself and give over all. (73)

- (73) Samuel Daniel, A defence of Rhyme (in English Critical Essays, ed. E.D. Jones, 1947), pp. 61, 62.
-

Certainly Puttenham, with his sympathy for and his understanding of the earlier English poets, appreciated this important fact about earlier English verse. For Puttenham, his editors have written,

It is rhyme which compensates for the lack of 'numerositie' and which offers to the English maker opportunities of Art comparable to those enjoyed by the classical poet. The delight of the ear is the 'cadence or the tuneable accent in the ende of the verse'. (74)

- (74) Puttenham, p.lxvii.
-

Thus, as was remarked in an earlier note, the need to emphasise rhyme by means of punctuation independent of grammatical sense. Such an emphasis corresponds well enough to Puttenham's "concentration on rhyme as

the main pivot of metre" (p.lxvi). The bonding of English verse by means of end-rhyme is tightened by means of alliteration:

Were it for grace, or els in hope of gaine

These non-quantitative devices are of self-evident importance in early-Tudor verse:

Skelton has a marked proclivity for "hunting the letter" in all his poetry. In the matter of alliteration, he frequently reaches the limit of three repetitions which to Puttenham was the maximum number allowed by good taste, and there are many instances that go beyond. (75)

(75) Rubel, p.33.

And, as Rubel shows elsewhere, Barclay and Hawes are much given to the same practice.

The problem for Wyatt was how to develop the English verse he inherited in order to deal adequately with his situation as a courtier; or, in other words, how was he

to develop a verse expressive of his preoccupations as an English Court poet. More specifically it meant developing from the most confident and assured forms which were initially available - such as

Wyth seruing still
this have I wone
for my goodwill
to be vndone

and those of the English carol mentioned by both
Tillyard and Harding (76)

(76) Tillyard, p.13. Harding, "The Poetry of Wyatt", pp. 202, 203.

- to something as radically new as this:

They fle from me that sometyme did me seke
with naked fote stalking in my chambre
I have sene theim gentill tane and meke
that nowe are wyld and do not remembre
that sometyme they put theimself in daunger
to take bread at my hand and nowe they raunge
besely seking with a continuell chaunge

If we look to the native carol tradition, to fourteenth and fifteenth century lyrics, to liturgical chant and plainsong, in order to understand something of Wyatt's background - "such music was as helpful as any grammatical theorist in encouraging poets to have 'regard to the accent' of their mother tongue" (77)

(77) Ing. p.135.

it is needful to note, at the same time, their inferiority when compared to such a poem as "They fle from me".

There can be little doubt that the conversational and dramatic qualities of much of Wyatt's poetry springs from his phrasal conception of rhythm. And in that sea chanties, liturgical chant and plainsong all reveal the same kind of understanding of rhythm it may be said that Wyatt and his contemporaries were, in fact, writing within a more or less firmly established tradition. Professor Harding amplifies this point:

This pausing verse has much in common with plainsong. The music complicates the question by sometimes giving an

unnatural or exaggerated accentuation, but the main effect is similar: the words are divided up into rhythmical units of diverse structure which therefore have to be clearly separated from one another by a pause: 'As it was in the beginning - is now - and ever shall be'. The 'parallelism' adopted in the translation of the Psalms further reinforces the tradition of balanced but distinct units as a satisfactory mode of treating language. And, as the Encyclopaedia Britannica article on plainsong points out, the absence of a regularly repeated rhythm allies plain-song 'with such things as sea-chanties, counting-out rhymes, and the like'. (78)

(78) Harding, "The Rhythmical Intention in Wyatt's Poetry", p. 97.

It was a tradition which was to reassert itself with the appearance of the madrigal; Miss Ing having noted for

us "the madrigal practice of allowing a whole phrase to constitute a rhythmical unit" which "must not be broken down if it is to satisfy the ear" (p.136). A similar practice seems to inform many of Wyatt's slighter lyrics, as for example the following:

wyth seruig still
this have I wone
for my goodwill
to be vndon

D 156

sync

and

At moost myschief
I suffre greif
for of relief
syns I have none etc.

E 53

Such verse has never, of course, presented any rhythmical problem. As it stands it is successful enough by any standards, but its success is hardly remarkable. This kind of verse, assured though it may be, is limited principally by the exigencies of the rhyme scheme. As has already been seen, the next step towards greater freedom of expression is represented by leaving every other phrase unrhymed:

To cause accord
or to aggre
two contraries
in oon degre etc.

E 82

Such a development produces the stanza as it is to be found in E:

To cause accord or to agre
two contraries in oon degre
and in oon poynt as semeth me
to all mans wit / it cannot be
it is impossible.

In longer lines, such as those of the Psalms for instance, it will be found that only one in three of the phrases carry rhyme. But whilst this picture of the construction of verse shows the early-Tudor poet's verse problems in a new light - no longer is he seen grappling with a changing pronunciation which made it difficult for him to count his feet - and helps us to overcome the difficulties encountered by more classically-minded prosodists such as Dr. Tillyard, nevertheless it does not establish Wyatt's interest in rhythm as anything more than academic.

However, although Wyatt's ability as so far described may be thought primarily technical it is such as, limited as it may be in some respects, finally developed with Wyatt into an integral function of the matter of poetry. In his mature verse the pausing rhythm has, as it has in Donne, a functional purpose as part of the enactment or dramatic realisation of certain attitudes towards life, it seeks, in Puttenham's words "to inueigle and appassionate the mind", it "inuegleth the iudgement of man, and carieth his opinion this way and that " (p. 8). The lover's complaint, for example, is not one long tale of woe to be recounted in flowing and overflowing iambic pentameters but a passionately apprehended situation in which the subtleties, the intricacies, the tactical changes in tone and, hence, in approach, the characteristics of persuasion, are created by the pregnant pause:

It may be good like it who list
but I do dowbt who can me blame
for oft assured yet have I myst
and now again I fere the same
The wyndy wordes the les quaynt game
of soden chaunge maketh me agast
for dred to fall I stond not fast

E 22.

One is reminded rather forcibly, I feel, of "The Good Morrow" in trying to interpret the rhythm of this particular poem and the reminder is not irrelevant; the inner grip upon the dramatic moment is enacted after the same fashion and reveals itself in the same chequered rhythm. To Saintsbury "the strange turns and twists" of such verse is only a symptom of "a total want of ear"; but this shared characteristic is a part of what is meant by saying that Wyatt and Donne belong together in observing certain standards.

The step which Wyatt takes is, I think, such a step as we are only prepared to associate with a very important poet. However, a great deal of Wyatt's verse is in various ways and with varying degrees of success an attempt at such a step forward and until the step was taken the production of great poetry was impossible. Wyatt disciplined and extended English poetry as it was not to be disciplined and extended again for many years to come and, unlike Surrey, he did it without devitalising it. This is Wyatt's real success; he took control of English verse when no one else could and he did so not as an exercise in the courtly love convention or in translation but as a means of expressing the uncertainties of life at a point which at the time

might well be claimed the centre of English civilisation, namely the court of Henry VIIIth. The crisis of consciousness was to pass and men were once again to be absorbed in the less urgent and more cultivated concerns of courtly life; literature was to be undertaken as a pleasing exercise, verses were to be lovingly polished and ornamented with the figures; Elizabethan court poets were to be courtiers first and poets only in proof of their courtliness and culture. Not until the death of Cynthia was English poetry going to become as vital as it had been with Wyatt; then with the mature work of Shakespeare and Donne English poetry was to break away from Elizabethan cultivation and, in a new crisis of consciousness, reassert the power of English speech.

Chapter Five

The Dramatisation of Verse

Once the essential connections between Wyatt and the early-seventeenth century have been appreciated there remains little room for criticism of Wyatt that does not acknowledge the supremacy of the rhythmical principles honoured by Shakespeare and Donne. For whilst

It is true that exceptional polish of simple metres may represent one form of literary sophistication, as in Dryden and Pope, ... advancing skill and command of language may equally lead to increasing irregularity, as of course in Shakespeare. (79)

(79) Harding, "The Rhythmical Intention in Wyatt's Poetry", p. 93.

In such cases different kinds of rhythmical principle obtain and it must by now plain that those of Wyatt

are closer to those of Shakespear than to those of Dryden and Pope. That these are the principles applying in general to the early-Tudor period can be seen from the character of the work of lesser poets than Wyatt. For all the clumsiness of Barclay's "The Ship of Fools" (a poem too easily dismissed by Dr. Tillyard), in it may be found to the full that quality of animated gesticulation which is the dramatic essence of the speaking voice. The very presence of rhythmical uncertainties serves to give the poem a polemical dynamic which requires explanation before it is possible to understand fully what is being lost as a result of Puttenham's "new inuentions". However, it must be admitted that "The Ship of Fools" is lacking in the subtlety of control which is expected of great poetry. If it is precisely the fusion of these three elements subtlety, control and animated gesticulation, which we perceive in the finest achievements of later verse we are acknowledging the importance of the standards by which Wyatt's poetry has to be judged.

ally be

It was Wyatt who disciplined the kind of clumsy but vital verse which is associated with Barclay

Like to these vnmesurable montayns
 is my painfull lyff the burden of Ire
 for of great height be they: & high is my desire
 and I of teres : and they be full of fontayns
 Vnder Craggy rockes they have full barren playns
 herd thoughtes in me : my wofull mynde doeth tyre

E 34.

will present no difficulty, despite the absence of
 'fit quantity of syllable', once we attend to the rhythm-
 ical phrasing, once, that is, we stop trying (for
 example) to treat lines three and four as continuous.
 What Miss Ing has written of poetry influenced by
 madrigal music is as true of the lines above, and,
 indeed, of a great deal of other Wyatt poetry:

deliberate reading is essential if the
 rhythmical quality of this verse is to
 be felt: there must be world enough
 and time for the phrases to spread and
 settle into a division of the whole
 duration of the poem, which will reveal
 that their temporal position is
 controlled and deliberate. In fact,
 this poetry must be spoken and heard
 with care equivalent to that with which

music is sung and heard: then natural treatment of the stressing of the words will be found adequate to indicate rhythmical phrasing as sure and satisfying as simple feet. (81)

(81) Ing, p.129.

We know that Puttenham felt the rhythmical quality of such verse and he must, therefore, be chief witness in its defence. His remarks are close in spirit to those of Miss Ing, but they are even more explicit and offer us a valuable clue as to how Puttenham read the English poets, especially those of the past whose measures he knew were not those of the new prosody. He prefaces his remarks with some observations on intelligent speech in general.

There is no greater difference betwixt ciuill and brutish vtteraunce then cleare distinction of voices: and the most laudable languages are alwaies most plaine and distinct,¹ and the barbarous most confuse and indistinct: it is therefore requisit that leasure

be taken in pronuntiation, such as may
make our wordes plaine & most audible
and agreable to the eare: also the
breath asketh to be now and then releued
with some pause or stay more or lesse:
besides that the very nature of speach
(because it goeth by clauses of seuerall
construction & sence) requireth some
space betwixt them with intermission of
sound, to th'end they may not huddle one
vpon another so rudely & so fast that
th'eare may not perceiue their differ-
ence. (82)

(82) Puttenham, pp. 73, 74.

Even after we have learnt to read Wyatt, to eulogise his success would be as misleading as to deny it. Technically it was both tremendous and elementary, as all fundamental achievements are, at least to our hindsight. As was intimated earlier, the success had its shortcomings, mainly in the rather metronomic rhythm which is encouraged by the phrasal construction of verse.

The 'tick-tock' of the phrases -

Sum tyme I syghe sumtyme I syng etc.

-- frequently gives to Wyatt's lines that see-sawing quality which Professor L.C. Knights has commented upon in Macbeth ("Cannot be ill: cannot be good").⁽⁸³⁾

(83) L.C. Knights, "King Lear and the Great Tragedies," in The Age of Shakespeare (ed. Boris Ford, Pelican Guide to English Literature, 1955), p. 230.

Yet this see-saw, whatever may be its drawbacks and limitations as now revealed to our hindsight, demonstrated the possibilities of balance and control within the turbulence of English speech. These possibilities can be expressed in a principle, one which is active in much of Wyatt's poetry: English speech emphasis conforms to a principle of rhythmic displacement. In speech, that is to say, we use emphasis as a means of allocating special significance to a word or a phrase with the result that emphasis fluctuates with meaning. Ultimately, therefore, a decision as to the rhythm of

a line or stanza is also a decision as to the import of the line or stanza. This practice has already been invoked in examining the lines from "Eche man me telleth" with which Dr. Tillyard experienced some difficulty. And in "It may be good" the see-saw -

It may be good / like it who list
but I do dowbt / who can be blame

(the virgula has been added in order to emphasise the break in the line) - although still basic to the organisation of the poem is no longer a simple rhythmical device but is being used to create the movements of self-debate and hesitation which are so much a part of the purport of the poem.

So, although attention has been largely concentrated upon what might easily be thought of as Wyatt's "technical success, there has been, I hope, more than a hint that the technical feat instituted radically new ways of handling language material. Wyatt, amongst other things, showed not merely that discipline could be imposed upon the rhythmical kaleidoscope of our language, but also gives evidence in his work of an understanding of the manner in which language imposes a discipline of its own upon the poet. He is plainly working with and

not against the grain of the English language. What, in other words, Wyatt discovered, at least in practice (which is all that is of concern to us), was that the English language is an active and not a sleeping partner, one which demands due respect for its own innate characteristics, and his verse is an attempt (to put it no higher for the present) at, to use a phrase from Daniel, "such a verse as best comports with the nature of our language." With a poet in the language such as Shakespeare it is hardly necessary to stress the point that properly understood the English language can perform feats outside the reach of any other art material, but (precisely for that reason) no artistic failure can be quite so devastating as that which results from the absence of the Shakespearian-like intelligence. We find an example of that kind of intelligence - a crude example perhaps but capable of making the point clearly and forcibly for that very reason - in the lines

My galy charged with forgetfulnes
 thorough sharpe sees in wynter nyghtes
 doeth pas
 twene Rock and Rock

E 29.

In this way Wyatt's poetry at its best becomes much more than a poetry of statement and description, it becomes a poetry of enactment, dramatic poetry; here with the rhythm of "twene Rock and Rock" emulating the pitch and toss of the galley, providing a mental image of the movement 'it inveigles the mind'. We have seen that rhythm is used to the same affect in "It may be good", there to create the shifting attitudes of mental debate. In such cases as these emphasis is used as

a quality of speech sounds which can indicate with remarkable accuracy an order of syllables revealing a rhythmical structure in the mind's ear of poet and reader. (84)

(84) Ing, p.193.

Attention to the latter poem, "It may be good", shows how essential to the total import of the poem this creative function of the rhythm is. It presents us with the movements of a mind

that seketh to accorde two contraries
and hope still & nothing hase
imprisoned in libertes

E 22.

The assurance and certainity with which the alternations
of doubt are created is what makes the paradox of the
poem -

Assured I dowbt I be not sure

- dramatically present. It is in vain that we search
through Surrey for some evidence that he possessed this
kind of ability: Surrey's option for smoothness and
elegance had allowed him to solve the rhythmical
problems that confront all truly serious poets on the
cheap.

By and large, what is true of Surrey is true of
the Elizabethans in general, under the influence of
alien models they opted for an inflexible, mechanical
regularity. The critical concern to draw up a book
of rules for versifying is an eloquent testimonial to
their essentially decorative and baroque interest in
the problem of rhythm. Something of this interest can

be culled from such works as Gascoigne's Certayne notes
of Instruction concerning the making of verse or ryme
in English (1575), Spenser and Harvey's Three Proper
and Wittie familiar Letters ... Touching the earthquake
in April last and our English reformed Versifying and
Two other very commendable Letters of the same men's
writings (1580). The beginning of the next century
 saw the appearance of Campion's Observations in the Arte
of English Poesie (1602), an attack upon rhymed verse
 which called forth Daniel's spirited reply in Defence
of Ryme (1603). It could be argued that the concern
 which such works represent arose out of the recognition
 of the inadequacy of earlier English verse. But such
 an argument would be grounded in a misunderstanding of
 the nature of 'the problem of rhythm'. It is one of
 the contentions of the present argument that 'the
 problem of rhythm' is an individual problem arising
 from the poet's concern to make his poetry vital, that
 is to say to make his poetry a complete articulation
 of those situations and experiences in which he, the
 poet, is most completely involved. The overshadowing
 of this problem by a concern for rules and regulations
 results in a facile easiness of movement which was

readily elevated into decorum. Rule prescribing appears to have been quite a pastime with Elizabethan poets. Spenser writes to Harvey telling him that Sidney and Dyer

have by authoritie of their whole Senate, prescribed certaine Lawes and rules of Quantities of English sillables, for English Verse : having had therof already great practise, and drawn mee to their faction. (85)

(85) "Two Other, very commendable Letters," in The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser (ed. J.C. Smith and E. De Selincourt, Oxford, 1924), p. 635.

And Puttenham enquires,

If ... Art be but a certaine order of rules prescribed by reason, and gathered by experience, why should not Poesie be a vulgar Art with us aswell as with the Greeks and Latines, our language admitting

no fewer rules and nice diuersities
then theirs? (86)

(86) Puttenham, p.5.

