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TOWARDS FORTUNE IN THE VERSE OF SIR THOMAS
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OF MAN AND THE WHEEL:
POETIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS FORTUNE
IN THE VERSE OF SIR THOMAS WYATT

by

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Thesis Director's signature:

Edward Doughty

Houston, Texas

May 1974
To
my wife
Betty
and
my parents
Joseph
and
Mary
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CHAPTER I

Therefore if a man look sharply and attentively, he shall see Fortune; for though she be blind, yet she is not invisible.

--Francis Bacon

THE CRITICS AND THE TRADITION

Sir Thomas Wyatt's literary reputation, at present, continues to be "in the ascendant"—rising more rapidly than C. S. Lewis could have imagined when he penned that comment two decades ago.¹ A glance at the history of Wyatt's major editions attests to this rise in interest. Tottel's Miscellany (1557), published fifteen years after Wyatt's death, marked Wyatt's first appearance in print. Two and one-half centuries elapsed before the first complete edition, G. F. Nott's 1816 edition, and then another century passed before Agnes K. Boxwell's 1913 edition appeared. But only thirteen years later, in 1929, E. M. W. Tillyard issued his influential selected edition; then Kenneth Muir's 1949 edition appeared in paperback; and, in 1969, a much expanded edition with fuller critical apparatus appeared under the joint editorship of Kenneth Muir and Patricia Thomson.²

The history of critical commentary on Wyatt provides
another index of his gradually evolving reputation. Wyatt's contemporaries were uniformly laudatory, sometimes hyperbolically so, when evaluating his poetic skills. Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, includes this passage in an elegiac catalogue of Wyatt's attributes:

A hand that taught what myght be said in ryme,
That reft Chaucer the glorie of his wytte,
A mark the whiche (vnperfyt for tyme)
Some may approche but neuer none shall hytte.\textsuperscript{3}

Using Chaucer as a touchstone for contemporary literary excellence was common in the early sixteenth century, but the comparison does illustrate that Wyatt's art attracted serious critical attention. John Leland, the antiquarian, furthered this type of comparison by placing Wyatt on an equal plane with Dante and Petrarch, and by establishing Wyatt as a principal developer of the English language:

The English tongue was rude, its verse vile;
Now, skillful Wyatt, it has known your file.\textsuperscript{4}

Within half a century, George Puttenham discarded the rhetoric of hyperbole for what became the standard statement about Wyatt for most critics in the next three centuries:

In the latter end of the same kings raigne sprong vp a new company of courtly makers, of whom Sir Thomas Wyat th'elder and Henry Earle of Surrey were the two chief-taines, who hauing travaulled into Italie, and there tasted the sweete and stately measures and stile of the Italian Poesie as nouices newly crept out of the schooles of Dante, Ariosto and Petrarch, they greatly polished our rude and homely maner of vulgar Poesie, from that it had bene before, and for that cause may justly be sayd the first reformers of our English meetre and stile. . . .

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Henry Earle of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyat, betweene whom I finde very little difference, I repute them (as before) for the two chief lanternes of light to all others that haue since employed their pennes vpon
English Poesie, their conceits were loftie, their stiles stately, their conseyance cleanly, their termes proper, their meetre sweete and well proportioned, in all imitating very naturally and studiously their Maister Francis Petrarcha.\footnote{3} After Puttenham's evaluation, it became a commonplace to mention Wyatt's name only in conjunction with Surrey and the importation of the Italian Renaissance to England.

Even more disturbing was the subsequent critical tradition that Surrey's meter, versification, and sensibility—if any distinction between the two poets were made—are superior to Wyatt's. Examples of this strange inversion abounded. Eighteenth century literary historian Thomas Warton found Wyatt "confessedly inferior to Surrey";\footnote{6} G. F. Nott, who edited both poets, agreed that Wyatt "confessedly ranks below Surrey";\footnote{7} Robert Bell, another editor, also felt that any comparison between the two poets "on general grounds must unhesitatingly be admitted to be largely in favour of Surrey";\footnote{8} and Hyder Rollins, the modern editor of Tottel's Miscellany," valued Wyatt's "chiefly derivative" talent merely because it was the historical preparation for "Surrey's smoother lines and more pleasing accentuation."\footnote{9}

Fortunately, other critics rejected this mainstream opinion by preferring Wyatt's poetic depth to Surrey's surface smoothness. Wyatt had his defenders as well as his detractors. Poet and literary historian William J. Courthope, for example, emphasized how Wyatt manifested traces of energetic originality when he "looked at Nature through his own eyes, and sought to express directly the feelings of his own
heart." \(^{10}\) Frederick M. Padelford, another of Wyatt's defenders, also recognized that Wyatt's freshness of approach "breaks through the hypothetical world of fancy, with its artificial emotions and studied address, and with fine imagination realizes his experiences, and presents them in simple, fervent, and sincere language." \(^{11}\) But most of the credit for recent re-evaluation of Wyatt's verse belongs to E. M. W. Tillyard who put the case succinctly when he wrote that "many readers have made the mistake of overemphasising the sonnets, of confining their reading to Tottell's Miscellany, of under-estimating the number of good lyrics, and of failing to see that Wyatt by virtue of his profounder and more passionate temperament is a greater poet than Surrey." \(^{12}\) The critical mainstream is now solidly in accord with this approach, and the proliferation of books and articles on Wyatt indicate that he is receiving the attention he has long deserved.

Twentieth century attention has focused on five major issues: influences, prosody, style, conventions, and psychology. Preliminary considerations of what has been said about each of these areas can provide us with useful orientations to the poetry and the period.

In the first of these five areas, influence, critical opinion is de-emphasizing Wyatt's debt to his Italian sources. Ironically Wyatt's importation of the Italian Renaissance to England--specifically the sonnet form and the Petrarchan mode of expression--has simultaneously won for him a lasting
footnote in standard literary histories and suggested that his poetry is merely derivative. Puttenham called Petrarch Wyatt's master, and Otto Hietsch devoted a book-length study to a detailed comparison between Petrarch's original poems and Wyatt's adaptations.\textsuperscript{13} But, while sources have been discovered for many poems, recent critics point out Wyatt's significant departures from the letter and spirit of these sources.

First of all, the Petrarchan strain--characterized by elaborate and exaggerated comparisons, extravagant descriptions of beauty, innocence, cruelty, suffering, happiness, and despair, and linked chains of rhetorical antithesis--is not the exclusive property of Italian poets. The early Tudor definition of love is more probably Chaucerian than Petrarchan. C. S. Lewis, for one, maintained that the so-called Petrarchan tradition was introduced to England with the translation of \textit{The Romance of the Rose}: "to translate Petrarch was not necessarily to introduce a new note into English poetry."\textsuperscript{14} Similarly, Raymond Southall remarked that "the preference of the courtly makers for English rather than continental models is a hall-mark of their poetry; the oft repeated claim that they introduced the Italian strain into English poetry does not bear examination. . . . It is true that they translate Petrarch's sonnets, but even in doing this their precedent is Troilus."\textsuperscript{15}

And second, we may discount charges that Wyatt is
a derivative poet by examining the use to which he puts his sources. Quite simply, Wyatt's imitations of Petrarch are not strictly Petrarchan in nature; the English poet used his sources with discretion to suit his own purposes, seizing one concept while discarding others. A number of critics have come to see this independence from "maister" Petrarch. Sergio Baldi, for instance, commented that Wyatt's translations show "an insight into a poetic world different from his own, and an impulse to interpret in Petrarch's more spiritual manner his experience of Passionate love."\textsuperscript{16} Even stronger are the judgments of Donald Guss and Donald Friedman: Guss felt that Wyatt's "translations" are more precisely humanistic adaptations that alter Petrarch's moral philosophy beyond recognition,\textsuperscript{17} and Friedman remarked that Wyatt's non-Petrarchan diction and tone create "attitudes totally alien to Petrarch's idealizing view of the lover's relationship."\textsuperscript{18} Close textual analysis emphasizes Wyatt's departures from his sources.

The second major critical topic is prosody. Reduced to barest essentials the central question is whether Wyatt is metrically inept or the master of a subtler expressive meter. On the negative side of this question are critics like H. B. Lathrop who averred that Wyatt "did indeed blunder and exhibit a lack of feeling for rhetorical and rhythmic organization,"\textsuperscript{19} and C. S. Lewis who found it "impossibly improbable a priori that the same man at one period of his career should have gone on, beyond the regularity, to the
subtlest departures from it." But of late the positive side of this question has received majority support from critics like E. K. Chambers, Hallett Smith, D. W. Harding, John Thompson, and Elias Schwartz. Unfortunately, after the initial consensus that Wyatt is a skillful versifier, one encounters disturbing disagreements about the particulars of that skill. Chambers wrote that the subtle delicacy of rhythm could not fit into classical scansion; Smith felt that Wyatt emended lines for rhetorical clarity rather than superficial smoothness; Harding compared Wyatt's rhythmic phrases with older Anglo-Saxon "pausing verse"; Thompson believed that Wyatt wanted to emphasize the quality of living speech in his verse; and Schwartz defined Wyatt's basic metrical pattern as accentual verse with marked isochronism. This confusion accurately reflects the state of prosodic criticism.

Beyond this confusion of definition, Wyatt's meter is usually effective. Examine, for example, Tottel's metrical regularizing of Wyatt's "It was no dreme: I lay brode waking" into "It was no dreams: for I lay broade awaking." One cannot deny that Tottel smooths the pattern of stresses to suit the rules of formal meter--but at what a loss. Smoothness and regularity are not, in this case, virtues because the sense of the line demands abruptness rather than sonority. The moment when the speaker of this verse interrupts his own reverie to assure his audience that he fabricates no daydream but reports fact profits by this abruptness. Disrupting the
metrical flow reinforces the sense of separation that the poem attempts to create; therefore, while Tottel's version is more classically correct, Wyatt's handling makes better poetry. Detailed analysis of individual poems will evaluate metrical form on this basis of contextual effectiveness.

Style is the third major critical topic. No one doubts that Wyatt wrote within the strictures of a plain, or unadorned, style; rather, debate centers on the merit of this plain style. C. S. Lewis, who reveled in the "golden" imagery employed by Elizabethan poets, damned Wyatt with faint praise because he used a plain---Lewis calls it "drab"---style:

Clearly, we are not dealing with an incantatory or evocative poet. We are in fact dealing with a Drab poet---provided we remember always that "Drab" is not a pejorative term. All Wyatt's weaknesses, and nearly all his strength, are connected with his unadorned style. When he is bad, he is flat or even null. And when he is good he is hardly one of the irresistible poets. He has no splendours that dazzle you and no enchantments that disarm criticism. . . . In order to appreciate Wyatt you must read with great attention and do your fair share of the work. He is not necessarily the worse on that account. 22

Although he said Wyatt is "not necessarily the worse" because of the plain style, Lewis made it clear that plainness must be regarded as a poetic liability for early Tudor poets. Other critics, however, found the plain style a valuable asset that makes the early Tudor period superior to the later Elizabethan period. Yvor Winters forwarded this school of thought when he stated that the typical Tudor poet is "interested in his rhetoric as a means of stating his matter economically as possible, and not, as are the Petrarchans,
in the pleasures of rhetoric for its own sake."²³ Douglas Peterson continued this preference for the Tudors at the expense of the Elizabethans by maintaining that the earlier poets experimented with form "mainly in the interest of 'content'" while the latter relished superfluous ornamentation.²⁴ Where Lewis, at one extreme, and Winters and Peterson, at the other, erred was in making exclusive claims for the inherent superiority of one stylistic manner over another.

Craftsmanship within a given style is the only true measure of poetic success, regardless of the properties peculiar to that style. This criterion—the skillful handling of the plain style—has been used by a number of unbiased commentators. E. K. Chambers, for example, found Wyatt's handling of the economical plain style responsible for "a singular plangency."²⁵ Patricia Thomson, too, found the plain technique integrally functional in Wyatt's poetic method because austere diction throws weight "not on to what Wyatt sees but on to what he feels about what he sees."²⁶ And Karl Wintersdorf, in a statistical study of the relatively few images employed by Wyatt, concluded that "it is the nature of the image-subjects as much as the rugged prosody and anti-romantic outlook that accounts for the virile quality of Wyatt's work."²⁷ These critics clarify the central issue that Wyatt's style and content complement each other because he harmonizes both elements according to the larger controlling conception of the total poem.
Conventions, the fourth critical topic, has been and still remains an area of the greatest controversy. H. A. Mason and John Stevens are the major spokesmen for the theory that Wyatt's poems are merely versified clichés. Mason, stating that Wyatt never departed from or enriched his conventional material in any way, hypothesized that "we could compose a dictionary of conventional phrases which would show that many of these poems of Wyatt's are simply strung together from these phrases into set forms. There is not the slightest trace of poetic activity. . . . Consequently, the study of these poems belongs to sociology rather than to literature." Stevens concurred wholeheartedly with this extreme devaluation. After excepting in a footnote only "one or two" of Wyatt's lyrics from his sweeping condemnation of "formulaic" poetry, Stevens commented that "the lyric of courtly love from Chaucer to Wyatt is in its most characteristic form a mere gambit in the 'game of love'--deliberately stylized in language, oblique in purport, idealistic, bantering and abusive by turns. Its full, indeed its essential significance can never be recorded, only guessed at: its study 'belongs to sociology rather than literature.'"

Because conventions figure prominently in the content of Wyatt's poetry, one must come to terms with this issue. Patricia Thomson, for one, confronted the problem of clichés by admitting that a large portion of Wyatt's poetry does "fall within the range of the Mason-Stevens gunfire," but
then by observing that "the line of demarcation between poems in which conventions master Wyatt and those in which he masters them is bound to shift about in accordance with individual tastes." 30 Thomson's own taste is decidedly more generous than Mason's or Stevens'. Another critic, Hallett Smith dealt more harshly with Wyatt's detractors when he argued that "critics who have described Wyatt's love songs as merely rehearsing over and over again the interminable complaints of the lover have been looking only at the apparent subject matter. They have missed the terms of style and mood which Wyatt so carefully prepared by the rhetorical organization of his poem, by adapting the metrical scheme to his purpose, and by the use of the tantalizing refrain, often in a different tone from the rest of the poem. " 31

This study draws a "line of demarcation" between mastery of and enslavement to conventions. The problem remains that, while only a few critics have found the entirety of Wyatt's poems clichéd, all critics have found some of his poems conventionally dull. To discriminate between successful poems and failures, one must confront conventions and judge them according to consistently artistic criteria. Since some poems are composed of mechanically plugged-in formulas, and other poems contain revitalized conventions, any criteria must rely on contextual judgment. Quite simply, if a poem does not relate a convention to the total structure of its parts, the convention is mere clichéd; however,
a convention with an essential function within a poem's context is properly employed. Since this "line of demarcation" is contextual and, therefore, dependent upon particulars in individual poems, one cannot be very specific about the viability of conventions. But some general observations are possible: when conventions are handled as irrelevant paradigms or ideals without any particularizing tone or specific individuation, when nouns are usually comprehensive abstract classes or categories, when adjectives are impressionistic, when verbs are simple and implicitly allegorical, when language is filled with hackneyed metaphors, more denotative than connotative, then conventions destroy poetic possibilities. However, conventions need not exist solely in such undifferentiated wastelands. Only excessive and unskillful use of conventions arouses distaste, but, in the hands of a skillful practitioner, conventions can be made fresh and exciting.

Skillful use of conventions often leads to the fifth major critical topic, psychology. Douglas Peterson considered Wyatt a skillful practitioner whose "desire to satisfy the conventional led eventually to his most significant contribution to the poetry of his time... As his interest shifts from the conceit, itself, to the emotion associated with it, the conceit becomes, as it often does in Donne, a means for examining the emotion, a means rather than an end, and contributes in this function
to the originality of the emotion by altering and qualifying it.\textsuperscript{32} Essentially, this comment means that an emotion associated with a convention within the context of a given poem becomes the key in creating fictional characters and revitalizing the convention itself. Wyatt examines the minds of his personae by emphasizing their attitudes towards conventions.

Many critics have remarked how this psychological creativity sets Wyatt apart from other poets in his period. Like Peterson, E. K. Chambers and Catherine Ing found grounds for comparing Wyatt to that greater psychologist, John Donne. Chambers maintained that Wyatt, as well as Donne, "can be a psychologist, watching his own emotions in detachment, with a finger on the burning pulse";\textsuperscript{33} and Ing commented how both poets were "often concerned with the twists and troubles of a man-woman relationship uncommon in other Elizabethan poetry."\textsuperscript{34} Frequent, also, are comments on the psychological aspects of role-playing in the poems. Peterson felt that Wyatt penetrated further than most into "the role of the lover."\textsuperscript{35} Michael McCanles elaborated this point when he wrote that "the bulk of his poetry presents a coherent psychological situation and that the conventional postures he adopts are partly the vehicles and partly the very embodiment of that situation."\textsuperscript{36} And Donald Friedman observed that Wyatt "was interested above all in examining the mind of the courtly lover; it is this interest which is the distinctive mark of Wyatt's love poetry. . . . He does
not dissipate his energies in an attack on the hypocrisy of the rituals of courtly love. He turns his attention, rather, to the effects of such a language on the minds that habitually use it. 37

Any study designed to examine these effects must anticipate the objection that sixteenth century poets were not interested in psychological verisimilitude but in abstraction. No doubt many poems deal solely with abstract generalities, especially those poems that may be classified among narrowly devotional pieces. Yet the assumption that all poems illustrate the abstract application of orthodox hierarchies, such as Christianity, must surely be oversimplified because this assumption implies that human passions were uniformly stimulated and elaborated in ways essentially foreign to our understanding. Certainly, Christian orthodoxy played a large part in Wyatt's poems (see Chapter V in this study); still, the demands of daily exigencies are sometimes more persuasive—in life and in poetry—than divine commandments. In particular, this study denies that fortune must always be abstractly imposed upon sixteenth century literature in the de casibus context.

According to the de casibus convention, a tragic hero is one who subjects himself to fortune; conversely, the comic hero is one who transcends fortune. Psychological individuation under such a strict convention is insignificant because fictional speakers exist only to illustrate
abstract Truth. But surely Wyatt's poetry goes beyond mere abstraction for its own sake; his speakers exercise their freedom of will as they move through conflict to some state of tentative synthesis. Wyatt's speakers do not illustrate or illuminate without exception an absolute pre-ordained order under which fortune is a prefabricated trial. If anything, these speakers illustrate themselves as they search for authentically human responses to their individual encounters with multiform fortune.

A most conclusive argument against oversimplification lies in the historical heterogeneity of comments on fortune. Certainly, there is neither space nor time for an exhaustive examination of this pervasive cultural theme; so, we will mention only the most historically significant instances. This brief survey shows that different men have taken different and sometimes contradictory stances towards fortune, and that a belief in fortune preceded the introduction of Christianity and has survived it. If the historical tradition of fortune manifests variety, one can assume that Wyatt was not forced into poetical enslavement by a single type of treatment.

Beginning with the classical world, one finds philosophers attempting to find descriptive terms for the force that determines cosmic and individual fate. Plutarch, a popularizer rather than an innovator, quoted Aristotle's descriptive terms for fortune—*causa per accidens*, or cause by accident—and personified fortune as a deity.
Seneca elaborated upon the character of this goddess, too fickle and irrational to reward virtue or punish vice; and her urged men to oppose her on moral grounds. With the advent of Christianity, theologians tried to accommodate some notion of fortune in their doctrines to convert this popular tradition to their own use. Augustine and Aquinas, for example, found "fortune" a useful term for describing events that seem chance occurrences but really manifest hidden Providential causes; but they could not accommodate the existence of a goddess with strict monotheism. Perhaps the most successful attempt to synthesize classical and Christian thought on fortune was made by Boethius. His Consolation of Philosophy dramatizes the rise of a man from self-pity because of his apparent misfortune to an apprehension that all fortunes are good under the plan of Divine Providence. This argument is indisputable (it is still used today to reconcile human free will with Divine Foreknowledge) if one believes in an all-perfect deity who cannot be comprehended by human reason; but even granting this premise, there is something deficient with an argument based on the incomprehensible. The persona in Consolation speaks for the popular majority when he says that such persuasive arguments satisfy only while they are spoken.

The Italian Renaissance, wholly Christianized, inherited this problem of explaining fortune from the classical culture being revived. Dante pictured fortune as
an agent of God's eternal plan ("general ministra e duce"); she wheeled her sphere, and shifted possessions from one person to another according to eternal causes beyond man's limited powers of comprehension. Petrarch, too, considered fortune a goddess in his Remedies of Fortune, but his goddess, unlike Dante's agent, was wily and seductive. However, when Petrarch later commented on King John of France's imprisonment, he changed his conception by denying without qualification the existence of a goddess who administers fortune. Boccaccio, who had called fortune a goddess like Dante and Petrarch, tried to clarify matters by stating that any mention of a fortune goddess must be regarded as mere poetic fiction; nevertheless, the fact that he needed to make that statement implies that there was popular belief to the contrary. And a final example from the political sector indicates even more forcefully the confusion of attitudes towards fortune: Niccolò Machiavelli elevated fortune from one of God's ministers to an independent, co-existent deity whose offered opportunities invited success through the use of might and cunning.

The English tradition of fortune was not more uniformitarian than the classical or Italian Renaissance traditions. Roman England had numerous altars dedicated to the goddess of fortune, her cults and superstitions. Later Germanic influence, evidenced in Beowulf, introduced the inevitable and inscrutable Wyrd to the Anglo-Saxons; this term was more fatalistic than that borrowed from Rome.
When Alfred the Great translated Boethius, he used "wyrd" to refer to abstract fortune and "woruldsael" to refer to the goddess. But during the Middle English period the variety and heterodoxy of the conception of fortune are most apparent; and it is this native tradition that most influenced Wyatt. While John Gower, on the one hand, in his prologue to Confessio Amantis was depicting fortune as a just goddess who doled out rewards and punishments according to merit, John Lydgate, on the other hand, in his Troy Book was crying out against fortune's fickleness and instability. And Chaucer's works offer a compendium of confused conceptions. He translated Boethius into Middle English; depicted fortune first as a false wheel and then as a "ministre general" of God's will in his Knight's Tale; elaborated on the de casibus theme of fortune in the Monk's Tale; described fortune as a false goddess in the Book of the Duchess; called fortune the "executrice of wyrdes" in Troilus; and presented both sides of an argument over whether fortune is a false adversary or true teacher in his Balades de Visage sanz Peinture.

This rich historical tradition supplied Wyatt with precedents for many different conceptions of fortune. Fortune could be a goddess or an abstraction, false or true, capricious or just, a minister of the Christian God or an agent of the devil.

