R O Z P R A W Y

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ROBERT SOUTHWELL, 1561 (?) — 1595
A REVALUATION

I. INTRODUCTION

The literary criticism has been as scanty as the biographical material is vast, though interest in Southwell as a writer has never been quite lost. A good deal of work based on contemporary and seventeenth-century Catholic historians has been done by recent Catholic research, interested in him as a martyr, but comparatively little attention has been paid to him as a poet, and what has been written is too often an attempt to swell a minor poet into a major one rather than an attempt to assess him on his own poetical merits. It does him no service to be compared to his own advantage with Spenser, with Shakespeare, or even with Gray and Wordsworth (as a nature poet!) [1], or to make unduly large claims for his "influence" on practically all the English writers of note in his own day. There has also been a persistent attempt to connect him, willy-nilly, with Shakespeare, the latest phase of which, now that Grosart's linking of *St. Peter's Complaint* with *Venus and Adonis* has been discred-

[1] P. Janelle, *Robert Southwell the Writer*, London 1935, p. 268 and p. 281.

ited for reasons of dating, seeks an affinity between the former poem and *The Rape of Lucrece* [2].

It seems therefore proper to seek to re-adjust the balance. Southwell was a poet, and a true poet, but he cannot be made into a major poet by any interpretation of that term.

Discounting the scattered earlier allusions to his poems or dubious biographical details only of interest in showing that he was still read and appreciated in periods of very different outlook and manners, the first serious attempt to give a critical appreciation of Southwell as a poet was made in 1872 by A. B. Grosart, so far the most competent editor of the complete works [3]. He prefaced his privately published edition of the Latin and English poems, transcribed from MSS or early editions, with a short biography and a sympathetic and enthusiastic critical account of the poet. He is more grieved than shocked that Southwell should have been a Catholic, but approves the poet's attempt to lead a reaction against the "vain and amatorious" themes of the poetry of his day. He attempts to connect Southwell with Shakespeare, regarding *St. Peter's Complaint* as a direct reply to *Venus and Adonis*, (it will be shown later that all Southwell's poems, including the longer version of the Complaint, must have been written before the publication of the latter) and pointing out certain similarities, e. g. the metre of the two long poems mentioned. He even conjectures that the dedicatory sonnet by R. S. to Spenser's *Faerie Queene* was written by Southwell, whom he pictures rather improbably as having contact with the leading poets of the day.

Every student of English poetry owes a great debt of gratitude to Grosart, who was one of the first capable workers in the field of sixteenth-century literature and to whose enthusiasm and patience we owe the collected works of many writers known only by name at the beginning of the nineteenth century. But Grosart was a Protestant clergyman; his methods were not

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[2] Ch. Devlin, *"The Month"*, September and November 1950.

[3] A. B. Grosart, *The Complete Poems of Robert Southwell*, 1872 (printed for private circulation), excluding the disputed *Fourfold Meditation*.

those of modern scholarship, and he wrote at a time when it was customary to hold a simplified view of Elizabethan England as a meeting-ground of Puritan Protestantism and Renaissance paganism, leaving the Old Religion largely out of account, Shakespeare was taken as the great representative of the age, and lesser writers were considered mainly in the light of their relation to him. For Grosart, it was an unhappy accident that Southwell was a Catholic; what was of importance was that he was a poet writing in the time of Shakespeare.

In the standard histories of English literature practically every statement of fact (and hence frequently of opinion) is demonstrably false, and each successive writer has almost invariably been content to reproduce the criticism of Grosart [4].

There are, among other items of lesser value, three very useful articles by H. Thurston in "The Month"; *Father Southwell the Euphuist,* relating to the prose writings, February 1895; *Father Southwell the Popular Poet,* March 1895; and *Father Southwell and his Peter's Plaint,* a commentary later superseded by the admirable article by Professor Mario Praz in The Modern Language Review for July 1924, *Robert Southwell's Saint Peter's Complaint and its Italian source.* Thurston's articles are however rather jottings for future study, valuable as far as they go but leaving much unfinished.

An Appreciation of Robert Southwell (1929), an American thesis by Rose A. Morton, is weak, being too sentimental and having an insufficient knowledge of the period to have an adequate scale of critical values. In her edition of some of the shorter poems in 1926 [5], Mrs. C. M. Hood is more interested in biographical than in literary questions, in which she again echoes Grosart.

Finally, in 1935 Professor Pierre Janelle of the Catholic University of Clermont published his book, *Robert Southwell the Writer.* This provides valuable literary criticism as well as a full

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[4] E. g. the article by H. Child in the *Cambridge History of Literature,* IV, 7.

[5] C. M. Hood, *The Book of Robert Southwell,* Oxford 1926.

biography, but is too enthusiastic in stressing the merits of a fellow-Catholic.