This overshadowing of Art by rule-gathering is itself consequent upon the loss of a creatively intelligent grasp of situations and experiences.

This difference in vitality (grasp upon life, i.e. situations and experiences) between Wyatt and his Elizabethan successors makes itself felt if, by way of illustration, it is considered as a distinction in attitude towards a common, indeed almost traditional, experience. This 'experience' may be characterised for us by what may be termed an 'inset complaint' in Lydgate's "The Complaint of the Black Knight" (lines 218-224) (87):

(87) in Skeat (ed.), Chaucerian and Other Pieces.

The thought oppressed with inward sighes sore,
The painful lyf, the body languisshing,
The woful gost, the herte rent and tore,
The pitous chere, pale in compleyning,
The deedly face, lyk ashes in shyning,
The salte teres that fro myn eyen falle,
Parcel declare grounde of my paynes alle

Wyatt need have gone no further for a model for the poem from which the following stanza is taken:

The restfull place Revyver of my smarte
the labors salve incressyng my sorow
the begys ese And trobler off my hart
quieter of mynd And my vnquyet foo
fforgetter of payn Remembryng my woo
the place of slepe wherein I do but wake
Be spent w^t teres my bed I the forsake

D 25. (88)

(88)

But, of course, behind all this is Chaucer. See his "A Complaint to His Lady":

Alas! whan sleeping-time is, than I wake,
Whan I shulde daunce, for fere that I quake;

(lines 54, 55 etc.)

Wyatt returns to the theme again in No. 141
Muir.

Wyatt enhances the posture, which Lydgate would have called 'disease' by transforming an inventory of woes into a see-sawing of antitheses and thereby going beyond an accumulative description of disquietude of mind to reveal the predicament from which this springs and to which it gives increased significance. It is difficult without seeming pretentious to describe the predicament in words other than those of the poem - expected relationships give way to their contraries, the very source of ease and rest becomes a tormenting rebuff transforming each thing into its opposite. It may be noticed en passant that Wyatt's stanza takes a roughly similar form to that of Lydgate both in the use of the 'see-saw' and in rhyme scheme.

The examples which follow all, more or less,
revert to the simplicity of Lydgate and as a consequence we lose that grip upon the perplexity of a situation which involves us in the poet's disquietude of mind, in

its place we find a loose hold upon certain stock material. In the following lines from Southwell's "Saint Peter's Complaint" the disquietude has been replaced by a complacent apostrophe. Experience to Southwell, one feels forced to conclude, had in this instance none of the complications which makes life such a constant source of perplexity to most people, or at least if it had this is not to be allowed to coarsen the balm of rhetoric.

Sleepe, deathes allye: oblivion of teares:
Silence of passions: balm of angry sore:
Suspence of loves: securitie of feares:
Wrathes lenitive: hartes ease: stormes calmest
shore:
Senses and soules reprivall from all cumbers:
Benumbing sence of ill, with quiet slumbers.

It will be noted that, despite the same phrasal use of rhythm, the predicament so essential to the affect of Wyatt's lines has disappeared, gone are the antitheses, and what for Wyatt was a turbulent but vitally apprehended situation has become, quite literally, an itinerary of nemesis. What we discern in the remainder of the examples is the complacency of Elizabethan rhetoric.

Sackville's well-known "Induction" is an early but, for all that, a standard product of Elizabethan complacency. Stanza 42 is hardly to be distinguished in spirit from that of Southwell (above) which it so closely parallels both in subject and diction.

The bodie's rest, the quiet of the hart,
The trauailes ease, the still night's secre was hee
And of our life in earth the better part,
Reuer of sight, and yet in whom wee see
Things oft that tyde, and oft that neuer bee:
Without respect, esteeming equally
King Croesus' pompe, and Irus' pouertie.

The closest that Sackville comes to a perception of experience which might ruffle the placid structure of his lines is that slight suggestion of paradox in the reference to sleep as "Reuer of sight, and yet in whom wee see", but it is only an artful flourish to be rounded off in the line which follows.

Even in what must be one of the better poems of the Elizabethan period we near the vital spark of experience rather through a kind of reportage which makes demands upon our sympathy than through an act

of creation and direct apprehension:

Come, Sleep, O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
The indifferent judge between the high and low!
With shield of proof shield me from out the prease
Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw.

If Sidney's lines (from sonnet xxix, "Astrophel and Stella") are saved from the utter complacency of Southwell's or Sackville's it is by the sincere, but easy, appeal to our sympathies contained in the last two lines. Sidney's "Despair" is there as a compliment to Stella, it does not identify the range of experience informing the poem; a coarse compliment, in fact, since it lacks that kind of backing in the poem.

It may be objected that the greatest Elizabethan poetry escapes the baneful confines of such inertia. This may, of course, be a matter of definition, but it can only be discussed in terms of specific works. It will be noticed that once the rhetorical cue (Sleep) is given, the possibilities of escape from the dead weight of complacent rhetoric seem to be denied even to the very greatest Elizabethan poet:

Metthought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more!

Macbeth does murder sleep'

Would Shakespeare be able to resist the tremendous temptation to insert the stock Elizabethan rhetorical apostrophe? Here at this tense and troubled moment Macbeth's mind becomes inexplicably slack and slips into the well-worn groove:

the innocent sleep,

Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast, - (89)

(89) Cf. Polonius's lines in Hamlet, Act 2, scene 2,
line 86 et seqq.

to expostulate

What majesty should be, what duty is,
Why day is day, night night, and time is time,
Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
I will be brief.

The affect of these and of Macbeth's lines is

much the same. Gertrude's blunt command does justice to both: "More matter, with less art."

We do not know whose voice Macbeth heard, but it is obvious enough that the voice in Shakespeare's ear was that of Southwell-Sackville-Sidney. The passage from Macbeth might not be altogether out of place later in the play when Macbeth relapses into the lethargy of the lines beginning

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, (5.v.17-28)

or those which begin

I have liv'd long enough (5. iii. 22-28).

These aside, however, Macbeth is characterised by that sensitively relevant response to slight nuances which we associate particularly with Hamlet; as, for instance, when he enlarges the suggestions implanted by the witches, a process marked by the perturbed and troubled rhythms of such lines as those beginning

This supernatural soliciting

Cannot be ill, cannot be good; (1.iii. 130-142),

and which have been remarked by Professor Knights (as is noted elsewhere). But in the apostrophe on Sleep Macbeth slips from this characteristic troubled immediacy and directness of response into a second-hand, indirect dilation on experience. The suggestion is that once the cue, Sleep, has been given the pull of Elizabethan rhetoric diverts attention from the matter in hand with a resultant loss of immediacy and a breach of characterisation. Shakespeare's attention has slipped and, as a consequence, his grip has slackened. It is, admittedly, a serious charge to level against Shakespeare, but to be preferred to the equivocations (Macbeth's (hysteria' etc.) which might be built into its refutation.

The same voice makes itself heard in Fletcher's Valentinian, in the song which begins

Care-charming Sleep, thou easer of all woes,
Brother to Death, sweetly thyself dispose
On this afflicted prince; fall like a cloud ..
etc.

Here, however, the voice (compared with Macbeth's) is

soporific; the phrasing still recalls to mind Wyatt, but the vitality, which has gradually seeped from the experience in the course of a century, has now disappeared entirely. Consequently we have poetry not as the nervous yet vital energy it is in Wyatt but as a tranquiliser. Here at least the poetry of Fletcher is decadent.

The above example may well be thought to be heavily inclined to special pleading. It was, however, selected because it provided the most striking parallels. It is intended to intimate rather than to prove; a rigorous proof being ruled out by the nature of the case. It would not be altogether just, of course, to leave the matter there. Sidney, for example, at least on one occasion, proved himself capable of making rhythmical excursions on his own, namely in the following:

I might! - unhappie word - Once, I might,
And then would not, or could not, see my blisse;
Till now wrapt in a most infernall night,
I find how heavenly day, wretch! I did misse.

The typical Elizabethan confidence and easy facility is here replaced by the hesitant, pausing rhythms of Wyatt,

the rhythms which are later to be associated with Donne, in particular "The Good-Morrow";

I wonder by my troth, what thou, and I

Did, till we lov'd? were we not wean'd till then?

etc.

We have come to expect such a perplexed freedom from Donne and, of course, from Shakespeare, but in Sidney it is remarkable. Perhaps even more immediately than Donne and Shakespeare Sidney's lines bring to mind Hopkins. The comparison of Sidney's fourth line and Hopkins's

Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind

is what, I suppose, springs instantly to mind. But the connection with Hopkins is deeper than that suggested by the self-castigating "wretch" and lies rather in the more general uneasy and disturbing rhythm.

But where Sidney displays this kind of proximity to Wyatt he is outside (what might be called) the mainstream of rhythmical development during the sixteenth century; his lines, that is to say, are no longer

being manipulated by "an excessive feeling for mechanical internal regularity". (90)

(90) Puttenham, p.lxxii.

The more general development has already been illustrated, it is what we find informing the work of Surrey and more representative lines of Sidney such as

Queen Virtue's Court, which some call
Stella's face,
Prepar'd by Nature's choicest furniture,
Hath his front built of alabaster pure:
Gold is the covering of that stately place.⁽⁹¹⁾

(91) "Astrophel and Stella", sonnet ix.

which in its obvious figure-work and high polish reveals that conception of style as ornamentation which is such an essential ingredient of baroque taste and which Sidney himself refers to as

that honey-flowing matron Eloquence

apparelled, or rather disguised, in a
courtesan-like painted affectation ... (92)

(92) Sir Philip Sidney, An Apology for Poetry
(in English Critical Essays, ed. E.D. Jones,
1947), p.49.

The moral objection to such affectation is, according to
Wythorne, that

to flatter, glos, or ly ... requyreth
gloriowz and painted speech wheraz the
trewth needeth but A plain and simpull
vttterans without glozing or faining at
all. (93)

(93) Wythorne, p.65.

With regard to Wyatt, however, the classic examples
of this degeneration of taste are to be found in the
sophistications Wyatt's poems were subjected to at the
hands of the editor of Tottol's Miscellany. The rhythmical
beauty of such a stanza as

They fle from me / that sometyme did me seke
with naked fote stalking in my chambre
I have sene theim gentill tame and meke
that nowe are wyld and do not remembre
that sometyme they put theimself in daunger
to take bred at my hand & nowe they raunge
besely seking with a continuell chaunge

E 39.

is reduced by Tottel's editor to

They flee from me, that sometime did me seke
With naked fote stalkyng within my chamber.
Once haue I seen them gentle, tame, and meke,
That now are wild, and do not once remember
That sometyme they haue put them selues in danger,
To take bread at my hand, and now they range,
Busily sekyng in continuall change.

Dr. Tillyard in a note to the poem (in his Selection)
has remarked upon the loss of rhythmical richness which
is brought about by the regularising, smoothing activity
of the editor. The rhythm of Wyatt's poem (which Dr.
Tillyard wrongly describes as "quite unlike that of any
other poem" by Wyatt) is, as Dr. Tillyard rightly
remarks,

slow and halting in part, but full of
strange starts and surprises and on the
whole astonishingly varied. (94)

(94) Tillyard, p.155.

In its place Tottel provides a mechanically regular piece of relatively nondescript Elizabethan verse. The taste which appreciated the effort of Tottel's editor was in essence the same as that which appreciated the bulk of Elizabethan verse, just as the taste which appreciated Dryden's Shakespeare and Pope's Donne was in essence the same as that which appreciated the bulk of eighteenth century poetry.

A similar distinction in taste is to be noticed between Wyatt and Surrey as we find between Wyatt and Tottel's editor. Professor Muir prints the following stanza from a poem ascribed to Wyatt in Harleian MS.78:

Ffor as the flame by force dothe quenche the fier,
And runnyng streames consume the rayne,
Even so do I my self deayer
To augment my greff and deadly payne.

M 169.

whilst in Tottel we find a very similar poem ascribed to Surrey which includes the stanza:

As flame doth quench by rage of fire,
And running streams consume by rain.
So doth the sight that I desire
Appease my grief and deadly pain.

Assuming that Tottel's ascription is correct, what we have here is, it must be supposed, the outcome of editorial activity upon Surrey's poem: Tottel's version of Surrey's version of Wyatt's stanza! However this may be, it is obvious that what we have is such a piece of verse as that for which Surrey has been much commended by critics and scholars. Between the Wyatt version and the Surrey version there is an almost total difference in conception of rhythm: Wyatt's rhythms are functional, Surrey's mechanical. In the Surrey stanza rhythm has become what can only be called syncopation,

an excessive feeling for mechanical
internal regularity of a ti tum ti tum
pattern (95)

(95) Puttenham, p. lxxii.

The criticism of such verse is that it is simply an

outward tuning of the speech reading no
higher than th'eare and forcing the mynde
little or nothing (96)

(96) Puttenham, p. 161.

whereas

the eare is properly but an instrument of
conueyance for the minde, to apprehend the
sence by sound. (97)

(97) Puttenham, p. 197.

The rhythm of the Surrey stanza allows no particular
distinction to any word or phrase, one follows another
with that amount of emphasis required by the preformu-
lated rules and no more, the rhythm is thus about as
subtle as that of a ticking clock and remains impervious
to the demands of sense. Wyatt's stanza, on the other
hand, never permits the rhythm to dominate the sense,
significant words and phrases such as "I my self" in
the third line and "my" in line four receive a special

heavy emphasis which serves to drive home the comparison that is being made. The 'voice' slips quickly and smoothly across "Even so do" and is emphatically arrested by the reiterated 'i' of "I my". This kind of emphasis upon the personal pronoun is also to be met with in Donne and Miss Ing's remark upon this phenomenon although having reference to Donne will frequently be found to apply in the case of Wyatt also:

It is surprising how often the pronouns occur in positions requiring ictus, and how easy it becomes ... to give this ictus, where prose reading would deny it. (98)

(98) Ing, p.234.

This may be perhaps what we naturally expect of Wyatt; after all it has generally been agreed that he introduced a new personal strain into English poetry. This introduction is not the result of conscious cultivation. In Wyatt the personal strain frequently resounds from levels below that of consciousness and impresses itself

upon the reader's (unconscious) ear like a mnemonic echo which, when required, bursts into consciousness to justify the unusually heavy emphasis and, hence, significance, we are called upon to give the personal pronoun. I have italicised the echo in these lines

Like to these vnmesurable montayns
is my painfull lyff the burden of Ire
for of great height be they: & high is my desire
and I of teres: and they be full of fontayns
Vnder Craggy rockes they have full barren playns
hard thoughtes in me: my wofull mynde doeth tyre

E 34.

Here the reiterated 'i' works far more subtly than it did in the previous lines quoted; in fact, if it works as subtly as I would maintain, the suggestion that it works at all may well appear ingenuous. One should, perhaps, never be conscious of such matters in reading for

Each motion guides, and ev'ry nerve sustains;
Itself unseen but in th'affects, remains.

Wyatt's sense of the delicacy of rhythm and of its importance in giving value to statements is what is lost

to Elizabethan poetry as a consequence of its pre-occupations with metrical polish. The concern for surface finish, smooth numbers, rich diction and ornamental figures, suggests the sense in which poetry came to be viewed as a courtly exercise the aim of which was to provide evidence of a gentleman's social finish or polish. This, no doubt, serves to explain something of the dressy and 'flashy' nature of so much of it: Elizabethans, by and large, seem to have had the same taste in literature as they had in clothes. This last remark is no mere figure of speech, it indicates something essentially true about Elizabethan literary taste - it was dressy; they often thought of a presentable poem as they thought of a presentable young woman of the court. As to the ostentations of such a taste Puttenham (in a rather lengthy passage) leaves little room for doubt:

And as we see in these great Madames of honour, be they for personage or otherwise neuer so comely and bewtifull, yet if they want their courtly habillements or at leastwise such other apparell as custome and ciuilitie haue ordained to

couer their naked bodies, would be halfe
ashamed or greatly out of countenance
to be seen in that sort, and perchance
do then thinke themselves more amiable
in euery mans eye, when they be in their
richest attire, suppose of silkes or tyssewes
& costly embroderies, then when they go
in cloth or in any other plaine and simple
apparell. Euen so cannot our vulgar
Poesie shew it selfe either gallant or
gorgiouse, if any lymme be left naked and
bare and not clad in his kindly clothes
and coulours, such as may conuey them
somewhat out of sight, that is from the
common course of ordinary speach and
capacitie of the vulgar iudgement, and
yet being artificially handled must needes
yeld it much more bewtie and commendation.
This ornament we speake of is giuen to it
by figures and figuratiue speeches, which
be the flowers as it were and coulours that
a Poet setteth vpon this language by arte,
as the embroderer doth his stone and perle,
or passements of gold vpon the stufte of
a Princely garment, or as th'excellent

painter bestoweth the rich Orient
coulours vpon his table of pourtraite (99)

(99) Puttenham, pp. 137, 138.