Fortune lore provided the tradition, wrote Hallett Smith, out of which Wyatt created "something which had
not been there before. "Wyatt's contribution to this tradition is not novelty. He did not invent new philosophical conceptions of fortune; he did not create new epithets, paraphernalia, jargon, or appearances associated with the character of fortune; nor did he redefine the powers and activities of the fortune goddess with new literary formulas. That something which had not been there before is not novelty of conception but complexity of poetic embodiment. By selectively borrowing general or specific elements from his sources and then altering these borrowings to suit his particular needs, by employing a prosodic scheme that underlines and adds to the meaning of his verse, by using the economy of his plain style to focus on major points, by handling conventions so that they increase the quality of content, and by analyzing the psychological character of his fictional speaker through that speaker's own words, Wyatt creates art. And art is always something new.

Our specific focus on this art is indicated by the title "Of Man and the Wheel: Poetic Attitudes Towards Fortune in the Verse of Sir Thomas Wyatt." "Man" is the speaker in each poem; typically, this fictional creation performs a lover's role, but he sometimes identifies himself as a politician, a satirist, or a psalmist--he may even be she. "Wheel," the second element in the title, is the Wheel of Fortune, the traditional symbol for
life's vicissitudes. These two coordinates, Man and the Wheel, are made dynamic materials for poetry when linked by "Poetic Attitudes," man's psychological disposition towards fortune within the form of each poem. A definite pattern becomes apparent: "Man" perceives his existence in terms of the "Wheel," and reveals this perception through his "Attitudes" in the explicit or implicit meaning of the poem.

Four attitudinal stances towards fortune in Wyatt's poems can be identified. In the first stance, man looks up at fortune and courts happiness through good luck. In the second stance, man looks up at fortune and disavows responsibility for bad luck. In the third, man confronts fortune on an even plane and recognizes his responsibilities within the limits of circumstances. And finally, in the fourth stance, man looks down on fortune from the heightened perspective of chronological maturity, stoic philosophy, or Christian theology. The following chapters take up a detailed discussion of these stances in relation to individual poems.
CHAPTER II

It is the fortunate who should praise fortune. --Goethe

THANKED BE FORTUNE

Wyatt is the poet of unhappy love and the cruel mistress; at least, that statement typifies the popular conception. Indeed, in an age prolific with odes to idyllic love Wyatt stands out because he departs from that norm in many of his poems. One should not, however, conclude that this poet never treated happiness in love. Happiness--real or imagined, possessed or projected, past, present or future--forms the base for some of Wyatt's most effective poems. Still such happiness rarely appears without the tension of unhappy undercurrents as one critic observes when he says that if Wyatt "is to be moved to poetry, his happiness in love must be mingled with something less happy."¹ This observation accurately portrays how happiness usually functions in the overall context of a poem.

Happiness, as used in this chapter, describes the attitude of man under the favorable administration of fortune. The poems under investigation illustrate how men sometimes envision themselves subject to a potentially benevolent wheel of fortune. Generally speaking, the
characteristic speaker in these poems perceives himself below a heavenly force that is capable of fulfilling his desires. From this subservient position, the speaker assumes the role of ritual worshipper and petitioner, courting fortune's favors and placing final responsibility for the outcome of events in fortune's hands. Consequently, the wheel of fortune must assume the role of the heavenly dispenser of happiness from a position above the speaker, beyond his reach or comprehension. From these empyreal heights, fortune arranges the good and bad determinations of circumstances. Poetic conflict arises when the happiness that fortune bestows on men is either temporary, flawed, or not present.

Regardless of Tolstoy's apothegm, all happy people do not resemble one another. The poems under study testify to varied modes and degrees of happiness mixed with intensities of unhappiness. Four levels of happiness are apparent in Wyatt's poetic world: the moment of ideal joy, the experience of imperfect happiness, the probability of future good fortune, and the possibility of future good fortune. Detailed examination of poems that illustrate each of these levels will help us understand the operation of good fortune as perceived by fictional personae.

Examination of the highest level of happiness, that moment of ideal joy, begins with Wyatt's most popular poem, "They fle from me that sometyme did me seke" (XXXVII).² Although endless debate rages over pronomial referents and
metaphorical images, the poem's literary merit is ubiquitously proclaimed. This reputation may be attributed largely to this poem's remarkable combination of poignancy and economy of expression created by framing a stanza that recounts a period of dream-like good fortune and happiness with contrasting stanzas of bad fortune and bitterness.

This contrast is established at the outset of the first stanza and reaches a peak in the reverie of the second stanza. The initial verse, "They fle from me that sometyme did me seke," shifts from a verb in the present tense, "fle," to the past, "did . . . seke," thereby reinforcing the shift from present isolation to past love. Even the directional sense of these two verbs illustrates this contrast: fleeing away from the speaker once was seeking the speaker. The reader naturally expects the speaker to take up the past in the second stanza and develop it as he did the contrasting present. The speaker fulfills this expectation by beginning his reminiscence with an idiomatic homage to the power of fortune that made past joy actual. The fervent exclamation, "Thancked be fortune," may be an ambivalent introduction to the goddess Fortune and to the poet's mortal mistress according to one critic, but one need not agree with this interpretation to feel that the reference to fortune is not mere thoughtless expletive. Moreover, we may see this exclamation as the best possible description of the highest aspiration
of a certain kind of man. "Thanked be fortune" encapsulates the contrast between routine experiences and those experiences that make life worth living; that "ons in speciall" when "it hath ben otherewise."

Because of the significance of this eternal moment, this moment when fortune bestows perfect happiness on the speaker, each descriptive detail must be examined for what it reveals about both the content of the moment and the aspirations of the speaker. His mental reverie incarnates the "gentill tame and meke" in a single sexual encounter, and elaborates most upon the clothing worn by his coy lady. She wore "thyn arraye," a "loose gowne," probably donned for the evening's "pleasaunt gyse" she attended; then, later that evening when she enters his private bedroom, the clothing performs the function of striptease. Physical sensuality and teasing coyness keynote his descriptive phrases as the flimsy gown that enticed him with its opaqueness falls from her shoulders to reveal her nakedness dramatically. The striptease completed, she catches the speaker up in her "long and small" arms, kisses him sweetly, and inquires playfully, "dere hert, how like you this?"

What are we to make of this moment as the epitome of happiness? Donald Friedman, psychoanalyzing the speaker's description, diagnoses debilitating passivity as the reason for subsequent disappointment. After blaming others for faithlessness and fickleness while refusing to bear any
burden for failure himself, the speaker submits an occasion during which his lady took the sexual initiative as his apotheosis of good fortune and happiness. At the moment of embrace, one is tempted to conjecture that the speaker is "caught" in more ways than one. He is caught in her arms, caught in a cycle in which gratification leads ultimately to abandonment, caught in his refusal to recognize personal responsibility, caught in the comfortless present.

The final stanza addresses itself to this comfortless present. Because his pleasant reverie contrasts sharply with his current condition, the speaker hastily assures us that his ideal past is more substantial than a figment of his escapist imagination. The line, "It was no dream; I lay brode waking," as we have already seen, fulfills this purpose in both form and content. The abruptness of the statement's metrical organization as well as its meaning forces us from the cozy world of reminiscence to the harsh waking world of painful self-consciousness. And the fact that the speaker feels the need to protest against a probable misinterpretation that he is fabricating the experience wrenches both him and us from the nostalgic longing to recapture and exist in the past. His ironic conclusion that "all is torned thorough my gentinles" serves to remind us that this judgment may be truer than he knows. Because his only response to alienation is bitterness and recrimination without self-blame, and because his period of greatest happiness is one during which his role was passive,
a reader is likely to feel that the comfortless present is a logical development of the speaker's personality.

Analysis of this personality illustrates how poetry is made out of the relationship between man and fortune. The speaker, viewed from this perspective, confesses himself as wed not merely to the memory of a woman but to the concept of a dominating wheel of fortune. Although he depicts himself as an unwitting dupe, we see behind his protestations of innocence. He maintains that he has no control over personal success and failure, that he is a victim of insensitive abandonment, that, in short, he is swept along with fortune's unpredictable turn of events. Furthermore his nostalgic evocation of past happiness depends upon passive subservience both to the initiative of his sensual lady and to the circumstances produced by good fortune. This subservience to fortune, rather than fortune itself, brings about present misery as it brought about past happiness. Yet in every descriptive detail, every turn of phrase, he implies that fortune controls all. His deepest waking-dream focuses on a future time when fortune's wheel will revolve back to that favorable position that allowed the bed chamber episode, a future time when he may once again exclaim, "Thanked be fortune!"

The methodology employed in this poem is characteristic of Wyatt's art, but of course the high degree of success is rarely achieved by any poet. Before we proceed further, we should note that a traditional literary
convention like fortune can be given poetic viability if used creatively. Wyatt's creative use revitalizes fortune contextually by making the speaker's attitude towards the convention psychologically revealing.

Another example of this revitalization with reference to ideal fortune may be found in the poem "That tyme that myrthe dyd stere my shypp" (CLXXIII). Like "They fle from me," this poem concerns a man reaching back to the touchstone of happiness in his past and hoping that nostalgic evocation may serve to soothe his perturbations and foster new happiness. From his alienated perspective, he contrasts ideal "myrthe" of the past with present misery: "fortune bot not then the lypp,/But was Defence off my Dystresse" (to bite one's lip is the sixteenth century's idiom for registering extreme displeasure in one's countenance).

This personified fortune becomes his metaphysical explanation for good and bad fortune. If things go well, as they once did, then fortune's smile protects its ward from danger, but if things go badly fortune's frown must be the determining factor.

The implications of fortune's former smile deserve examination. The epitome of happiness under ideal fortune in "They fle from me" is a secret assignation; the epitome for the speaker in "That tyme" is the moment that his mistress writes in his book, "I am yowres you may be well sure,/And shall be whyle my lyff dothe dure." This moment and these words signify perfect love, strong and continuing. And
though this same lady, formerly his true love, is now his "extreme enemye," the strength of that written commitment enables him to keep faith and hope for fulfillment. This faith that she will repeat her touching pledge to him is basically a faith in good fortune, justifying any suffering or sacrifice. He would probably endorse the descriptive statement spoken by another man in a poem of similar theme, "If euer man might him auant" (CCXLIX), as including those qualities in his past good fortune that he looks forward to in the future:

    I had (what would you more perdee?)
    Ech grace that I did craue.
    Thus fortunes will was vnto me
    All thing that I would haue.

Repetition of this past favor means everything.

    A speaker who claims to have succeeded in promoting repetition of past ideal happiness in fortune tells his story in the poem "Ons as me thought fortune me kyst" (LXV).

During the first visitation, fortune

    bad me aske what I thought best,
    And I should have it as me list
    Therewith to set my hert in rest.

Again we find that a major condition of ideal fortune is that the speaker be able to have everything he desires; interestingly enough the speaker, not fortune, is the best judge of what the speaker should have. In the present poem, he chose possession of "my dere hert" forever; however, continuation of bliss is uncertain and "fortune semed at the last/That to her promes she saide nay." Although this denial caused the speaker deep despair, he did not lose faith with fortune.
Because his faith remained steady, he feels, fortune finally honors her promise and "sheweth herself so fayer." And again the speaker desires nothing but to retain possession of what he already possesses. The lesson of his history, although he ignores it, contradicts this hope for continuing good fortune because he has no assurance that fortune will not again break her promise.

His words and his refusal to consider this possibility make it appear likely that fortune will indeed abandon him. Initially he tells us that fortune kissed him, but only "as me thought"; then fortune only "seemed" to say nay; and finally she only "sheweth" herself fair. In each case, he reports mere appearances based on personal assumptions of an a priori cause-and-effect relationship between fortune and events. And since he subjects himself to these sudden moves of fortune, he tends to push out of his mind the very real possibility of future unfavorable mutability. Thus, although he concludes his poem on the note of contentedness and gratefulness towards fortune, the possibility of future mishap impresses the reader.

Before we conclude our discussion of ideal fortune we should say something about the problem of belief in poems dealing with fortune. Although we may not believe that fortune exists, we should be willing to suspend our disbelief if a poem contradicts our personal creeds. Even a poem like "Ons as me thought," based upon appearances about which we are skeptical, demands that we put aside
that skepticism temporarily to understand and appreciate the speaker's attitude. We should do this because that attitude provides us with a central key to the poem's total meaning. Since a major critical task involves receiving and explaining the revelations of poetry, and since the attitude of the poet's fictional voice determines much of that revelation, we must respect that attitude. Because of the width of this respect we should be able to understand varying visions of happiness, ranging from the simple possession of one's "dere hert" as above or the sadistic satisfaction of seeing a rival's hopeless envy in the poem "The wandering gadlyng" (XLVI).

Back to our concern with ideal happiness, we offer a final example in the poem "A face that shuld content me wonders well" (CXVIII), a poem that Ezra Pound admires so much that he includes it among his anthology of the most significant contributions to poetry from all cultures and all times. One suspects that Pound is taken by the way this poem combines simple description with complex psychology. E. K. Chambers assumes that the poem is a portrait of Elizabeth Darrell, Wyatt's mistress, but the poem surely transcends such a limited biographical identification. Beyond biography, this poem enumerates a dream-like list of conditional requirements that fortune must fulfill if the speaker, less selective in the past, is to risk love again.

These conditional requirements are ideal in every sense. The speaker begins with his Galatea's face that
would "content" him only if it were "cumley to behold" in addition to being merely fair, and cheerful with a quality of sympathy and communion beyond words. Then he prescribes hair of "crysped goold" and wit for his ideal lady, and he concludes that he "myght chance"--emphasizing the word "myght"--to tie love's knot once again if he can find a woman who fits all these specifications. However, the reader recognizes that this ideal mistress is as unreal as she is perfect because the speaker's conditional requirements are intentionally exaggerated. One feels this intention is implicit in the speaker's desire to avoid repetition of love's pains in relationships with all-too imperfect mistresses. In fact, the sad wistfulness of his catalogue overshadows any hope he might realistically entertain of finding such an ideal woman. If anything, he finds some compensatory satisfaction in the process of manufacturing this image of total desirability--his mental vengeance for past failure. His striking description of a woman's countenance that can speak "withouwt wordes, such wordes as non can tell" reveals at once the inevitable clash between the desires of his dreams and the realities of his life: ineffability connotes impossibility. He is caught in a dilemma between pathetic longing to redeem past unhappiness with future perfection and the unliklihood that such longing will ever be realized. The ideal is in this sense the unreal.

So far we have looked at ideal happiness under
fortune—no matter how brief or remote—and instances of speaker's attitudes towards such fortune. The emphasis has been on the ideal. Now we turn to a lesser degree of happiness, in which the speaker emphasizes obstacles, disruptive forces, shortcomings, and unexpected events that flaw good fortune. Within this category we find plaintive voices like that of the speaker in the poem "You that in love finde luckes and habundance" (XCII) who lives in "mischaunce," cut off from the good fortune he observes, and who asks that he be allowed to "dreme of your felicitie." He knows how it would feel to love and have love returned in an ideal relationship, but he also knows that he must always be denied that experience.

The speaker in the poem "I am redy and ever wyll be" (CXXXIX) similarly bears witness to flawed happiness under good fortune. Although the Muir and Thomson edition dismisses this poem as an "undistinguished poem of doubtful authorship," the handling of the changing refrain to underscore the speaker's plight certainly manifests Wyatt's characteristic skill. From the first the speaker contrasts his willingness to perform any service for his love and his own personal integrity with an unspecified external lack:

I am redy and ever wyll be
To doo you service with honeste,
Ther ys nothing that lackys in me
But that I haue not.

He offers his service, his heart and his mind to the lady but implies that he is still unable to overcome this
disadvantage, which probably involves wealth or social status. Yet, in spite of this disadvantage, he and his mistress have attained secretly the joys of mutual love, and he hopes for renewal of this relationship.

As we receive this information, the poem’s refrain evolves functionally from excuse or explanation to remedial vow. In the first half of the poem, the speaker's excuse for being denied love is "that I haue not." His purpose, stronger than this lack, becomes more concrete when he decides to study "how I myght haue" because some so-called friends have placed delays between the would-be lovers since "they haue not." He is realistic enough to recognize the importance of "having" in this social milieu, and therefore renews his pledge of faithfulness and devotion "till that we haue." In short, though his present condition prevents an open, socially acceptable love contract, he refuses to allow interference with what he does have—personal integrity and perseverance. He makes this contrast convincing precisely because the refrain plays upon the social concept of not-having. Though he may not believe in these externally imposed social strictures, his inner self-possession gives him the strength to abide until good fortune favors him again.

Like "I am redy," another poem, "Grudge on who list, this ys my lott" (CCXX), uses a repeated refrain to indicate fortune's flaw to otherwise perfect happiness. The speaker, a young woman, describes herself as young and
charming, and her love affair as one of perfect concord in which each thinks first of the other's pleasure. We would quite naturally agree with her conclusion that her "happiness 'shulde doble ons or twice,'" except for the fact that she qualifies each stanza with the ominous refrain, "If yt ware not." I would want nothing, she says, "If yt ware not"; I would be the happiest woman, our love would find no lack, I could soothe all my lover's troubles, and we would be perfectly contented "If yt ware not." This mystifying, unsettling obstacle haunts us by its repetition in the refrain.

In addition to the mystery of what is, the compelling problem of the speaker's psychological make-up also stimulates our critical curiosity. Wyatt's psychological delineation is finely drawn. From the speaker's own words, we can picture her as a relatively naive young woman only lately come to the knowledge of how reality destroys dreams, a shy girl who cannot bring herself to specify the details of her personal problem in words, a moral person who overcomes some of her shyness to offer herself as an example for others, and a person who believes herself assigned to this imperfect "lot" by fortune. This final point, her belief in fortune's intervention ambivalently causes both joy for the love she knows and sorrow for the obstacle to perfect happiness in that love.

Before we move on to the next lower degree of happiness in fortune, we should mention two additional poems that emphasize flawed perfection. One poem, "I Love lovyd and so
doithe she" (CLXXX), describes the plight of two people who love so well yet "want our will." The speaker sees fortune's hand both in love's happiness and in them "that causer is of this" imposed evil: both good and evil seem to be products of fortune. In the other poem, "To my myshap alas I fynd" (CLXXI), the speaker points out a moral to this ambivalent hand of fortune:

To my myshap alas I fynd  
That happy hap ys dangerus;  
And fortune workyth but her kynd  
To make the joyfull dolorus.

The speakers in both these poems are caught in a situation produced by "chance" in which one's "chefe desyer doth cause me mone." Fortune's happiness is there, but fortune's unhappiness is also present to undercut the joy one feels.

Thus far we have discussed the vision of perfect happiness and the experience of imperfect happiness under fortune. Now we descend one rung further on the ladder of happiness and good fortune from possession of to faith in good fortune.

Faith in the probability that good fortune will follow bad may be illustrated with reference to a common conception about the wheel of fortune. Good and bad fortune are merely two extreme positions on the same revolving wheel: bad fortune becomes good fortune in the course of one-half revolution. If one believes in this concept, then bad fortune actually represents a transitional phase that usually precedes the advent of good fortune. This third degree of happiness under fortune is especially evident in two short
poems that Wyatt imitated from Serafino’s strambotti, “Venemus thornes that ar so sharp and kene” (LXXVI) and “He is not ded that somtyme hath a fall” (LX).

The first poem, “Venemus thornes,” argues for the existence of a natural order that is simultaneously good and evil under fortune's control. Three parallel cases illustrate this natural order: sharp thorns sometimes bear flowers, poison is often used medicinally to restore health, and fire is a purgative that may either heal or hurt. Drawing on these illustrations, the speaker applies this natural pattern to his own situation:

and if these bene true,  
I trust somtyme my harme may be my helth,  
Syns every wo is joynid with some welth.

The word "welth" in Wyatt's poetry, as Hallett Smith demonstrates, often is used as a synecdoche for one's entire well-being in contrast to the word "wo;" the state of extreme sorrow. Clearly, the speaker wants his sorrow translated into his happiness as he finds is the case with nature.

In fact, he expresses this desire in the form of petition to fortune. Although his substantiating proposition that every woe is linked with wealth is based only on three distinct instances (and is not, therefore, intellectually rigorous), he reveals his faith in the existence of a great chain of being along which fortune practices its art according to proportion and degree. He indicates three examples of this chain dealing with plant
life, poison, and fire, and then makes it evident that this chain extends all the way to man. By citing this operation of fortune in the natural world, he manifests his faith in the universality of this order and attempts to stimulate analogous operation in his personal world. The petition to stimulate this operation resembles most Christian prayers, beginning with the enumeration of a deity's attributes and then asking for favors within the capacity of such a deity. "Venemus thornes" begins with the enumeration of instances that illustrate fortune's simultaneously good/bad nature and then concludes with a statement of "trust" that the petitioner's "harme" be transformed into "helth."

The second poem, "He is not ded" (IX), proposes a sequential rather than simultaneous order for good and bad fortune. To back up the contention that "he is not ded that somtyme hath a fall," the speaker offers three analogous cases: the sun hidden behind a cloud will shine again, a ship whose mast and shroud are destroyed by storm may still reach its port, and a willow bent by the wind rises with greater strength. After the first analogy, that of cloudy obscurity, he makes his faith in good fortune's probability explicit:

And when fortune hath spitt outhe all her gall I trust good luck to me shalbe allowd.

Note that the speaker's attitude is one of "trust" just as in "Venemus thornes," and that his concern is not that fortune make an exception in his case but that fortune
allow him her routine visitation of good luck after bad
luck has its term. Falling and cloudy obscurity, he argues,
are both temporary appearances produced by unfavorable cir-
cumstances that must inevitably be followed by the favor-
able circumstances that allow rising and sunshine. The
two subsequent analogies to this personal plea do not
merely repeat the clouds analogy but serve to widen the
purview of fortune's sequential nature. The ship analogy
adds to this concept the presence of physical debilitation:
even with a damaged mast and shroud a ship can reach safety,
just as a man hurt by his fall may yet attain his goal.
And the final analogy of the bent willow adds the concept
of a rise to greater strength when the wind subsides or the
fall ends. Where the speaker in "Venemus thornes" asks for
the obverse side of bad fortune, the speaker in "He is not
ded" asks for the sequential outcome of bad fortune.

Also this poem demonstrates how effectively Wyatt
can make use of his sources. Interestingly, all extant
manuscripts except the Egerton manuscript follow Serafino's
first person opening: "I am not dead although I had a
fall"; however, the Egerton version, "He is not ded that
somtyme hath a fall," carries the authority of being
emended in Wyatt's own handwriting. The depersonalization
realized through this emendation improves the poem because
it blends in better with the other impersonal examples of
sequential fortune, and sets the stage for a more dramatic
departure into the first person singular in the key fourth
and fifth verses. Furthermore, Wyatt makes these impersonal examples more convincing by adding concrete terms like "cloud" and "storm," and by adding stronger comparative terms like "greater." And by inverting the relative position of verses three and four, Wyatt increases tension by withholding his personal example until the last moment. Although one critic classifies this poem as a "line by line translation . . . with no alterations of the sense," Wyatt's handling of this source demonstrates true innovation, the signature of poetic artistry.