M. Janelle goes to the other extreme from Grosart. For him, the most important thing is that Southwell was a Catholic, and by happy accident he was also a poet. He makes the claim that Southwell was not merely an isolated survival amid the boisterous paganism of Elizabeth's reign. He asserts that the real importance of Southwell is not recognized, that he should not be judged by the same standards as other Elizabethan authors since he represented an altogether different and even hostile ideal which was attempting to gain a footing in England, and that he started a tradition of literary work with a lasting influence both upon English letters and upon the English character. M. Janelle has made a thorough-going and scholarly investigation of Southwell's life and works, both prose and poetry, and given incomparably the best account so far presented. Yet his estimate of Southwell's importance is exaggerated, even when backed by all his learning and eloquence.

The book is a case of special pleading. An ardent Catholic, accusing Green and Taine of a biassed view of a naturally Protestant England, he fails to see that he himself is equally biassed in the opposite direction. Rightly claiming Southwell as a leading Catholic poet, he fails to understand that Southwell was so widely read not because he was a Catholic but, especially as the years went on, rather in spite of this. Lastly, in his account of the Catholic persecution, he minimizes the political action of which it was largely the consequence. In Elizabethan England, Catholicism became popularly identified with treason (a stigma which clung to it for centuries and begot a distrust still very much alive in certain circles even today). The long succession of plots against Elizabeth fostered if not instigated by Catholics was in itself a sufficient cause of this. Though Southwell himself was careful to keep out of politics, many of his companions took an active part in conspiracies, and this tinge of infection naturally affected the circulation and publication of his literary work.

It therefore seems worth while attempting a re-assessment of Southwell's place in English poetry. He was immensely popular in his own day, and for half a century after, as the number of editions of his poems shows; there were however other reasons for this besides his quality as a poet. It is just this question of religion that may have led to the over-estimation of his work in his own day (and in ours), and to the later neglect of a writer who is certainly not without importance and merit.

It is foolish to exaggerate this importance, or to pretend that Southwell was anything more than a minor poet. But it is usually the lesser writers who give the best reflection of the modern of thought and feeling of their day, so that to anyone interested in the history of English literature it is always of value to see what a poet such as Southwell was trying to do, why he was trying to do that and not something else, and why his poems have their peculiar form and character. It is especially useful to have such a groundwork in such an age as Southwell's, which was probably the greatest formative period in English literature. Spenser had already published part of his work before Southwell ceased to write, and Shakespeare published his first poems shortly afterwards. There is no direct connection between these and Southwell, who on the whole looked back to the style of the poets of Henry VIII's time rather than forward, yet strange as it may seem to us today, he was for a brief time more widely read than either, as a cursory comparison of the respective numbers of editions will show, and from this we may see something of the taste of the reading public of those days.

Since we are concerned with Southwell's place in English poetry, only his English poems will be considered, and his prose-writings and Latin verses will be disregarded. His prose, though mostly written in the fashionable Euphuistic style and widely read in his own day, was written *ad hoc*; with the exception of *Mary Magdalens Tears,* it belongs rather to religious history than to literature. His Latin verses, youthful exercises in the Jesuit imitative style, have perhaps some little importance in the study of his English poems, but certainly none in the study of English poetry in general.

II. *THE CANON OF THE POEMS;* MSS AND EARLY EDITIONS

Before any discussion of the work of any Elizabethan poet, it is as well to decide what he wrote and if all the poems ascribed to him are really his. This task is on the whole less difficult in the case of Southwell than in that of most of his contemporaries. For one thing, though most poets of the day included religious poems in their output, Southwell alone was professedly and solely a religious poet, so that the narrowness of his range aids the certainty of identification. Again, Southwell spent only six years in England, and those among a rather limited society, before he was caught and imprisoned in 1592, so that those who copied his poems into their commonplace books had a pretty good idea of the author even if they did not know him personally, and there is little chance of any important new material turning up in some unexpected quarter. Southwell's poems were published barely two months after his death, so soon that it is permissible to suppose that the printer had already had the MSS in his possession. Lastly, and most important, Southwell was not a fine gentleman writing occasional verse only for his friends and shunning publicity, nor yet a player-poet scribbling against time and avoiding multiplication of his work for fear of piracy; he was a careful and methodical Jesuit who regarded poetry as a handmaid to religion. Since he had a definite purpose in writing verse and considered the turning of poetry from worldly themes to the service of God as part of his mission, he most certainly took some care of his verses once they were written. Though we have no MSS of his poems certainly in his own hand with the exception of Stonyhurst A/V 4, the draft of a translation of a few verses of *Tansillo's Lacrime di San Pietro,* the existing MSS and early editions tally sufficiently for it to be supposed that they may have had a common source in the poet's own MSS, which were probably destroyed for safety's sake on the news of his arrest.