Needless to say, this frivolous preoccupation with outward finesse or effeminacy does not accord well with the ethos from which great poetry is likely to spring. We can measure the change in ethos which was to take place at the end of the century by the difference between, say, Sidney and Donne and

to speak in the same breath of Donne and of the perfect Elizabethan is to become aware of a profound difference between the two humanists, a difference measured by the contrast between Songs and Sonets and the sonnet-sequences first set in fashion by Astrophel and Stella. (100)

(100) M.M. Mahood, Poetry and Humanism (1950), pp. 90, 91.

But, as has been seen, there is at least one occasion upon which we hear the 'great note' in "Astrophel and Stella" and on that exceptional occasion it sounds in the plain, unembroidered language and dramatic rhythm of "It may be good" and "The Good-Morrow".

It is no contention of the present argument, of course, that Sidney, Donne, Shakespeare or Hopkins were familiar with the work of Sir Thomas Wyatt, although it is probable that, with the exception of Hopkins perhaps, they were. Wyatt, however, was writing important poetry and when later poets do the same their work has a certain family characteristic which associates it with Wyatt. And

Wyatt's best poetical inventions (as I see them) were totally ignored by his own and later generations, and were freshly discovered by Shakespeare and Donne

(101) H.A. Mason, Humanism and Poetry in the Early Tudor Period (1959), p.191.

In particular these poets treat rhythm as a living and individual problem which can no more be solved by textbook prosody than can the problem of diction and syntax by resort to a dictionary and a grammar; in the words of one of Sidney's sonnets,

those far-fet helps be such
As do bewray a want of inward touch.

To create the natural rhythm of situation and attitude which enables poetry to enact its values is something expected of important poetry; Wyatt's poetry needs to be judged after such a fashion in order to be properly appreciated; its contact with speech is part of what is meant by referring to its life-connectedness, the naturalness of its relationship to actual life which is so forcibly present in its 'conversational tone' and its dramatic rhythm. It is now necessary to consider more fully the life-connectedness of Wyatt's poetry, its rhythm and its peculiar Englishness.

Chapter Six

Metaphysical Preoccupations

Wyatt's interests are home-grown, not imported continental, produce and the English setting has been underestimated in the past, largely, no doubt, because the poetry of Wyatt's contemporaries and of his fifteenth century predecessors has not been so readily available as that of his successors. Tottel's Miscellany itself has tended to arrest attention and to suggest that early-Tudor poetry is principally that of Wyatt and his followers. There is, of course, some measure of similarity in this body of poetry, there is a limited set of stock situations expressed in a common language revealing common concerns and showing many signs of being a specially 'tailored' or literary language. Nevertheless, the debt to Wyatt upon which the claims of discipleship rely has been greatly exaggerated. There must have been a great deal of poetry coincidental with Wyatt's and although, as Miss Foxwell has pointed out (Study, p.122), he "seems to have had no help from English contemporaries", there

can be little doubt that he learnt as much from his contemporaries as they did from him and at least a probability that, being a far better poet than any one of his contemporaries, Wyatt learnt more from them than they did from him. We can observe without ingenuity the proximity between such a piece of early-Tudor verse as the following and that of Wyatt's Psalms.

'O mercy, god,' quod ich, 'I me repent,
Caitif and wrecche in hert, in wille, and thought!
And aftir this shall be myn hole entent
To serve and plese, how dere that love be bought:
Yit, sith I have myn own penaunce y-sought,
With humble spirit shall I it receive,
Though that the King of Love my life bereyve.
And though that fervent loves qualite
In me did never worch truly, yit I
With all obeisaunce and humilite,
And benign hert, shall serve him til I dye:
And he that Lord of might is, grete and highe,
Right as him list me chastice and correct
And punish me, with trespase thus enfect.' (102)

(102) Skeat (ed.), "The Court of Love", in Chaucerian and Other Pieces, lines 204-217.

It is not a local (hence illustrative) proximity, but one of tone, expression and situation and hence, basically, of attitude. By also observing that this is an address to Venus's spouse we can appreciate the continuity of attitude which gives the love poetry and the religious poetry a homogeneity of interest. It is this homogeneity which leads Hallett Smith to conclude that Wyatt's Psalms are romantic:

they form a series of complaints, not so much for sin in general as for the traps and trammels of the flesh from a courtly point of view. David is made the author of a kind of de remedia amoris. (103)

(103) Hallett Smith, "English Metrical Psalms in the Sixteenth Century and their Literary Significance", HLQ, IX, 3, p. 262, (May 1946.).

This community of interest is, again, something which Wyatt shares with earlier English poetry.

The earlier part of The Five Joys of the Virgin ... consists of praise which would

be more appropriate if addressed to an earthly mistress, and in another lyric the Virgin is described as 'pat leuedy gent and smal' ... Similar language is used with reference to Christ; for example, in A Spring Song on the Passion ... the poet says his heart is filled with 'a suete louelonyng' ... al for a loue newe', who is Christ. Later in the same lyric the poet returns to this theme and expresses his regret that he cannot choose Christ as his 'lemmon'. It is possible that this use of the phraseology of the secular lyrics for religious purposes is referred to in the passage in The Owl and the Nightingale in which the Nightingale claims that she sings of church-song. (104)

(104)

Brook, p.16.

This community of interest, reflected in the community of phraseology, was to continue. It has frequently been remarked in Donne's Holy Sonnets and it may have been that it was with this specially in mind that Herbert

decided to cease writing poetry since the only poetry he felt worth writing, religious poetry, was blasphemous (fortunately he changed his mind). The importance and the prevalence of this confusion of sacred and profane love has been well-considered by Valency. (105)

(105) M. Valency, In Praise of Love (New York, 1958).

Underlying the common phraseology of love is the profound though tacit realisation that love arises from a serious and fundamental personal relationship, whether it be between man and woman or between man and God. This insight is not created but rendered more articulate by the literature of amour courtois; the language of profane love seems always to have recommended itself to Christian writers as a means of expressing man's relationship to God and with the emergence of amour courtois that language was considerably enriched. Thus although, as Hallett Smith has expressed it, Wyatt's Psalms "form a series of complaints, not so much for sin in general as for the traps and trammels of the flesh from a courtly point of view" so that "David is made the author of a kind of de remedia amoris" this

should not obscure by religious prejudice the profound humanity of attitude which is revealed in placing the love of man for woman on a level with the love of man and woman for God.

There is in such poetry as that represented by the lines quoted earlier a seriousness of purport and of attitude which was soon to slacken; this slackening is plainly related through a common shift of interest to the replacement of a necessary and instructional drama by a drama of leisure and entertainment. It is not until we reach the new dramatically serious work of the early seventeenth century that we again encounter the sober assurance of attitude and steady assessment of man's equivocal situation which we find in Wyatt's Psalms and which is revealed in lines such as

My flesshe is troubled, my hart doth feare the speare;
That dread of death, of death that ever lastes,
Threateth of right and draweth neare and neare.
Moche more my sowle is trowbled by the blastes
Of theise assawltes that come as thick as hayle
Of worldlye vanytie, that temptacion castes
Agaynst the weyke bulwarke of the flesshe frayle:

Wheare in the sowle in great perplexitie
 Ffeelethe the sensis, with them that assayle,
 Conspyre, corrupte by vse and vanytie;
 Whearby the wretche dothe to the shade resorte
 Of hope in the, in this extreameytie.

M 201.

Here is a profundity definitive of Wyatt's poetry at
 its best -

Wheare in the sowle in great perplexitie
 Ffeelethe the sensis (106)

(106)

Cf. Eliot's, "Tennyson and Browning are poets, and
 they think; but they do not feel their thought as
 immediately as the odour of a rose."

T.S. Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets", p.117.

- and its affinities are with Shakespeare and to a slighter
 extent with Donne, although it must be added that on the
 whole Donne's religious verse lacks something of the weight
 of Wyatt's at its best.

Despite the difficulties of formulation it is

necessary to see the Englishness of Wyatt in order to appreciate properly his importance. In introducing his selection of Wyatt's poems Dr. Tillyard has remarked upon Wyatt's relationship to an earlier English 'lyric tradition' and perhaps by taking exception to this remark as trivial (although no doubt just) it may be possible to begin to sketch in something of Wyatt's native setting. Dr. Tillyard's remark is trivial, I suggest, because nothing that is essentially valuable in Wyatt is bound up with the weightlessness of English lyricism; H.A. Mason has even asserted "that most of Wyatt's 'lyrics' are not poems at all." (p.168) ! However, I have a distinction in mind here, which is not usually made, between lyrical poetry and didactic poetry. Many of the poems which Brook includes in The Harley Lyrics I would class as didactic poems. The "Advice to Women" (Brook No. 12) I would classify with the advice poems we find in Chaucer and Lydgate and not with, say, "Blow, Northerne Wynd" (Brook No. 14), "The Cuckoo Song" or "Western Wind, when will thou blow". When Wyatt is writing most probably for music (i.e. when his poems are most lyrical and carol-like) he is not, I am suggesting, writing important poetry. That Wyatt does have roots in an English lyrical tradition I have tried to emphasise, but his success lies in the growth

he represents and in the transformations which he accomplishes. The importance I am placing upon didactic poetry is, however unpalatable to some modern readers, historically justified. Puttenham, writing in the middle of the sixteenth century, still placed the emphasis upon the didactic when he wrote of "the chief and principall" matter of poetry, firstly as

the laud honour and glory of the immortall gods (I speake now in phrase of the Gentiles.) Secondly the worthy gests of noble Princes: the memoriall and registry of all great fortunes, the praise of vertue & reproofe of vice, the instruction of morall doctrines, the reuealing of sciences naturall & other profitable Arts, the redresse of boistrous & sturdie courages by perswasion, the consolation and solace of mankind in all his trauails and cares of this transitorie life. (107)

(107) Puttenham, p.24. And Wythorne (c.1550), who could himself "mak english rym" (p.167) and who claims to have imitated and

followed the early-Tudor court poets (p.14), thinks we should reserve our approbation for ditties "mad in the commendation of vertew & reprehending of vices" (p.157).

The final, non-didactic, group Puttenham later treats as trifles and toys. This stress upon the importance of didacticism does justice to the Wyatt whose achievement remains permanent and who therefore has something particular to offer the modern reader, this Wyatt is Tottel's "depe witted Sir Thomas Wyatt". There is in Wyatt a strong and "depe witted" didactic vein which I find characteristically English and which becomes more pronounced (more obvious) as, at times, his poetry swells to the amplitude of the earlier English narrative poets. And although, generally speaking, Wyatt and his contemporaries did not express themselves at any great length, the difference in bulk often appears to be in the nature of an abbreviation rather than in the nature of a radically new departure.

Wyatt's poetry is not recognisably didactic by statement and yet unlike many of his successors he

certainly subscribed (in practice) to that view of the poet's role which Barclay pays homage to in "The Ship of Fools":

they laude vertue & hym that useth it rebukying vices
with the users thereof / They teche what is good and
what is euyl: to what ende vyce / and what ende
vertue bringeth us / and do nat Poetis reuyle and
sharply byte in their poemys all suche as ar unmeke /
Prowde / Couetous / Lecherous / Wanton / delycyous /
Wrathfull glotons / wasters / Enuyours / Enchaunt-
rours faythe brakere / rasshe / unauysed / malapert /
drunken / untaught foles & suche lyke (108)

(108)
Alexander Barclay (tr.), Ship of Fools (1509, B.M.
G11593), a.viii.

And the subscription, being evident in Wyatt's pre-occupations, is not, as one may suspect when similar beliefs are later expressed, a consequence of the need to placate religiously motivated anti-poetry crusades. The didactics only become apparent when we consider the manner in which Wyatt inherited and extended the

possibility of linguistic control over the turbulence of experience. This has already been revealed in the nature of his interest in rhythm, but there are other factors to be considered. For Wyatt, and this must be frequently repeated and kept fresh in mind, experience is essentially antithetical, it is governed by diametrically opposed impulses and this assessment of experience has roots which stretch back into the depths of christian medieval civilisation, it is the conflict of good and evil, God and Devil, the eternal and the transient, the ideal and the actual. In short, experience is evaluated dialectically (but in an Hegelian rather than a Marxian fashion); not that the cleft in experience such as we have it created by Wyatt conforms to that between any particular pair of opposites.

In considering the inherited character of Wyatt's preoccupations, or at least of some of them, it is more relevant to note the situation in which the 'poet' is placed than the form of any particular poem or group of poems. For instance, such a slight poem (probably a song) as E 70 is not without its English precedents.

If chaunce assynd
were to my mynde
be very kynd
of destyne
yet would I crave
nought els to have
but liff & libertie

Then were I sure
I myght endure
the displeasure
of crueltie
where now I plain
alas in vain
lacking my liff for libertie etc.

This, as has already been remarked, bears a self-evident relationship to such a fifteenth century song as:

Alone walking,
In thought pleyning,
And sore sighing,
All desolate,
Me remembring
Of my living,
My deth wishing
Both erly and late.

Infortunate
Is so my fate
That, wote ye that?
Out of mesure
My lyf I hate
Thus desperate;
In pore estate
Do I endure. etc.

But such an observation is at present less pertinent than that such a poem as Wyatt's "Greeting to yon bothe" (D151) belongs to a tradition of advice poems which is represented earlier, in the fifteenth century, by Henry Scogan's "A Moral Balade", or that, despite their satire, the First and Third Satires of Wyatt are not far removed from such a poem as Lydgate's "Ballad of Good Counsel". Although the poet's situation changes slightly, we encounter similar preoccupations in Barclay's "The Ship of Fools" and Skelton's "The Bouge of Court".

We can begin to appreciate the similarity of pre-occupation by observing that the ship which we meet with in the poems of both Barclay and Skelton mentioned above is a common figure in the poems of Wyatt, e.g.

My galy charged with forgetfulness
 thorough sharpe sees in wynter nyghtes
 doeth pas
 twene Rock and Rock ... etc.

E 29.

and

That tyme that myrthe dyd stere my shyp
 whyche now ys frowght w^t hevines
 & fortune boate not then the lypp
 But was defence off my dystresse etc.

D 24.

The figure is conventional, its use is illustrated for us
 in Bosch's painting "The Ship of Fools" in the Louvre,
 in the illustrative woodcuts to Brant's text and to
 Paracelsus, (109).

(109) Walter Pagel, Paracelsus (Basel, 1958),
 Fig. 5, p.45.

Brant's illustrations are reproduced in
 Barclay, a.i. and X.ii.

we meet with it also as "the wagging boat" in Piers Plowman
 (C. xi. 32) and again in Scogan's "A Moral Balade" (lines
 138-140). Skeat in introducing his supplementary volume

to the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer informs us that

The 'ship' is a common symbol of this
present life, in which we are surrounded
by perils; (110)

(110)
Skeat (ed), Chaucerian and Other Pieces ,
p. 456.

and refers us to the passage in Langland already noted.
The figure of the ship strongly recommended itself to
these poets as a symbol of insecurity; it symbolises
very aptly that peculiar pitch and toss which we
encounter in Wyatt's rhythms. The significance of the
symbol in the period was obviously generally recognised;
we have a letter in which Henry VIIIth writes to thank
Anne Boleyn for

the fine diamond and the ship in which the
solitary damsel is tossed about. (111)

(111) The Love Letters of Henry VIII to Anne
Boleyn (ed. J.O. Halliwell Phillips,
1907), [7].

We are left to assume that this figurative representation of Anne's trepidation and insecurity as Henry's mistress was not lost upon the king. We must, of course, bear in mind that the ship intended in this figure is more like a cockleshell than an ocean liner, it is a ship at the mercy of the elements, a ship such as that described by Scogan (see above):

But, as a ship that is withouten stere

Dryveth up and down, withouten governance

The amplifications of such a figure are numerous and yet they will, by and large, be found to agree in their general didactic purpose, they all serve to impress upon us the need for disciplined living, the need to find some 'stere' or point of orientation by which life may be governed and directed for (as the author of "The Testament of Love" puts it) "How shulde a ship, withouten a stere, in the grete see be governed?" (112).

(112) Skeat, Chaucerian and Other Pieces, p.6.

One of Wyatt's preoccupations, therefore, can be represented by this inherited picture of man's life.

A man's life is like a ship manned by Lust, Deceit, Despair, Reason, Will, Grace, Hope, etc. in which through raging seas he makes for the haven of Peace. This is the picture of life informing the symbol in Bosch, Brant, Barclay, Skelton and, in such a poem as "My galy charged with forgetfulness", Wyatt. Perhaps the best representation of the picture is contained in "The Testament of Love". The narrator reaches the sea:

Than were there y-nowe to lacche myn handes,
and drawe me to shippe, of whiche many I
knew wel the names. Sight was the first,
Lust was another, Thought was the thirde;
and Wil eke was there a mayster; these
broughten me within-borde of this shippe of
Traveyle. So whan the sayl was sprad, and
this ship gan to move, the wind and water
gan for to ryse, and overthwartly to turne
the welken. The wawes semeden as they kiste
togider; but often under colour of kissinge
is moked old hate prively closed and kept.
The storm so straungely and in a devouring
maner gan so faste us assayle, that I

supposed the date of my deth shulde have
mad there his ginning. Now up, now downe,
now under the wawe and now aboven was my
ship a greet whyle. And so mokol duresse
of weders and of stormes, and with greet
avowing pilgrimages, I was driven to an
yle, where utterly I wende first to have
be rescowed; but trewly, at the first
ginning, it semed me so perillous the
haven to cacche, but that thorow grace I
had ben comforted, of lyfe I was ful
dispayred. (113)

(113) Ibid, pp. 15, 16.