To this point, the three categories of happiness under good fortune have been arranged in an order of descending intensity. First, we saw the vision of perfect happiness, then an account of flawed happiness, and then faith in the probability of future happiness. We now turn to the final division in this chapter, the lowest degree of happiness when good fortune is perceived only as possibility. Possibility is indeed a weaker version of probability, evidenced by a speaker's hesitancy and doubt even as he hopes for the advent of good fortune. Yet for all these qualifications, such a speaker never questions the ultimate desirability of good fortune nor the desirability of the kind of happiness realized through possession of this fortune. Even at the extremity of misfortune, at the very moment of despair, some tenacious hope based on the remotest of possibilities remains alive in the devotee of fortune—for example, the "fearful trust" in the poem
"Though this thy port and I thy servaunt true" (LXXVIII) or the possible "one beame of pitie" in the poem "Suche vayn thought as wonted to myslede me" (LVI).

One of the best illustrations of a speaker grappling with the dilemma of trusting in the possibility of good fortune is contained in the poem "It may be good, like it who list" (XXI). This poem, widely anthologized for its excellent psychological drama in lyric form, see-saws between the hope that fortune "may be good" and the qualifying doubt from past experience, between the speaker's innate desire to believe and his educated tendency to be skeptical. This skeptical voice of experience recognizes the similarity between details that assure him of success now—flirtatious love talk and meaningful glances—and details that have signaled "soden chaunce" before. His dilemma is encapsulated in the single verse that one critic finds representative of Wyatt's prevalent theme of insecurity in the psychological, amorous, or political spheres:10

Assured, I doubt I be not sure.

The confused syntax of this line, its conflicting stresses on both assurance and doubt, mirror accurately the speaker's indecision. Immediately following this verse, the key question arises: "should I trust to suche suretie?" The evidence of experience, of course, demands that the reply be negative because the speaker knows that hope based on mere possibilities is usually "great foly," yet native optimism seems to survive the harsh education of experience.
This question is answered—as far as an answer is possible—by the refrain at the end of each stanza:

For dred to fall I stond not fast.

One is struck by the resemblance to the concluding verse in another poem, "Agaynste the Rock I clyme both hy and hard" (CXVII):

For Dred to falle, my hand now hold fast.

But the contrast between these two lines is even greater than the similarity. In "Agaynste the Rock" the speaker manifests his determination to succeed in the face of danger; in "It may be good" the speaker manifests paralyzing hesitation in the face of a question that demands decision. Balancing hope against doubt, this latter speaker cannot bring himself to make any decision even though he recognizes on a rational level that "my liff thus I do wast." The poem concludes in this hesitation with the unchanging refrain that portrays a man caught between two alternatives.

This vacillation between hope and dread with regard to the possibility of realizing good fortune is sounded again and again in Wyatt's poetry. "So feble is the threde that doth the burden stay" (XCVIII), opening with an allusion to the weaving fates, recommends spiritual self-maintenance "some better luk to fynd," but ends with the speaker admitting that "I fere and yet I trust to see that I requyre." Another poem, "If fansy would favour" (XLIJI), employs a series of if-then
propositions based on the possible alliance between fortune's fancy and the speaker's good faith, but the conditional "if" weighs heavily against the speaker's flimsy hopes. A third poem, "Whan that I call vnto my mynde" (CCXXX), looks back over a since-thwarted hope that proves that one should not be "much assurid without mistruste," yet the speaker doggedly

Abides the tyme of my retourne  
Yn hope that fortune by my playnte  
Wyll slake the fire wherewith I bourne.

And still another poem, "Alas, fortune, what alith the" (CXII), illustrates this dread-hope syndrome by beginning with accusations directed towards fortune's ill-willed obstinacy, and then confirming the speaker's allegiance to fortune while he remains "euer in trust at last, perdy,/
That thow wylt chaunge." As long as the possibility exists that good fortune may appear to rid its loyal subject of bad luck, fearful trust controls these speakers.

The final poem in this chapter's survey, "Marvaill no more, all tho" (LII), brings to a close the theme of happiness in good fortune sounded in "They fle from me." The spontaneous cry--"Thancked be fortune!"--that defined the realization of a lifetime's dream in a moment of exquisite pleasure now becomes a more restrained conditional statement--"Than shall I thanck fortune." The descent from a moment of realization to a moment of qualified hope for the possibility of some future moment of joy explains this shift in tone. "Marvaill no more" describes a life of woe,
made bearable by the dimly seen vision of good fortune. Since this speaker expresses himself through his songs, he maintains that he cannot sing of joy when "fortune overthwart/Doeth cause my morning chere." Yet he still shows himself as willing to forget present misery and past persecution by fortune if only he can find the light at the end of the tunnel. His hope for such light is severely qualified:

But yet perchaunce som chaunce
May chaunce to chaunce my tune,
And when such chaunce doeth chaunce,
Then shall I thanck fortune.

Whereas repetition of the word "chance" seems to make the possibility for good fortune remote, one cannot deny that the speaker manages to convey a certain sense of optimism within bad conditions. This optimism, even as the last outpost against despair, allies this speaker with other speakers in the poems we have discussed.

To sum up, each of these speakers has, had or perhaps will have a time of happiness produced by some form of good fortune, and each embraces this time with present participation, nostalgia or hope. The attitude implicit in these circumstances, taken as a whole, stems from belief both in the existence of good fortune and in one's ability to curry fortune's favors while avoiding its wrath. This dual motivation brings us back to our prefatory remark that Wyatt is not often moved to poetry of unbounded happiness. Instead he reminds us that the dark side of the boundaries
to happiness contain the inescapable facts of misfortune and unhappiness. The other side of the dream-like rendezvous in "They fle from me" is present abandonment and isolation; the other side of "perchaunce" in "Marvaill no more" is a life of proven woe.

The other side has been present in our discussion but our emphasis has been on on the brighter side of fortune. It remains for us to explore fortune's darker side more throughly, to emphasize its sorrows and tribulations, its problems and issues.
CHAPTER III

For ever, Fortune, wilt thou prove
An unrelenting foe to love.
--James Thomson

FRUSTRATION: THE UNQUIET MIND

Generally speaking, when fortune places obstacles between man's setting of goals and his attainment of those goals, man becomes frustrated. Wyatt's translation of Plutarch's The Quyte of Mynde makes this point graphically with sixteenth-century terminology: "it may be sensably parcyued/the playntfull vnquietnesse of the minde/
\[\text{stems from}]/ scoldyng with fortune."¹ This unquietness of mind is the confusion, bafflement or annoyance man feels when he experiences thwarting circumstance and blames misfortune.

Although the poems under investigation in this chapter have some elements in common with poems in the previous chapter, their differences are more significant than their resemblances. In the last chapter we observed an unshakable faith in fortune's generous potential even though a speaker might be experiencing present misfortune. The poems that follow demonstrate similar dependence upon fortune; however, they emphasize pessimism rather than optimism. The cause
for this contrasting attitude cannot be attributed soley to differing experience (misery is often the common denominator of poems in both chapters), but must be attributed to differing individual interpretation of that experience: one sees misery as temporary while another sees it as permanent. The typical speaker under examination in this chapter sees misfortune as unwarranted persecution and expresses his consequent frustration, or unquietness of mind, in his poem.

A four-line poem (CCXXI) dramatizes economically the two essential elements in all the poems that follow: the situation of misfortune and man's attitude towards that situation.

Ffortune dothe frowne:  
What remedye?  
I am downe  
Bye destenye.

The speaker describes his problem by assigning human characteristics to the responsible force: "Ffortune dothe frowne." This deceptively simple declarative statement gives real-substantive form to his conception of a powerful god-like force that can destroy his life with a simple facial expression. Fortune's frown, awesomely vivid, becomes a synecdoche for the profound misery the speaker experiences. He does not elaborate upon the content of this misery, but he does make it clear that this misery is complete. The shorthand tone creates this impression by imitating the meaningful brevity natural for one who is mentally exhausted by misfortune's pressure.
The question that follows immediately after the personification of a frowning fortune illustrates the speaker's response: "What remedy?" He delivers this remark with a shrug of his shoulders and a helpless tone in his voice, for he seeks sympathy not information. The two-word question evinces his recognition that fortune portends disaster without mitigation; since active aggression would be fruitless, he chooses to respond with apathy, inactivity and withdrawal. This sullen and detached response is born from frustration.

After the question comes the final evaluation. The apathetic shrug is translated into a descriptive conclusion: "I am downe/Bye destenye." The word "downe" provides the reader with an accurate indication of the spatial metaphor that the speaker believes in. From above, fortune frowns; consequently the speaker is pushed further down, away from happiness or even hope. Furthermore, the largeness of the term "destenye" conveys a strong sense of preordained necessity and justifies the speaker's passivity. If this terrible position is necessary, then no resistance or remedy is possible. The passive voice construction reinforces this conclusion as it impersonalizes the speaker's plight and emphasizes his helplessness.

We can use this poem as an introduction to the two major topics in this chapter: psychological defense mechanisms employed by speakers to cope with misfortune and the specific effects of misfortune on speakers' lives. The
first of these topics—psychological defense mechanisms—may be illustrated by Aesop's fable of the fox and the grapes. After repeated unsuccessful attempts to reach a bunch of grapes, the fox preserved his dignity by rationalizing away his own failure: the grapes were probably sour anyway. Similarly, the typical speaker in this chapter often preserves his dignity by rationalizing away his own failure; the hand of fortune is responsible for his inability to reach a desired goal. Such a defense mechanism allows a speaker to increase his sense of well-being in the face of otherwise debilitating frustration. Three defense mechanisms frequently employed to shift the blame from speaker to fortune are descriptive hyperbole, abstract terminology and personification. When we have seen how these mechanisms function in the context of poetry about fortune, then we can turn our attention to the second topic—the specific effects of misfortune on a speaker's life.

Descriptive hyperbole, the first of our defense mechanisms, ennobles a speaker's plight by enlarging the ubiquitous enormity of his personal misfortune. A good example of this enlargement may be found in the poem "I have beene a lover" (CXLV):

I have beene a lover
Full long and many days,
And oft tymes a prover
Of the most paynfull wayes;
But all that I have past
Ar tryffylles to the last.

A context for superlative frustration is immediately established through comparison with past misfortune. The
speaker introduces himself as an authority in the area of misfortune by virtue of his intense experience, and then informs us that his present misfortune makes even his terrible past misfortunes appear as trifles. This hyperbolic introduction serves his purposes well: his present misfortune is presented as the \( n + 1 \) misfortune beyond which there can be nothing more terrible; his personal experience is presented as an unquestionable authority; his intentional omission of specifications allows for greater imaginative impression; and his plea arouses the public sympathy he demands.

Another poem "Suche happe as I ame happed in" (XXXVI) employs similar overstatement to suggest a quality of misfortune that exceeds even the expressive import of standard language patterns:

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Suche happe as I ame happed in
Had never man of truth I wene;
At me fortune list to begyn
To shew that never hath ben sene
A new kynde of vnhappenes;
Nor I cannot the thing I mene
    My self expres.
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How can one describe something that has never been seen? This speaker solves the problem by emphasizing the inexpressability of such misfortune. If the misfortune is too great to describe, then it must indeed be grave. Further he suggests that his plight be compared to a classical allusion of "honger still a myddes my foode."

Since classical allusions are relatively rare with Wyatt, and since this particular allusion is employed at
least three times in separate lyrics, we should devote some
attention to its use. The classical allusion is to Tan-
talus who was assigned punishment in that portion of Hades
where Ixion was fastened to a ceaselessly revolving wheel
and Sisyphus labored to roll a huge stone forever. Tan-
talus stood thirsty in water up to his chin and hungry
underneath trees laden with fruit; but when he bowed his head
to drink, the water receded leaving the ground at his feet
dry, and when he grasped for the fruit, winds whirled them
beyond his reach. Iconographically, the figure of Tantalus
is the figure of Frustration when the sight, show or promise
of a desired thing is kept out of reach (in fact, the verbal
derivative "tantalize" came into use at the end of the six-
teenth century to describe torment analogous to that of
Tantalus). This figure appears, as we said, when the speaker
in "suche happe" mentions his "honger still a myddes my
foode." The Tantalus figure is also suggested in the poem
"My loue ys lyke vnto th'eternall fyre" (CC) in which the
greatest pains of misfortune are measured against the pain
of those whose one great desire is to "se the syght whyche
they may not attayne." And strongest of all is the figure
in the poem "The fruote of all the seruise that I serue"
(CCVII):

In paradis for hunger still I sterve
And in the flowde for thurstte to deth I drye;
So Tantalus ane I and yn worse payne
Amydes my helpe, and helples doth remayne.

The figure of Tantalus—in all these poems—conveys in
hyperbolic language the sense of a speaker whose misfortune
is ultimate frustration because of the physical proximity of desire coupled with the actual distance of consummation of that desire. This descriptive exaggeration functions as a psychological defense mechanism, for when misfortune is thus intensified the speaker's self-esteem is protected. To put it simply, how can a reader deny sympathy to one who identifies himself with Tantalus?

We turn from descriptive hyperbole to a second type of psychological defense mechanism—the tendency to employ powerful abstract terms to account for individual misfortune. We have already seen this tendency towards abstraction in our introductory quatrain where the speaker referred to his personal problem as a visitation from destiny. The very mention of the word "destiny" ennobles the speaker's plight as it frees him from responsibility for incurring it.

The poem "The piller pearisht is whearto I Lent" (CCXXXVI) may serve as a representative example of the tendency to use abstract terminology. The poem focuses upon a man accounting for and responding to the crisis of loss. Depicting his loss as a metaphorical pillar that had been the "strongest staye of myne vnquyet mynde," he predicts imminent mental collapse. The pillar is irreplaceable:

The lyke of it no man agayne can fynde
From East to west still seking though he went.

The progressive nature of this poem depends upon these functional metaphors: the fruitless search for mental quiet is compared to a vain expedition for a missing architectural support.
Presiding over this metaphorical wasteland are the abstract names for misfortune—"happe," "chaunce," "vnhappe" and "destenye." The Petrarchan source posits "morte" or death as the destroyer of joy, but Wyatt substitutes the concept of abstract fortune for literal death. With this substitution Wyatt intensifies his thematic focus on abstraction and anticipates the speaker's evaluation of his situation: "And I (alas) by chaunce am thus assynde." This abstraction becomes his defense mechanism against unfavorable self-analysis because he uses it as an excuse for passivity. What can he do to re-establish the strong support of his unquiet mind "syns that thus it is by destenye" he is persecuted? He believes literally that these abstract forces drive him to irreversible self-hate, terminated by death only. Although one critic, H. A. Mason, calls this poem a "characteristic failure" in its clichéd use of fortune, we find that the functional use of both metaphor and abstraction creates psychological drama, not mere cliché. Indeed, the poem is successful precisely because Wyatt included these descriptions of fortune as revelations of the speaker's unquiet mind.

Before proceeding to our examination of a third defense mechanism we should mention briefly a few other functional uses of abstraction for psychological purposes. The speaker in "Dryuen by dissyr to set affection" (CCLXII), for example, uses an abstract term most frequently found in the context of religious destiny: "Chosen I am, I thinke
by election." He applies this word "election" to account for his compulsion to aspire hopelessly above his social rank and personal competence; since he feels this compulsion is forced upon him "agaynst my will," he must substantiate his feeling by pointing an accusatory finger at some abstract force. Under similar compulsion, the speaker in "Alas, poor man, what hap have I" (CLXXXV) points his finger at "my desteny." Both speakers, having lost their powers of self-control and self-determination, find some measure of satisfaction and defend their egos by blaming cosmic obstacles for personal failures. And finally, the speaker in the double sonnet "The flaming Sighes that boile within my brest" (CCXXXVIII) represents his "weried mynd" with an abstract spatial metaphor: "I am that place assynd" by misfortune. Like Milton's Satan, who says that the "mind is its own place," this speaker contends that an unquiet, frustrated mind is as real as its fortune. Further, he contends that the mind's place is assigned from without, not created from inside--this contention saves him from feelings of guilt. By pointing his finger at an abstract conception of fortune, this speaker like others preserves his dignity in the face of defeat.

Related to descriptive hyperbole and abstract terminology is a third psychological defense mechanism--personification. We saw an example of personification in the verse of our introductory quatrain: "Pfortune dothe frowne." By personifying fortune--that is, by attributing
human characteristics and form to fortune—a speaker deals more directly with his miserable circumstances and assigns blame more easily. Literary precedents for personifications of fortune predate English literature, but one example that comes readily to mind is the personification at the conclusion of Chauser’s "Monk’s Tale" where the Monk depicts a fortune that would “covere hir brighte face with a clowde” whenever men placed their trust in her.

Some examples of Wyatt’s poems that use personification to shrug off guilt and vent frustration follow. The speaker in “Absens absenting causithe me to complaine” (CCXXVIII) employs a typically sixteenth-century analogy from court life when he paints fortune in the figure of a haughty queen who dismisses her courtiers capriciously:

Her face she hathe turnid with cowntenance contrarious,  
And clene from her presens she hathe exilid me.

With this personification he communicates the depth of his plight to sympathetic readers as he consoles himself by defining the metaphorical terms (and controlling them, at least creatively) of his misfortune. Another speaker in "To wissehe and want and not obtain" (LVIII) justifies his contention that all resistance to misfortune is in vain by personifying a fortune, “deiff vnto my call," who "list yet for to lowre." The speaker in “Suche happe as I ame hapsed in" (XXXVI) is not as concrete in his personification, but he discerns a figure who "list to begyn/To shew" him a new kind of misfortune as she kills his spirit. And last, the speaker in "Where shall I have at myn owne will" (LIII)
similarly adumbrates: a fortune who lifts him up only to cast him down again. All these personifications of fortune reveal the psychological need to substantiate causes for paranoia and ease an unquiet mind. Functionally, personification (no less precise than the spatial metaphors of depth psychology like "superego" and "subconscious") fulfills this need well while it simultaneously fulfills the artistic demands of the poetic form.

Indeed all three defense mechanisms--descriptive hyperbole, abstract terminology and personification--fulfill both psychological and artistic functions. Psychologically, these mechanisms give a speaker the temporary satisfaction of naming, and therefore controlling to some extent, his particular affliction. The greater the name of his affliction, the greater his sense of honorable martyrdom. Artistically, these mechanisms are poetic images that reveal character because they are carefully chosen by a speaker to communicate the state of his mind.

Now that we have seen how these mechanisms function we can turn our attention to the second half of this chapter by focusing upon the specific effects misfortune has on a speaker's life. These effects are described in detail by victimized people who feel the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. Among these slings and arrows are self-conscious decay, mutability, weakening of the will, and belief in one's own ineffectuality. We will deal with each of these four effects in turn to gain additional insight.
into the frustrations of the unquiet mind in the throes of misfortune.

The first of these effects, self-conscious decay, or the waste of human resources, is most evident in poems that may be termed confessional. Confessional poems often operate according to a standard pattern: with paralyzing amazement (analogous to traumatic shock) a speaker watches fortune as it destroys his life's aspirations, and he finds himself either unwilling or unable to take positive remedial action. Instead, the speaker accepts the fact of his demise with the pained wonderment of a child who cannot understand but must follow the dicta of the adult world. Disavowing responsibility, petulance, helplessness and self-centeredness are indeed childish responses to misfortune but natural enough for one who views decay as the capricious punishment meted out by an oppressive taskmaster.

This sense of decay often expresses itself through metaphor. The speaker in the poem "Som fowles there be that have so perfaict sight" (XXIV), for example, differentiates between three metaphorical types of animal vision: perfect day vision that can withstand the sun's harmful glare, perfect night vision shielded from that glare, and the illusory vision that entices flies to perish in a flame. His mistress is the flame or sun, and he is the fly, unable to withstand his mistresses looks nor hide from her glare, who rejoices in the sight of the flame so much that he is irresistibly attracted to its brightness. But he finds the
contrary of what he intends:

My destyne to behold her doeth me ledes;
Yet do I knowe I runne into the glede.

Similarly the poem "Lyke as the wynde with raginge blaste"
(CCXLV) employs a series of conceits of self-destruction--
among them another flame-seeking fly, a self-consuming fire,
venomous glances, and a spider's lost labor--to illustrate
how misfortune can force self-destruction upon its victim.
The introductory conceit is typical of the series in its
import although atypical in its complexity:

Lyke as the wynde with raginge blaste
Dothe cause each tree to bowe and bende,
Even so do I spende my tyme in wast,
My lyff consumeynge vto an ende.

The import of this conceit is simply that the speaker destroys
himself in a manner analogous to the operation of nature.
However, the traditional arrangement of this wind-tree
conceit identifies man with the tree that must bend or else
break under the wind's force; the speaker reverses this con-
struct by identifying himself with insubstantial air--this
reversal produces some freshness and surprise. The con-
clusion to both these poems is also similar: "I my self
desyer/To augment my greff and deadly payne" because of
misfortune's compelling force.

Adding to the strength of metaphors from nature is the
the traumatic shock of recognition. For instance, the speak-
er in "Lyke as the wynde" bears simple witness to his own
self-destruction by saying, "I fele and se my owne decaye."
This simple phrasing uncovers the depth of his emotion by
depicting simultaneously that his decay is terrifying and absurdly unbelievable. To feel and see one’s own decay is to be confronted with something that cannot be happening but nonetheless is happening. This amazement receives similar treatment in the poem "I see my plaint with open eares" (CCXLIII) where the speaker emphasizes the excruciating shock of self-decay by using the verb "to see." His reaction to decay combines this shock with severe depression:

I see my lyfe away so weares
That I my self my self dispysse
And most of all wherewith I stryve
Ys that I see my self alyve.

Decay breeds self-hatred, most painful in his compulsively acute consciousness, and then leads to a schizophrenic separation of self into observer and observed. He sees himself as he is aware of being seen; the psychological effects are complex, yet the simple verb "to see" communicates this complexity as few other concepts can.

From this sense of decay we move to a second of fortune's effects upon men—mutability. Edmund Spenser describes this unsettling and disorienting phenomenon as an "ever-whirling wheele/Of Change, the which all mortall things doth sway." As the image of the wheel suggests, mutability and fortune are iconographically related in Wyatt's poems as they are in Spenser's. Wyatt stresses his speaker's frustrating inability to cope with the mutability introduced unto his life by misfortune.