As Southwell's poems were circulated in MSS in accordance with the custom of the day and because of the difficulty of printing any form of Catholic literature (though this difficulty

was evaded apparently without unpleasant consequences even during the poet's life), there is no lack of material. Its value as a textual basis is another matter. The shorter poems are found in three MSS, one at Stonyhurst College in Lancashire and two in the British Museum, Harleian 6291 and Additional 10,422. The last also contains a transcript of *Saint Peter's Complaint,* supposed unique until a second was found in Peter Mowle's commonplace book at Oscott College, near Birmingham. This also contains the disputed piece *A Foure-fould Meditation,* of which there are two further MSS in the Bodleian, Rawlinson 219 and Tanner 118, and one in the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. The only MSS of the poems said to be in the author's own hand are preserved by the Jesuits at Stonyhurst.

MS A/V 4 contains a varied collection of Latin prose fragments, then Latin verse, then some drafts of English prose and finaly a rough draft of a poem, *The Peter Playnte,* so much revised and interlined that it is in many places hard to decipher. The whole manuscript is written in the same cramped and imperfect English secretary hand, very unlike the "small, neat, rather schoolboy-like Italian hand" of two prose MSS, one in the royal archives in Brussels and one at Newbury in Berkshire, which are also described by M. Janelle as being in Southwell's autograph [6]. At intervals on the irregularly-sized folios, there are inscriptions in a contemporary hand, "P. Rob. Southw. Martyris autographum" [7]. With the exception of the last, in paler ink and

[6] Janelle, op. cit., p. 143, assumes the latter to have been written by Southwell on information supplied by Father Newdigate, S. J. of the contemporary autograph attribution of Fr. Christopher Grene. The former is not described. My own feeling is that even contemporary attributions should not be taken on trust without a careful comparison of MSS, especially in the case of such a poet as Southwell, where a pious temptation may have led to a mistaken attribution by contemporaries anxious to have a relic of the martyr.

[7] R. E. S. Vol. 2. 1926 (April). H. Jenkinson, *English Punctation of the Sixteenth Century:* "...the chief cause of error and misconception in the matter of autographs is a tendency in modern students to attribute to the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a moral attitude in this matter which really belongs only to a later period. Thus, for a modern copyist to write the signature of another man, without any indication that

perhaps in a more recent hand, all these inscriptions seem to have been made at the same time. The first of the Latin poems *(De Assumptione B. V. M.)* bears a dedication, " Tuiss. in Dno Robertus Southwellus". Apart from this signature, only the author himself could have written the rough draft of *The Peter Playnte,* and so it is quite safe to assume that as this is in his autograph so is the rest of the MS.

A/V 27, written in a clear and careful Italian hand and well bound in vellum, contains the majority of the English poems and all the Latin poems. One complete poem, *The prodigall chylds soulewracke,* and a few corrections are written in a crabbed and cramped secretary hand in very black ink. This was rashly supposed by Grosart to have been Southwell's own hand; the claim is rather contemptuously dismissed by Janelle [8], on the ground that the main hand is obviously that of a scribe and that of the corrections bears no resemblance to Southwell's autograph. There is certainly no resemblance to Southwell's signature: but then a signature is often a little mannered and not quite similar to the hand used e. g. in the corpus of a letter. It seems to me that it is not quite impossible for this to be a specimen of Southwell's secretary hand.

Educated abroad, Southwell naturally used the Italian hand current on the Continent. At home the native "secretary" hand was as yet more widely used, though many educated people could write both. Elizabeth herself has left youthful MSS in the new and fashionable clear writing which was gradually to replace the less legible native style [9]. As part of his preparation for the English mission, Southwell certainly had to learn to write in the English manner, if only for fear of betraying himself if he had practice only in the foreign hand. Now M. Janelle points out that the hand in A/V 4 is a compromise between Italian and secretary, and suggests that Southwell had made a sort of fair

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it is not by the signatory's own hand, is a thing definitely wrong, against the canons; the sixteenth century, and the periods before and after it, had no such canon."

[8] Op. cit., p. 142, p. 305.

[9] *The Mirror of the Sinful Soule.* Facsimile in British Museum.

copy of his literary production even before he left Rome. Could not the corrections in A/V 27 represent a further stage in Southwell's secretary hand? Allowing for differences in the ink and the cut of the pen, the differences between the secretary hand in A/V 4 and that in A/V 27 did not seem to me to be so completely irreconcilable as M. Janelle would suggest. The question is rather one for an expert in hand-writing to decide.