If then, as will frequently appear, Wyatt is principally concerned with the insecurities of life, his concern is a traditional one. If, as has been stated, he produced poetry out of the vicissitudes of court life it is to be observed that court life provides a more sharply etched reproduction of the above picture of the life of man.

The civilisation which Wyatt inherits and of which the Renaissance court is the 'peak' is grounded in a

life which is seen to be beset by moral peril, Lust, Deceit, and so on, and rocked by continual insecurity. Human assertion is, therefore, essentially didactic; the assertion of human discipline is not, as it is in our own modern scientific era, exercised over the elements but over the passions; what shapes life is not the discipline of science but that of moral rectitude; the cleft in consciousness is between Good and Evil rather than between Fact and Fancy. This distinction must be grasped if we are to partake of the achievements of such a civilisation. Discipline or control was exercisable over the ship's crew (the human faculties and passions) and hence, ultimately, over the ship's course, it was not exercisable over the storms which beset the ship (the elements) and which came under the government of Chance and Fortune (and, in the non-secular sphere, of God as 'things sent to try us'). The insecurity of life arose not solely from the possibility of a mutiny, which it was always within man's power to put down, but also from the vagaries of Fortune. It was recognised, as it would be to-day I suppose, that it was not purely in ourselves that we are thus and thus but that exigencies of situation play their part in shaping us towards peculiar

ends and in turning our course somewhat from what we would. Fortune, exigencies beyond our own control, is therefore an important figure in this picture of life; 'she' is the source of that disquietude which characterises it. This attitude to the vagaries of living (and the tendency to fatalism which is implicit in it) is well expressed in Wyatt's four lines:

ffortune dothe frowne

what remedye

I am done

bye destenye

D 148.

But the figure is extensively relied upon in his poems under a variety of names - Fortune, Chance, Hap, and so on. I quote only one more example however, and this in order to illustrate something of the government of the elements (exigencies and situations) which was the special office of this recalcitrant goddess. It is the first three stanzas of E 68.

Ons as me thought fortune me kyst

and bad me aske what I thought best

and I should have it as me list

therewith to set my hert in rest

I asked nought but my dere hert
to have for evermore myn owne
then at an ende were all my smert
then should I nede no more to mone
Yet for all that a stormy blast
had overturned this goodely day
and fortune sowed at the last
that to her promes she saide nay

Fortune, then, is the figure of that (to make use of
a phrase from Lydgate) "worldly fikelnesse" (114)

(114)
Fortunes wheel goth round aboute
A thousand tymes, day and night:
Whoscours standeth ever in doute
For to transmew; she is so light.
For which adverteth in your sight
Th'untrust of worldly fikelnesse

Lydgate, "Beware of Doubleness", 41-48, in
Skeat (ed.) Chaucerian and Other Pieces.
For a parallel in Wyatt see M183.

from which springs that basic insecurity and trepidation which haunts the traditions and the civilisation within which such poetry was conceived and executed.

This insecurity, however, penetrated the fabric of human living in a manner which gave the metaphysical propositions, that life is like a ship and life is governed by fortune, their veracity. Such propositions were felt to be satisfactory (otherwise they would have been discarded) on the only grounds that such propositions can be felt to satisfy - they summed up what was significant and observable in human relationships. Storm, Flood, Fire and Plague were, of course, perilous to man's frail bark, they were the dark powers that Man and Woman had unleashed in the paradisal garden and which thenceforth blighted man's relations with the Creation. These physical evils, however, were the least of mankind's troubles. It has already been remarked that the major distinction we have to reckon with here is that between Good and Evil and the pronounced human assertion is that of moral rectitude. In other words, to make the matter explicit, of the two recognised categories of evil (moral and physical) moral evil was considered the fulcrum of all Evil. The directive concern with

insecurity is, therefore, with moral or human insecurity rather than with that of the elemental powers. The belief, as it is expressed by Wythorne, is that

if any of thoz fortions afforsaid do
happen to vs kontraryly or ill, it is
throuh ovr own wikkednes and sinfull
natiur. (115)

(115)

Wythorne, p.35.

This dimension of concern is naturally present in the poetry as well as in the theology. In the picture of life symbolised by the ship as it has been so far considered, the captain is the Will whose duty it is to govern and control the crew of faculties and passions and to ensure that the ship maintains its proper course to the extent that the storms of fortune will permit. But this picture has application only to the life of the individual. There is, modelled upon it, one which has application to the community - in the case of Skelton's "The Bouge of Court", that of the royal court. Puttenham also makes use of the

figure and takes the trouble to explicate it for us -

the common wealth, a shippe; the Prince a
Pilot, the Counsellours mariners, the
stormes warres, the calme and /hauen/ peace,
this is spoken all in allegorie (116)

(116)
Puttenham, p.187.

In this larger model Fortune ceases to be simply an external elemental power and penetrates into the human fabric of life. Fortune here governs the affections and loyalties of men and women. The insecurity with which we have been so much occupied is important (hence the figures considered were found recurrently significant and satisfying) not because man was felt to be at the mercy of the elements but because he was at the mercy of man. This remark may appear vacuous unless it is born in mind that a man coming under the jurisdiction of the royal court held not only his property but his very life as a gift of the king and should his enemies gain access to the royal ear a few well-chosen words would lose him both his life and his property. The figure of Fortune thus represents not only the exigencies of the elements but also those of court politics.

Thus the didacticism which underlies the presentation of the individual as a ship beset about with peril extends into the realms of politics. The deceit, the lust, the despair which buffeted the individual on his voyage through life become enemies intent upon effecting his overthrow by means of lies and slander. The literature of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century is obsessed with this preoccupation, slander, not simply as a moral danger - for as a general rule moral dangers do not become pressingly important until they become political ones. Thus one finds that it is not only the evil done by slander to the slanderer's soul which occupies the poet's attention, but the more general ethical and political evil it brings about:

And tonges false, through hir sleightly wyle,
Han gonne a werre that wil not stinted be;
And fals Envye, Wrathe, and Enmite,
Have conspired, ayeines al right and lawe,
Of hir malyce, the Trouthe shal be slawe. (117)

(117) Lydgate, "The Complaint of the Black Knight",
lines 255-259, in Skeat (ed.), Chaucerian
and Other Pieces.

The complaint was common, it will be found recurring through such a 'tract' as "The Testament of Love":

And false wordes springen so wyde, by the
stering of false lying tonges, that fame
als swiftly flyeth to her eres and sayth
many wicked tales; and as soone shal
falsenesse ben leved as truthe, for al
his gret sothnesse. (1. iv. 67-70).

Again in Wyatt we find frequent evidence of fifteenth century didacticism in this kind of preoccupation with 'trust' and with 'truth' and 'doubleness'. In "What vailoth trouth?" Wyatt reiterates the complaint such as we have it in Lydgate (above):

What vailoth trouth? or, by it, to take payn?
to stryve, by stedfastnes, for to attayne,
to be iuste, and true: & fle from dowblenes:
sythens all alike, where rueleth craftines:
rewarded is boeth fals, & plain:
sonest he spedeth, that moost can fain.
true meanyng hert / is had in disdayn.
against deceipte & dowblenes:

What vailoth trouth?

on

E2.

The spirit of such lines is much the same as that of the

third satire.

However, Wyatt takes us closer to the conspiratorial character of court life than this. He is, in the main, more concerned with the actions of friends, acquaintances and enemies than with such abstractions as Envy, Wrath and Enmity. The distinction between Lydgate as a 'clerk' and Wyatt as a courtier (a court poet) can be made by noting how much more closely and more personally Wyatt's poetry approaches actuality in dealing with those who "Have conspired". For instance, supplementing the occasional references to the desertion of friends we have such a poem as "They fle from me" or the personal address of "Luckes, my faire falcon" and the personal complaint of the Psalms:

And when myn enmys did me most assayle
my frendes most sure wherein I sett most trust
my own vertus / sonest then did ffaile
& stoud apart. reason and witt vniust
as kyn unkynd were fardest gone at nede

E 117.

And to see the extent to which the translation of the Psalms has ceased with Wyatt to be mere translation and become a means of personal expression such a passage

should be compared with "They fle from me" or "Luckes,
my faire falcon"; in the words of Puttenham, "the very
Poet makes and contriues out of his owne braine, both
the verse and matter of his poems, and not by any
foreine copie or example, as doth the translator" (p.3).
This, the desertion of friends, is only one aspect of
that vacillation with reference to which Fortune becomes
a political concept. The balance of favour being as
precarious as it appears to have been at court, the
distinction between friend and foe was vague and temp-
orary.

for suche as ye think yo^r frinde maye fortune
be yo^r ffoe

D 151.

Vigilance in friendship, as Wyatt advises in "Greeting
to you bothe", was, as a consequence of such uncertainties,
necessary to survival. The seeming-friend was, naturally,
a very special danger:

Ryght true it is: and said full yore ago

take hede of him: that by thy back the
claweth

for none is wourse: then is a frendely ffoo

E 51.

Friends desert when favour is lost, when fortune turns
her ball. (118)

(118)

A figure which Wyatt inherited from Chaucer
where Fortune is "hir that turneth as a
bal" (Truth, balade de bon consayl, line
9. Skeat, Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, I.

But the winds of favour, unlike the winds of heaven, do
not blow as they list, their direction and velocity depend
in the last resort upon the influence of enemies.
Friends may desert even in anticipation of a change of
wind and thereby bring about the very change they antici-
pated, a situation often reflected in the poems, for as
a consequence of such a politic desertion

So had thei place theire venim owt to thrust
that sowght my deth by nowghty word and dede
theire tonges reproche theire wittes did
fraude aplye

E 117.

Plainly such situations as we find them in the poems are
sufficient to account for Wyatt's striking preoccupations

with such matters as friendship and honest affection. There can be little doubt that initially at least these situations received special significance in the conventions of courtly love.

The lover in The Way of Woman's Love not only has to reproach his mistress for her inconstancy but has to contend with the evil wrought by backbiters who set her against him ... Backbiters play a large part in French lyrics, where they are always on the watch to make mischief between lovers. (119)

(119)

Brook, pp. 24, 25.

But in English, this concern with slanderers widened considerably: to beware of slanderers received a political dimension as a piece of advice to pass on to friends and people in high places and the lover's complaint (as was seen in the previous section) also provides occasion to press similar advice upon the 'lady'.

The general picture of life we begin to draw up in placing Wyatt's poetry in relation to his English predecessors is not a particularly pleasant one; it is a life bedevilled not only by the dangers implicit in the human lot, such as moral intemperance, plague, fire, flood and famine, but also by many of more pressing and immediate moment which sprang from the corruption of human intercourse. The government of Fortune, the "wagging boat", the proliferation of slander, the conspiracy of enemies and the vacillation of 'friends' are counterpoised by 'teaching', by asserting the need for self-government, moral rectitude, honest affection and steadfastness. It is in the sense covered by this use of the term 'teaching' that I refer to such poetry as didactic. And if, to sum up, the preoccupation of such a poetry can be given in a phrase it can be said to be with stability and instability. This may seem a very general preoccupation - which of course it is - but the poetry of no other age (to the best of my knowledge) shows such an obsession with so many aspects of stability and instability as does that of the early-Tudor period and in particular as that of Wyatt. This is no doubt improperly comprehensible unless we permit that poetry to draw us into a concern for the quality

of actual living which such poetry embodies. And the quality of actual social living as we discover it through early-Tudor poetry is corrupt, it is characterised by a fear and insecurity which springs from the distortion of honest and spontaneous affection effected by the rule of that political expediency which centred upon the royal court.

Chapter Seven

Political Preoccupations

In many respects Wyatt's poetry represents the peculiarly English expression of a phase in the history of a European civilisation, a civilisation which reached its peak of articulation amidst the uncertainties of Renaissance court life. Wyatt's rhythms have not only to be viewed as English, therefore, but need also to be assessed in terms of such widespread and pervasive uncertainties. His poetry, that is to say, cannot be appreciated unless it is seen as an attempt to render articulate the actual quality of civilised living such as it was in one Renaissance court, namely that of Henry VIIIth. The key to Wyatt's sense of rhythm, a rhythm expressing strange perplexities, hesitations and uncertainties in its peculiar twists and turns, is to be found ultimately in the vicissitudes and instabilities of court life. It is in this sense that Wyatt's poetry can be said to be representative; Wyatt is the English court poet. His success in producing poetry out of the texture of actual court life, out of the insecurities

which characterise it, distinguishes Wyatt from the Italian Petrarch and the English Surrey and, indeed, from the majority of his Elizabethan successors.

Many previous writers have insisted upon Wyatt's debt to the Spanish, French and Italian poets and in particular upon his debt to Petrarch. Thus Puttenham commends Wyatt and Surrey for

in all imitating very naturally and
studiously their Maister Francis
Petrarcha (120)

(120)
Puttenham, p.62.

and as

much affecting the stile and measures
of the Italian Petrarcha (121)

(121)
Puttenham, p. 126.

Bell, introducing his edition of Wyatt, writes of

His success in transplanting into our
language the forms of the Spanish,
French and Italian writers (122)

(122)
Bell, p.60.

And, more recently, an historian of literature has
claimed that

Wyatt put the Psalms into the stream of
English literature, using the verse
forms which he had brought from the
continent to England. (123)

(123)
Lily B. Campbell, Divine Poetry and
Drama in Sixteenth-Century England
(Cambridge, 1959), p.35.

Similarly, although a note of doubt can now be heard,
C.S. Lewis, in his survey of sixteenth century literature,
affirms that Wyatt

is, for one thing, the first of our
Italianate poets, though this element

in his work may not have quite the importance which the older critics claimed for it. (124)

(124) C.S. Lewis, English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, p. 223.

Lewis reflects something of the discontent bound to be felt about such a claim by someone taking into account earlier English poetry of the fourteenth and fifteenth century. There are, in Wyatt, plain enough signs of an indebtedness of one sort, namely in the translations, but these signs have been misunderstood because the character of Wyatt's general achievement has been misunderstood. In the past Wyatt's achievement came to be viewed in terms of a supposed 'reform' of English poetry so that past critics were committed to the view that

his great claim to recognition, like that of his contemporary and follower, Surrey, lies in his successful effort to raise his native tongue to dignity by making it the vehicle of 'polite' and courtly poetry, an effort which

his model, Petrarch, had himself made
in his time. (125)

(125) Child, "The New English Poetry" ,
p. 174.

As a consequence, questions concerning the magnitude of
Wyatt's achievement were to be settled by comparing his
smoothing influence with that of Surrey. Thus, on
Wyatt's behalf, Bell argued that

As a poet, Wyatt's claims have never
been adequately recognized. While he
has obtained the credit of having
co-operated with Surrey in 'correcting
the ruggedness' of English poetry,
his share in the reform has not
received the acknowledgment to which
it appears entitled. Surrey, being
the better poet, has carried off all
the honours. (126)

(126) Bell, pp. 53, 54.

Seeing this as his 'achievement' it is not surprising that another historian of literature should believe that, as far as Wyatt's stanzas are concerned,

their place in the history of English poetry is more important than their intrinsic qualities. (127)

(127) Child, p.172.

Nor is it surprising to discover that interest in Wyatt has been predominantly 'historical' and concerned with influences (four of the last six quotations are from histories or surveys of literature). The general critical estimate is now finding its way into history proper:

English poetry, which was at a low ebb, gained no real inspiration before the days of Wyatt and Surrey ...

Surrey, who shares with Wyatt the credit of having introduced into English poetry the graces of Italy ... (128)

(128) J.D. Mackie, The Early Tudors 1485-1558 (Oxford, 1957), pps. 226 and 420.

And, finally, it is not surprising that since the character of his achievement has been generally misunderstood so has his dependency upon the Italian poet. Wyatt and Petrarch write within a similar tradition, but it must be remembered that the conventions of courtly love, for instance, had been anglicised long before Wyatt. Of the early fourteenth century poems in MS Harley 2253 (which includes, as its editor informs us, "More than half the secular lyrics that have come down from before the end of the fourteenth century" p.vii)

Most of the secular lyrics were written
under the influence of the conventions
of courtly love (129)

(129) Brook, p.6.

The principle significant source for these conventions as far as early-Tudor poetry is concerned was, of course, Chaucer. According to at least one early-Tudor writer,

The fine Courtier wil talke nothyng
but Chaucer. (130)

(130) Wilson, p.162.

And the effect of Chaucer upon Wyatt's poetry, or at least upon its diction, has been well illustrated by Rubel.

When he essayed to reproduce in English the poems of Petrarch and others, he did not import and adapt the language of his originals. In fact, it might seem surprising that there are so few conspicuous Romance words in his poetry ... (131)

(131) Rubel, p.47.