This inability is especially implicit in the poem
"My hope, Alas, hath me abused" (LXII). The speaker's self-confidence in the present and his aspirations for the future are undermined by his experience of ephemeral joy; the good life he sought was enjoyed but a moment before it was transformed into something less desirable. As his unquiet mind analyzes this misery, he recognizes that past assurances have become the reasons for present anxiety. Confused by mutability, he unhesitatingly lays the entire blame to fortune while he throws up his hands in surrender:

In fortunes forge my Joye was wrought,
And is revolsted redely.
I ame mystaken wonderly,
For I thought nought by faithfulnes,
Yet I remain all confortles.

Mutability, which he defines as the condition in which everything "hath happed contrary," creates his "comfortles" mind. The refrain at the end of each stanza emphasizes the state of comfortlessness, complete and irremediable, and implies that inability to cope with change has produced this unquietness.

Another poem that highlights mutability is "Desire, alas, my master and my foo" (LXXV). Here too, the speaker finds everything "alterd" for the worse and describes this condition in terms similar to those used in "They fle from me":

Some tyme I sough that dryvys me to and fro;
Some tyme thow ledst that ledyth the and me.

Unable to cope with this "to and fro" cycle and unable to find any effective solution to his problem, he asks rhetorically:
What reason is to rewe thy subiectes so
By forcyd law and mutabilite?

What reason? The speaker can find no reason, no design, no plan; all he can do is point an accusatory finger at the fact that he is subject to the unalterable law of change. But mere identification of the problem does not help provide a solution, for the law of mutability is "forcyd."

Without recourse and without hope for escape from this law, the speaker can only vent his frustration by framing his rhetorical question. He like the previous speaker is unable to cope with mutability.

Turning from the frustrations of mutability we encounter new frustrations in a third effect of misfortune—weakening of the will or loss of self-determination. When a healthy psyche feels the volition to do something, the powers of choice and resolution may be exercised; but an unquiet mind under the compulsion of misfortune has not these discretionary powers. Under these circumstances, some speakers feel their will to action is permanently weakened.

Quite a few poems dramatize this frustrated will by recounting a situation in which one feels the compulsion to fall in love and remain in love with an antagonistic spirit contrary to one's conscious will. It may be argued, of course, that a deeper subconscious will authors the compulsion that the speaker assigns to fortune, but to argue in this manner violates our sympathetic contract with the speaker. Thus we can mention some poems in which a speaker
tells us that he has been forced into a love relationship with one who hates him. In "All hevy myndes," for example, the speaker blames misfortune for violating his conscious and reasonable will:

My chaunce doeth so
My wofull case procure
To offer to my ffoo
My hert to cure.

He assumes that he would never enter into such a relationship by his own will if he were not compelled by "chaunce."

Similarly, the speaker in "Gyve place all ye that doth reioise" (CCXVI) finds that all his good intentions have been thwarted and so concludes helplessly "bye chaunse I am assignid/With stedfaste love to serue the vnkinde."

Another speaker in the poem "Payne of all Payne, the most grevous paine" (CCXIII) is forever "bewayling his fortune and life bestall" because "Cupido hath inflamid the hertes desires/To love there as ys disdayne." But the most elaborate account of a weakened will forced into a love relationship with an adversary is contained in the poem "I see that chance hath chosen me" (CCLVI). The speaker in this poem describes his will as being frustrated by fortune:

Such is the fortune that I haue
To loue them most that loue me lest;
And to my pain to seke and craue
The thing that other hauest possesse.
So thus in vain alway I serue;
And other hauest, that I deserve.

Since he feels that he "cannot" in any way "change this minde" from its unquiet course, he concludes that he must be "by chance assinde" and his will "bound by force." All of these
demonstrate how misfortune can so weaken an individual's will that he feels compelled to fall in love with an evil mistress against all his natural inclinations.

Some other poems develop this theme even further by dramatizing complete usurpation of the speaker's will by an evil mistress. The poem "Hart oppressyd with desp'rat thought" (CCXXXIV), for instance, tells us that it is the speaker's "happeless lotte" that he "must consent" to all the indignities dictated by his lady's "crewell will"--a will that has replaced his own. Another poem, "For want of will, in wo I playne" (CCXLVIII), places the speaker in the totally subjugated position of a kept dog that "lacketh will to chage his place." As a "hounde that hath his keper lost," this speaker has lost all his will to his keeper. A third poem, "If waker care if sodayne pale Coulour" (XCVII), describes love under the administrator of misfortune as the condition of being without will:

She from my self now hath me in her grace;  
She hath in hand my Witt, my will, and all.

This speaker has transferred the principles of individual integrity from his own keeping; in doing so he has lost the capacity for self-direction. A final poem, constructed upon an extended quibble on the word "will," "I wyll althow I may not" (CXLIII), may be seen as a comprehensive study of the problem of the usurped will. The single verse, "My will is not my owne," epitomizes the lyric cry of anguish and utter helplessness when fortune has weakened one's will.
Consideration of the weakened will leads us to the fourth and final psychological effect produced by misfortune—a belief in one's own ineffectuality. Since those who believe in fortune and misfortune tend to be pragmatists who evaluate personal success in terms of attaining definite goals, failure to attain these goals is often interpreted as personal failure. The speaker who finds his utilitarian self-image shattered by unsympathetic fortune often turns to despair. His ultimate criterion for truth is individual experience, limited by his own perimeters, as opposed to more universal experience; therefore, individual failure is perceived as an indication that his spirit is worthless and his efforts are ineffectual.

The rondeau "What vaileth trouth? or, by it, to take payn?" (II) illustrates this belief in personal ineffectuality; the speaker attempts to resolve all his intellectual and emotional problems in a purely practical way, accepting only functional tests as a means of determining what is true. He rejects absolutist norms of behavior--such as those offered by orthodox Christianity--because they have failed him in specific instances. Furthermore, he rejects the demanding paths of truth, steadfastness and justice because "all alike, where rueleth crafines/Rewarded is boeth fals, and plain." In other words, traditional values are useless when fortune pays no attention to them. With material success as his sole criterion, he perceives virtue not as a spiritual asset but as a practical handicap, for
he observes proverbially:

Sonest he spedeth, that moost can fain;
True meanyng hert is had in disdayn.

If success depends upon fabrication and falsehood, he
reasons, then all his virtuous efforts have been self-
defeating. He then abandons these general observations
to reveal his specific problem in terms of his own and
virtue's inaffectuality:

But, for to love, lo, suche a maisteres,
Whose crueltie nothing can refrayn,
What vaileth trouth?

As supported by the rondeau form this closing verse, a
word for word repetition of the opening phrase, indicates
the circularity of reasoning that has trapped the speaker:
if he begins with the supposition that truth is worthless,
his conclusion must inevitably reinforce his initial pess-
simism. He interprets his experience under misfortune to
mean that all positive human values are undercut and that
all his efforts are similarly doomed to failure. The
rhetorical question, "What vaileth . . . ," keynotes this
thematic ineffectuality.

Similar statements that nought availeth can be seen
in a number of poems. In "I have sought long with sted-
fastnes" (LXIX), the speaker commences with the attitude of
defeat:

I have sought long with stedfastnes
To have had some ease of my great smert,
But nought availeth faithfulnes
To grave within your stony hert.

Here faithfulness instead of truth is under attack, but as
before the speaker employs purely pragmatic criteria to evaluate worth in a world he believes to be dominated by fortune. In this world love is "happe and hit or els hit not, /As vncertain as is the wynde," and his mistress's greatest pleasure is to hear her suitor cry out in pain—he naturally hesitates to prescribe the exercise of virtue as a remedy. He does not bother to overcome the limitations of his individual experience for a more complete overview but resorts to typical descriptive resignation. Since "fansy rueleth, tho right say nay," he must discard his virtuous efforts as useless, and therefore, valueless. Another speaker faced with similar failure in the poem "Processe of tyme worketh such wounder" (LXXXII) enlarges the scope of ineffectuality: "Nought helpeth tyme, humblenes, nor place." From the outset he feels that all individual efforts, his own included, are destined to fail because the evil dispensation of fortune is stronger than and antagonistic towards such efforts. And a final poem, "Gyve place all ye that doth reioise" (CCXVI), simply offers these disturbing queries:

What vaylith trothe or stedfastness
Or still to serue without repreffe?
What vaylith faithe or gentilnesse,
Where crueltie dothe raine as chefe?

He begs the answers to these questions by the implicit attitude that unsuccessful virtue is worthless virtue: this attitude begets frustration and feeds from the frustration it begets. After elaborating upon his miserable
ineffectuality, he comments, "I like yt not."

This simple comment reveals frustration as well as dis-like. When fortune frowns, there is no remedy because destiny is irreversible. Thus we return to the opening of this chapter with insight gained from analysis of the poems of misfortune. We have examined first some psychological defense mechanisms designed to cope with the personal failures produced by misfortune, and second some psychological effects of misfortune. In sum, we have examined the frustrated, unquiet mind.

In this mind the flexibility ordinarily required to solve problems and adapt to adverse circumstances is missing. Chronic misfortune has produced the fixated response of blaming fortune for everything that goes wrong. The typical speaker in the poems included in this chapter finds that frustration leads immediately to resignation; he resigns the field to his antagonist—fortune and its agents—with the self-justification that he has no other choice.

In the following chapter we will consider poems in which the speaker does not resign the field. This new speaker assumes the attitude that since fortune chooses to challenge him, he can in turn choose to challenge fortune. In marked contrast to the response of resignation, this new speaker refuses to flee misfortune or shirk responsibility; rather he confronts frustration with psychological flexibility and strength of purpose. He feels that, as a free man, he can exercise the option of free choice to oppose whatever
frustrations he might encounter. Fortune, viewed from this new perspective, does not control man's responses; instead, fortune stimulates confrontation between itself and man--two equals.
CHAPTER IV

Every man is the architect of his own fortune.
--Appius Claudius Caecus

CONFRONTING FORTUNE

In the last two chapters we examined poems that spoke of a world under fortune's control. The very use of the preposition "under"—frequently employed in these poems—illustrates metaphorically that fortune, for good or evil, lies above mortal understanding and reach. This metaphorical conceptualization remained constant while the sympathetic quality of fortune's visitation differed in poems of the two preceding chapters. Poems in the second chapter implicitly or explicitly depicted fortune as the only possibility for happiness in a troubled world: the speaker in these poems placated fortune and offered ritual petitions accompanied by substantiating claims to fortune as if he were a devotee of some supernatural deity. Poems under study in the third chapter assumed the same basic relationship between man and fortune—that of inferior to superior—but gave a uniformly sinister potential to fortune. Consequently the speakers' attitudes shifted with their perspectives as obsequious sychophancy became abject resentment towards unwarranted persecution. In sum,
poems in both these chapters expressed attitudes that, while divergent in their positive and negative tendencies, resulted directly from speakers's awareness of being constantly under fortune's sway.

In contrast, the poems under examination in the present chapter manifest a radical shift in consciousness and a radical alteration of world view. To put it simply the representative speaker in these poems confronts fortune as another earthly phenomenon; he does not look up to a beneficent or malicious fortune, enthroned in the heavens. The key word in this new attitude is confrontation, a word that signifies a bringing together face to face, an active opposition between equals. Dethroned from its residence up in the stars above man's understanding, fortune is confronted as opportunity, circumstance, or limitation depending on whether man sees fortune as favorable, neutral, or unfavorable. In any of these cases, the power of determination—the power that orders the future—is not exercised solely by either man or fortune. Within the situation of confrontation, the power of determination lies somewhere between the two forces. The metaphorical epigraph to this chapter may serve to clarify this relationship. If man is the architect of his fortune, he must depend upon the specifications of the raw material available when he designs the edifice of his life—that raw material, adaptable or obstinate, is fortune. Terms like destiny, chance and lot—terms that communicated fatalistic power in poems of the previous chapters—are now
weaker because man has gained strength. Previously these
terms conveyed the belief that the architectural raw mater-
ials determined the final shape of the building; now they
signify the "given" of the world and admit the shaping
vision of an architect. According to this more humanistic
attitude, man's accomplishments vary in direct proportion
to his skill as an architect, confronting the raw material
at hand and straining the perimeters of possibility.

The ideal of self-reliance also distinguishes poems
in this chapter from those in previous chapters. No longer
does man maneuver to shift the blame for failure onto a
petulant goddess; the defiant integrity inherent in the
notion of confrontation prohibits recourse to such excuses
that run counter to the ideal self-reliance. At times the
speaker may achieve his purpose, and at times fortune may
prove too strong for him; in either case, the degree of
success or failure depends in part on the speaker's effort
and perseverance. His sense of worth and acknowledgement
of responsibilities, not a change in fortune's existence in
his life, differentiates his attitude from those expressed
in chapters two and three.

These general observations can be brought to bear
upon the poem "It was my choyse, yt was no chaunce" (CXCI). From the outset the speaker indicates his unwillingness to
shift the blame for consequences onto fortune; indeed, he
uses words that make his admission of responsibility more
boast than admission:
It was my choyse, yt was no chaunce,
That brought my hart in others holde.

Forthright and direct, these words convey with economic precision the essential situation of confrontation between man and fortune, between choice and chance. Love's field provides a particularly revealing battlefield for this confrontation. Even though his heart has suffered in his relationship with an unkind mistress, he continues to focus upon his own burden of responsibility. Furthermore, he uses the issue of free choice as the strongest argument in his favor for convincing his mistress to relent:

Syms I ytt bownd where ytt was ffree,
Me thynkes, ywys, of Ryght yt shold Acceptyd be.

In other words, he feels that his lady should take into account his good intentions and the depth of his commitment to her--freely made--before she rejects him. Just as the passive voice is more suited to the speaker who feels hopelessly overwhelmed by fortune, the proclamation of the active voice ("I ytt bownd") is more suited to the speaker who takes the initiative by forcing the issue in confrontation. When she re-evaluates her attitude towards his suit she will be compelled to make her decision on a more informed basis because he has consistently drawn attention to his belief in the necessity of informed free choice.

Besides free choice, he also focuses upon justice in his argument. He insists that only his side of the issue is "Ryght." However, the conscientious thoroughness of his
persuasive method dictates that he include the argument of
the opposition. He is, he maintains, in the right, unless
"fortune hath the powere/All Ryght of love for to abuse."
The logical basis for this reasoning bears study: since
justice enforces a system of rewards and punishments
with regard to merit whereas fortune dispenses rewards and
punishments capriciously, fortune is capable of undermining
justice if fortune actually possesses the power. Fortune
therefore poses a serious threat to his plea for justice; so
to convince his lady that right is the only acceptable an-
swer, he develops the case of fortune possessing the power
to abuse justice to absurd conclusions. One might as well
"trust to chaunce and go by gesse," he concludes, if un-
certainty reigns supreme in this world. The only appeal
remaining in such a world is to "fantasy," but fantasy is
precisely the shifting foundation of psychological insecurity
that one wishes to avoid.

He rescues justice and his lady from this circular
trap by envisioning a more complex alternate world order in
which both justice and fortune can co-exist:

To fantasy pertaynys to chose;
All thys I knowe, for fantasy
Ffurst vnto love dyd me Induse;
But yet I knowe as stedefastly
That yff love haue no faster knott
So nyce a choyse slyppes sodenly--
Yt lastyth nott.

This statement is a compromise, refining both the speaker's
initial assertion that there is no chance inherent in the
process of choice and the contrasting world view which
claims that everything happens by chance without choice. Experience teaches him that to the extent that an individual makes clear plans, knows what he is doing, is guided by his expectations and the risks involved, and moves steadfastly towards his goals, that individual is making a cognitive choice; but to the extent that an individual must operate in a world not of his own making with an intellect influenced by emotions, that individual is also making an accidental, impulsive and irrational choice. Neither of the two aspects can be denied existence. Specifically he is telling his lady that one can fall in love on the dual basis of both choice (selecting fine moral character in one's partner) and chance (being enticed by facial features and mannerisms). Therefore, he can rescue both his lady and justice from the dilemma of a world of total fantasy because, although chance provides some of the important attractions to love, only moral commitment can make love lasting. Of course, the fact that love lasts—as emphasized in the tag to this stanza—is the ultimate criterion for determining that love is meaningful; justice lasts in spite of fortune's alterations.

Having led his lady down the path of his carefully laid out argument, he then advises her to join him in making that just and lasting commitment to love:

Fansi doth change, fortune ys fayne,
Both these to plesse, the ways ys strange;
Therefore me thyntes best to prevayle,
Ther ys no way that ys so Just
As trowgh to lede, tho tother fayle,
And therto trust
In other words, he is insisting that with choice as the fundamental tool for a moral life and truth as the guiding principle, justice must prevail. Even occasional failures do not invalidate these ideals, he maintains, because life's meaning does not depend wholly upon material success. His moral is clear: prevail along the straight and steadfast ways, and avoid the ways that are strange to live life in the best manner. His application for this moral is also clear: if his lady will subscribe to this ethical philosophy, then she must necessarily accept his love and reciprocate in kind. His interpretation of truth and justice demands such a decision.

In summary, "It was my choysse" illustrates four aspects basic to man's confrontation with fortune. First of all, the freedom of choice issue is emphasized. Freedom to decide between two or more alternative options (the complex relation of choice to fancy in this poem may serve as an example) enables man to help shape his fortune. A second aspect of confrontation is rhetorical sophistication. When fortune's fatalistic myths are debunked, the ritual language associated with those myths is also debunked; consequently, a speaker must search his own inner resources to express his opposition to fortune and to persuade others to join him. This rhetorical expertise is manifested in the convincing argument and blunt manner of saying what "me thynkes best" in the poem "It was my choysse." A third aspect of confronting fortune is the speaker's patience. Patience is an active moral virtue, not passive
resignation, employed in response to fortune's obstacles. The prolonged past "sufferaunce" for a purpose in the poem "It was my choys" illustrates this patient attitude. And a fourth aspect of confronting fortune is invoking justice. As the speaker in "It was my choys" invokes the principle of justice when he insists upon right, others who confront their fortune oppose the systematic plan of justice to the amorphous vagaries of fortune. This chapter will consider each of these four aspects in turn.

Therefore, our initial area of concern involves freedom of choice. The motivational dispositions inherent in conscious choice are complex but usually identifiable when the psychological implications of poetic statements are examined. When a speaker knows what he wants, knows the efforts needed to overcome obstacles, and knows the satisfaction that achievement will bring, he can make educated decisions to forward his goals. Freedom of choice is absolutely essential if he is truly to confront fortune on equal terms. With all the purposeful behavior and strength of will he can muster, the typical speaker of the poems under study in this chapter is prepared to make a personal commitment to abide by his freely made decision. He is willing to face fortune's risks because he is confident that he will succeed in reaching his level of aspiration. As in the poem already discussed, fancy may set the stage for his dramatic conflict with fortune by erecting unexpected, formidable obstacles to the fulfillment of his
purpose, but his primary concern lies with his own ability to perform his freely chosen role. And the performance of this role depends upon his degree of commitment and his sense of responsibility.

Perhaps the sanctity of his commitment is what the speaker who confronts fortune takes most seriously. Whatever else may alter under fortune's influence, a vow must remain lasting and binding. One who chooses freely equates his worth as an individual with the worth of his ability to remain true to his choice; if a commitment is frivolously broken, then he feels himself less a person. The sanctity of vow receives treatment in many of Wyatt's poems; two instances suffice to make the point clear. The speaker in the poem "As power and wytt wyll me Assyst" (CLXXXVIII) phrases his commitment to love simply:

Myn eye and hart agreythe in one 
Hathe chosyn yow only Alone 
To be my joy or elles my mone.

In sixteenth century parlance (especially evident in later sonnet sequences) the eye is used as a symbol of the entrance of love impulses to the heart; the heart is the internal seat of feeling, understanding, and thought. When both organs agree on a particular choice, the person's commitment is total regardless of the consequences--joy or sorrow. He makes his total commitment clear in words that remind one of the Scriptural act of faith, "Thy will be done":

Ffor as ye lyst my wyll ys bent 
In euer thyng to be content 
To serve in love tyll lyff be spent.
His eye and heart reveal his sense of commitment; yet there are those like the lady in the poem "And if an Iye may save or sleye" (XCIII) who pervert the conduit function of the eye by dissembling. In this particular instance, the male speaker feels called upon to warn her that flirtatious glances are products of free choice, not strokes of chance as she would have it:

But I your freende shall take it thus,
Syns you wol soo, as stroke of chaunce;
And leve furder for to discus
Wither the stroke did sticke or glaunce;
But scouse who canne, let him avaunce
Dissembled lokes; but for my parte
My Iye must still bitray my harte.

In other words, because her commitment is superficial, she can feign a pledge and then justify breaches of promise as mere chance occurrences beyond her power to correct. However, his highly developed sense of integrity, stemming from his total commitment, precludes such shoddy excuses: he honors his vow so completely that his eye cannot refrain from revealing the truth in his heart. Significantly, this poem closes on a note of moral prescription with the advice that the lady abandon dishonesty for the better task of "helping trowth stedfast to goo." When she makes this free choice, she can join in his commitment and cease worrying that her eyes will betray her falseness.

Some other poems go even further in illustrating that commitment to one's freely made choice is more important than any other consideration. To the betrayed love in "Spight hath no powre to make me sadde" (CCXIX), for example,
"Yt doth suffice" that he keeps his word even though his mistress abandons her faith. Similarly the lover in "Fforget not yet the tryde entent" (CCIII) forwards his proven intentions and "stedfast faythe yet neuer movyd" as evidence of how well he honors his commitments. A third poem "Though I my self be bridilled of my mynde" (XXVII) emphasizes the seriousness of this principle by transforming the light social conversation in the Petrarchan original into a jarring psychological poem of introspection. Wyatt has his speaker point out that neither mental constraints, disruptive desires, nor fortune can remove the responsibilities incurred by free choice:

If thou seke honour to kepe thy promes,  
Who may the hold, my hert, but thou thy self vnbynd?

This statement evinces real strength of purpose: strength to honor a commitment, strength to persevere with fortitude, strength to proceed with integrity. When the speaker gathers together all these inner forces, he concludes:

Sigh then no more, syns no way man may fynde  
Thy vertue to let, though that frowerdnes  
Of ffortune me holdeth.

Certainly, he admits, fortune's frowardness may produce discomfort and discord, but "tyme, trought and love" have more lasting significance; therefore he determines to abide by his choice notwithstanding vigorous opposition. He would agree with the speaker in "Tho of the sort ther be that ffayne" (CLXIX) who tells his mistress:

Tho chaunse hathe powere to chaunge thy love,  
That all by chaunce ther wyll dothe gyd,
Suche chaunce may not my hart remove,
For I by choise my selfe haue tryed;
And not by chaunce.