A better argument against the authenticity of the hand would have been the lateness of the MS — if it is late. H. Janelle points out in another place [10] that as the order of the poems in the Stonyhurst MS is almost the same as that in the B. M. MSS, which are known to be late, it is probably also late. This does not follow. He suggests that the MSS were all copied from the early editions, but at the same time describes the order of the poems as "haphazard" and differing from that in the early editions of the *Complaint* and the *Maeoniae*; if they were copied from these, however, why do they not follow the same order? And what of the poems appearing in the MSS and not in the early editions? Again, the order in which the poems were printed is not necessarily the order in which they were written. It would be quite natural for the poet to group his poems according to subject later, when preparing his material for the press, e. g. all the *Magdalene* or all the *Virgin* poems need not have been written consecutively, and as the subject to a certain extent dictates the style, too much cannot be made of "internal evidence" in poems written over such a short period.

M. Janelle also bases his repudiation of Grosart's assumption on the grounds of the nature of the corrections, stating that "the corrector, whoever he may have been, was only anxious to do away with absurdities for which either the copyist, or the text he copied was responsible" [11]. But may not the poet himself have been anxious to do away with the errors of a copyist? M. Janelle takes special notice of one of these corrections on fol. 41 a (*The Visitation*):

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[10] Op. cit., p. 159

[11] Op. cit., p. 305.

> And heavenly stile with handmayds sill acquaints,
> Her youth to age, her selfe to sicke she lends.
> (sill corrected to t o y l e, s e l f e to h e a l t h).

(My own transcription shows the spelling "helth"). He then remarks on the substitution of "helth"; "In neither case is the meaning clear or the sentence grammatical, and there is no very forcible reason why the second reading should be thought superior; certainly the uncorrected line would be more in keeping with Southwell's habitual use of alliteration". But with all due deference, the corrected line is more consistent with Southwell's habitual and much more characteristic use of antithesis, besides making better sense. As to the quibble over the grammar, Elizabethan usage was freer and less pedantic than it later became, and here it does not obscure the meaning.

M. Janelle also supposes that the Stonyhurst MS was directly descended from the Harleian; it seems to me that this is a somewhat arbitrary assumption, and may perhaps be related to his desire to confute Grosart. On the contrary, it is even more probable that the Harleian is copied from the Stonyhurst MS, since the corrections in the later are incorporated. If (which is admittedly doubtful) the correction are Southwell's, of course that settles the matter; but even if not, the Harleian still seems to be later. It appears from the equality of the writing and the colour of the ink to have been written all at one time. Like the Stonyhurst MS, it is written in a rather large and very clear Italian hand, but there are some careless errors and it has been so badly damaged by damp that the lower part of each page is illegible. The order of the poems corresponds with that of the Stonyhurst MS, and in neither is the longer version of *Saint Peter's Complaint* given. From this omission it might seem that the MS is early, were it not for a signature "Charles Cavendish" on the last page, in the same hand as the rest, followed by the date 1620, a quarter of a century after the poet's death. M. Janelle does not seem to have noticed this date, which is (as far as I remember) preceded by some blank pages.

As has already been observed, at this period handwriting does not offer a trustworthy clue in dating, for though the

Italian hand only came into general use during the seventeenth century, it was used both by scholars and by fashionable folk much earlier; and conversely, the secretary hand persisted well into the same century. Therefore the fact that the Stonyhurst MS is written in an Italian hand and corrected in a secretary hand gives no help. There is however an obvious relation between the two MSS; and from the date of the Harleian I should judge it to be the later.

The other British Museum MS, Additional 10,422, is written in a secretary hand, which is somewhat surprising in view of the late date given at the end of the book, 1681. Turnbull, in his edition of 1856, thought that this might be the lost MS formerly kept in the library of the Catholic Chapel at Bury St. Edmund's; but according to the list given by Oliver in his "Collections" towards illustrating the History of the... Society of Jesus" (1845), the contents and arrangement do not quite correspond. It agrees in general with the arrangement of the Stonyhurst MS, suggesting that it had a common source for the short poems; the chief differences are the addition of the longer version of *Saint Peter's Complaint* and its prefatory verses "Deare eye that daynest" and the omission of the Latin poems with the exception of *Clara ducum soboles,* which is copied in a very clear and careful script at the end of the book, followed by a brief note and the date "This last of September 1681". Then comes the English continuation, *Of Howardes stem,* in the same hand as the rest of the MS, scotching the supposition that the Latin verses and the date are later additions. The short poems have certain mistakes agreeing with those of the Stonyhurst MS before correction [12]. There is a re-arrangement of the order of the verses

[12] E. g. the Stonyhurst MS has:

The Visitation, I 5

Her youth to age her self to sicke the lends [*self* corrected to *helth*].

I dye alive III 1

Thus still I dye yet still I do remayne [*remayne* corrected to *revive*]

Lesse in delaye II 6

Let thy farewoll guide thy thoughte [*farewell* corrected to *forewyll*]

In each case, the Harleian MS follows the corrected, but the Additional

in the *Complaint*; sixteen verses have been transposed from the latter part of the poem to the earlier, so that vv. 104—119 are found between vv. 39—40, as numbered in Cawood's edition of 1595. The same order is followed by Wolfe in his probably pirated edition of 1595 (which Janelle erroneously describes as identical with Cawood's), but not in any other. Hence probably the theory repeated by Janelle that the Add. MS may have been copied from Wolfe.