And

It is not even necessary to assume, as Miss Foxwell does, that Wyatt's use of elisions are the result of "carefully reading Italian measures," since such forms are common in Chaucer as well. (132)

(132) Rubel, p.47. Wyatt's relationship to Chaucer is dealt with at some length by Mason, pp. 159-166, 229-230.

Plainly the conventions of courtly love came through the same channel. It seems certain that many of the Petrarchan 'attitudes' which Wyatt has been credited with introducing into English poetry had long inhabited the English Parnassus. (133)

(133) It often seems to be forgotten that Chaucer also translated Petrarch. See, for instance, "Troilus and Criseyde", l. 400-413).

Certainly the bulk of these can be illustrated from the Harley lyrics, Chaucer and Lydgate. Wyatt and Petrarch, an Englishman and an Italian write within a European tradition, but their interests in that tradition are distinct and, in many respects, opposed; the Northern Renaissance has generally been understood to maintain a greater measure of contact with the medieval past than the Italian Renaissance appears to have done and, certainly, much that is best in Wyatt's poetry reveals the continuity of medieval moral-didactic concern.

It is not perhaps readily appreciated that Wyatt's

amorous complaints belong to the same continuum of consciousness as do his more overtly didactic poems. And yet the complaints testify to a general pre-occupation with insecurity and plaintively express a fundamental dissatisfaction with the conditions which are identified with the vagaries of court life and the dependency upon the fortunes of favouritism. If, as was claimed at the outset of the present section, Wyatt gives peculiar expression to what was a European civilisation, he does so by means of what has to be seen as a response to its inadequacy. This, I believe, is the role of the complaint in the hands of Wyatt.

The political character of the complaint has not received a great deal of attention to date (134)

(134) Miss Foxwell notes changes in the Arundel MS which must have been carried out for political reasons:

E So sacks of dirt be filled up in clyster;

A So sacks of dirt be filled; the neat courtier.

E Lerne at Rittson that in a long
white cote;

A Lerne of the ladde that in a long
white cote.

Foxwell, Study, p.12.

and yet in view of the courtly situation this assumes
some considerable importance particularly when the
complaint has the court of Henry VIIIth for its general
setting.

For there is one historical fact which
must never be forgotten in reading the
poems of courtiers: the absolute power
of life and death in Henry's hands.
The proverb on everyone's lips in
Henry's reign was

Indignatio regis nuntiij mortis.

(The kynges displeasure is a
messaunger of death, but a wyse
man wyl pacifie him.)

Writers were driven to wit, irony, or
any masking device to avoid that
messenger. (135)

(135) Mason, p.49.

Such devices were certainly familiar and Puttenham takes them into account, he writes of "rymes, which might be constred two or three wayes" (Puttenham, p. 260) and more explicitly of the 'Eglogue' as a kind of poem whose special function was

vnder the vaile of homely persons, and
in rude speeches to insinuate and glaunce
at greater matters, and such as perchaunce
had not bene safe to haue beene disclosed
in any other sort ... (136)

(136) Puttenham, p. 38.

The kind of poem which Puttenham probably had in mind is exemplified by one entitled "The Hospitable Oake", which occurs in a MS. dated 1564 and deals allegorically with the life and execution of Lord Admiral Seymour (see Thomas Park, ed., Nugae Antiquae, 1804, II, 330-332). But even if we see that some of the lover's complaints were similar masked or veiled glances "at greater matters", the form and sentiment proper to the complaint also lent itself easily to undisguised political exploitation. The amorous complaint was admirably suited to the purpose of seeking the patronage of well-placed ladies of the court.

The complaint, after all, offered them 'service', reminded them of past service and of suppliant's faithfulness and trustworthiness or, alternatively, chided them with lack of gratitude in a properly respectful tone of servility. This political character of the complaint is deeply rooted in the history of the conventions of courtly love:

It grew up in a feudal society, and the love of a troubadour was thought of in terms of feudal relations. The lover devoted himself to the service of his mistress, who became his liege lady. He was her baillie, and had to render her the submission of a vassal. The submission which a lover owed to his lady did not conflict with his feudal obligations as a knight; in fact, it was thought that a noble could not be a true knight unless he loved a lady, to please whom he performed his warlike deeds. Jeanroy points out that such a conception of the relations between a lady and her lover would be likely to

grow up in a typical Provencal castle in which there were very few women of rank but many landless knights, squires, and pages, who were feudally inferior to the lady of the castle. This relationship helps to explain the extreme humility which is one of the characteristics of courtly love. Another result of the association between courtly love and feudalism was that knightly qualities, especially courtesy and loyalty, which would in any case be desirable in a lover, came to be especially valued. (137)

(137)

Brook, p.9.

Granted the propriety of complaints written in such a convention, what need of any alternative political vehicle in a court governed by favouritism? In brief, the self-recommendation and self-advancement, the demands of which lie close to the heart of the genre, was in all probability (a probability to be considered more fully later) as largely political as it was amorous. There can be little doubt that the complaint provided a

ready form for flattery directed in the first instance to ladies of influence. In this respect the complaint can be as much a complimentary poem as the fifteenth century poem "To My Soverain Lady" which, according to Skeat,

is evidently a conventional complimentary poem, written to please some lady of rank or of high renown (138)

(138) Skeat, (ed.) Chaucerian and Other Pieces, p. lxvii.

Perhaps then Wyatt's surprising success as a courtier

at a time when to retain the royal favour was a more delicate business than to capture it (139)

(139) William Edward Simonds, Sir Thomas Wyatt and His Poems (Boston, 1889), p.44.

was not unconnected with some poetic complimentary successes. Doubtless at least Puttenham had good grounds

for calling poets "cunning Prince-pleasers" (p.17).

Some, although not all, amorous poems obviously smoothed the way of courtly careerists.

The lady in the Tudor court was not in the same position of isolated superiority as her sister in Provence, but Puttenham tells of an episode which reveals her political importance and suggests the kind of favour a courtier must often have required.

A Knight of the Queenes priuie chamber,
once intreated a noble woman of the
Court, being in great fauour about her
Maiestie (to th'intent to remove her
from a certaine displeasure, which by
sinister opinion she had conceiued
against a gentleman his friend) that
it would please her to heare him
speake in his own cause, & not to
condemne him vpon his aduersaries
report ... (140)

(140) Puttenham, p.140.

Here we have the gist of so many lover's complaints: enemies and back-biters have set the lady against him with lies, but if she will only allow him to "speake in his own cause, & not ... condemne him vpon his aduersaries report" she will quickly be assured of his unfailing allegience and will once again bestow her favour upon him. In the context of Puttenham's passage the favour could hardly be amorous. The episode reveals the kind of influence for which well-placed court ladies were often wooed in so many 'amorous' verses. Yet if many offers of love and complaints of rejected or unrewarded service emanate from the need to seek advancement, security and protection behind the skirts of influential women, such an expediency as currying favour could hardly have done much to encourage secure affections and honest relationships.

The dependency upon ladies of position is not restricted to the Court circle. Such a pattern of dependency upon the influential estate of the lady and the uncertainties attending upon that is to be observed even amongst the middle class. It is a pattern sketched for us by Wythorne in a manner which gives a remarkably clear picture of the political dimensions of Fortune.

In a passage in his autobiography Wythorne writes,

to Shortly after ther happened mor trobuls vnto
mee, for Fortiun chanzed my mistres estat from
hy to low, the which hindred me also for althoh
I fownd that shee doted not on mee, yet I waz
sertain that if shee had kontinewed in
prosperite I shuld hav bin in better kas to
have lyved then I waz afterwardz

His ill luck appears even worse as he had recently
turned down an offer of employment made to him by a
noble woman. However, Fortune was necessarily more
violent with the aristocracy and

the said nobull woman and her lovd huzvand had
wurs fall shortly after my mistress fall

The outcome of his consideration of their falls and
his own "ill hap" was a poem on Fortune's mutability.
(See Wytherne, p.60).

To return to the Court circle: that there was
something profoundly unnatural about the personal
relationships of the 'civilised' set must have been

apparent to any fairly sensitive member of it, certainly to Wyatt, and what we find in the poetry produced by some of its members and in the conventions of that poetry bears this out. Professor Harding has observed that the circle of Wyatt's attention in the love poetry is firmly circumscribed by "the expectation of rebuff and protest at the betrayal of his affection" (141)

(141) Harding, "The Poetry of Wyatt", p.210.

and that the pervading depression - a state of mind which may be exemplified in the following lines:

Like to these vnamesurable montayns
is my painfull lyff the burden of Ire
for of great height be they: and high is
my desire
and I of teres: and they be full of fontayns

E 34.

- is intimately linked to reflections upon a breach of friendship, a rejection of preferred service or some

similar instance of infidelity and lack of trust. Such reflections (as will be seen throughout) must, Professor Harding also remarks, have received their strength and pertinacity from the position of the Tudor courtier and are only to be fully understood within a general political context. For Wyatt

the convention of the love-lament offered indirect expression to a range of feelings - depression, protest at bad faith, weariness from unrewarded service - that may have arisen from quite other sources, such as the difficulties and disappointments of his diplomatic work, fluctuations in the King's regard for him, and the hazards of his position as a courtier among intriguing rivals. (142)

(142) Ibid, p.206.

If, therefore, Wyatt's apparent love poems carry a burden of political complaint they must, plainly,

have been ambiguous and have given rise to difficulties of understanding amongst his contemporaries. There are, indeed, poems by Wyatt which appear to indicate such a difficulty, as for instance D132:

Me list no more to sing
of love nor of suche thing
howe sore y^t yt me wring
for what I song or spake
men dede my songis mistake /
my songes ware to defuse
theye made folke to muse
therefor me to excuse
theye shall be song mor^e plaine
nothr of Joye nor payne /

One must, of course, take into account here the convention of secrecy which was part of the rule of courtly love.

The lover in A Wayle whyt ase whalles
Bon laments the fate of the man who loves
secretly and dare not tell anyone what is
the matter with him ...; in this lyric
there may be a special reason for secrecy

since it is suggested that the lady is married. Wells suggests that the occasion of The Way of Woman's Love ... is that the lady has cast off her lover for revealing their secret love, and there is a clear allusion to the convention in the second stanza of the lyric:

Y wolde nemne hyre today
And y dorste hire munne

Finally, there is the pun by which the author of Annot and John conceals the name of his mistress ... (143)

(143)
Brook, pp. 12, 13.

But if we take the rule of secrecy into account it is only to note that it is not to this that Wyatt's poem refers. It seems that the Wyatt lyric is not particularly concerned with hiding his lady's name so much as with mistakes and speculations about the general purport of

of his poems: "Men dede my songis mistake" not 'my lady's name'. Furthermore, were it a reference to a convention, a rule of the game, the poem would have little point; men would hardly be led astray by the poet's adherence to the rules. People are puzzled by the songs, they sense something in them which does not quite square with their expectations, with the conventions; that, I take it, is a valid exegesis of the lines. But far from making the poems "to defuse" it is the very presence of such shades of ambiguity, a possible vacillation between political and personal allusion, which gives the poetry such a surprising degree of integrity to court life. Personal merits such as honesty, good faith, steadfastness, are being asserted in a context dominated by the tenuous personal allegiances of political expediency. This general context which the poems create gives Wyatt's poetry an extended connotation which serves to place love and friendship very firmly in the actual conditions of court life. In this sense Wyatt's poetry is essentially court poetry, the poetry of a courtier not qua cultured gentleman as in the case of Surrey, but qua member of a specific social group dangerously governed in its relationships by exigency rather than by the ideals of the Petrarchans.

It has been claimed above that Wyatt's poetry evokes a limited range of experience, it is bounded by insecurity, trepidations arising from that, and loss of affection (love, friendship, trust).

Professor Harding has already drawn attention to this restriction of the area of feeling within which Wyatt's poetry operates:

the convention of the love-lament
offered indirect expression to a
range of feelings - depression,
protest at bad faith, weariness from
unrewarded service (144)

(144) Harding, "The Poetry of Wyatt", p.206.

Although the veracity of this contention could only be substantiated by reading and examining a great deal of Wyatt's poetry, a few illustrations can be produced simply to suggest the way in which a limited number of such basic concerns express themselves, make themselves felt, in the poems. It may serve at least to exemplify more particularly the manner in which Wyatt's

poetry is preoccupied with the distortion of honest feelings which resulted from the nature of court existence.

Upon a first acquaintance with the poems one is impressed by the highly conventional character of the sentiment. For example, the poet complains of his cruel mistress:

Behold, love, thy power how she dispiseth:
my great payne how litle she regardeth.

E 1.

of court life:

That who so ioyes such kinde of life to holde
In prison ioyes, fettred with cheines of gold.

M 193.

or

of my lost yeres & tyme myspent

E 17.

And yet, for all the apparent conventionality, the accumulative domination of a sense of insecurity and trepidation is so finely controlled that the conventions give way to a new, important and individual 'voice'.

One particular poem (M 21) may be allowed to illustrate this point. The superbly controlled movement of "It may be good" creates the perplexity of an insecure mind, of a state of mind which springs directly from the unreliability of personal attachment (from "The wyndy wordes, the les quaynt game") and an opposing need for certainty and assurance. Plainly then, here is a poem created out of the courtly distortion of feeling and personal contact by a poet who is aware of a pressing need for honesty in personal relationships. (This is not, of course, intended to imply that the poem reflects any particular personal attachment, for as Brock has remarked with respect to the Harley lyrics, "It is dangerous to assume that any particular poem represents actual personal relationships" p.10, that is to say the poems do not necessarily reflect biographically actual friendships and enmities of the poet.)

It may be good like it whe list
but I do dewbt who can me blame
for oft assured yet have I myst
and now again I fere the same
The wyndy wordes the les quaynt game

of soden chaunge maketh me agast
for dred to fall I stond not fast

E 22.

The poem is truly a creation, the insecurity and need for assurance is being produced by the way in which the language, especially the rhythm and syntax, is being used rather than by the mere reportage of explicit statement. Just as it is the way in which the language is being used here and in the remaining two stanzas - e.g. the third, which begins

Assured I dowbt I be not sure
and should I trust to suche suretie
that oft hath put the prouff in vre
and never hath founde it trusty

- which makes us aware of the predicament so concisely set before us in that line "Assured, I dowbt I be not sure", the predicament of an ineradicable psychological need for certainty and the undeniable political wisdom of doubt. In brief, the language of this (generally overlooked) poem is made to

tred an endles maze
that seketh to accorde two contraries

"such wordes & speaches", as Puttenham remarks about another matter, "inwardly working a stirre to the mynde" (Puttenham, pp. 142, 143). Few of the poems of this period are so dramatically successful in revealing (as opposed to reporting) the conflict between psychological necessity and political expediency and a consideration of the manner in which Wyatt uses movement in this poem has already been put forward in a previous section.

As most of Wyatt's poems do, to some extent, reveal this basic insecurity, exhaustive illustration is not possible, but one further example may be adduced. I have chosen a love poem ("It may be good" is obviously not a love poem). The chosen poem will be found to be as greatly preoccupied with the same instability as "It may be good", an instability to which, in this instance, the poem gives a title, "this tossing mew".

Vnstable dreame according to the place
be stedfast ons: or els at leist be true
by tasted sweteness / make me not to rew

the sudden losse of thy fals fayned grace
By goode respect in such a daungerous case
thou broughtes not her into this tossing mew

E 84.

Although this poem is admittedly slighter than "It may be good" - the predicament of feeling produced by "this tossing mew" is not present - yet the terms of the conflict which we have in "It may be good" are here: the desire for certainty, steadfastness in opposition to the "Vnstable dreame" and the "tossing mew".

In both poems there is a characteristic trepidation, although it will be noted that in the more obviously political poem ("It may be good") what is feared is a "fall", that is to say a "sudden chaunge" of political fortune, whereas in the love poem ("Vnstable dreame") it is "The sudden losse" of "her" affection (true, an affection already suspect). This fear of deprivation is to be met with in the very slightest of the poems. It is present in such a slight poem as "What deth is worse then this", a lyric no doubt intended for musical accompaniment.

What deth is worse then this
when my delight
my wele my Joye my blys
is from my sight
Boeth daye & nyght
my liff alas I mys

E 66.

But again this lament is a general characteristic of Wyatt's poetry and not peculiar to any one form. Thus, in a bulkier poem such as "The Joye so short" the motif of sudden loss appears at the outset:

The Joye so short alas the paine so nere
the waye so long the departure so sm^rte
the furst sight alas I bought to dere
that so sedainelye now fro hens must parte

D 137.

The extent of this feeling of deprivation is driven home by the manner in which the poet sets himself apart from company in the final stanza, the final couplet of which is, incidentally, a fresh illustration of that pervasive depression remarked upon earlier.

when other laughe / alas then do I wepe / ly
 when other sing / then do I waille & crye
 when other rune perforcyd I am to crepe
 when other daunce / in sorro I do lye
 when other Joye / for paine welnere I dye
 thus brought fro welthe / alas tendles paine /
 that undeseruid / causeles to remayne /

Concern for the loss of love, friendship and well-being,
 and for the corresponding dangers of such states of the
 affections are common and pervasive in Wyatt. Being
 characteristic of Wyatt only a comprehensive reading
 of the poems could vindicate the justice to Wyatt done
 by such a selection of illustrations.