In short this is the difference between men of choice and
men of chance.

Choice, then, is the essential tool employed by
speakers who confront fortune in the poems under examination
in this chapter. But choice is a two-edged tool: it bol-
sters individual freedom by giving man certain options
within situational limitations, but it also places respon-
sibilities squarely on the shoulders of one who exercises
this option. So we find speakers like the one in the
sinewy alliterative poem "Dobell, dyuerse, soleyn and
straunge" (CXXX) saying first, "Thancked be fortune of
frendly chaunce" for offering favorable opportunity in
which to use the power of choide; then such a person will
conclude by acknowledging personal responsibility by
saying "of my myshappe I thanck my self." The speaker
realizes that fortune's opportunity, while welcome, will
not insure success by itself; one must use opportunity
properly. Hannibal, says the speaker in "Off Cartage he
that worthie warrier" (LXXXI), is an example of a man who
fails to use opportunity properly. This translation from
Petrarch describes Hannibal as one that could "overcome,
but cowld not vse his chaunce"; likewise the speaker him-
self fails in love:

And I like wise off all my long indeuor
The sherpe conquer tho fortune did avance
Cowld not it vse: the hold that is gyvin ouer
I vnpossest.
Unable to pursue fortune's advantage, the speaker realizes that his whole life "hangith in balaunce"—the consequence of choice. Defined in these poems as the use one makes of fortune, choice is indeed the weight that determines the final balance on life's scales. Choice is the essential tool for confrontation with fortune.

Now that we have identified this tool we examine our second topic—the stylistic use of that tool or the rhetorical stance of sophistication. Quite simply rhetorical sophistication is a means to success when one confronts his fortune. Since such men must rely primarily upon their own abilities, they tend to develop rhetorical skills commensurate with their self-reliance. Furthermore, they use these skills to take advantage of opportunities. If the situation demands it, such a person can be witty, blunt, humble or arrogant; he can spin elaborate conceits or reduce an argument to barest essentials; he designs all his rhetorical skill towards making the best out of his fortune.

The persuasive power of dalliance, for example, is evident in a number of poems in which a speaker confronts fortune. The poem "It burneth yet, alas, my hartes desire" (CCLV) illustrates how easily "hartes be wonne by loue, request, and mone"—especially request and moan. As a model for seduction dialogue, this poem reveals the operations of a lover schooled in the rhetorical arts of persuasion. Although his lady expresses great reluctance to being wooed,
he is able to transform her negative resolve, first into a reply of probing hypothesis ("If I sayd yea"), and then into definitive acceptance. The ease with which he accomplishes this difficult feat is a tribute to his verbal facility. He refuses to take no for an answer; as a lady puts it in "The losse is small to lese such one" (CCXVIII):

The losse is samll to lese such one
That shrynckith for a slendr maye;
And wyt thei lak that wolde mak mone
Tho all suche peakes ware wipid awaye.

The success lies in the suitor's wit. One who understands the art of seduction knows the value of persistence and wit; he is never discouraged by refusal. His purpose is to confront fortune and defeat it.

Two of Wyatt's adaptations of Serafino's strambotti show in greater detail the creative persuasion of sophisticated rhetoric. "Alas madame for stelyng of a kysse" (XLIV), the first of these poems, opens with questions deliberately intended to deflate the seriousness with which the lady regards a stolen kiss. Wyatt's "opening, with its added exclamation and recasting in the interrogative mood, is more dramatic than the original, and his conclusion more concentrated and witty."

These changes in Serafino's texture show Wyatt's interest is more intensely directed toward rhetorical effects. After the speaker elicits his lady's offended response to his stolen kiss, he cleverly offers her this suggestion for revenge:

Then revenge you, and the next way is this:
An othr kysse shall have my lyffe endid.
For to my mowth the first my hert did suck,  
The next shall clene oute of my brest it pluck.

With this type of tortured logic, Wyatt translates Serafino into the beginnings of an English tradition of wit that culminated with Donne's psychological precision. No less striking, the second strambotti "What nedeth these thretning wordes and wasted wynde?" (XLVIII) also deals with emotional over-reaction to a certain theft in love's game. Equivocal terms and phrases suggest that the theft might possibly be that of the lady's virginity until a glove is mention in the final verses. Thus language as well and literal meaning combine to satirize her solemn concern over relative trivialities. With superb confidence the speaker defends his action and offers to put the case before impartial judgment: "Let love be judge, or els whome next we meit." This zeugma, Wyatt's own addition to his source, simultaneously presents the matter to either the most revered of all judges or a total stranger—in this case the reader of the poem. Like a skilled barrister, he concludes summarily with convincing charm and wit:

She toke from me an hert and I a glove from her;  
Let vs se nowe, if th'one be woroure th'othre.

In both these poems, the persuasive rhetoric of dalliance reveals the argumentative edge held by one who confronts fortune on his own linguistic terms for seductive purposes.

But seductive suitors can also adopt a humble stance in their argument. "Defamed gyltynes by sylens vnkept"
(CXXVII), for instance, employs the stance of total honesty: the speaker admits his fault immediately by rejecting all innocent pretence. Honesty, in this case, proves to be the best policy. According to his strategy, admission of guilt coupled with firm amendment to avoid future transgressions is his best character defense:

Gylty, I graunt that I haue don amys.  
Shall I neuer do soo agayne, forguye me this.

His disarming humility makes it difficult for his lady to take offense. In addition he increases this difficulty by using the same argument employed by Christ in defense of the woman taken in adultery. The speaker's version of "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone" reads:

Accept myne Excuse for this Offens,  
And spare not to refuse me your presens, 
Onles ye perceyue ye do refrayne  
From doyng amys, wyle I Lyue agayne.

This tactic—offensive honesty as an argument—defends his character more effectively than had he attempted to conceal his wrongdoing. Honesty also proves to be the best policy in a lesser poem "Dryuyn to Desyre, a drad also to Dare" (CXXIX). Trapped between desire for his mistress and fear that she will refuse his proposal, the speaker in this poem takes advantage of his own uncertainty and insecurity by formulating this humble plea: "take me as I am,/Though Dowbell in Dedes, a inward perfitt man." It is difficult to imagine an impassioned plea capable of rendering external duplicity in a more favorable light than this one. Indeed both these poems demonstrate how a speaker who is skilled
rhetorically can translate his weaknesses into strengths as he confronts fortune with the purpose of winning the love of his chosen lady.

However, rhetorical sophistication can be employed to rid oneself of old loves as well and conquer new loves. Thus we find the speaker in "To Rayle or geste ye kno I vse it not" (CCXI) sloughing off his deceitful lady with effective, witty sarcasm:

Your fayning wayis as yet forget them not,
But like rewarde let other lovers have:
That is to saye, for seruis true and faste,
To long delaies and changing at the laste.

In effect he hopes that she will do unto others as she has done unto him—-he simultaneously indicts her for her deceit as he puts a curse on her future lovers. Another speaker in "What shulde I saye" (CCXV) also refuses bluntly to be deceived; and so he decides to "forsake/One so unkind" by employing this verbal dilemma:

Can ye saye naye?
But you saide
That I allwaye
Shulde be obeide;
And thus betraide
Or that I wiste,
Fare well, unkiste!

According to the terms of this sophisticated piece of rhetoric, if his unkind lady refuses to let him go she is disobedient and therefore deserving of abandonment; but if on the other hand she obeys his wishes she still loses him. No matter how she responds she is left "unkiste" while her ex-lover effectively controls the situation. And a third
speaker in "Thy promese was to loue me best" (CXCIV) also refuses to spend his faith in vain upon a faithless woman. He tells her "playn" that she has lost the game by employing her own broken promises against her:

sens to change thou dost deylt
And that thy ffayth hath tayn his fflyghtes,
As thou desaruest I shall the quynt,
I promese the, I promese the.

In contrast to his lady, he will keep this promise. In each of these poems speakers do not permit fortune's fatalistic hand to prolong undesirable relationships; on the contrary they believe that by confronting fortune they can find emotional release and some measure of control in their own lives. The rhetorically sardonic farewells accomplish both these aims.

One should not assume, however, that it is easy to be rhetorically direct where emotions are involved, or as above to "tel the playn." Wyatt uses some of his poems to examine and comment upon the inherent problems in using rhetoric to confront fortune. The speaker in "As power and wytt wyll me Assyst" (CLXXXVIII), for example, presents us with this version of the problem along with his personal solution:

Sum in wordes mucche love can fayn
And sum for wordes gyve wordes agayn;
Thus wordes for wordes in wordes Remayn,
And yet at last wordes do optayn
Evyn as ye lyst.

To crave in words I wyll exchew
And love in dede I wyll ensew.

For this man words are obstacles to, rather than media of,
communication because they tend to be self-perpetuating substitutions for the deeds they should foster; he prefers to avoid verbal entanglements by communicating unequivocally though his activities. Another speaker concerned with the problem of words in "Through out the world, if it wer sought" (CCLVIII) agrees by saying:

Through out the world, if it wer sought,
Faire wordes ynough a man shall finds;
They be good chepe, they cost right nought;
Their substance is but onely winde;
But well to say and so to mene,
That sweet acord is seldom sene.

Language, he feels, is too often mere ornamentation, concealing more than revealing—they have significance only in a severely limited and self-enclosed aesthetic realm. To rejuvenate the language, to bring words back to their original contact with the tangible world (the sweet accord), one must write poems such as these which confront the problem in words made new and meaningful. Both these speakers examine a rhetorical problem by using rhetorical principles in their examination, both confront fortune's traps by discriminating between words that convey personal commitment and words that are empty. The speaker in "Thou hast no faith of him that hath none" (XIX) learns from experience that such discrimination is an essential ability for one who seeks to confront fortune when he says "I perceive I lacked discretion/To fasshion faith to wordes mutable."

In order to avoid this deceit produced by mutable words, one lover-poet in "Me list no more to sing" (CCX)
shows one way of controlling words. He confronts his fortune of being misinterpreted by semantically narrowing the range of possible meanings for his songs. When he sang previously, "men dede my songis mistake" because

My songes were to defuse,
Theye made folke to muse;
Therefore, me to excuse,
Theye shall be song more plaine.

This intended plainness results in an unequivocally explicit poetic argument for gathering rosebuds while ye may. The speaker then steps back from his poem to comment that its straightforward approach is subject to misinterpretation only by obstinate or ignorant people. His tone is direct and homely:

Yf this be undre miste,
And not well playnlye wyste,
Undrestonde me who lyste;
For I reke not a bene,
I wott what I doo meané.

The idiom is plain, native Anglo-Saxon (reminiscent of the idiom spoken by certain Chaucerian characters) with insistent bluntness. Because this speaker is a poet—an author of words—he seeks to bring his own words into sweet accord with their commonly accepted meanings, independent of equivocation.

On the other side of verbal exchanges, the speaker as recipient of words authored by another can demand candid, unequivocal formulations from the author. Typically this confrontation takes place within the context of a hedging love relationship. A good example may be found
in "Madame, withouten many wordes" (XXXIV) in which a lover expresses his consternation with his lady's continued verbal vagueness. Therefore he decides to broach the subject plainly:

Madame, withouten many wordes,
Ons I am sure ye will or no;
And if ye will, then leve your bordes,
And vse your wit and shew it so.

While he clearly campaigns for an affirmative rejoinder to this request, he also indicates a business-like willingness to accept any response. Fortune is defeated by effective confrontation, he reasons, as long as the response is definitive and not hidden beneath the mask of hedging words:

Yf it be yea, I shalbe fayne;
If it be nay, frendes as before;
Ye shal an othre man obtaine,
And I myn owne and yours no more.

The goal he seeks is self-control—to be "myn owne." A second example of this demand for clarity may be seen in the urbane attitude exhibited in "Lo! how I seke and sew to haue" (CXCIX). The speaker expresses great desire to "bryng thys doute to good or bad" with a direct answer to his suit. Too often he has been put off with ambiguous answers; now he wishes to terminate this doubt regardless of the personal consequences.

To lyue in sorows allways sad,
I lyke not so to lynger fforthe;
Hap evyll or good I shall be glad
To take that comes as well in worth.

Lingering doubt is so debilitating that we can feel the
relief in his voice when he says, "Sone owt of doute I shall be sure." And last among the recipients of words is the speaker in "I abide and abide and better abide" (CCXXVII) who also seeks the relief of being sure about his future. At present he is trapped within airy words, "nother obtayning nor yet denied"; there is no mistaking his discontent:

Aye me! this long abidyng
Semithe to me as who sayethe
A prolonging of a dieng dethe
Or a refusing of a desyrd thing:
Moche ware it bettre for to be playne,
Then to saye abide and yet shall not obtayne.

All of these speakers seek security in their confrontation with fortune; all demand the same unequivocal response that they would issue if they were in a position to do so.

This last poem suggests, although negatively, our third topic in this chapter—patience as a means of confronting fortune. Our last topic, rhetorical sophistication, is a stylistic device; our first topic, choice, is a tool; patience is a moral stance.

At the outset we should distinguish true patience, an active moral virtue, from passive abiding as depicted above. Abiding another's whims, far from being a confrontation with fortune, is enslavement to fortune. True patience is the attendant of wisdom, not the handmaid of passion; true patience is recognized through its cause and purpose. To illustrate we quote from one of Saint Augustine's minor moral treatises, De patientia, in which
the word patience is derived from the Latin root "patiendo" or suffering. Augustine provides a basic moral definition for the term:

The patience of man which is good, praiseworthy, and deserving the name of virtue is said to be that by which we endure evils with equanimity, the good through which we arrive at the better. By their unwillingness to suffer evil, the impatient do not effect their deliverance from it; instead, they bring upon themselves the suffering of more grievous ills. But the patient, who prefer to bear wrongs without committing them rather than to commit them by not enduring them, both lessen what they suffer in patience and escape worse thing by which, through impatience, they would be submerged. In yielding to evils that are brief and passing, they do not destroy the good which is great and eternal.²

This, true patience, is not mere endurance for the sake of passion like the above instance of abiding, Augustine would say, because all who suffer do not share in patience in the same way as all who know share in knowledge. Suffering for improper goals illustrates fortune's dominance, but suffering for self-control illustrates genuine confrontation with fortune. True suffering patience is the choice, for example, of the steadfast speaker in "Synce loue wyll nedes that I shall loue" (CCLIII):

    Yea, though fortune her pleasant face,  
    Should shew, to set me vp a loft;  
    And streight, my wealth for to deface,  
    Should wraithe away, as she doth oft;  
    Yet would I styll my self apply  
    To serue and suffer paciently.

His true patience exhibits strength of purpose and self-determination under fortune's duress; the exercise of such patience is a prime means of confronting fortune.

However, prior to the decision to exercise patience
one who wishes to confront fortune must establish two necessary prerequisites—taken here from "Desyre to Sorow doth me constrayne" (CXXVI)—first, one must be certain that "there ys no remedy playne,/But paciens" for a particular problem created by fortune, and second, that "suffering to hartes desyre ys gyde/By pacyens." In other words, patience is a last resort to attain a proper goal. When one discovers insurmountable obstacles erected by fortune, one wisely refuses to "stryve agaynst the tyde" in the hope that the great and eternal good will survive the temporary rise and fall of the waters. By recourse to this strategy one hopes to achieve his "hole intent/Through paciens."

These themes are sounded in four of Wyatt's poems—XXIX, XL, CXG, and CCXXIX—commonly labeled his patience group. United by the common vision of patience as therapeutic remedy for fortune's infections and by a shared metrical format, these four poems are sometimes attributed to a single source—Serafino's "Canzona de la Patientia." But aside from a few verbal resemblances, Serafino's and Wyatt's "grumblings against misfortune are differently directed." Where Serafino complains against politically evil times when the wicked flourish and the innocent suffer, Wyatt focuses on more personal love experiences whose reference to society comes only through implication and extension. In Wyatt's vision of patience, confronting fortune is put in very personal, sometimes intimate, terms
in which each man is alone with only his own moral courage and fortitude.

The first of the patience poems, "Patience, though I have not" (XXXIX), shows that patience is a calculated choice when other options are closed. The speaker reasons

I must of force, god wot,
Forbere my moost desire;
For no ways can I fynde
To saile against the wynde.

Again we see those two qualities that make patience a viable choice: first, since "there is no redresse" only patience will do; and second, patience should be effective:

For fortune is my foo;
Patience must be the charme
To hele me of my woo.

The second patience poem, "Patiens for my devise" (XL), is followed in the Devonshire manuscript by a notation that relates it back to the previous poem: "patiens tho I had nott the &c/to her that saide this patiens was not for her but that the contrarye of myne was most metists for her pourposse." The former poem employs patience to solve an internal dilemma, the latter employs patience as psychological sublimation for social difficulties. When the hand of fortune causes the obstinate lady in the second poem

Perchaunce sometyme to fall:
Paciens, then take him vp
And drynk of paciens cupp.

Even though she might not accept patience under normal circumstances, she can readily understand the social advantages of being able to brush off one's gown after such a fall so
that "no man knowe your payne." Before moving on to the remainder of the patience group, we should note that the political poem "Caesare, when that the traytour of Egipt" (III) vividly illustrates how such patient sublimation of feelings can both thwart fortune and soothe one's mind.

And Hannyball eke, when fortune him shitt Clene from his reign and from all his intent, Laught to his folke whome sorrowe did torment, His cruell dispite for to disgorge and qwit.

In Hannibal's case as in the lady's, patience can indeed be used as a charm to heal fortune's woes.

The last two poems from the patience group are not so intimately connected as the first two, but the same argument is put forth. "Patiens, for I have wrong" (CCXXIX) is spoken by a man who chooses to confront fortune with patience because nothing else is left him:

Patiens, for I have wrong
And dare not shew whereyn;
Patiens shalbe, my song,
Sins truthe can no thing wynne;
Patiens then for this fytte,
Hereafter comis not yette.

He feels that patience will bring him to his desire in time.

The speaker in the last of the patience poems, "Pacyence of all my smart" (CXC), agrees; he quickly analyzes his personal problem, then grasps onto patience as the only possible solution. Since "fortune ys tornyd awry; Pacyence must ese my hart":

Pacyence to be content
With froward fortunes trayn;
Pacyence to the intent
Sumwhat to sake my payn;
I see no Remedy
But suffer payently.
No other defense is available against fortune at this point; he "must take pacyence." Both these poems along with the others in the patience group perceive patience to be an active remedy to certain of fortune's obstacles. Patience is one way to mitigate pain and avoid being destroyed by unfavorable circumstances.

Another stance assumed in man's confrontation with fortune--our fourth and final topic in this chapter--is based upon the principle of justice. To review briefly, choice is the essential tool of confrontation; rhetorical sophistication is a stylistic stance; patience is a moral stance; and justice is a legal stance.

Justice is the categorical name for the profound belief that right and wrong exist and are identifiable. Where fortune exerts purely capricious influence over events, justice establishes systematic guidelines, formulated on the basis of distinguishable right and wrong, of deserved rewards and punishments. The speaker who assumes the stance of justice to confront fortune always recognizes this innate opposition between the two principles and uses that difference to his advantage by invoking justice's name in situations where agreements and cases of merit are involved.

Justice, especially as it pertains to individual merit, may be employed as a safeguard against the onslaught of fortune's agents: whim, slander, and rumor. Against whim, the speaker in "The knott that furst my hart dyd
strayn" (CLXXII) suggests several suitable punishments if he is seen false in any respect; on the other hand he urges that because of his unimpeachable faithfulness "off Ryght I shuld obtayne" the lady's favor. Justice must be applied uniformly, he implies, or not at all. While his song ends with humble submission to the lady's judgment, he leaves her with the clear understanding that she should choose the way of total justice rather than be controlled by fortune. So too, rendering love for love in the poem "Pas fourthe, my wontyd cries" (CLIX) is considered "my just reward"; and in the poem "Alas! dere herte, what happe had I" (CIX), any obstacle to reciprocatory love is viewed as a "great wrong." Right and wrong are illuminate as the two great polarities. Against another of fortune's agents, slander, the speaker in "Accusyd thoo I be without desert" (CXVI) demands that allegations of wrongdoing be proven or that all objection to his suit be dropped. Against a third of fortune's agents, rumor, the speaker in "Dysdaine me not without desert" (CCLXVI) urges his gullible mistress to disregard unsubstantiated charges when observed deeds contradict them. In all of these cases, justice is opposed to fortune.

In sum, justice is the plea for true desert—a phrase echoed throughout Wyatt's poetry. The poem "Perdy I sayd hytt nott" (CLVIII) is just such a plea, beginning with total denial that the speaker ever uttered words that were antagonistic to the vows of true love. To prove
his devotion, the speaker analyzes objectively the hypothesis that he is guilty; he finds this possibility so abhorrent that he suggests strict punishments—continuing pain, social shame, heavenly disfavor, exile, death, and decay. But since he is guiltless and suffers from the pressure of unwarranted allegations, he demands that justice be invoked to overturn the evils wrought by fortune's influence. His argument is easy to follow:

\[
\begin{align*}
Yf \ I \ be \ clere \ from \ thought, \\
Why \ do \ ye \ then \ complayn? \\
Then \ ys \ thys \ thynge \ but \ sough \ \\
To \ put \ me \ to \ more \ payn. \\
Then \ that \ that \ ye \ haue \ wrought \\
Ye \ must \ hyt \ now \ redresse; \\
Off \ ryght \ therfore \ ye \ ought \\
Such \ rygor \ to \ represse. \\
\end{align*}
\]

And as I haue deseryd, \\
So grant me now my hyer; \\
Ye kno I never swarvyd, \\
Ye never fownd me lyer.

Basically, as guilt merits punishment, so innocence merits restitution. The sense of conviction he conveys in this conclusion should help persuade his lady to reward his long and honorable service rather than put credence in vicious rumors she hears.

But she may ignore his persuasive argument if she wishes. Justice, if it is to be effective, must be subscribed to by both parties in any agreement. Without this shared belief, justice loses its all-inclusive systematic structure to fortune's formlessness. Nothing can prevent one from breaking a contractual agreement if that person wishes to circumvent the principles of justice.
An expostulation-and-reply pair of poems, CLI and CLII, illustrate this problem dramatically. The first poem, "Madame, I you requyere" (CLI), is a simple plea for justice. The speaker, relying on his implicit faith that one's word is given only with the understanding that it will be fulfilled, asks his lady to fulfill her word. "That promys ye dyd mak" is, for the speaker at least, an incontrovertible obligation to be met when time and place permit; he says that "yf your wordes be trewe,/ I must haue that I lake." But in the very act of using the conditional phrase "yf your wordes be trewe," one feels the speaker's emphasis is wavering. Although his main intent is probably straightforward statement, there exists an undercurrent of insecurity. The lady seizes on precisely that insecurity when she gives him her answer in "Your ffolyshe fayned hast" (CLII). She belittles his sense of urgency while she draws attention to his own focus upon the concept of words. At the point when she states "Your wordes in vayne ye wraste," she opens the possibility that words can be spoken sometimes to no fruitful purpose. Then she destroys the basis of his argument by declaring personal immunity to justice's principles: "No promys shall me bynd." Thus she removes love from its stable foundation upon justice by placing it upon fortune's shifting ground. And after this switch, she sloughs off the responsibility for her action to her persistent suitor:
Because ye thynck yt deue,
I spek that that I spake;
And this word shalbe trewe:
Ye get not that ye lacks.