However, a second MS of the longer version of the *Complaint* is in the library at Oscott in a commonplace book written by Peter Mowle, begun on April 20, 1595, less than two months after Southwell's death, and finished in 1605. The whole book is written in the same clear though occasionally careless hand, and besides the *Complaint* contains prose extracts from several authors, including Southwell's *Epistle of a Religious Priest unto his Father, A Foure-fould Meditation,* and some shorter religious poems of unknown authorship, some of which I think there is a good case for attributing to Philip Howard. The arrangement of the *Complaint* agrees with that of the B. M. Add. MS, and there is a curious little copyist's error which seems to indicate that the Add. MS version was copied from Peter Mowle, and that neither was copied from print. Verse 71 (according to the order in Cawood's edition of 1595) starts: "Come shame the liuery of offending minde". In the Oscott MS the fourth word is almost illegible; it might be *liuerie,* it might be something like *lincea.* The Add. MS has *lincea,* written especially clearly and as if after deliberation. But no such word is found in any of the printed versions, nor did it exist in the language; and from the care with which it is written it is obviously not the usual type of copyist's error due to carelessness, speed, or tiredness.

From this brief description, it may be seen that while there are no authentic autograph MSS of the poems with the excep-

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the uncorrected version. In certain other and equally frequent cases however, the Additional agrees with the Stonyhurst corrected version, showing that whatever its source, this was not either of the other MSS now known. For technical reasons it has proved impossible to show in print the deleted and the newly-inscribed words in the MS above each other as shown in the manuscript of the author of the paper (editor's note).

tion of A/V 4 at Stonyhurst (*The Peter Playnte*) and possibly the corrections and one poem in A/V 27, the contents of the various MSS are substantially in agreement. Their number also serves as evidence that Southwell was read fairly widely, and that his works were still considered worth the trouble of copying up to a comparatively late date. Taking into account other MSS that are known to have been lost [13], the material is rich in comparison with that of the majority of Elizabethan poets.

The number of editions of Southwell's work is surprising when compared with that of other poets who are today regarded as at least of equal importance, Greene or Breton for example, or even Marlowe himself; and especially surprising when the severity of the censorship is remembered. In the first year of Elizabeth's reign, 1558—9, a series of "Injunctions given by Her Majesty" were promulgated, strictly forbidding the printing of "any book or paper of what sort, nature or in what language soever it be, except the same be first licensed by Her Majesty, or by VI of her Privy Council" [14]. In 1566, the Star Chamber issued an "Ordinance for the reformation of divers disorders in the printing and uttering of books", followed by a series of royal proclamations; and in 1585 the number of authorized presses was greatly reduced. In order to ensure more efficient control, only two were permitted to exist outside London, both at the Universities. Throughout the reign, by fits and starts according to the political atmosphere of the moment, there was a good deal of searching in the houses of suspected recusants; and to show that the injunctions were to be taken seriously, severe punishments were meted out. For instance, in 1584 William Carter was sentenced to a traitor's death for publishing

[13] E. g. the "little book written, called Saint Peter's Complaint" found along with other manuscripts in the cloak-bag of John Bolt the musician, and mentioned at his trial in 1593 (J. Morris, *Life of Gerard*, London 1872, p. 155.); or the lost MS from Bury St. Edmund's mentioned by Oliver; or the MS described by Gillow; etc.

[14] This and the following details are taken from G. Sampson, *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature*, 1941, p. 225, and H. Thurston's articles *Catholic Writers and Elizabethan Readers* in "The *Month*", February and March 1895.

"naughtie papysticall" books, and in the next year Thomas Awfield, a seminary priest, and Thomas Webley, a dyer's servant, were executed for bringing seditious book into the country. In 1602 two Catholics, Duckett and Collings, were hanged at Tyburn for printing and disseminating an edition of Southwell's "Humble Supplication to Her Majestie". In order to show that this severity was not directed only against Catholics, but included all those who troubled the somewhat precarious peace of the realm, the similar fate of two Puritans, Barrow and Greenwood, should be mentioned; and the story of the Puritan *Martin Marprelate* tracts is too well known to need comment.

Mere possession of an unlawful book however was not usually made the sole ground of conviction, as is shown by e. g. the case of John Bolt in 1593. He was caught with quite a collection of Catholic literature, but escaped unharmed to end a long life peacefully in a convent abroad.