Wyatt, as is made plain enough by his use of rhythm,
 is a poet fundamentally preoccupied with the antithet-
 ical nature of experience and his love poetry is firmly
 directed by this preoccupation. Whilst it is probably
 true, as David Stevenson points out, that

No age easily avoids contradictions in
 amorous thought and feeling (145)
 (1954)

(145)

David Lloyd Stevenson, The Love-Game
Comedy (New York, 1946), p.8.

the sixteenth century seems to have been particularly susceptible to them. In Wyatt the contradictions arise from the incompatibility of the standardised ideals of courtly life and the actual conditions which governed it. In a recent essay, Miss Patricia Thomson has illustrated this divergence from and opposition to Petrarch in noting the manner in which Wyatt transforms his 'original' or source in the poem "Whoso list to hunt". In Wyatt's poem, Miss Thomson writes,

The atmosphere is far from dreamlike, the picturesque description of the countryside has gone, and the sentiment is arrogant and cynical. To describe the pursuit of an inaccessible lady as so much time spent 'in vain' is to aim a blow at the foundation of the sentiment of 'courtly' love common to Petrarch and the Petrarchans. (146)

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- (146) Patricia Thomson, "Wyatt and the Petrarchan Commentators," Review of English Studies, x, 39 (August 1959), 225.

Mason also sees the poem as

"quite clearly a radical criticism
of Petrarch's whole attitude to
women"

and describes it as "a technical triumph
of pausing rhythm". (p.188)

The resultant predicament of feeling is somewhat akin to that which we encounter in Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and it is a characteristic which sets Wyatt apart from and in opposition to the school of Petrarch as Miss Thomson has pointed out. In noting the incompatibility between the ideal and the actual, Wyatt's waking sense of reality tells heavily against the standardised ideals and generates (as it does in Troilus and Cressida) a strong and bitter strain of cynicism, a shudder away from an idealism which was often so much hypocrisy, so many "words, words, words". It is, in part at least, this shudder which gives Wyatt's poetry its peculiar power; in it Wyatt is directly opposing the life-ideals of steadfastness, honesty, security and affection to the actual values observed in court life without (as one often suspects with the Italian poets) allowing

the ideals to be mistaken for actuality, (which is "the pretty-pretty or external idealisation of Petrarch" Mason, p.189). Thus Wyatt is capable of suggesting possible alternative values to those of the Petrarchans. The cynicism we meet with in such lines as¹⁸

thy nece: thy cosyn: thy sister or thy doghter
if she be faire / if handsam by her myddell
Yf thy better hath her love besoght her nee
avaunce his cause & he shall help thy nede.
it is but love: turne it to a laughter / tance

E 89.

is thereby elevated by having something more positive in view. And the difference between Wyatt and the Petrarchans is, here, a difference in attitude and not a difference in environment, as Burckhardt's account of the court of Lodovico il Moro bears out:

At his court, the most brilliant in Europe, since that of Burgundy had ceased to exist, immorality of the worst kind was prevalent; the daughter was sold by the father, the wife by the husband, the sister by the brother. (147)

(147)

J. Burckhardt, The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy (1960), p.27.

Whether we can call such a manner of living 'civilised' or not it was an essential part of Renaissance court life, one which Wyatt was honest enough not to idealise into amour courtois. Thus, with regards to Wyatt's attitudes and interests, the importance which needs to be placed upon Petrarch in a study of Wyatt falls roughly into the same category as Holinshed's importance in a study of Shakespeare, although even then Petrarch had less of that importance for Wyatt than Holinshed had for Shakespeare.

Chapter Eight

Psychological Preoccupations

In the tradition of the lover's complaint, Wyatt's poetry expresses the doubts, anxieties, trials and tribulations of an unusually sensitive mind confronting a perplexing and dangerously insecure world. At times the poetry explicitly appears to evoke such a traditionally perplexed, pain-filled and frustrated lover:

I seke the way how
to vtter the smert that I suffre w^t in
but suche it is / I not how to begyn

E 59.

However, such evocations are not limited to the secular love poems as may be seen from the following passage from the Psalms:

O lord, thou knowst the inward cōtemplation
off my desire / y^u knowst my syghes &
 plaintes
thou knowst the teres of my lamentation
Can not expresse my hertes inward restraints

E 117.

But the more these and similar instances are considered the more apparent it becomes that the lover is a relatively insubstantial fiction and that what the poetry reveals is an overwhelming preoccupation with "the smert that I suffre w^t in", "the inward cōtemplation off my desire" and "my hertes inward restraints."

It has, of course, been noted by previous writers that Wyatt introduces into English poetry a new, introspective strain. In Wyatt the 'lady' demanded by the tradition of courtly love fades into the background; instead of on stage she is now in the prompt box watching over a psychological drama of which she is almost fortuitously the occasion. Perhaps 'psychological' is not as descriptive a term as it here needs to be, but in its everyday and untechnical sense it is the one required. A few quotations may serve to remove any lingering doubts as to the use of such a term and simultaneously illustrate the correspondent interest manifest in the poetry. The sense of inner perturbation and distress for which Love is made responsible in one poem:

love w^t vnkindenesse is causer of hevines
of inwarde sorro & sighis painefull.

D 139.

Chance in another:

Suche cruell chaunce doeth so me threte
continuelly inward to frete

E 61.

and, in a third (a Psalm), "the chastysynges of syn,"

In fretying styll w^t in
y^t neu^r soffer rest vnto the mynd

E 115.

these may serve to explain the sense in which Wyatt's poetry is referred to, here and throughout, as a psychological drama; it is a drama of that which is within the mind.

To say that Wyatt's poetry is inward in the sense that it is concerned with that which is within the mind is still simply a matter of drawing attention to "the words on the page". We are told quite plainly not only that we must consider the poems inwardly, but also that in such considerations the mind has an important role. We must attend to the "thing" within the mind:-

Then seke no more owte of thy self to fynde
the thing that thou haist sought so long before

for thou shalt fele it sitting in thy mynde

E81.

- for the drama of the poetry revolves around it, or rather around the question forthrightly posed in a quite minor poem:

shall still that thing
vnstable vnure and wavering
be in my mynde withoute recure

E 47.

So that the inwardness of Wyatt's poetry arises from its attempts to create states of mind. To substantiate this claim is a matter of attending once again to Wyatt's rhythm and, in all simplicity, to expressions of which the following may serve as obvious examples:

o faithfull mynde, too sodenly assented:

E 5.

yet, may I, by no meanes, my weried mynde
drawe from the Diere:

E 7.

the werid mynde streight from the hert departeth

E 30.

The piller pearisht is whearto I Lent
the strongest staye of myne vnquyet mynde

Hughey, No. 96.

To seke by meane to change this minde
Alas I proue it will not be

M 190.

Here faithfulness, constancy, disquiet and weariness are
all presented as states of mind, as elsewhere in the
poems are remembrance (Nos. E32, D163, E207), foolish-
ness (Nos. E32, M228), woefulness (No. E34), offence
(No. E46), fear (No. E59), chance (No. E70), change
(Nos. D19, D135, D144), "to lyue in loves blys" (No. D71),
carelessness (No. D74), cruel-heartedness (Nos. D143,
D154), gentleness (No. M179), consent (No. M186),
mistrustfulness (No. M188), wretchedness (No. E61),
and rest (No. E115) - and this list is far from exhaust-
ive. Plainly, and this is the point the list is
intended to give substance to, Wyatt's poetry is
avowedly concerned with states of mind.

As the above list will also serve to show, the
poetry is not dominated by any one state of mind; rather,

as the pitch and toss of the rhythm has already suggested, it is, as it see-saws between alternatives and extremities, emulating changes and movements of mind. It is this preoccupation that gives a characteristic inwardness and dramatic momentum to such a poem as E 30. Like several of Wyatt's poems E 30 is classed as a translation, from Petrarch, and this classification ignores the most significant feature of the poem, the feature that gives it value as a poem and raises it above the level of a courtly exercise. This feature of the poem is the one I have been attempting to define: Wyatt's characteristic grip upon the internal structure of a situation as revealed in states and movements of mind. Here is the poem in question:

Ausying the bright bemes of these fayer Iyes
 where he is that myn oft moisteth & wassheth
 the werid mynde streight from the hert departeth
 for to rest in his worldly paradise
 Ande fynde the swete bitter vnder this gyse
 what webbes he hath wrought well he perceveth
 whereby with himself on love he playneth
 that spurreth with fyer: and bridilleth wth Ise

Thus is it in suche extremitie brought
 in frossen though nowe and nowe it stondeth in
 flame
 twyst misery and welth twist earnest & game
 but few glad and many a dyvers thought
 with sore repentaunce of his hardines
 of suche a rote cometh ffruyte fruytles

E 30

Here is just such poetry as I have sought to define; it does not refer to the lady, other than to "the bright beemes of these fayer Iyes", on the contrary it treats her appearance as a creature of the lover's over-active imagination; it is not concerned with the more conventional affair of the heart; it explicitly concentrates upon the lover and especially upon "The world mynde", a state of mind met with in several other Wyatt poems (e.g. Nos. E7, E30, Hughey 310, E118, D58). Here then is an example of a poem in which we can see the introspective strain, mentioned earlier, at work. The 'lady' soon fades into the background and in that her eyes serve as little more than mirrors "where he is that myn oft moisteth & wassheth" (i.e. as a device by which the poet can mediate between the convention of amour courtois and his own introspective concern) she is almost fortuitously the occasion whose

presence in the poem is justified as a necessary fiction.
This fact is itself realised in the poem:

what webbes he hath wrought well he perceveth
whereby with himself on love he playneth y^e

the occasion of the poem is a necessary fiction wrought
by the mind by means of which the mind comes to terms
with its own condition.

A paraphrase of such a compact poem is bound to
be a very sketchy affair, yet it may serve to amplify
what has already been said of Wyatt's interest in states
and movements of mind. The following, then, is offered
merely as a very sketchy explication of the poem:

Gazing upon "these fayer Iyes" and seeing in them (in
reflection) the lover who is so often washed by his own
tears, the "werid mynde" leaves the lover's heart and
seeks to rest within this "woroldly paradise". Instead
of the apparently promised sweetness, however, the mind
discovers that this paradise disguises bitterness.
Perceiving that it has been caught in a web of its own
making - that the worldly paradise is a figment of the
mind - the mind realises that it itself is the real
subject of the lover's plaint, that which "spurreth with

fyer: and bridilleth wth Ise." Thus it is from the
 "webbes he [the mind] hath wrought" that the mind is
 "in suche extremitie brought", spurred and bridilled,
 tossed between "frossen though" and "flame", "twyst
 misery and welth twist earnest & game". Filled with
 "many a dyvers thought" of which there are "but few
 glad", the mind repents its recklessness for/but in
 such a state it is fruitless, the thought though "dyvers"
 is to no end.

"The werid mynde" is met with in other poems as
 has already been remarked; in this poem, apart from
 noticing that this state of mind is 'given', it hardly
 requires comment. What is of importance and does
 call for closer attention is the condition and movement
 that is created (as opposed to 'given') in this poem,
 expecially that of the lines:

that spurroth with fyer: and bridilleth wth
 Ise

Thus is it in suche extremitie brought
 in frossen though nowe and nowe it stondeth in
 flame

twyst misery and welth twist earnest & game
 but few glad and many a dyvers thought

The wearied mind has been impelled from its weariness by the perception of "these fayer Iyes" and has sought in them a "woroldly paradise" in which to rest; disillusioned, however, the mind turns in upon itself and we get the above passage in which its condition is presented. Here the phrasal construction is pronounced as the pauses receive special emphasis. In the lines:

that spurreth with fyer: and bridilleth wth Ise
twyst misery and welth twist earnest & game

the rhythmical see-saw creates a counterpart for the declared antipathies of the mind. This movement in various forms, but all relying upon the see-saw for their affect, and with varying degrees of emphasis or importance, recurs throughout Wyatt's poems.

Already instances of this peculiar swaying in the poetry have been referred to, it has been seen in lines such as

Sum tyme I syghe^u sumtyme I syng
sumtyme I lawghe^u sumtyme mornynge

D 30.

At present, however, we are more directly concerned with the way in which this rhythmical movement expresses,

subterraneously as it were, the meaning of "the words on the page". Thus, in the case of "Sum tyme I syghe" we are interested at present in the juxtapositioning of such phrases as "I syghe" and "I syng", "I lawghe" and "mornynge" as explicit indications of the poem's preoccupation with extreme fluctuations in inner condition, a preoccupation enacted by the rhythm. Phrases "spurreth with fyer" and "bridilleth wth Ise", "frossen though" and "in flame", "twyst misery and welth twist earnest & game" produce the same fluctuations in poem E 30, and attention is directly focussed upon them by the line, "Thus is it [the mind] in suche extremitie brought". It is plain what is being attempted in E 30, attempted with great success; the meaning and the rhythm of the lines are integrated in order to represent a turbulent self-consciousness.

This turbulence is a datum of Wyatt's poetry; in other words we might say that Wyatt's poetry is poetry because it creates rather than prates about its subject matter and what it creates is this turbulent kaleidoscope of states of mind. It is worth calling this turbulence a datum of the poetry in order to underline the fact that it was undoubtedly characteristic of

English poetry as Wyatt found it and that his creative ability, his quality as a poet, is revealed in the way in which this turbulence is controlled and made to stand witness to the inner fears, doubts, anxieties and uncertainties from which the uneasy character of the language as he found it in all probability arose.

As a further illustration of this, to be placed beside "Some tyme I sygh" and the passage quoted above from E 30, the following lines show at some length the way in which the rhythm and the explicit statement integrate:

Tossing and tornig wha y^e body wold rest.
 w^t dreamis opprest and visions fantastycall.
 sleping or waking love is ever preste
 some tyme to wepe some tyme to crye and call
 bewayling his fortune and lif bestiall, e
 Nowe in hope of recure and now in dispaire
 this ys a sorye lyf to lyve alwaye in care /

D 139.

"Tossing and tornig" precisely describes the effect of Wyatt's most typical and important poems. It is a "Tossing and tornig" we encounter in the lines

Some tyme to wepe some tyme to crye and call ...
 Nowe in hope of recure and now in dispaire

Here again we return to the movement which, in a rudimentary form, is that of "Sum tyme I syghe".

The rhythm of the poems, therefore, is an integral part of what the poems are more explicitly 'about', it is functional in that it is a function of (or it enacts) this more explicit 'meaning'. It is, perhaps, necessary to remember at this point that the poems are concerned with states of mind and that this is not a critical metaphor but a direct reference to "the words on the page". Similarly, one way of illustrating the integrity of the undercurrents of meaning (provided by the rhythm) and the surface meaning (provided by the meaning of the words used) is to draw attention to "the words on the page" which, apart from their self-evident roles, also describe the rhythm of the poetry. One instance has already been provided, "Tossing and tornig", which in context refers to the restless heart but which also describes the movement not only of the poem in which it occurs but that of the bulk of Wyatt's poems. In fact, this phrase gives us a key to correctly understanding Wyatt's peculiar conception of movement: this tossing and turning of the heart and mind with which his poetry is concerned

would have become superficial, would merely have been 'written-about', had Wyatt fallen victim to the smoother versification introduced by Surrey. In effect, Wyatt would have become another Surrey, for plainly it is as a matter of integrity of this kind that we must rank Surrey far beneath Wyatt.

There are many instances in which the meaning of "the words on the page" also signifies (is integrated with) the movement. In E 120 David decides to reconsider the "diepe secretes" of which he has been singing:

And so he doth./ but not exprest by word

Cⁱ but in his hert he tornith and paysith

ech word y^t erst / his lypps myght forth aford.

he poyntes / he pawsith / he wonders / he

praysyth ...

David's turning in upon himself, although under aⁿce different impulse, turns attention in the same direction as does the movement of the lover's mind in E 30 - inwards. It is noticable, however, that where in E 30 the lover's mind turning upon itself is "in suche extremitie brought" that the poetry becomes a fervent

pitch and toss of contraries, in E 120 the consequence
is a calmer balancing of phrase against phrase, there
is reflection rather than contradiction,

he poyntes / he pawsith / he wonders / he
praysyth

As the passage suggests, each phrase is turned and
passed and balanced by another. The mid two lines of
the passage, therefore, provide a commentary upon the
calm deliberation which expresses itself in the careful
balancing of the rhythmical units of the final line.

One other instance must suffice to illustrate the
manner in which Wyatt's use of words relates directly
to his use of rhythm. Poem E 86 concludes with the
lines

so hangith in balaunce

Off warr my pees / reward of all my payne

At Mountzon thus I restles rest in spayne

Here we do have extremeties, and "Off warr" and "my pees"
are two phrases very heavily and equally emphasised; as
a consequence there is a "balaunce" in the actual rhythm

at the point. The balancing of phrase against phrase has been seen in E 120 and has been dealt with at some length in a previous section. The paradoxical character of Wyatt's use of a balancing rhythm to present conflicting states of mind is well expressed in the final line, "thus I restles rest": rest because of the balance achieved, restless because of the antithetical character of the experience so precariously controlled.