Notwithstanding the popular saying that a woman has the prerogative to change her own mind at whim, the consequences of such a decision are grave. In truth, they undermine the entire system of justice. To put it plainly, she blames him for taking her word for granted, and then turns around to give her word again as if she had not already eroded its plausibility. She wavers with the wind if she has the right to extend and withdraw her word capriciously. He tries to confront fortune with justice; but she makes such confrontation a failure by invalidating justice's base.

In summary, we have seen in this chapter the attempt to confront fortune from a number of angles. We have examined choice as the basic tool for confrontation because choice implies a freedom from fortune's control. We have examined rhetorical sophistication as a most effective style with which to confront fortune: control over words and manner translates into power over fortune. We have examined patience as a remedy of last resort when fortune erects insurmountable obstacles. And last we have examined justice as a means of systematically undercutting fortune's caprice.

Significantly our study of the pair of poems on justice shows that personal failure and fortune's resurgence may attend any of these aspects of confrontation.
The failure of direct confrontation anticipates the subject of our next chapter. Confrontation never guarantees success because it is essentially the problematic conflict between two forces, either of which may emerge dominant. Certainly confrontation provides more possibility for success than passivity, but confrontation often proves unsatisfactory. In the next chapter, we will examine some poems that illustrate ways to insure personal success over the powers of fortune by rendering fortune impotent.
CHAPTER V

A change of fortune hurts a wise man no more than a change of the moon.

--Benjamin Franklin

THE CONSOLATION OF PHILOSOPHY

When Boethius, bitter over his unjust imprisonment, asks the creator why uncertain fortune should control our lives, Lady Philosophy comments that she is disturbed not so much by his being imprisoned as by his fatalistic attitude. ¹ Her point is that fortune does not control our lives without our consent. In the metaphysical scheme of this influential moral treatise, fortune has no real significance. Fortune's status is clearly defined by the speaker in Wyatt's "In faith I wot not well what to say" (XXIII):

Though thou Fortune me set for a wouneder
And sekest thy change to do me payn,
Mens myndes yet may thou not order,
And honeste, and it remain,
Shall shyne for all they clowyd rayn.

Fortune, in other words, can bestow and withdraw external things such as wealth and physical well-being; however, fortune cannot determine our mental attitude, cannot order our minds. In fact the reverse is true: our minds order fortune, or at least the extent to which fortune is a factor in our lives.

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Consequently, the attitude of the ordering mind towards fortune forms the basis for our critical analysis in this chapter. To recap briefly, poems examined in chapters two and three reveal an underlying world view that enthrones fortune as an omnipotent deity, somewhere beyond man's reach. Not only is fortune omnipotent, but she is also capriciously willful. When fortune is favorable (as in the poems of the second chapter) the speaker worships it and courts its favors; when unfavorable (as in the poems of the third chapter) the speaker curses it as an invidious demon as he tries desperately to avoid its wrath. For good or evil, therefore, fortune is held accountable for everything—damnable for misfortune, and laudable for good luck. As a corollary, man sees himself as a dependent being deprived of freewill: he is merely an innocent pawn carrying out supernatural dicta without being able to object. This deterministic attitude defines man and the poems he writes.

In the fourth chapter, however, this attitude changes. The poems illustrate a different world order in which fortune is dethroned from its heavenly heights to be replaced by a delicate balance of powers between man and fortune. Frowning or smiling agents of fortune with their issue-determining wheels disappear when man confronts his circumstances with self-reliance. Fortune descends into the realm of human possibility and man ascends into the realm of decision-making until both arrive at an even plane.
In this humanized world view, man is a responsible being who grapples with circumstances, uses opportunity, and recognizes limitations.

Poems in the present chapter continue this shift in the balance between man and fortune until man becomes dominant. Man now finds himself on an elevated level from which he looks down upon fortune. Men's minds and souls are on this level, an untouchable order of things that transcends the unsettling fortunes of daily living. This transcendence is a way to attain the state of quiet or peace.

To better understand the nature of this quiet, we need look only at Wyatt's humanistic treatise. This passage, already quoted in part from *The Quyete of Mynde*, defines mental calm in terms of opposition to fortune:

> it may be sensably parcyued/the playntfull vnquietnesse of the minde/scoldyng with fortune and casting away it self with wondering at other/& to ryse for toppresse it self/and the owne thynges. For of trouth it breketh maruelyously the constant & quyet state of the mynde/with hyer entent to stryue aboue the power to get any thing as to sayle with gretter sayles than proporcion/as whan hope shyneth neuer so lytell/promysing foliashly vnto our selfes vmmesur-able and great thynges/& than whan chaunce foloweth nat/we accuse wicked fortune and our desteny/whan rather we shulde dam our selfes of foly/as it were to be angry with fortune/that thou canst nat shote an arowe with a plou/or hunt an hare with an oxe/and that some cruell god shulde be agaynst them/that with vayn indeuour/hunt an hart with a dragge net/and nat that they attempt to do those impossibilytes/by their own madnesse and folysshnesse. Surely the cause of this errour/is the noughti loue of our self.²

Couched within this characteristically sixteenth-century syntactical rambling is some highly instructive moral
preaching together with homely anecdotes that make the lesson more palatable. The key point is that a constant and quiet state of mind may be maintained with integrity, reasonableness, and humility. Blaming misfortune for personal failure unsettles the mind and is as foolish as blaming improper tools for failure to perform tasks for which they are unsuitable. Ignoring fortune's hand in human affairs is one way to achieve a truly quiet mind.

The search for this elusive quiet is a theme in a number of Wyatt's poems. One speaker in "Ever myn happe is slack and slo in commyng" (XXX) despairs of ever finding his goal of "peace and quyetnes"; another in "Alas, poor man, what hap have I" (CLXXXV) thinks it his destiny "neuer to lyve in quiet Rest"; and a third in "Yf in the world ther be more wo" (LXXXIX) clearly believes that he is addressing an all-inclusive audience when he appeals to those "who list to lyve in quyetnes." The search for quiet also seems to involve people in all occupations. A satirist in "My mothers maydes when they did sowe and spynne" (CVI) describes how often men are deceived "in seking quyete liff"; a psalmist in "Rew on me, lord, for thy goodnes and grace" (CVIII, Ps 51) asks to be embraced "in quiete wonderfull"; and a courtier who detests corruption and insecurity pleads in "Stond who so list vpon the Slipper toppe" (CCXL) to "use me quiet without lette or stop." We will go into the varying conceptions of quiet later, but for now it is sufficient to note how pervasive this theme
is in Wyatt's poetry, and how important this psychological urge is to the individual.

By way of contextual definition, quiet of mind is a type of philosophical consolation, that is, the psychological consequence of a philosophic stance that enables one to rise above the vagaries of fortune. If one can make this ascent, one feels the superiority inherent in a heightened perspective. One no longer needs to confront fortune—either good or bad—because it is so much his inferior.

The poems under consideration in this chapter reflect three distinct consolatory philosophies that reveal this attitude of superiority to fortune. First, the wisdom of maturity illustrates insight gained through experience; second, stoicism (especially evident in the satires) illustrates an intellectual indifference to fortune; and third, Christianity (especially evident in the psalms) illustrates theological indifference to fortune. We will deal with each of these attitudinal stances in turn.

Maturity, the first of these stances, is the categorical term for accumulated wisdom attained through experiential growth. The speaker in a poem that manifests such wisdom is one who has come through, one who has learned life's lessons and is determined to heed them. More specifically, he is one who has achieved that perspective of chronological hindsight which permits one to
descant upon what he terms his "lost yeres," his "misspent" or "rekles youthe," his past "folly"—in short, that period when fortune exercised dominant control over his life. This perspective usually results in *ex post facto* judgment because it is the perspective of present wisdom looking down upon past ignorance. Such a perspective also produces a kind of psychological bifurcation within the speaker—a separation between self-present and self-past with unavoidable emotional detachment between the two. This detachment has a dual function: it is a buffer zone that allows the speaker to comment critically on his own faults with minimal pain, and it is a viewing lens that may distort the reality of his past life for self-protection. Consequently, we hear many pieces of proverbial wisdom. We must remember to be a sympathetic audience, for the proverbs of experience may be uttered by either a Polonius or a Lear. The poetic context of the proverbs rather than the proverbs themselves carry the weight of true or false wisdom.

In examining maturity as a stance of superiority to fortune, we may separate the path leading to wisdom into three stages. First, during the time prior to resolving his attitude, one ponders the problem in search of an answer. Second, at the moment of recognition, reflection upon the lessons of past experience supplies a philosophical solution. And third, after the philosophy of maturity has been thoroughly assimilated, one becomes
a teacher, instructing others to follow along the path to true wisdom.

The first of these chronological periods, that prior to finding the solution offered by maturity, is illustrated in "It may be good, like it who list" (XXI). From the outset the speaker's tone is problematic as he weighs the possibilities for hope against past disappointments:

It may be good, like it who list,
But I do doubt: who can me blame?
For oft assured yet have I myst,
And now again I fere the same.

On one side of his dilemma is his desire for a love relationship he has long sought; on the other is his fear that flirtatious words and glances are once again symptomatic of fortune's impending reversal. One side urges him on; the other urges retreat. In the body of the poem, he pictures himself as "imprisoned in libertes," unable to decide between these "two contraries." His concluding stanza, therefore, does not truly conclude anything. Rather it describes his anxious hesitancy to commit himself either to trust fortune again or to heed the cautioning voice of experience:

Assured, I doubt 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?
Nay, sir, In faith it were great folly.
And yet my lif thus I do wast:
For dreed to fall I stond not fast.

On the purely rational level, he understands that fortune's fickleness is most likely to entice him into love again;
but on the emotional level, he is strongly attracted towards this possibility for love. He knows that it would be great folly to trust in something that experience has proven untrustworthy, yet he remains trapped between acceptance and rejection. He is not yet prepared to adopt the stance of maturity fully.

Another poem about fortune and maturity that also comes to no definite resolution is "Myne olde dere En'mye, my froward master" (VIII), a debate between love's fortune and a matured speaker. The speaker testifies before Queen Reason how love "that turneth as a ball" conceals "bitterness" beneath its "fals swetenes"; in fact, he admits, this false love is so compelling that "when I was yonge I sett within his reigne." Iconographic details like the turning ball (see LVIII for comparison) together with his description of the amorous dance as "all erthely frailnes and vain pleasure" seem to relate love with fortune's sway. He further confesses that while this love was continually "whetting my youthely desyere," he set at nought/All othre thoughts, in this onely to spede." The general tenor of his remarks is accusatory. However his forensic opponent, Love, interprets this same evidence differently. Love maintains that the speaker's wisdom is essentially experiential, for "vertues he lerned in my great schoole." Thus while he is renouncing his youth as a time during which love's fortune misled him, Love is claiming praise for its role as teacher. In other words, says Love, the
adversity that brought pain also taught the speaker about
the vanity of earthly things. We the audience are left to
judge the relative merits of both interpretations in the
person of Queen Reason; but she defers judgment because,
we assume, each interpretation contains a portion of truth.
In effect there can be no final judgment. An undisputable
point, however, is that fortune is empty—this lesson can
be learned either by rejecting a wrongheaded period of one's
life or by embracing that period for purposes of instruction.

Recognizing this truth leads us to the second chronolog-
ical stage on the path to mature wisdom—the moment of
recognition. When one realizes that fortune deceives, that
moment is at hand. By way of illustration, we may examine
the sad statement of the speaker in "To my myshap alas I
fynd" (CLXXI):

To my myshap alas I fynd
That happy hap ys dangerus;
And fortune workyth but her kynd
To make the joyfull dolorus.
But all to late hyt comes in mynd
To wayle the want that made me blynd,
So often warnyd.

Common sense tells us that ill fortune is dangerous, but
only a special quality of experience can teach us to be-
ware the enticements of good fortune. The contention
that "happy hap ys dangerus," however, is not new with
Wyatt. Chaucer put it most succinctly in his translation
of Boethius when he wrote that the "amyable Fortune
desceyveth folk; the contrarie Fortune techeth." Wyatt's
speaker has been deceived; he ignored repeated warnings
about good fortune so that "unawares thus am I trappt" by
fortune's sudden turn. But he makes an effort to overcome
this shock to learn from experience. At his moment of re-
cognition he says, "Thus am I taught for to beware,/And
trust no more such pleasant chance." His case is typical
in Wyatt's poetry. This recognition that fortune has
exercised detrimental influence over one's life leads
frequently to active rejection of that influence along
with personal redirection away from that influence and
towards a consistently mature understanding of life.

This consequential moment provides some striking
lines for poetry. For instance, when "carefull chaunce"
produces "vnderserued chaunge" for the speaker in "Alas
the greiff, and dely wofull smert" (V), he concludes
pointedly, "I qwite th'entreprise of that that I have
lost/To whome so euer lust for to proffer moost." Also
leaving "loues dysceatfull vse" to those who have not
yet recognized its futility is the speaker in "Ffull well
yt maye be sene" (CXCVII); he quits by saying sarcastically,
"Let them enjoye the gayn,/That thynkes yt worthe the
payn." Another betrayed lover in "I se the change ffrom
that that was" (CXCV) vows "repentens" when he discovers
how foolish he was to trust fickle fortune; he extra-
polates this lesson into a vow "neuer to trust the lyke
agayn." More elaborate is the treatment of this problem
in "Now must I lern to faine" (CCLXVIII) in which a
spurned lover explains his reason for renunciation,
And seing it is my chaunce
My loue in vaine to wast,
I am not in that daunce
The first nor yet the last;
But wise he is by once
That can his foly know,
To reuoke at once
Seyng she wyl not so.

His attitude is urbane and decisive: he understands that his position is not unique, but he has the inner strength to rid himself of a parasitic burden. Similarly thwarted in love by fortune's influence, the female speaker in "Syethe yt ys so that I am thus refusyd" (CLXIV) reasons that she too must cut her losses:

I can no more but I shall me aplye
My woffull hart to bryng out of distres,
And withdraw my mynd so full of ffollye,
Sythe thys dothe Raygne this false newfanglydnes.

Her determination along with the determination of the other speaker sounds a call to action that provides a welcome contrast to complaint without remedial possibilities. To face up to a mistake at the point of recognition and shout "I quit!" reveals courage. Because such a person believes that fortune cannot infringe upon his psychological integrity, he is able to disassociate himself from a past that contains much that he might have valued once—he is able to withdraw his mind to consider new values outside the frame of fortune.

This withdrawal leads us to the third chronological step on the path to maturity. During this last step, the new values of independence from fortune have been thoroughly assimilated; the speaker is now able to assume the role
of moral teacher with a store of experiential wisdom. From this role, the speaker in the first part of "Lo what it is to love!" (LXXXVII) first describes love as uncertain as the throw of dice and then cautions his audience, "Lerne by me to beware." Also a teacher is the speaker in "Howe shulde I" (CXCVI) who lectures, "Lett no wise man beleve" in fortune's temporary smile or a mistress's feigned promises. More general than these teachers is the speaker in "Happe happith ofte vnloked for" (CXXXV). He mentions some standard examples of fortune's unpredictability, and then warns:

I wyll rede them to take hede,
Seith hap doth turne soo sodenly,
Lest he by chaunge do chaunce them lede
Into sum trade clene contrary,
And bryng hym low that was full hy,
And set hym hard that set full softe;
Vnloked for all this happs ofte.

In each of these cases the speaker has already learned his lesson; so he recounts his experience for the moral edification of others. What would otherwise be wasted time is thus transformed into didactic examples.

Within this third chronological step also falls some poems of misspent youth (already anticipated in our discussion of "Myne olde dere En'mye"). One such poem is "There was never ffile half so will filed" (XVI) in which the speaker claims he was "beguiled" by fortune when he was young. But now he finds new hope in maturity:

reason hath at my follie smyled
And pardond me syns that I me repent
Of my lost yeres and tyme myspent,
For youth did me lede and falshode guyded.
Notable in this poem is the benevolent tolerance with which the speaker regards past transgressions; he perceives reason as a benevolent instructor who forgives anything if the truant is sincerely repentent. One sees a striking resemblance to the wisdom of Ecclesiastes. There is an appointed time for everything; a time in youth to explore the ways of folly, a time in maturity to repent folly and ponder anew life's meaning. This generous sentiment receives more explicit treatment in "Mye love toke skorne my servise to retaine" (CCXXIII) in which a spurned lover states:

my doting dayes bee paste,
And with my losse to leve I must agre;
For as there is a certeyne tyme to rage,
So ys there tyme suche madness to asswage.

His tone is almost cheerful as he easily sloughs off the burden of madness for the more pleasant alternative of contemplation. Also happy for similar reasons is the speaker in "Synes loue ys suche that, as ye wott" (CXCVIII). He too claims that "vnto eche a tyme there ys" for both youthful folly and matured wisdom. One detects some wistfulness in his description of his earlier aimless wanderings:

Ffor in my yeres of Rekles youthe
Me thought the power of loue so gret
That to her lawes I bound my treuthe
And to my wyll there was no lett.

Past sensual bondage is exchanged for matured wisdom, but one has reason to believe the exchange is tenuous. Not only does he blame fortune ("suche was my lott") for his
the guilt he confesses, but he also repeats his former error when he celebrates the new "power wherein I am pos-
sest" with the exclamation, "Thankyd be fortune that me gave/So fayre a gyfft, so sure and fast." Unlike others, he comes only far enough to recognize the folly of his youth, but not far enough to recognize new folly in the present. Even with experiential wisdom, the temptations of fortune are difficult to resist.

Evidently some people require stronger defenses against these attractive temptations. Some people need greater moral guidance based on unchanging principles beyond chronological experience. After all, experience is open to any number of divergent interpretations.

A transition from maturity (our first stance in opposition to fortune) to stoicism (our second stance) is illustrated in the poem "Ffarewell, Love, and all thy lawes for ever" (XIII). In contrast to the last poem, this farewell to folly is forever. Baited hooks, blind error, sharp repulse, brittle darts, and rotten boughs are some of the pejorative images employed by this speaker to characterize the sensual imprisonment of his youth under fortune's influence. However, this influence is at end because "Senec and Plato call me from thy lore,/To perfaict welth my wit for to endever." The transi-
tory nature of love, he continues, has "taught me to sett in tryfels no store/And scape fourth syns libertie is lever." Therefore he effects a complete break with
the world of physical passion:

Therefore, farewell; goo trouble yonger hertes
And in me clayme no more authoritis;
With idill yeuth goo vse thy propertie
And theron spend thy many britill dertes:
For hetherto though I have lost all my tyme,
Me lusteth no lenger rotten boughes to clyme.

This statement is philosophically stronger than some others
examined above because it carries the additional weight of
a built-in formal philosophy—that associated with the
names of Seneca and Plato. The philosophy is stoicism.

Stoicism, as a stance of superiority to fortune, is
a convenient term for the popular interpretation of the
philosophy of material self-abnegation. Happiness for the
stoic consists in freeing oneself from the bondage to
passions and appetites in order to attain spiritual free-
dom. Although lumping Plato and Seneca together under
this single philosophical rubric does injustice to both
men, there is some resemblance between the Platonic
ascent from physical to spiritual love and the Senecan
indifference to material passions. The specific influence
of stoic philosophy on Wyatt is illustrated in two of
his poems "Who lyst his welthe and eas Retayne" (CLXXVI)
and "Stond who so list vpon the Slipper toppe" (CCXL) taken
from Seneca's Phaedra and Thyestes respectively. In addi-
tion we find Wyatt advising his son by letter, "I wold
Senek were your studye."4

Poems that stem from the stoic attitude towards for-
tune share some elements in common. Speakers feel that
they can endure successfully misfortune by practicing virtues and maintaining high personal integrity. Since fortune is merely a material phenomenon, the stoic mind can transcend it. The mind can rise above the fleeting pleasures or depressions of fortune to imperturbable satisfaction in the possession of what the above speaker called "perfaict welth." Imperfect wealth describes the external prosperity that is subject to fortune's give and take; perfect wealth, not subject to fortune, describes internal happiness in the contemplation of unchanging verities.

Our consideration of the stoic attitude deals with this kind of contemplation, this inner tranquility or quiet of mind amid outer disturbance. We deal first with man's social endeavors and then with his political aspirations.

In the social realm we find poems that convey a strong sense of calmness in the face of adversity. The man with a stoic disposition serves his master, truth, as faithfully as falcons serve their master in "Luckes, my faire falcon, and your fellowes all" (CCXLI). Slaves to fortune are like lice that "awaye form ded bodies thei crall" when they encounter even "light adversytie." Some speakers, resembling these metaphorical falcons, aggressively proclaim their inner integrity by projecting an indifferent attitude towards fortune. Among these are the speakers in "Hate whome ye lysete, I care not" (CXXVI);
in "Loue whom you lyst and spare not" (CCLXIII) who says "I am indifferent"; and in "I am as I am and so wil I be" (CXL) who prefers to "lede my lif indifferentelye." Each of these speakers boast of their total indifference. Less obnoxious is the speaker in "In faith I wot not well what to say" (XXIII) whose response to fortune's external "chaunces" is reaffirmation of his personal honesty: "mens myndes yet may thou not order." Another speaker in "Dyvers dothe vse as I have hard and kno" (CCXVII) has enough self-assurance that he can "let it passe" when "it chaunsith soo/That women change." And a third in "Spytt off the spytt whiche they in vayne" (CLXIII) claims he is "set and wyll not swerve" because he is not one "that ought dothe reche." In all of these poems, the order of fortune and the order of the mind are distinguished from each other as the external and internal orders. Recognizing this distinction and acting accordingly can produce the inner quiet sought in spite of outer social interference.