Although, according to Gerard, Southwell had the use of a secret press [15], nothing is known of what was printed. Indeed, there is considerable confusion as to the dates of his earliest publications; his prose works were circulated in the usual manner in MS before finding their way to the printer's, and though *An Epistle of Comfort, The Triumphes over Death, A Supplication to Her Majesty,* and *Mary Magdalens Tears* were all stated by Grosart to have been printed by 1593, the only issues of which there is now certain evidence are those of *Mary Magdalen's Funeral Tears.* This is entered in the Stationer's Register to

[15] "P. Southwellus qui in modo iuvandi et lucrandi animos excelluit totus prudens et pius, mansuetus etiam et amabilis... in domos suo Londini Prelum habuit ad imprimendos libros suos, quos quidem edidit egregios." MS account of Gerard's missionary life in England, written in 1609 and preserved at Stonyhurst. See also communication of the Very Rev. Dr. Oliver to the Cath. Mag. for Sept. 1832. See also article in the "Times Literary Supplement", May 23rd 1935, p. 336, on an exhibition in the Bodleian Library at Oxford of books connected with Thomas More and John Fisher. A section of this exhibition was given to the work of Catholic secret presses, the chief of which were at Greenstreet, East Ham; Stonor Park, near Henley; Arundel House, the Strand; and Birchley Hall in Lancashire. The assignment of individual publications to individual presses has aroused some controversy during the last few years.

Gabriel Cawood on Nov. 8th, 1591, "under the hand of the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury" [16]. Perhaps the earliest issues of this work have vanished; perhaps Cawood was afraid to print the work while the author was proscribed and hunted; the first known edition was in 1594 when Southwell was already in the Tower. Cawood published this during Southwell's lifetime and with his consent because, as was explained in the preface, "copies had flown abroad so fast and so false" that the author was driven "to the print" in order to prevent the circulation of a corrupt text (quoted from the edition of 1594 in the Bodleian). This was all quite lawful and above-board, and nothing whatever happened to Cawood, who was a thoroughly reputable printer and publisher, a warden of the Stationer's Company, and the only Protestant publisher to issue anything of Southwell's during the latter's lifetime. He seems to have had some understanding with purchasers of Catholic literature, more on business than on religious grounds. He was also the publisher of Lyly's *Euphues*, and in 1593 of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, in answer to which Grosart mistakenly supposed Southwell to have written his *Complaint*.

Whatever may have been the case with his prose, Southwell's poems were certainly all published posthumously. His preface to *Saint Peter's Complaint* "Poets by abusing their talent", and the prefatory verses "Deare aye that daynest to let fall a looke" show that he had it in mind to publish, though his capture and imprisonment made this impossible for him to arrange himself.

The first edition of *Saint Peter's Complaint*, with the addition of some short poems, was entered to Gabriel Cawood on April 5th 1595, only six weeks after Southwell's death [17]. It is possible that the MS for Saint Peter's Complaint was in Cawood's hands before Southwell's imprisonment, since the poet obviously intended it for publication and had already entrusted Cawood with *Mary Magdalen's Tears*. But even the most daring publisher, let

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[16] F. Arber, *A Transcript of the Register of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554—1640*, 5 vols., London 1875—94.

[17] Arber, *A Transcript of the Register of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554—1640*, 5 vols, London 1875—94.

alone one with an official respectability to consider, would scarcely issue anything by an imprisoned Jesuit in the face of the stringent injunctions by the Star Chamber against unauthorized printing, and no licence would be given before the trial. If however Cawood were in possession of the MS, this would explain the rapidity of production after Southwell's death.

Saint Peter's Complaint seems to have been the most popular of all Southwell's works. It ran through at least fourteen editions in the next forty-five years, and was re-edited with varying success by Walters in 1817. Turnbull in 1856, Grosart in 1872 and Joseph Stewart in 1878.

Grosart, in the preface to his editions of the poems, assigns the first edition to John Wolfe, who printed a book similar in content to that of Cawood in the same year, 1595, but with verses 104—119 of the *Complaint* transposed in the same manner as in the B. M. and Oscott MSS. Since however the book is entered to Cawood, and remembering Wolfe's notoriety as a pirate, it is safe to say that Wolfe is not the original publisher, especially as Cawood brought out two further editions in 1597 and 1599, and as the copyright was retained by W. Leake, his successor in the business. It is known that Wolfe occasionally printed for Cawood (e. g. Watson's Hekatompathia in 1582), and in this way he may have been able to get hold of any MS already in Cawood's possession; or he may have come by a copy independently. The book is not entered to him in the records of the Stationer's Company, and though he was himself a member of the Company and comparatively respectable by this time, his old habits sometimes proved too strong. He does not seem to have entirely given up piracy; at any rate he was in trouble with the authorities as late as 1600 for pirating Hayward's *Life of Henry IV* [18].

There is only one copy of this edition now known, in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge [19]. It bears the marks of

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[18] R. B. McKerrow, *Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers, 1557—1640.* Bibliographical Society, 1910.