It is not possible to deal with all the states of mind represented in Wyatt's poetry, but fortunately it is not difficult to isolate the most significant of these. It has already been remarked that the poetry is not one long tale of woe, on the contrary, as the examination of its rhythm has suggested, it avoids anything so monotonous and concentrates upon the psychological (or inward) ups and downs of experience.

Sum tyme I syghe sumtyme I syng,
sumtyme I lawghe sumtyme mornynge,

has been chosen to characterise this kind of concentration. There is no need to interpret what is apparent: the language is plain and accords well with the vocabulary of the romantic love tradition. It is equally apparent that Wyatt's use of this vocabulary has the effect of dividing it against itself.

The effect of pairing off the contraries in the vocabulary strengthens the general effect of Wyatt's rhythms and to some extent explains the extended significance of their phrasal, see-sawing, basis. Naturally enough, the sharper the division within the vocabulary, the more striking the antitheses, the more emphatic is the basic rhythm:

when other laughe / alas then do I wepe /
 when other sing / then do I waile & crye
 when other rune perforcyd I am to crepe
 when other daunce / in sorro I do lye
 whan other Joye / for paine welnere I dye
 thus brought fro welthe / alas tendles paine /

D 137.

sleping or waking love is ever preste
 some tyme to wepe some tyme to crye and call
 bewayling his fortune and lif bestiall.
 Newe in hope of recure and now in dispaire

D 139.

The pause of the rhythm is a consequence of the division within the vocabulary. But this division is itself functional: its effect is to realise states of mind.

Through appreciating Wyatt's use of the traditional vocabulary of love it becomes possible to identify the dominant state of mind informing the poetry. "the smert that I suffre w^tin", "my hertes inward restraints", the "inwarde sorro" and the "fretying styll w^tin y^t neu^r soffer rest vnto the mynd", "that thing vnstable vn sure and wavering" which is "in my mynde", "my werid mynde", "myn vnquyet mynde", these can to some extent be subsumed by reference to Wyatt's general use of his vocabulary and rhythm. The division in the vocabulary reinforced by the rhythm creates the dominant affect, the dominant inward condition, which is that of a divided mind.

At its simplest the success of Wyatt's poetry is that of realising such a state of mind. Most of the poems display an awareness of the problem, some a quite explicit awareness, but not all succeed equally well in resolving it. Thus E 82:

: To cause accord or to aggre
two contraries in oon degre
and in oon poynt as semeth me
to all mans wit / it cannot be
it is impossible.

fails to create the perplexity and sense of contradictoriness which is called for and we have a poem which prates rather than creates. As a consequence of this failure the concluding stanza is betrayed into a lie:

Yet love that all thing doeth subdue
whose power there may no liff eschew
hath wrought in me that I may rew
these miracles to be so true
that are impossible /

The miracles have not been "wrought" they have merely been written about. "It may be good " on the other hand is a much finer, and more successful poem in that it achieves a perfect resolution of the problem, a problem indicated in the lines:

Alas I tred an endles maze
that seketh to accorde two contraries

E 22

The resolution can, in this poem, be seen for what it is and what it should be, the perfect integration of syntax, vocabulary and rhythm which creates the hesitating and perplexed movement of a mind divided

between contraries, an integration which may be illustrated in the line

Assured I dowbt I be not sure

but which is introduced immediately in the poem's commencing lines.

The preceding remarks are intended to qualify what has been written earlier of Wyatt's Englishness, his didacticism and the drama of his peculiarly anti-thetic assessment of experience. In every instance what we have is a revelation of the character of an inner impulse and not of self-conscious cultivation; in this he compares favourably not only with Surrey, but also with Spenser. Wyatt's didacticism, for instance, is not superficial, not simply a matter of a professed concern manifest in sententia, it is integral to that basic attitude of mind just examined. Similarly, the atithetic assessment of experience is not that taught by the medieval dialecticians, but one which proceeds from a fundamental preoccupation with the divided mind - the mind caught between the ideal and the actual, desirous of the former but too honest to turn away from actuality and create a soft-centred

dream world. In one obvious sense, then, Wyatt's cast of mind is new - idealism no longer is accepted as a comfortable substitute-reality; ideals are to be tested by observation of practice. But, unlike Machiavelli, Wyatt was aware of the life-goals incapsulated in the old ideals and could not throw them overboard for a tough-minded empiricism. Hence Wyatt's divided mind.

what he was called on to do, very much on his own, was to create a focus of consciousness. His abler contemporaries were aware, each according to his lights, of the need in a moral world threatening to break up for the restatement of moral standards in such a way as to revive respect for the bonds which keep society from anarchy. (148)

(148) Mason, p.199.

Wyatt (the Wyatt of the poems) yearns for a life governed by the age old ideals, he lives one in which the old ideals have little point of actual application.

Chapter Nine

Wyatt's Place in the Sixteenth Century

The presumption that Wyatt's rhythm can be judged by standards which are impervious to the actual performance of his poetry, to the actual affects achieved and the 'actual' meanings' thereby imparted, leads ineluctably to the rejection of Wyatt's poetry by prosodists. The rejection of that presumption leads just as rigourously to the conclusion that prosody (as that term is widely understood) has no role to play in the assessment of Wyatt's poetry. Favoursing this second conclusion there appears, at first sight, only the slightst and unacknowledged testimony provided by the manuscript punctuation and slightly reinforced by the phrasal rhyme-scheme of some of the poems. This evidence, however, is suggestive and by following through the suggestion of a non-quantitative rhythmical principle the rhythm of Wyatt's poetry assumes a creative and dramatic significance pointing to a limited but pervasive set of preoccupations - metaphysical political and psychological - within the poems. These

preoccupations, set within but transforming the conventions of amour courtois, produce a poetry which stands as a permanent criticism of English court civilisation in the early-Tudor period.

In the course of the preceding chapters perhaps too much emphasis has been placed upon Wyatt's rhythm as a rhythm of internal conflict, of divided loyalty and divided desires and of aspirations chaffing and jolting against realities. This was necessary to the thesis as a whole; it was necessary to prove that beneath the tempestuous and highly expressive rhythm of Wyatt's poems there was a pattern, a significance. It was necessary to show that the phrasing of the poems, dimly revealed in the scribal use of punctuation, was at the very centre of the 'meaning' of the poetry and that once grasped and understood, if only in broad outline, it gave to Wyatt's poetry a sense and an all-pervasive preoccupation with the actual conditions of that life to which he was accustomed that suddenly revealed Wyatt not as yet another 'singing bird' but as a very important poet. But, necessary though it may have been so to establish Wyatt's claim

to importance, it precluded a thorough 'placing' of Wyatt within the sixteenth century.

It cannot be too firmly asserted that Wyatt's rhythm is not simply one of conflict and division, since these reveal only the extent to which Wyatt is still within the old life and the old tradition, but that it is an internal conflict, grounded in the mind of individual man. It is this which raises the poetry above the level of 'social complaint' and 'satire'. A reformer such as Starkey could point out the external signs of decay, the top-heavy and parasitic economy, the decline in domestic and ecclesiastic architecture, the increase in vagabondage, etc.; many a satirist could pour acid upon the hypocrisy and lechery of the Court and the clergy, many a humanist point out the deficiencies in education, many a Lutheran call for a Reformation of the faith, but none of these exposes carries within it the damnation of the existing modes of life that we find in Wyatt. Wyatt reveals the self-destructive dialectic at work within man's consciousness and feelings: the great vivifying ideals were still hot in men's minds but life itself, and for Wyatt the courtly life especially, seems to

have manufactured demands which not only defied such
ideals but even went so far as to reward their opposites.
This is the self-destructive dialectic in fact -

thou knowest well first who so can seke to please
shall purchase frendes where trowght shall but
offend
ffle therefore trueth : it is boeth welth and ese

E 89.

as in effect it is -

Vnstable dreame according to the place
be stedfast ons: or els at leist be true etc.

E 84.

and it sets up a far more general conflict between the
cri de coeur and the responce de la monde.

The game of amour courtois ceases with Wyatt to
be a game, the demand for reciprocity of affection has
an urgency that overrides convention and becomes a cry
of love to which romantic tradition can offer no
'remedia', it is the cry of love against the sixteenth
century. A gesture - acceptance of the Lover's service

(thralldom, suit) - would satisfy the convention and silence the complaint, for the convention was a formality and had its rules of conduct like any other convention. But it is not necessary to read many of Wyatt's poems before realizing that the "tossing mew" within which the poet is caught cannot be stilled and escaped by mere ritual; the consuming demand for affection and the sensitivity to, the almost wincing expectation of, rebuff cannot accept a simply ritualistic sublimation, and hence the ritual, the convention, has a cynical sting in the poetry of Wyatt. And it is because the conflict is internal in Wyatt that a ritual which is mere ritual, convention which is mere convention, which has ceased, that is to say, to be the direct expression of an inner condition and hence capable of affecting that condition, holds forth no remedy, no pacification. Surrey lacked that sensitivity of consciousness possessed by Wyatt; for him there appears to have been no discrepancy between the conventions and the realities they were supposed to represent and the conventions could therefore be accepted as truly representative and expressive of life; a conventional exercise was therefore an exercise in living. This tacit assumption, exposed and rejected by Wyatt, poisoned the poetry of the sixteenth century which became involved

in the confusion of the conventional and the actual and lost grip upon direct experience in an obsession with conventional ideals. Such is the kind of unpalatable truth which the character of Wyatt's achievement seems naturally to promote.

But whilst it seems to promote such a judgement it also offers something by way of a more positive view of the sixteenth century, but again a view which may prove unpalatable. The point of growth which is represented in Wyatt is precisely that point which fails to find satisfaction in the old conventions, against which indeed the old conventions are in a sense weighed and found wanting. It is because this point is so essential to Wyatt that it cannot be sacrificed to the old conventions and those conventions accepted, as they were by Surrey, as a mode of life. Of course, it must be presumed that there always was a great discrepancy between the civilizing ideals and the actual conditions of a civilisation; men and women have never been and doubtless never will be perfect. Why then is Wyatt so obsessed with the discrepancy? Why does it penetrate so deep into that consciousness we find in the poems? An ideal is defined as an

ultimate aim of endeavour; its force, therefore, is directive and not descriptive: Wyatt's disenchantment with the pertinacity of the old ideals is, then, a reflection upon the directive powers of the civilisation which still stood about him. The new directive power, partly cause of and partly effect of the disenchantment, is grounded in the realisation of a man's need for integrity, in a new dimension of life which opened up as the disintegration of the old civilisation revealed a new distinction, between the ultimate aims of endeavour controlling an individual mind and those controlling society at large. The inner man, providing a new standard of integrity and honesty and hence possessing a new directive power, has in Wyatt become articulate. Wyatt's poetry writes Mene Mene Tekel Euphrasim on the walls of the old life just as surely and as ineradicably as do Luther's theses.

That growth in consciousness which Wyatt represents so well is formed into a new way of life, develops new conventions and becomes a 'tradition' in its own right over the succeeding century, firstly Protestant and later Puritan, the 'tradition' of total Reformation of life about that central and internal judge that sits

within the mind. After Wyatt it became more and more closely identified with sectarian religious movements and finds relatively inadequate expression in poetry, much of which the sectarians come to suspect of a lack of 'deeper seriousness', an absence of that kind of didacticism which has been seen to be still vital in the best poetry of Wyatt.

In Wyatt, then, we can perceive that impulse which was forming itself into a movement of reformation and in his poetry is revealed something of that crisis of consciousness which must have had a catalytic effect upon the diverse elements of the new civilisation which were appearing; the outcome was the movement of Protestant reform. In this respect it seems true to say of Wyatt that he "focussed the consciousness of his age". But Mason, whose remark this is, obscures this simple truth by a facile comparison with Donne and a rather meaningless distinction between Wyatt and Donne and Chaucer and Shakespeare; thus, according to Mason,

Wyatt focussed the consciousness of his age in terms of his own consciousness in a way that aligns him with Donne rather than with Chaucer or Shakespeare. (149)

Donne had a vague and general relation to the drift of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, but no vital and transforming contact with Elizabethan civilisation. This is not to say that Donne could not thumb his nose at Elizabethan conventions, he could and did; love had its feet firmly planted on the earth by Donne in a way that often suggests the deliberate cocking of a snook at the disembodied passions of the Elizabethan sonneteers. But for Donne to be able to do this the ideals prompting the sonneteers had to be dead to him, had to be mere conventions, which is what indeed they were. Donne had, relative to the immediate past, a lack of roots that enabled an impish iconoclasm to be purchased without much effort, without much pain and sacrifice. The absence of pain and sacrifice gives to Donne's work a certain facility and ease of accomplishment and it is not until he comes to attempt a definition of his relationship to the immediate past, which he does in his religious verse, that the profounder note is sounded. Here Donne is closer in spirit to Wyatt; he is, after all, attempting to achieve a

personal and Protestant expression out of a past (at least on his mother's side) saturated in the old, Catholic, allegiances. But even here Donne's task was relatively easy, its outlines were clear even if the personal edges were necessarily blurred, for there was already something amounting to a Protestant tradition in England, so that for Donne it was rather a matter, in large terms, of working out a modus vivendi with the present than, as with Wyatt, working out a manner of life in conflict with it. Wyatt represents a growth that emerges from the pain of a real and urgent personal need clashing against a real and persistent denial. The resolution of this conflict in the consciousness of the age transformed its self-destructive and chaffing energy into a powerful movement for social regeneration.

What sense does it make then to say of Wyatt that

His strength is in a limiting sense

Protestant

or that he had

no rich and glowing contact with the

conception of a divinely sanctioned order

of society, such as can be found in
Erasmus, More, and Shakespeare. (150)
in

(150)
Mason, p. 234.

His strength, it is true, may be described as Protestant, but Protestant in the vitalising and dynamic sense, not in the limiting one. It is equally true that Wyatt saw society very largely in terms of that smaller society with which he was most familiar, namely the court. Again, this is hardly a limitation since it means that Wyatt saw society not as divinely constituted (surely early-Tudor society was not that!), but as compounded out of specific human relationships and, in particular, weighed it in the scales of the most profound and personal of all human relationships - for it must certainly be true that, in the words of D.H. Lawrence,

The great relationship, for humanity, will always be the relation between man and woman. The relationship between man and man, woman and woman, parent and child, will always be subsidiary. (151)

(151) D.H. Lawrence, "Morality and the Novel,"
in Phoenix (ed. Edward D. McDonald, 1936),
p. 531. only

And it seems scarcely credible that Mason, sensitive critic that he undoubtedly is, can seriously wish to maintain that Shakespeare subscribes to a "conception" that in point of abstraction belongs in The Elizabethan World Picture rather than in Macbeth or Hamlet. It is true, of course, that Ulysses says a great deal about the "divinely sanctioned order of society" in a set piece which, in relation to those parts of the play in which Shakespeare is most deeply engaged, in defining the relationship of Troilus and Cressida for instance, seems almost as abstract if not quite so pompous as many of Polonius's undoubtedly equally traditional 'truths'.

There is, however, some point behind Mason's criticism of Wyatt, but it is lost in the confusion which necessarily arises in describing Wyatt as Protestant. Wyatt's poetry certainly presents a life and a consciousness of life which was ripe for the

reception of Protestant reform, or at least some radical reformation which honoured inviolable and intrinsic human virtues not only in theory (or rather theology) but also in practice. But the great regenerative power which Protestantism must have seemed to possess to the early reformers never fully materialised. Part of the reason for this seems to lie in the failure of personal impetus, a failure to retain the initial contact with the kind of individual predicament which finds utterance in Wyatt. This impetus is manifest in Wyatt's Psalms, in passages such as the following:

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O lord thow knowst the inward cōtemplation
off my desire / y^u knowst my syghes & plaintes
thow knowst the teres of my lamētation
Can not expresse my hertes inward restraints
my hart pantyth / my force I fele it quaile /
my syght / myn lyes / my lok dekays and fayntes.
And when myn enmys did me most assayle
my frendes most sure wherein I sett most trust
to my own vertus / sonest then did ffaile
& stoud apart. reason and witt vniust

as kyn vnkynd were fardest gone at nede
So had thei place theire venim owt to thrust
that sowght my deth by nowghty word and dede
their tonges reproche theire wittes did fraude aplye
and I like deffh and dome forthe my way yede
Lyk one that heris not / nor hath to replye
one word agayne / knowyng y^t from thi hand
thes thinges procede and thou o lord shalt supplye.
my trust in the wherein I stikk and stand
yet have I had gret cawse to dred and fere
y^t y^u woldst gyve my ffoos the ou^r hand
ffor in my ffall they shewd suche plesant chere
and therew^t all I alway in the lashe
abyd the strok . and with me eu^ry where
I bere my fawte / y^t gretly doth abashe
my dowlfull chere / ffor I my fawt cofesse
and my desert doth all my coffort dashe.
In the mene while myn Enmys saffe / encesse
and my provokars herby do augmet
that w^t owt cawse to hurt me do not cesse
In evill for good agaynst me they be bent
and hinder shall my good pursuete off grace
lo now my god y^t seist my hole Intent
My lord / I ame thou knowst well in what case

fforsake me not / be not farre from me gone
hast to my help hast lord and hast apace
O lord the lord off all my helth alone.