This inner-outer distinction is taught through a traditional social fable in Wyatt's second satire, "My mothers maydes when they did sowe and spynne" (CVI). A country mouse decides to forsake her simple poverty for what she assumes is the true "quyete liffe" lead by her urban sister who "hath a lyving good," lies in a warm and dry bed, scarcely works, and feeds richly. "So fourth she goeth, trusting of all this welth," says the
narrator, "to lyve a Lady while her liff doeth last." But ironically her life has not long to last as soon as she begins to trust this imperfect material wealth. Her dream of the quiet life is unalterably shattered by a monstrous city cat, described by the narrator as "a sorry chaunce." Accustomed to the dangers of her own environment the town mouse easily escapes; however the country mouse, pathetically and ineffectually wishing she were "at home," is killed. The narrator stereotypes the country mouse as one who "had forgotten her poure suretie and rest/For semyng welth wherein she thought to rayne"; she illustrates his moral that men often stray erroneously when they are "seking quyete liff." Ways of life each have their material advantages and disadvantages; but each way of life deals with external activities, not internal. To look for the perfect inner life in external form is to "mys-seke"—often with dangerous consequences. The narrator then applies his moral to a prescriptive thesis that further clarifies the contrast between the inner and the outer:

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.

In other word, quiet life, perfect wealth, or whatever else one wishes to call the object of life's search is to be found nowhere is not within oneself, unfettered by the things of fortune.

A different poetic approach to the same social
problem may be seen in "Most wretchid hart most myser-
able" (XCI) which again contrasts the internal and exter-
nal aspects of life. A debate rather than a fable drama-
tizes this theme: a man and his heart respond differ-
ently to identical experiences of adversity. The man, a
forlorn lover wallowing in despair, prefers death to his
current condition, and therefore cannot understand how
his heart remains hopeful. Perhaps recasting a line from
Chaucer's poem "Fortune" ("No man is wrecched, but him-
self it wene"), Wyatt has the heart state bluntly:

I me selff have all my will,
And he is wretchid that wens hym so.

Implied by this statement is fortune's usurpation of the
lover's will while his heart feels that even an antago-
nistic heavenly conspiracy "can not oppresse my mynde."
Philosophically, the lover is cast in the role of a fa-
talist who believes that everything from his mental dis-
position to his death is under fortune's control; but his
heart, in contrast, recommends the counsels of stoicism
to counteract depression. Misfortune, says the heart,
can make external things unpleasant, but can never con-
trol internal realms of the spirit. Since "happe doth
come again and goo," the heart suggests that the lover
ignore misfortune by maintaining internal constancy of
purpose. In this way, internal stability can nullify
external instability.

Moving from the social to the political arena, we
find similar expressions of this stoic contrast between the inner and outer. The poem "Stond who so list vpon the Slipper toppe" (CCXL), for example, criticizes the ways of court life, a "slipper toppe" with mixed "brackish joyes." Taken from Seneca's Thyestes, this poem contraposes political insecurity with the tranquility of private retreat, a "hidden place" where the speaker desires to experience "quyet without lett or stoppe." He much prefers this inner peace to the outward show of court. Another poem, "In court to serue decked with freshe aray" (CCLIX), begins as if cataloguing the advantages of court life—its fashionable dress, its delectable foods, its gay party life, its games. But the suspended periodic sentence that at first appears to catalogue advantages soon reveals itself as a catalogue of disadvantages with the verb "waste." All this so-called glory can be enjoyed only "amid the presse of lordly lokes," "within a situation of unendurable "bitter taste," or "prison ioyes, fettred with cheines of gold." Both speakers editorialize with the authority of personal observation, and perhaps participation. These poems reveal the internal corruption and unhappiness beneath the elegant external pomp of politics. Court life is evidently too much at the mercy of fortune, too full of guises and deceits to satisfy men who prize internal contentedness above external riches.

Wyatt's first satire, "Myne owne John Payntz, sins ye delight to know" (CV), elaborates upon this attitude
of political disenchantment by advocating private retirement from public life. The narrator in this satire (from the original by Alamanni) describes court life in terms similar to those used in the poem "In court to serue" just mentioned. The court is a place of constant "presse" where one must live "thrall vnder the awe/Of lordly lookes." While he pretends to disclaim any intention to "skorne or moke" the politically enfranchised powers, his language and tone undercuts his avowed neutrality:

It is not for becausesse I skorne or moke
The power of them to whom fortune hath lent
Charge over vs, of Right, to strike the stroke;
But trow it is that I have allwaies ment
Lesse to esteime them then the common sort
Off ouwtward thinges that juge in their intent
Withowte Regarde what dothe inwarde resort.

We notice that he hurries to add that the power lent by fortune is right, but his distinction between "ouwtward thinges" and "inwarde resort" indicates skepticism. He makes it obvious that both he and the lords of court seek honor; however, his honor is based upon internal virtue while theirs depends entirely upon external esteem. His adamant refusal ("I cannot, I; no, no, it will not be") to feign, lie, flatter, admire debauchees, worship villains, or attempt to make vices seem virtues separates his honor from theirs as it justifies his retirement from the life where these evils are commonly practiced. Reduced to a single metaphor, his reason for retreat stems from the fact that a "chipp of chaunce" is deemed more substantial than a "pownde of wit" in court. Like the
educated country mouse in Wyatt's second satire, he too prefers to be "at home," but unlike the mouse he takes positive precautionary action to insure his security by retreating to "Kent and Christendom." There he profits through the traditional country arts of hunting, reading, and writing. Remote from the constant pressures of court life, he truly is "at home" with inner contentedness.

Yet there is a middle ground between political corruption and bucolic retreat. Wyatt's third satire "A spending hand that alway powreth owte" (CVII) illustrates this middle ground through ironic advice. The narrator prefaces his advice by telling his companion, Brian, that one of the truly noble purposes for writing is "to cownsell man the right"; then he complains about Brian's overzealousness in serving his monarch. The narrator castigates his friend for this lack of external rest, but the poem indicates that it is possible to possess internal composure within a busy and honorable political context.

When the narrator offers perverse moral precepts for Brian's material profit (purchase friends, avoid truth, pay lip service to virtue, be miserly, pander to the rich, pimp and whore because such practices are "as it goeth now a days"), Brian laughs at this "thrifty gest." He seeks the profit of an honest name—not a full purse. Elsewhere, in a letter to his son, Wyatt defines honesty not as "reputation for riches, for authoritie, or some like thing," but as "wisdome, gentlenes, sobrenes, disire
to do good, frendlines to get the love of manye, and trougth above all the rest."5 This kind of honesty, as opposed to justifications for now-a-days unprincipled opportunism, is Brian's claim to a restful mind. Even if he invites poverty and adversity upon himself by his obstinate sense of honor, his quiet mind remains undisturbed.

The distinction between the inner and outer orders of life make this sense of well-being possible. Both the narrator in the first satire and Brian in the third satire recognize what is false and corrupt within the outer pomp and circumstance of court life; consequently both voice their contempt for fortune by their unshakable integrity. But their responses to this recognition differ. The former disassociates himself from immediate contact with the court to avoid temptation of any kind; but the latter remains in court while disassociating himself from court attitudes. Although the responses differ, both men achieve true internal nobility.

This nobility is based upon secular stoicism (our second stance of superiority to fortune), but such nobility is also a Christian goal (our third and final stance of superiority to fortune).

The poem "If thou wilt mighty be, flee from the rage" (CCLXI) synthesizes the stoic and Christian stances (as does Boethius's Consolation from which this poem is adapted). This poem too distinguishes between the internal and the external; its specific theme is that
external sovereignty or power without the firm self-control of internal sovereignty is hollow. If one aspires to true might and nobility, says the speaker, then one must "flee from the rage," the "foule yoke of sensual bondage," and the excesses of "oruel wyll." If one does not flee, these evils will overtake and ensnare the individual. But internal nobility is the birthright of all men regardless of social degree because all men have a common, divine origin—all men are created by God. Only internal faults such as "couteise," "foule lust and vice" can thwart life's natural tendency towards internal nobility; external circumstances are unimportant. Only internal faults breed discontent, and a discontented man is no sovereign.

In sum, the stoic attitude defeats fortune by ignoring it. Fortune determines only the things of the physical world; the stoic is concerned only with things of the mental world. By destroying the bridge between external and internal phenomenon, one may achieve true quiet of mind. Yet in the very terms used to describe internal corruption—covetousness, lust, and vice—the poem "If thou wilt" lends itself to theological as well as secular interpretation.

Christianity, the theological interpretation, next comes under our examination as a stance of superiority to fortune. In many ways Christianity is both a historical and metaphyscial extension of stoicism. Augustine, among other theologians, reaffirms the traditional stoic
wisdom that temporal prosperity is not an incontrovertible sign of divine favor, just as misfortune does not signify demonic intervention. The universal life force of the stoics is homologous with the one, true God of Christianity whose omniscient minds contains all the accidents that are popularly attributed to fortune.

The distinctive mark of Christianity—at least in respect to fortune—is its concept of Providence. Providence as a word is derived from the Latin root “providere” meaning to foresee in the distance and to prepare for the future. God’s Providence guides and sustains human destiny in all things. Therefore, the wheel of fortune becomes subservient to the wheel of Providence; the former is thought of as capricious and directionless, but the latter gives it necessarily good direction—good in the sense that everything happens according to a plan designed to promote man’s welfare. Under the God-driven wheel of Providence, fortune’s prosperity and adversity become the temporal context of an eternal plan. Man’s task is to comprehend this plan and act consistently with it.

Wyatt’s fairly close translation of Psalm 37
"Altho thow se th’owtragius clime aloft" (XCIV) investigates the problematic appearances of evil in a God-created world so that man can comprehend the relationship between fortune and Providence. The standard theological solution to this problem is to translate temporal evil
into eternal good according to the unchanging Providential plan. Therefore we are told that "blinde properitye" only "semith" good but that this "cursids welth" actually over- shadows true righteousness. Consolation for these dis- turbing temporal appearances is to be found by trusting in eternal prosperity with Providentially given foresight as opposed to finite blindness:

Paciently abide the Lordes assured grace;
Bere with even minde the trouble that he sends
Dismay the not tho thou se the purchase
Encresse of some, for such like lucke god sends
To wicked folke.

This exhortation exceeds the bounds of conservative orthodoxy—that good fortune does not indicate God's favor—by positing good fortune as an indicator of God's disfavor. Good luck can be held against one by the Christian community. And furthermore, the psalmist describes the last judgment—that time when the "sobre" shall overthrow the "wikked folke"—in terms not unlike those employed to describe fortune's blind temporal prosperity. One detects a certain tone of envy and a consequent feeling of satisfaction in contemplation of eternal vengeance. This descriptive bias provides some comfort for beleaguered Christians. But if there are similarities between the sober and the wicked, there are more differences. The wicked folk compromise themselves daily for material prosperity while sober Christians conduct themselves according to Providence's unalterable law: "Pflee yll, so good, that thow mayste last all wayes." Only trust in the
Lord, says the psalmist, and the unsettling wheel of fortune becomes insignificant within the infinitely larger context of Providence's wheel: the good will prosper and the evil will fail.

In sermon form, this lesson is essentially that dramatized in Wyatt's longest poetic effort, his Penitential Psalms (CVIII). The seven psalms that compose this group are traditionally held to be David's repentant testimony for sending a man to his doom in battle so that David could marry his wife, Bathsheba. To these psalms, Wyatt adds versions of Aretino's seven prologues, expanding upon Aretino's observations to illuminate David's physical and spiritual progress with greater clarity.

Wyatt employs two structural principles in his version of the Penitential Psalms: linearity and circularity. Linearly, David progresses from sinful commission, through recognition of guilt, confession, despair, and hope to spiritual consolation in the contemplation of Providence—this is the narrative progression and development of character. Circularly, the psalms develop concepts thematically by examining them first after the commission of sin and then after the contemplative insight. This circular return to the beginning may be seen, for instance, in the treatment of bondage: the poem opens with David in sensual bondage to Bathsheba, and then closes with David in spiritual bondage to God. Both structural principles operate simultaneously to reveal the process of David's absolution
and the unfolding of God's plan for all creation.

At the outset David is described as one of Wyatt's secular speakers in the throes of love's fortune: Bathsheba's eyes touch "his sensis and ouer ronnis his bonis" (line 7) as if "moyst poysen in his hert" (10). His ignoble response to passion is to contradict his own principles of internal sovereignty by setting up this woman as an idol before his God. The intensity of his passion also blinds him from self-knowledge until the prophet Nathan sets the horrible facts "afore his face" (34); then in shame David confronts his own iniquity by withdrawing in wretched dress into a dark cave. The dress and cave, he feels, are external indicators of his own internal corruption. This, the first prologue, sets the stage for David's drama by establishing two points of view—that of the repentent sinner David and that of an omniscient observer. David acts out the drama; the observer explains motivation, emphasizes attitudes, and highlights images and themes.

The six remaining prologues function similarly. In the second prologue, after confessing his sin, David is described as "selff accusing" (198) because "eersd, not yet heled, he felith his disese" (200). Evidently, simple repentence alone cannot allow David to achieve a quiet mind. This stubborn disease (lack of spiritual ease) is potentially curable, however, as the image of the sunbeam descending on David's plaintive harp suggests in the third prologue.
The harp is a symbol for David’s repentence and love for God; the sunbeam is a symbol for God’s mercy and love for David. The fourth prologue shifts attention away from hope and back to the depth of David’s suffering—his confusion and struggle with despair. Then the remaining prologues devote themselves to conceptual contemplation: the fifth to infinite mercy, the sixth to the discrepancy between external penitential acts and true internal repentence, and the seventh to redemption and immortality. Each prologue marks a step taken by David in his quest for spiritual ease. While David’s comprehension of Providence expands, each step is described by the observer who has known all along the final goal of David’s journey. The conclusion, therefore, is implicit in the beginning. The omniscient observer follows David’s progress and leads us along with him.

The psalms, on the other hand, are pure statements delivered by the ignorant sinner and penitent, David, without the mediation of an observer. In the first psalm, Psalm 6, David says, "I washe my bed with teares contynuall" (149). This descriptive detail is usually native to love poems, but here the tears are tears of repentance, not of sensual passion. In fact, David draws us away from consideration of such passion by saying that his past lust is "now bitter to my mynd" (160). This bitterness is somewhat relieved in the second psalm, Psalm 32, where confession of wrongdoings and description
of God's merciful forgiveness comfort David. The third psalm, Psalm 38, contrasts David's mortal instability with God's immortal stability; and the following psalm, Psalm 51, asks for the grace to be able to partake in that divine stability. The fifth psalm, Psalm 102, has David pondering the ramifications created by the existence of an eternal order. Having purged his sinful nature in these contemplations, David delivers a testimony of trust in God in the sixth psalm, Psalm 130; and he confirms that trust with great confidence in the final psalm, Psalms 143. Each of these psalms is a searching, probing internal monologue in which David progresses gradually to spiritual wisdom first by confronting his own iniquity and then by expanding his comprehension of God's Providential plan for human salvation.

One key to interpreting this progression may be found in the thematic search for consolation from fortune's miseries. Fortune tempts him with external beauty, taunts him with instability, and dooms him to live in a world of mutability. The thought of fleshly beauty, once delightful, is made bitter because it occasioned great evil; and David finds that concealing his sin of the flesh only increases his anguish:

In slepe, in wach, in fretyng stylly within,
That neuer suffer rest vnto the mynd;
Fylld with offensive, that new and new begyn
With thousands feres the hert: to strayne and bynd.

(283-85)

His unquiet mind is eased somewhat by his confession of
guilt, but he still finds pain in contemplating his "fraile-
full wykednes" (340). This wickedness stems from his own
repulsive vacillating instability:

    in my fleshe . . .
Is not on poyn of ferme stabilite,
Nor in my bonis there is no stedfastnes:
Such is my drede of mutabilit.

(336-39)

The initial discrete sin of passion is now expanded to in-
clude the entire heritage of original sin--the "tyranny off
sin" (349) that dooms all men to "lyve withowten rest" (352)
in a world of fortune and flux. David's dread of this heri-
tage is great because it threatens the very meaning of his
existence and leaves him without any hope for even a
temporary consolation from sin.

Consolation comes only when David turns his attention
away from a sin-stained self within the material world of
fortune to the contemplation of Providence. Repentance
is good, but it is only a negative activity; repentance
must be linked to something positive in order to give man
grounds for hope. Thus David finally turns to the source
of everything positive--God.

He turns to God, "the lord off all my helth alone"
(394), and pleads to be embraced in God's "quiete won-
derfull" (430). David perceives God as the epitome of
"stedfastnesse" (484) whose word is eternally "stable"
(453); in contrast David perceives himself as a "thing
most vnstable" (456). God is not only a person but he is
also a home. Like the country mouse in the second satire
who wishes herself "at home," and like the narrator in the first satire who feels "at home" in "Kent and Christendom," David too senses the need for a home—a place where he can experience quiet, rest, and stability—lost by his subjugation to sin and fortune. He calls this home "Inward Syon" (504), and defines it as the home for "peple that lyve vnder God's law" (584). With this image of God, David reveals the extent of his understanding that inner peace remains in an order apart from external fortune. Living under God's law exorcises David's dread of mutability because God's word is the essence of absolute and unchanging stability:

Thi holly word off eterne excellence,
Thi mercys promesse, that is alway just,
Have bene my stay, my piller and pretence.
(685-87)

The figure of the pillar, Wyatt's own addition to the psalms, is reminiscent of the secular poem "The piller pearisht" (CCXXXVI); in the secular poem the speaker's ground of being falls victim to fortune's mutability, but in these psalms the speaker finds eternal support. David's consequent ecstatic vision, another of Wyatt's original touches, carries this defeat of fortune further by describing how God's eternal word-made-flesh—the incarnation of his son—literally redeems the world:

Manne redemid, deth hath her distructione,
That mortall vaile hath immortalte.
(709-10)

Because David is able to grasp immortality's implications
he can return to the language of love; he transfers his
subjection to physical passion for Bathsheba to a new
subjection to spiritual passion for God. His last words
are significantly like his first: "Ffor thyn ame I, thy
servant ay most bownd." With this bondage, consolation is
complete: instability becomes stability, finitude becomes
infinitude, fortune becomes Providence.

Indeed the psalms's approach to fortune through the
perspective of Providence sounds many poetic notes we have
heard in secular contexts. For instance when David pleads
with God not to "torne thy mercyfull fase" (543) from him,
one cannot help recall fortune's personifications--especi-
ally those examined in our third chapter. The same con-
structions used to describe fortune's wheel, to take another
example, can be translated to describe God's Providential
plan. "For thou dist lyfyt me vp to throw me downe" (575)
sounds like a description of fortune at work, but in the
following verse David makes it clear that he is describing
salvation-directed Providence.

In sum, the wheel of Providence is the Christian's
ultimate defense against fortune. Because Providence
exists, fortune must be an agent of God. Therefore, ap-
parent misfortune, mutability, even man's inhumanity to
man are only temporary manifestations of a divinely ordered
universe. Man can take consolation in the unchanging fact
that all events are designed to work out his ultimate
salvation if he will but cooperate with God's plan.
Looking back over this chapter, we find that maturity, stoicism and Christianity can defeat fortune in a way that confrontation cannot. Even the most valiant of confrontations with fortune does not guarantee man's success. On the other hand, adopting one of these superior stances insure man's victory because it eliminates the possibility of an opponent: no grounds exist for a contest. The mature man, the stoic philosopher and the Christian disciple have risen above fortune; now they look down upon fortune with contempt. They look down upon fortune and warn others to avoid the material pitfalls as they have.

Thus our analysis has run its course. We have examined dependency upon fortune, confrontation with fortune, and superiority to fortune. One large question remains: how can we evaluate the artistic success of these poems?
CHAPTER VI

Criticism . . . has not yet attained
the certainty and stability of a science.
---Samuel Johnson

TOWARDS AN EVALUATION

Wyatt's poems, as we have seen, fall into four major
thematic classifications. These classifications are based
upon the implied relationship between the poem's speaker
and fortune. A brief summary of these four relationships
and their functions will give us an overall picture of
Wyatt's concern with the theme of fortune.

In the first thematic classification we find poems
that deal with favorable fortune. Typical of the speakers
who talk about this aspect of fortune is the speaker in
"They fle from me that sometyme did me seke" (XXXVII).
Although he blames his present misery upon "new fangilnes"
produced by fortune, he also recalls tenderly a past moment
when fortune brought him ecstasy. His exclamation "Thanck-
ed be fortune" illustrates dramatically how he views him-
self with respect to fortune's power. His unbounded grate-
fulness shows us that he believes that fortune--and fortune
alone--is capable of bringing him true happiness. Even
though fortune may also bring him misery, fortune's gift of

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happiness—however fleeting or elusive—gives him hope and the strength to persevere.

The essence of his relationship with fortune may be summed up in one word—dependency. He resigns his power of self-determination to fortune and consequently claims that he cannot be held responsible for good or evil. The wheel of fortune determines the outcome of events. As that wheel of determination holds the promise of happiness and robs him of the self-reliance he needs to obtain happiness on his own, he courts fortune's favor. If the only road to happiness is fortune's, he must design his life around fortune's influence. His relationship with fortune thus results in moral dependency.

Poetry is made out of this relationship. The gap between fortune's favorable potential and fortune's more frequent unkind actuality supplies the raw material for dramatic conflict; the anguished speaker supplies the form of the poem. Given favorable circumstances, his satisfaction results in a purely laudatory poem or no poem at all; given unfavorable circumstances, however, his dissatisfaction results a vigorous monologue about conflicting forces. This vigorous voice—the voice that describes favorable fortune as long in coming and quick in going—considers the world in terms of human aims and values that are dependent on fortune. This voice communicates personal experience concretely in an effort to understand the struggle inherent in any relationship
that involves dependency.

In the second thematic classification of Wyatt's poems, man's dependency is still a major factor but fortune's favorable potential is missing. The speaker in "Fortune dothe frowne" (CCXXI) represents this thematic mode. Like the previous speaker, he blames his misery on misfortune, but in contrast he does not hope in fortune's potential for good. When he says that he is put down by destiny, he reveals how the perception of evil can produce unrelieved pessimism. He believes that fortune—a force that inflicts pain only—has victimized him. Yet since there is no remedy for inevitable destiny, he can only wait helplessly while his aspirations are destroyed.

His relationship to fortune is one of antagonistic dependency. He, like the previous speaker, resigns his power of self-determination to fortune, but this resignation is not compensated by any possibility for good fortune. As the dominant force in his universe, fortune controls his life; therefore, he feels that he is relieved of all moral responsibility. His destiny is misery; his attitude is pessimistic.

Poetry is made from the persecutor-victim relationship between man and his misfortune. This dramatic conflict emphasizes the contrast between his misery and the happiness he beholds elsewhere. Fortune denies him participation in such happiness, and thus increase his frustration. Poems of vicious declamation and poems of surprising
poignancy result from his reflection upon what misfortune does to his life. The unkind wheel of fortune is turned by a frowning goddess who delights in frustrating her victims.