[19] Janelle, op. cit., follows Grosart in accepting this as the first edition in his bibliography.

haste, since the printer has not even troubled to correct the alignment. Could Wolfe have laid hands on some MS already in Cawood's possession and brought out the work on his own?

This rush to print by two very acute business men and the readiness to pirate goes to prove that they expected a wide and ready sale of the poems, even though the author was rather dangerous to handle. Nothing seems to have happened, however, and on October 17th of the same year *Maeoniae, or certaine excellent poems by R. S.* (a collection of most of the short poems which had not already been printed at the end of the Complaint) was entered to John Busbie, who published two editions before the year was out, with an artful preface *The Printer to the Gentlemen Readers* urging the purchase of "so rich a treasury of heauenly wisdom" for "so small a mite of money". An edition brought out in Edinburgh (? 1600) by Robert Waldegrave is an interesting example of bowdlerization, for all mention of doctrines not in fashion is carefully expurgated and replaced by more orthodox ideas. References to the Blessed Sacrament are altered, and the Catholic Mother is changed to the Presbyterian Father; a few lines will show the nature of the "improvements".

1595 edition.

Can *Mother* like what did the Sonne abiure,
Or *hart deflowr'd a virgin's* loue redeeme?
The *Mother* nothing loues that Sonne doth loath,
Ah! lothsome wretch detested of them both.

1600

Can *Father* like what did the Sonne abiure
Or *murthering heart a Father's* loue redeeme?
The *Father* nothing loues that Sonne doth loathe
Ah, lothsome wretch detested of them both.

The shorter poems are the same as those given by Cawood, but the prefatory epistles are omitted. A reprint appeared in 1634.

Te next edition is undated; the title-page reads: Saint ‖ Peters Com ‖ plaint ‖ newly augmented with other Poems ‖ (device) ‖ London ‖ Printed by H(enry) L(ownes) for William Leake and ‖ (are to be sold at his shop in Paules Church ‖ yard, at the sign

of the holy ‖ Ghost ‖). Some poems not previously published are added (see bibliography). Grosart, who based his own edition on this issue, supposes it to have been published in 1596, because his own copy as well as a second which he heard about but did not see, was so dated "in a contemporary hand". But there is an entry in the Stationers' Register on July 6th, 1602 [20], to Leake, who succeeded Cawood in that year and took over several valuable copyrights along with the rest of the business, which, while leaving the exact date of publication unsettled, proves that it is at any rate not 1596.

Leake's successor William Barret produced a similarly augmented edition in 1615, and a second in 1620. In the same year he also published an effort at a collected edition, adding *Maeoniae, Marie Magdalens Funerall Teares, The Triumphs over Death,* and *Short Rules of Good Life.* The verses "To the Christian Reader" precede the last treatise, and are here printed for the first time. In 1630 J. Haviland printed a further edition with similar contents but adorned with a wood-cut of a monk with a rope round his neck and his eyes raised to heaven. Since the publishers of the day were not scrupulous about the authenticity of their illustrations, this is very unlikely to have been a portrait of Southwell, particularly as it does not in the least resemble the pencil drawing at Stonyhurst. This edition was repeated in 1636.

All these issues were either anonymous, or gave only the initials R. S., often qualified by the description of the author of *Saint Peter's Complaint.*

Another edition was published abroad in 1616, probably at St. Omer, *permissu superiorum,* and repeated in 1620. It contains *Saint Peter's Complaint* and a few short poems; the poet's name is found in full for the first time in the second of these issues — the Rev. Father Robert Southwell, Priest of the Society of Jesus. The text is however more corrupt than the editions printed in England; these continue to give only the initials of the author up to the last of the early editions in 1638.

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[20] Arber, op. cit.

During the Commonwealth and Restoration, as might be expected, no further editions appeared, and during the eighteenth century there is little mention of the poet and nothing of his work is reprinted until in 1783 a few poems were appended to Francis Godolphin Waldron's edition of Jonson's *Sad Shepherd;* these were then transferred by Headley to his *Select Beauties of English Poetry.*

In 1817 the Rev. Joseph Walter's amusingly delicate edition appeared, in which the improprieties of the poet whose aim it was to purify English poetry are suitably refined. The text is modernized, and only 116 verses of *Saint Peter's Complaint* are included, with a few of the shorter poems chosen apparently at random from the early editions. Though on the title-page Walters states his edition to have been "reprinted from the edition of 1595, with important additions from an original MS", and alludes to a second MS apparently lent to him by Bishop Heber (probably the British Museum Additional MS 10,422, which was bought at the Heber sale in 1836), no particulars are given, and he tampered with the text to a surprising extent. As an example of his editorial methods, one quotation may suffice.

1595

Is this the haruest of his sowing toyle?
Did Christ *manure* thy hart to breed him bryars?
Or *doth it need this vnaccustomd* soyle,
With hellish dunge to fertile heauens desyers?
No, no the Marle that periuries doth yeeld,
May spoyle a good, not fat a barraine field.