E 117.

It comes as something of a shock to recall that Wyatt is here 'translating'; Wyatt, surely, is writing straight out of his own political experience. Here, however, there is no opposition between the two activities, in fact there is only the one activity in which translation merges with the direct experience of a life lived in the shadow of the Tower. In such a passage the personal impetus behind the religious appeal - of the 'inner man' whose 'inward cotemplation' chafes against a 'bertes inward restraints' - is apparent. It is an appeal made from within the politic conditions of court life with its 'enmys', fair weather friends and 'kyn vnkynd'. The power of Protestantism lay in its promise to satisfy the inward contemplation of such a man's desire and, by removing the dead weight of mere ritual, to ease the heart's restraints. The failure of Protestantism in this respect might be traced through the succeeding decades simply by noting the death of such a personal impetus in the numerous translations of the Psalms and by

observing its replacement by an abstracted religious concern as fervently general as it is generally fervent. In many cases it blends into the literature which is written under the impetus of a slogan (usually 'Down with the Papists!') rather than the immediate experience and assessment of a specific mode of life. Protestantism, that is, seems to lose contact with the 'inner man' about which initially it seemed to offer to build a new life and from the specific needs of which it seemed ready to develop new civilising directives.

The point of truth, therefore, behind Mason's criticism of Wyatt is, then, a point of truth about Protestantism: it is limiting to say of Wyatt that his strength is Protestant. But in this limiting sense it is also anachronistic to describe Wyatt as Protestant. The alternative which Mason seems to leave us with, of describing Wyatt as Catholic, or at least of saying that he had a "rich and glowing contact with the conception of a divinely sanctioned order of society", is even more unacceptable. There are, after all, more than two banners waving in the sixteenth century and there are areas of life in which no banners wave at all. It has been seen that the trepidations and uncertainties, the cynicism and disgust, of Wyatt's poetry arises from

the frustration of certain basic, pervasive and irrepressible human needs, mainly for honesty in reciprocal affection, whether of friend, kin or lover. The consequence is a sensitive contact with an actual inhumanly sanctioned disorder of society which, far from being laid up in heaven, was laid down by men and women who coveted "degree, priority and place" and, since' (as Wyatt bitterly remarks) "friendship beres no prise" (i.e. prize), degraded the integrity of love, honour and friendship. This is the 'society' met with not only in Wyatt's satires, where such things might be expected, but in the whole range of his poetry; it is a 'society' in which

Sonest he spedeth, that moost can fain

E 2.

in which

true meanyng hert / is had in disdayn

E 2.

and price hath priuilege trouth to prevent

E 5.

where

fortunes frend is myschappes ffoo

E 55.

and

currs do fal by kinde
on him that hathe the overthrow

E 100.

(Seist y^u not how they whe their teth
which to touche y^e somtime ded drede

E 100.)

It is, in brief, a society ruled by no other conception of 'order' than that of sheer expediency, of temporary politic allegiance in which the affections are now here, now there, and in which men are now up, now down, in favour to-day and in the Tower tomorrow, pushed into insecurity by one prevailing fear:

for dred to fall I stond not fast

E 22.

And the relationship between Wyatt's use of rhythm and this kind of social order should by now be plain.

Wyatt's rhythms, therefore, express this deeper truth about the society in which he lived, about the values which it observed and about the psychological condition which it engendered. It is precisely because this truth is destroyed by the refusal to judge Wyatt's

rhythm as it stands and is obscured by the editorial rephrasing of the poems that it was thought necessary to consider what facts there are and what judgements there have been which bear upon the nature of rhythm in the poetry of Sir Thomas Wyatt.

Appendix A.

Who wrote Wyatt's Poems?

In a recently published book Miss Ethel Seaton has made the

sweeping and subversive claim ... that all but a few of the lyrics and shorter poems now attributed to Sir Thomas Wyatt, including those for which he has been most praised, are basically or entirely the work of Sir Richard Roos, and are therefore about a century older than their assumed date. (152)

(152) Seaton, p.454

Despite the argument marshalled by Miss Seaton it is still as certain as it ever has been that the poems of the Devonshire MS (B.M. Add. 17492), with one or two exceptions, are c.1525-1540 and that the poems of the Egerton MS (B.M. EG. 2711), excepting the Harington additions at the end of the manuscript, are c.1530-1542 and that the bulk of the poems in these two manuscripts are the work of Wyatt. Miss Seaton conducts her argument with care and

at length and it would be presumptuous not to remark at the outset that the following are, of necessity, no more than preliminary remarks,

Miss Seaton extends the Roos corpus to Chaucerian proportions by revealing the presence of anagrams, acrostics and anagrammatised acrostics in a considerable body of fifteenth and early sixteenth century poetry which, when unravelled, reveal the names of people who may have been or were acquainted with Roos. The anagrams look extremely impressive as they accumulate through the book, but reflection somewhat weakens their impression as evidence. For instance, in the list appended to the chapter on early sixteenth century poetry claimed for Roos, the anagrams set out as present in Muir's text of "Alas the greiff" employ 18 letters of a 22 letter alphabet (i.e. omitting V, J, X and Z). The odds are that any poems using, for example, a wide variety of initial letters for its lines will provide anagrammatised acrostics of the names of some people in Roos's circle. Thus Thomas Randolph's poem "Ode to Master Anthony Stafford" provides us with the following names of Roos's acquaintances by anagrammatised acrostic using the capital letters of the poem:

ALIAN. COBHAN; ELISAB-TH BOWMONT; WITTIN; PH--P
BA-DOLF; ANT. POWYS; ISMANIA SC--S; I AI T-T FORFAIT.

The exception, An, is permitted by Miss Seaton; the residual letters (other than T and W which are permitted) are G, P, B and D, which constitutes an allowable residue of four letters; the final phrase is Roos's motto J'AI TOT FORFAIT FORFAIT. The result compares very favourably with that given by Miss Seaton for "Alas the greiff" which is:

ALIAN. COBHA.; ANT. POWYS; B-WMONT, BARDOLF; WITTIN.;
AI TOT For-AIT.

No claims are, of course, being made for Randolph's poem. The point is simply to suggest that given sufficient freedom there is every possibility of extending the Roos corpus to include poems of the seventeenth century. Randolph's poem suggested itself because there may well be a family connection between Anthony Stafford and Roos's friends.

Colonel and Mrs. Friedman have drawn Miss Seaton's attention to the dangers of free anagrammatizing, but their sensible demand that a cipher must be keyed "in order to insure that the deciphered message is the same

as that originally enciphered, and that there is no possible alternative" (p. 551) has been rejected.

Miss Seaton does not appear to have fully appreciated the point at issue. It is not at all "like the neo-classic critic blaming Shakespeare for not observing the Unities" (p. 552) as she maintains, for we can always decide whether Shakespeare observed those rules, the Unities, even though we might ourselves believe them to be unimportant. The answer Miss Seaton has a right to expect here is, 'Shakespeare's plays are not classical - and Wyatt's poetry is not anagrammatised !' Nor is the freedom being claimed by Miss Seaton comparable to that of the crossword puzzle; it is simply false to maintain that crossword puzzle practice is

not system matching formal system, as precisely as the points of a legal indenture, but mind and ingenuity trying to meet and match a free-playing and ingenious mind. (p.552)

For an all correct entry (to use the language of the football pools) it is only possible to interpret an anagram in one way, "there is no possible alternative." Indeed, the arrangement of the words in a correctly

completed crossword does constitute, down and across, "system matching formal system." To make the mistake of anagrammatizing a clue not intended as an anagram is to get the crossword wrong, but how does one tell that a crossword is wrong except by observing the grid which keys the clues? Miss Seaton's plea for freedom of anagrammatizing has weak champions in 'Everyman' and 'Ximenes'.

The problem posed by Miss Seaton has not yet been investigated. What is the statistical probability of these particular combinations of letters occurring, say as the initial letters of a line? It is perfectly obvious that the probability ratio of certain combinations will change as the language changes. A glance through the Middle English lyrics in MS Harley 2253 reveals few initial Ws, a feature which changes in the fifteenth century. Further, it seems probable that later still, as you replaces thee and thou, initial T will diminish slightly in frequency. Then, of course, changes in syntax need to be considered (at least three of Wyatt's poems begin with the preposition of) and the loss of certain words to the language of poetry, e.g. Alas, O, Oh. In brief, Miss Seaton assumes the

statistical probability is in her favour, but this is not proven. In the absence of an anagrammatic-acrostic key one is left to presume that the disposition of letters lies in the pattern of the language, modified by the special demands of poetic diction, rhythm and syntax, rather than in the intention of the poets. This is obviously the case with Randolph's poem.

But if the anagrams must be left aside as lacking conclusiveness, there are criteria less uncertain placed before us by Miss Seaton:

No poem could be considered for inclusion in the 'Roos corpus', if its general style were impossible to be compared with that of La Belle Dame. (p.122).

The style of Wyatt's poetry is markedly and demonstrably different from that of La Belle Dame. There are tell-tale differences in diction, major differences in the use of imagery, a complete difference in basic rhythm and use of rhythm and, finally, from these emerges a difference in 'attitude' which marks Wyatt as an essentially 'dramatic' poet whilst revealing Roos as, just as essentially, a narrative poet.

Firstly, as to the diction: of the words which Miss Seaton gives (pp. 121, 122) as important Roos words sterve is used by Wyatt 5 times, serve is, of course, common, but kerve is not used by him at all. Of the second triumverate, the form routh is never used, the word slouth is never used, whilst trouth is common in Wyatt. Wyatt never uses goodlihede or seemlihede, he uses womanhede only twice, rede once, mede once, whilst dede is common. Wyatt never uses the forms pleasaunce, governaunce or suffisaunce; he uses shene once, kene twice and fresh (sometimes freshe) on six occasions. Miss Seaton gives the examples above as the most important and characteristic of Roos's stock of words and describes the group goodlihede, womanhede, seemlihede, dede, rede, mede as "almost a hallmark of this poet" (p. 121). As far as diction is concerned, then, it seems safe to say that Roos was not the author of the Wyatt poems. (Without a count La Belle Dame appears to employ words to the order of 50-100 which are not to be found in Wyatt).

Secondly, the use of imagery: the difference between that of La Belle Dame and that of Wyatt is principally a difference in usage. Both poets are to

some extent within a tradition of amour courtois which places a common stock of imagery at their disposal, but their manner of using it is not at all the same. Wyatt has a sense of heavily emphatic appropriateness, not so much amplifying as actually expressing the complaint:

Lyk as the swanne towardis her dethe
doth straine her voyse w^t dolefull note
Right so sing I w^t waste of brethe
I dye I dye and yon regarde yt note /

D 120.

And as a consequence there is continual personal sense of urgency which is never permitted to flag:

Like as the byrde in the cage enclosed,
The dore vnsparrd and the hawke without,
Twixte deth and prison piteously oppressed,
Whether for to chose standith in dowl ...

M 172.

These characteristics are noticably absent from La Belle Dame in which poem metaphor and simile amplify the action and do not present it; there is, that is to say, no dramatic metaphor or simile. Thus the following use

is typical of Roos's poem (the simile, it will be noticed, is unlike Wyatt's in that it serves simply as padding):

For the complaynt of his most hevynesse
Com to his voice alwey without request,
Lyk as the sowne of birdes doth expresse
Whan they sing loude, in frith or in forest. (153)

(153) Skeat, (ed.), Chaucerian and Other Pieces,
lines 121-4.

(frith, incidentally, is not a word used by Wyatt).

The point can be amplified by reference to one of Wyatt's 'translations' from Petrarch, "The longe love" (E 4), where again there is Wyatt's typical dramatic identification of the personal and topographical elements made with metaphoric economy in such a phrase as that which refers us to "the hertes forrest". In particular in this poem there is the imagic compression of the lines in which Wyatt sets his love before us as a knight at a tournament:

The longe love, that in my thought doeth harbor:
and in myn heart doeth kepe his residence:
into my face preseth, with bold pretence:
and therein campeth, spreding his baner.

La Belle Dame has not the vigour of those last two lines nor has it anywhere achieved that ability to employ imagery as an integral part of its action:

Right yong and freshe, a woman ful covert;
Assured wel her port and eke her chere,
kel at her ese, withouten wo or smert,
Al underneth the standard of Daungere.

(lines 177-180)

as we see in such lines as these imagery in La Belle Dame is at best an added grace. (Wyatt does not use covert or, with this sense, port).

Thirdly, there is Wyatt's use of rhythm and, of course, his syntax. Wyatt's conception of the verse line, unlike that of the author of La Belle Dame, is fundamentally phrasal, hence the syntactical difficulty of some of his lines. This peculiarity of phrasing can

be seen in a 'pure' form in such a poem as "Ffarewell,
the rayn of crueltie!" (E 12) with its double rhyme
scheme:

ffarewell, the rayn of crueltie!
though that w^t pain my libertie
dere have I boght: yet shall surete
conduyt my thoght of Joyes nede

The syntactical informality which such verse gives rise
to appears in the third stanza:

I fare as oon escaped that fleith:
glad that is gone yet still fereth,
spied to be cawght: and so dredeth
that he for nought his pain leseth.

This piling of phrase upon phrase dispenses with the need
for a repetitive use of the pronouns, but it has puzzled
editors and Professor Muir believed that the second line
made "doubtful sense". In such a poem as "It may be
good" Wyatt's commonest rhythmical device, a line built
upon the principle of a phrasal 'see-saw', is used as in
several of his poems to create the movements of mental
debate and, again, we are led to a use of syntax comparable
to his use of imagery as a means of creating, in this case,

the perplexity (the "endles maze that seketh to accorde
two contraries") with which the poem is preoccupied.
This last point is best illustrated in the line

Assured I dowbt I be not sure

E 22.

which is left thus unpunctuated in Egerton MS.

There is a phrasal principle observable in lines
of La Belle Dame, but it is significantly not, as is
Wyatt's, suggestive of the broken-backed line, the pause
is less pronounced and, hence, the line has a greater
continuity of movement than, say,

It may be good / like it who list

E 22.

Som tyme I syghe / sumtyme I syng

D 30.

Eche man me telleth / I chaunge moost my devise

E 11.

(The virgule has been inserted to mark the 'break').

Roos's use of the same principle can be seen in such a
line as

Sometyme with twayn, and somtyme with oon

(line 160)

Miss Seaton remarks upon the absence of what she calls "Lydgate's broken-backed lines " (p.101). She also realizes that Roos's use of the pause is "very free" although she seems to assume that this is commendable. The reason that the pause is so free in La Belle Dame is simply because Roos does not use the pause; although to some extent it is there by inheritance its position is largely determined by loose narrative style and the syntax appropriate to that.

Finally, there is the difference in attitude between Wyatt and Roos which gradually appears in the course of comparing their styles. Where Roos is loose, Wyatt is essentially a poet of compression, economy and density, with imagery, rhythm and syntax co-active and convergent. Wyatt's actual use of diction has not been considered, but it can be seen even in an example already quoted above. How much of the vigour of the opening lines of "The Longe Love" is due to the action of such words as "preseth", "campeth" and "spreading" is best seen by comparing the lines with Surrey's translation :

Love that liveth and reigneth in my thought,
That built its seat within my captive breast,
Clad in the arms wherein with me he fought,
Oft in my face he doth his banner rest.

In comparison with Wyatt's energy and economy, Roos is, to quote Miss Seaton, "a writer of conventional elegance" (p. 61). He is in many respects like Surrey, another writer of elegance; his style is easy, detached and with a marked tendency towards amplitude, it has an absence of personal urgency which should strongly recommend it to those who believe that poetry should strive towards the impersonal; in this, of course, it is most strongly opposed to Wyatt's. To make a summary stylistic distinction between Roos and Wyatt it can best be said that Wyatt is dramatic and Roos is narrative. And whilst the "general style" of Wyatt's corpus can be compared, as it has been above, with that of La Belle Dame it certainly cannot be assimilated to it.

There are, then, two criteria formulated by Miss Seaton which a work has to satisfy to justify including it in the Roos corpus; there is the anagram-acrostic criterion and that of style. In the case of the Wyatt poems claimed for Roos, however, the two criteria are in plain contradiction. Miss Seaton does not notice the contradiction because it is the anagram-acrostic criterion which is actually directing her argument and questions of style receive no more than a superficial

treatment. This is, however, a perverse treatment of evidence; in such a situation style must prevail and some other means of explaining the acrostic and anagrammatic potential of the verse, along the lines suggested above perhaps, needs to be found. Stylistic consideration of Miss Seaton's basic argument must be heavily predisposed to the view that the anagrams and acrostics are being worked into the poetry rather than being worked out.

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