In the third thematic classification, poems illustrate that man and fortune are equal in power. The speaker in "It was my choyse, yt was no chaunce" (CXCII) describes this balance of power. Rather than blame his misery on fortune or praise fortune for his happiness, he indicates an aggressive willingness to accept full responsibility for all his actions. With the energetic spirit of self-reliance he emphasizes his freedom to choose among the possible alternatives available in order to attain the best results. Yet even as he emphasizes his own power of self-determination, he admits that fortune does have a great influence over the existence of these possible alternatives.

In his relationship with fortune, he keeps self-determination for himself while he recognizes that fortune determines circumstances. He regards fortune as merely another earthly phenomenon like himself and not as a heavenly power; consequently he feels competent to grapple with the circumstances created by fortune. He acts like the third son who with independence and native shrewdness sets out to seek his fortune in traditional fairy tales. When he sees opportunities he takes advantage of them; when he sees obstacles he analyzes them
so that he can deal with them wisely. Fortune, he believes, will not favor him automatically, and destiny will not be imposed upon him from without—he must work to seek his own fortune.

Poetry is made from his confrontation with fortune. He confronts fortune as an equal opponent. To use an analogy from battle, his army meets fortune's army on the battlefield of life; the outcome of the fray determines the victor. The outcome of the battle is always in question—neither he nor fortune alone can determine the result. Therefore, his skill in waging war, his resourcefulness, his persistence, and his self-reliance influence heavily his chances for success. The wheel of fortune still has power over the circumstances of his life, but he has a matching power to alter these circumstances. Confrontation determines the outcome.

In the fourth thematic classification, we find poems that reject or ignore the influence of fortune. For instance, the speaker in "There was never ffile half so well filed" (XVI) repents his youthful folly when fortune was his false guide; he happily rejects the bondage imposed by dependence upon fortune for the freedom of maturity. Another speaker in "My mothers maydes when they did sowe and spynne" (CVI) rejects the popular notion of searching for happiness in the things produced by fortune; he advocates searching for happiness in one's own mind. And David in the Penitential Psalms learns
through his spiritual penance and his meditation on the perfection of God to have contempt for the fortune-controlled things of the flesh.

The relationships between these speakers and fortune is decidedly one-sided. The absolute power of self-determination lies within themselves; conjunctively, fortune's power is limited to things that have no significance in the scheme of true human values. Because the wisdom of maturity, the indifference of stoicism, and the faith in Christianity bestow no blame or praise on fortune, they are the masters of their fate. They act independently from fortune to attain goals that are not influenced by fortune.

Poetry is made from the dramatic contrast between their independence and the dependence of those around them. The ideals of maturity, stoicism, and Christianity rise above the everyday actualities of social and political corruption. All around are lust, greed, and lying designed to attain control of material fortune; in contrast, the conscientious individuals prescribe contemplation, generosity, and honesty to attain control of internal principles. These individuals who have already gained insight into things that transcend the realm of fortune attempt to warn others to avoid fortune's snares. Thus we find poems that recount personal histories of a man's rise to maturity, poems that satirize social and political evils, and poems that dramatize the road to salvation.
Fortune's wheel is demythicized and fortune dethroned; the internal principle of man's being--variously called the lesson of experience, the mind, or the soul--is enthroned in its place.

These then are the four basic attitudinal stances that speakers in Wyatt's poems take towards fortune. Looking back over these stances, we notice that much of the quality we call poetry depends upon the dramatic conflict implied in the relationship between the speaker and fortune. This relationship is an abstract construction made concrete through its representation in the person, action, and language in the poem. Naturally we find ourselves asking questions about literary worth. Does our thematic classification help us evaluate the poems? What makes one poem successful and another poem--perhaps dealing with the same theme--unsuccessful? In the final analysis, is Wyatt an accomplished poet or primarily a precursor of more accomplished artists?

Before we can provide an answer to these questions, we need to examine the relevance of certain critical approaches. M. H. Abrams, in The Mirror and The Lamp, gives us some assistance by pointing out that all critical approaches discriminate between four elements in their emphasis: the artist, the audience, the work, and the universe. A critical theory that sees art in terms of the artist, that is, sees art as primarily an expression of the historical artist, may be described as an expressive
theory. A critical theory that sees art primarily in terms of its effect on the audience may be called a pragmatic theory. A theory that sees art primarily in terms of the work itself may be called an objective theory. And finally a theory that sees art primarily in terms of the universe, or the material that is imitated from the world of nature, may be called a mimetic theory. An examination of what these four approaches—expressive, pragmatic, objective, and mimetic—can tell us about Wyatt's poems may help us arrive at an evaluation.

First, the expressive theory. When one thinks of poetry in Wordsworthian terms as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," one is applying principles implicit in the expressive theory. A critical sensibility educated by contact with romantic thought from Longinus through the early nineteenth century often yearns for this pure lyric cry of emotion. When one hears a poet fall upon the thorns of life and bleed, one may along with Emily Dickinson be so cold that no fire could warm one and feel as if the top of one's head were taken off.

Yet when subjected to such physical tests, Wyatt's poetry is usually unsatisfactory. He is not basically the poet of pure lyric cries. In fact C. S. Lewis is fairly accurate, though somewhat biased, when he says that Wyatt is "hardly one of the irresistible poets. He has no splendours that dazzle you and no enchantments that disarm criticism." The requisites for expressive poetry that
dazzles indicate the value placed upon biographical sincerity, upon deeply voiced emotions and passions that can be traced to the poet's personal experiences. Can we apply these biographical requisites to Wyatt's poetry?

Wyatt has been the subject of much biographical speculation because of his position in the court of Henry VIII and his rumored relationship with Anne Boleyn. Patricia Thomson devotes an appendix in *Sir Thomas Wyatt and his Background* to examining poems that contain evidence of this perennially interesting relationship. Some of the most frequently made biographical interpretations of poems follow.

"What wourde is that that chaungeth not" (L) is a riddle on Anne Boleyn's first name (Anna). "Who so list to hounte I know where is an hynde" (VII) contains a veiled reference to Henry's claim on Anne Boleyn. "Some tyme I fled the fyre that me brent" (LIX) describes Wyatt's journey to Calais in Anne Boleyn's train, just before her marriage to Henry.

"Who lyst his welthe and eas Retayne" (CLXXVI) refers to the executions of Anne Boleyn and her accused lovers with Wyatt's expectation of the same fate. "You that in love finde lucke and habundance" (XCII) is based on Wyatt's May imprisonments in 1534 and 1536. "In mornyng wyse syns daylye I Increas" (CXLVI) is an elegy for Anne Boleyn's paramours written after Wyatt's release from prison. "If waker care if sodayne pale Coulour" (XCVII) shows in its revised version an attempt to cover-up a reference to the political turmoil caused by Anne Boleyn. There are others.
"So feble is the threde that doth the burden stay" (XCVIII) is addressed by Wyatt to his mistress Elizabeth Darrell. And "The piller pearisht is whearto I Lent" (CCXXXVI) is a lament for the death of Wyatt's friend and political protector, Cromwell.

However, these biographical identifications are not indisputable. William H. Wiatt, a historian, states that the evidence for a relationship between Wyatt and Anne Boleyn rests on three late and pro-Catholic accounts of Henry VIII's reign plus a 1530 letter written by Charles V's English ambassador. He terms the only possible other evidence a "handful of poems of uncertain interpretation." Yet even if the uncertain interpretations could be proven—a highly improbable task—to be historically accurate, what does the literary critic gain?

Agnes Foxwell provides us with one possible reply in *A Study of Sir Thomas Wyatt's Poems*. Biographical interpretation, she claims, illustrates Wyatt's gradual development as an artist. She dates the poems according to an *a priori* evolutionary theory that follows Wyatt progress from sin to repentance. Her theory establishes the basis for biographical sincerity by accounting for the apparent disparity between the poet of the sensual love lyrics and the poet of the Penitential Psalms: the sensual lyrics were composed during Wyatt's youth and the psalms just before his death. In other words, her version of Wyatt's life implies that he wrote about foolish lovers only when
he himself was a foolish lover, and about repentance only when he himself renounced his earlier profligacy. Her neat biographical picture, however, is too neat and rests on too many questionable assumptions. Even as she assigns "probable" dates to certain poems, she is forced to admit that "documentary evidence is missing." Other critics are free to assign other dates. For instance, she dates the Penitential Psalms (the cornerstone of her theory) after Wyatt's 1541 imprisonment; yet H. A. Mason, with far more respectable credentials in dealing with the psalms, dates them more than five years earlier in 1536.

The sad fact for the expressive critical theory is that Wyatt's poetry does not fit into any neat biographical package. Because evidence is lacking, his poems cannot be dated with the remotest precision nor can the authorship of many poems be established beyond doubt. Even granting some very dubious biographical assumptions, we cannot describe his poetry as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. The feelings in some poems contradict the feelings in others. Most likely, Wyatt was a poet who could adopt various fictional stances to suit his purposes: he could compose love lyrics one day, translate a moral treatise the next, return to the love lyrics, compose psalms, and then write more love lyrics. Indeed, in the course of our study we have frequently rejected biographical interpretations when they interfered with broader literary interpretations.
We are impressed with something that cannot be called biographical sincerity in Wyatt's poems. In truth, not only can biographical speculation interfere with the evaluation of poetry, but biographical sincerity produces much poetry that is very bad. Let us then discard the expressive theory as a valid approach to Wyatt. For the moment, let us push the artist, his biography, and his intentions into the background so that we can concentrate on the audience. What can the effect of Wyatt's poetry upon its audience tell us about its literary worth?

This focus upon audience is the essence of the pragmatic critical theory. During the eighteenth century, the pragmatic approach to art was very much in vogue. Emphasizing the second half of Horace's please and teach formula, the pragmatic critic feels that poetry is intended basically to teach the audience a lesson. Thus we find some critics (Warton, Nott, and Bell, for example) who praise the high moral perception Wyatt shows in his satires and psalms. These same critics, however, dislike the majority of Wyatt's lyrics for their lapses in moral taste; these lyrics either teach no moral lesson or immoral lessons. Consequently, the result of the pragmatic approach to Wyatt has been the downgrading of his love lyrics.

Some modern critics, namely H. A. Mason and John Stevens, approach Wyatt through a primarily pragmatic avenue. Mason feels that Wyatt's lyrics are a patchwork of cliches and conventional phrases, sewn together in a
haphazard manner. Stevens enlarges upon this condemnation by picturing Wyatt's audience as a select group of idle ladies and courtiers, assembled in some huge castle drawing room for an evening's light entertainment. The poet, who has spent the afternoon composing the kind of light verse this clique demands, reads his collection of cliches, his thinly disguised references to recent social and political scandals, and his exercises in polite sexual titillation to his audience. The end result of this picture is temporary delight for the audience of superficial sensibility, but nothing of lasting value for a wider, more cultured audience. Mason and Stevens find Wyatt an intellectual lightweight because his audience is intellectually lightweight; the poems composed for these social occasions reveal more about the dilletantish identity of his audience than about the tradition of poetry. Therefore, they relegate the study of Wyatt's poems to sociology. Interestingly enough though, Mason is a great defender of Wyatt's Peni- tential Psalms even as he devalues Wyatt's lyrics. For Mason, the authentic Wyatt is the humanist poet who imitates, translates, or paraphrases the sources of classical and scriptural wisdom. His favorite Wyatt is the poet who teaches his audience properly under the requisites of the pragmatic theory.

Clearly the pragmatic theory is incomplete for the evaluation of the majority of Wyatt's verse. Like the expressive theory, it assumes too much that is unprovable and
ignores too much that is obvious. We must take a critical approach that can deal with all of Wyatt's poems—his love lyrics as well as his philosophical verses. Let us then place the audience in the background with the artist and emphasize the work itself.

An approach that emphasizes the work is based on an objective theory, the third critical theory. The objective theory is a relatively modern development in aestheticism. Edgar Allan Poe demonstrates the objective theory when he defines poetry as "the rhythmical creation of beauty. Its sole arbiter is taste. With the intellect or with the conscience it has only collateral realtions. Unless incidentally, it has no concern whatever either with duty or with truth."5 Poe in his essay "The Poetic Principle" is reacting against the crude demand for moral didacticism in newspaper and magazine criticism in America. His voice and others led the way to a new theory of art for art's sake.

According to the objective theory, poetry is separate from biographical sincerity, religious and social morality, and the factual data in the surrounding world. Rather, poetry is pure beauty—useless in the scientific sense. Science classifies facts and reasons upon them; poetry, on the other hand, does not pretend to compete with the knowledge obtained through the study of science. Therefore, poetry becomes significant in itself without reference to anything external to itself.
Poetry that meets the requisites of the objective theory is analogous to a myth or a ritual. All three interpret natural events to reveal the world view of a group of people. The myth is a traditional story of ostensibly historical events, the ritual is an established form to confront the ground of being, and the poem is man's perception of nature. Primordial ceremony, racial memories, unconsciously held value systems, general beliefs, or the embodiment of a view is the essence of poetry. In short, poetry is not a representation of truth, but truth itself.

What can the objective approach tell us about Wyatt's poetry? We can see the relevance of a theory that speaks of myth and ritual being applied to a poetry that speaks of fortune. Those speakers who see themselves as wholly subject to fortune address fortune as a goddess; their poems may be interpreted as petitions or complaints. Those who confront fortune are engaged in the human ritual of struggle. Those who look down upon fortune erect other gods--experience, contemplation, or the Christian God. Fortune in Wyatt's poem is another name for a cosmic view of natural events; his poems are the acts of perception.

Applying the principles of the objective theory, we can observe the poems as most significant as objects in themselves. We can praise the use of myth and ritual as we determine whether the technical aspects of his verses are to our taste. Yet this theory is limited in scope. We
can do little more than state the fact that Wyatt's poetry revitalizes the myth of fortune. We need a supplementary approach that allows us to see poetry as more than an end in itself.

Let us then place the work in the background with the audience and the artist as we emphasize the universe. This emphasis upon the actuality that the poem imitates is the emphasis of the mimetic theory. The poem as imitation is a theory introduced by Plato; however, Plato's basic theory of a world of Ideas led him to conclude that poetry is twice removed from reality and therefore little more than misrepresentation. Aristotle followed Plato in believing poetry to be imitation, but justified poetry as an authentic form of knowledge with a desirable effect on the human mind. Because Aristotle rejected the theory of reality as pure, immaterial Ideas, he was able to conceive of reality as a process of development. Art, like nature, shapes raw materials into definite form and gives them meaning. Aristotle's definition of poetry is the basic mimetic theory.

The New Critics of the twentieth century have seized upon this mimetic concept of art as a source of knowledge. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, spokesmen for this group write:

Poetry gives us knowledge. It is a knowledge of ourselves in relation to the world of experience, and to that world considered, not statistically, but in terms of human purposes and values. Experience considered in terms of human purposes and values is dramatic--dramatic in that it is concrete, in that it involves a process, and in that it embodies the human effort to arrive--
through conflict--at meaning. We know that to conceive of poetry as knowledge is not the only possible way of conceiving it. It is, however, our basic assumption. We may attempt conceiving of Wyatt's poetry as knowledge because he relates his speaker's experiences to the world of experience considered in terms of human purposes and values. We can make the mimetic theory our basic assumption.

Our thematic focus on attitudes towards fortune has given us an educated insight into a single type of experience in Wyatt's poetry. In each poem the experience is unique because it is the experience of one person; yet taken together, these unique experiences become a compendium of possible experiences within the boundaries of our own lives as well as the lives of Wyatt's speakers. In other words, the feasibility of classifying attitudes towards fortune under four generic category headings demonstrates the universality of unique experiences. After all, uniqueness is the universal mode of all experience. Therefore, we can look upon these poems as sources of knowledge both about the individual speakers and ourselves.

Aristotle emphasized this universality of the mimetic creation in his law of probability or necessity. Mimetic art does not merely imitate the world of nature, but shapes nature into the form of the poem to give it unity and significance. Truth is stranger than fiction, in one sense, because it lacks the coherence of artistic form; truth may sometimes produce the freak of nature, but fiction produces
the non-accidental creation. Aristotle felt, therefore, that the truth of history is less universal or philosophical than the fiction of poetry because history particularizes where poetry generalizes. The poetic form develops the concrete elements of experience into a complete whole that illustrates what is possible, given man's temperament and his circumstances. This emphasis upon what might happen under the law of probability provides one of the keys to the mimetic theory.

The mimetic theory evaluates Wyatt's poetry as a source of knowledge—knowledge about the universality of unique experiences, knowledge about the probable. Essentially, Wyatt's poems offer us knowledge about states of mind. The sensitive reader may share these states of mind with the speaker in the poems. One may object that he does not need this type of knowledge because his own state of mind is all he needs to be concerned with. Yet this solipsistic attitude sets oneself up as the sole arbiter of what is of value. The desire to learn—a pleasurable activity—must also be satisfied with material outside one's own experience. Wyatt's poems can broaden one's knowledge of possible types of experience. Even though readers may respond differently to the same poem, the knowledge gained is valuable. People respond variously to the same experiences in life; why should they be forced into uniform responses in poetry? It is sufficient that the response to a poem contain the conviction that the poem is true—or
probable as Aristotle has it—and that the poem enables one to know more clearly than before.

Yet to supplement this value placed upon poetry as a source of knowledge, we also demand drama. Knowledge of states of mind is not statistical. We learn about the mind—not on the dissecting table but by observation of the living species. Robert Frost said it another way when he wrote that "everything written is as good as it is dramatic." A poem like a play is a dramatic fiction, and its speakers like the characters in a play are fictional creations.

Wyatt's speakers are individuals caught in the act of revealing themselves in their dramatic struggle with the implications of fortune. Not only is the poem what the speaker tells us it is; the poem is also about the speaker. The sensitive reader recognizes this double-sided knowledge and examines the speaker's statements against a context of human purposes and values. At this point—the essence of internal and external conflict—Wyatt's powers of psychological delineation determine the relative success or failure of the poem.

This delineation is felt in two aspects: (1) the attitude of the speaker towards his subject and (2) the implied relationship between the speaker and his audience.

The attitude towards the subject is our main concern. We have examined Wyatt's poems in light of what they say about fortune, and have established guidelines for a system of thematic classification. Within these classifications
we look for the authenticity of Wyatt's dramatic conception. If his speaker expresses an attitude in keeping with his fictional identity, the poem has achieved a certain success. If, furthermore, that attitude adds to the fictional identity, the success is greater. The quality of human depth, psychological soundness and completeness that is evidenced in the form of the poem also depends upon the relationship between the speaker and his audience.

This implied social relationship involves a manner that can be formal, informal, aloof, casual, solicitous or sarcastic—or any other adjective that describes a manner of address one can adopt. Our recognition of this manner depends on our knowledge of sixteenth century ways of speaking, and on our ability to detect departures from speaking styles. The whole question of irony rests upon our perception of this relationship. If the tone adopted by the speaker is consistent with his material, the poem has achieved a certain success. If the tone adds to the psychological complex that is the speaker, the poem has achieved greater success.

In summation, our classification of Wyatt's poems into thematic attitudes towards fortune may serve as a step towards critical evaluation. We can see the need for a critical approach that deals with this aspect of his poetry. Expressive, pragmatic, and objective theories seem shortsighted, but the mimetic theory seems promising. With the mimetic theory we can evaluate the poems as
sources of knowledge—knowledge about states of mind expressed or implied in dramatic terms. In the final analysis, the relative success of Wyatt's poems depends upon his attention to psychological detail in the realization of the characters of his speakers. Wyatt's realization is primarily in terms of his speakers's attitudes towards their subject and their relationships with their audience.
NOTES

Chapter I


2This sketch includes only the most significant editions. Among the others that exist are Sewell (1717), Chalmers (1810), Nicholas (1831), Bell (1854), Clarke (1868), Arber (1870), Flugel (1896-97), Arber (1900), Griffith and Lai (1930), Padelford (1907), Cole and Cole (1928), Swallow (1949), Harrier (1952), and Hughey (1960).


4Quoted in Ibid., p. 266.


31 op. cit., pp. 348-49
32 op. cit., p. 94.
33 op. cit., p. 130.
35 op. cit., p. 118, p. 106.
37 op. cit., p. 139.
38 op. cit., p. 326.

Chapter II

1 Sergio Baldi, Sir Thomas Wyatt, p. 17.


3 For example, F. W. Bateson, English Poetry (1950), ventured that the "they" were perhaps deer; Arthur Moore, "The Design of Wyatt's 'They Fle from Me,'" Anglia, 71 (1952), 102-11, also felt "they" were harts; S. F. Johnson, "Wyatt's 'They Fle from Me,'" Expl, 19 (1953), Item 39, described the "they" as "birds of an earlier season"; E. E. Duncan-Jones, "Wyatt's 'They Fle from Me,'" Expl, 12 (1953), Item 9, claimed that "she" was intended as a non-metaphorical lady, not an abstraction; J. D. Hainsworth, "Sir Thomas Wyatt's Use of the Love Convention," EIC, 7 (1957), 90-95, found "they" to be average courtiers and mistresses; Frederick Combellack, "Wyatt's 'They Fle from Me,'" Expl, 17 (1959), Item 36, described "they" as the doves of Venus; Arnold Stein, "Wyatt's 'They Fle from Me,'" SR, 67 (1959), 28-44, found the vagueness about referents to be "a sort of multiple mask afforded by the gentle lover observing the code of secrecy"; Albert S. Gerard, "Wyatt's 'They Fle from Me,'" EIC, 11 (1961), 359-66 and Hainsworth's reply 366-68 banded about the grammar and motifs; Ann Berthoff, "The Falconer's Dream of Trust: Wyatt's 'They Fle from Me,'" SR, 71 (1963), 477-94, maintained that the metaphor is about falconry and not merely a hunt. And so it goes.


6 "Sir Thomas Wyatt" and Some Collected Studies, p. 141.


Chapter III


2 An interesting point for speculation is whether the text of Petrarch that Wyatt worked from could have read "sorte," i.e., fortune, instead of "morte."

3 *Humanism and Poetry*, p. 198. Mason specifically cites the word "assign" in conjunction with fortune as a cliche whose previous overuse "drags the words into an inferior context in which genuine feeling stifles." However, a glance at Mason's index heading "Poems, lyrical, medieval cliches in" reveals Mason's inability to distinguish between skillful and unskillful handling of conventions.

Chapter IV


Chapter V


5 Ibid., p. 38.

6 Arabic numerals within parentheses indicate verse number in the lengthy Penitential Psalms (CVIII).

Chapter VI

1 *Early Sixteenth Century Lyrics*, p. 227.

2 “Sir Thomas Wyatt and Anne Boleyn,” *ELN*, 6 (1968), 94.


4 *Humanism and Poetry*, pp. 204-05.


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