1817

Is this the harvest of his sowing toil?
Did Christ *enrich* thy heart to breed him briars
Or *is this barren and ungenial* soil
Too cold to fertilize with heaven's desires?
Ah! no: — the marl that perjury doth yield
May spoil a good, not fat a barren field.

A collected edition was published by Turnbull in 1856, based somewhat unsatisfactorily on the London edition of 1634 and the British Museum Additional MS 10,422; the Rev. Alexander

Grosart published a more serious and scholarly collected edition of the poetical works in 1872, including the Latin poems from the MSS at Stonyhurst, and preceded by a Memorial introduction, the first critical attempt at assessing Southwell's value as a poet, at establishing a text, or at making a bibliography. Though his statements on some points of literary history are inaccurate, and his arrangement of the shorter poems open to question, yet the value of Grosart's pioneer work in the field of minor Elizabethan poetry is inestimable.

In 1926, Mrs. C. M. Hood published a selection of the shorter poems edited from the Stonyhurst MS, with a mainly biographical introduction. Her account of Southwell's literary relationships is based on that of Grosart.

This rather lengthy discussion of editions serves to indicate the measure of Southwell's popularity. Even allowing for the fact that the earliest editions could only have been of 1250 or 1500 copies each (the usual number licenced for printing), their rapid succession shows how widely Southwell was read, and the omissions and adaptations considered necessary to conciliate the censorship or public taste are only further evidence that his poems supplied a demand, and so continued to be printed in spite of their authorship. The long lull during the Commonwealth and Restoration, continued during the eighteenth century, is easily explained by the change in taste, and the recrudescence of interest in the nineteenth century is due to the reawakening of interest in Elizabethan literature in general. The more recent revival, evidenced by articles in periodicals, M. Janelle's book, certain projected works which have been interrupted by the war, and some American theses on the prose works, seems to have been inspired more by interest in Southwell as a Catholic than as a poet.

There remains the question whether *A Foure-fould Meditation of the foure last things* is Southwell's or not. Such scholars as Lee [21], Pollard [22], and Grierson [23], besides the latest editor of the

[21] Sidney Lee, *Life of Shakespeare*, 1925, p. 681.

[22] A. W. Pollard, *Shakespeare's Fight with the Pirates*, 1917, p. 31.

[23] H. J. C. Grierson, *The Year's Work in English Studies, 1926*, p. 163.

poems (C. M. Hood in 1926), Child in his article in the Cambridge History of English Literature, and Legouis and Cazamian in their admirable History of English Literature (Paris 1924), all accept the poem as Southwell's without qualification, and some of them (surprisingly) praise it for the sustained lyrical exaltation of its verse (which makes one wonder if the writers in question have ever read the poem).

On the other hand, Thurston[24] attributes the *Meditation* to Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel, partly on the ground that it is too weak to have been written by the poet of *St. Peter's Complaint* (though he suggests that the poem was revised by Southwell), partly on the ground of the close connection between Southwell and the Howards, and partly on the ground that Howard's authorship is supported by the MS copies. Janelle follows this attribution unquestioningly, merely stating that the matter has been settled by Thurston.

There is also a note by H. J. L. Robbie in the Review of English Studies for April 1929, apparently written in complete independence of Thurston's article. This puts forward the theory that the *Meditation* should be attributed to Howard because two of the four MSS connect it with his name, one of these two also contains other work certainly by Howard, none suggests any other author, the single edition was pirated, and because the poem "has none of the fair and fragrant things which have made famous Southwell's poems."

To take the last point first, it must be admitted that in such a case the question of internal evidence is very ticklish. Too much cannot be made of the fact that the poem is weaker than Southwell's other work. This in itself would be no ground for giving it to Howard, since very few poets can remain consistently on their higher levels. Here the earlier dating of Southwell's

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[24] H. Thurston, "The Month", LXXXVI (1896) 32—50. In an earlier article in the same periodical, (October 1894), he conjectures the *Meditation* to have been a youthful work probably suppressed by Southwell himself because it was only printed ten years after his death, does not seem to have been passed round in MS, and was not mentioned by any of his connections.

poems now accepted might be brought forward as an argument; the exchange of his life in Rome, where the atmosphere was quick with literary interest, for the secret and wandering existence of a proscribed priest in England, might explain the difference between the greater vitality and fire of the *Complaint* and the pedestrian lack-lustre stanzas of the *Meditation,* if it is his. The latter poem may easily be shown to have certain resemblances to Southwell's work, but whether these are original or the consequence of imitation or revision is more difficult to decide. There are similarities in vocabulary; but these may be governed by the subject. The lack of movement and cohesion in both poems, held up as they are by elaboration and conceits (the frequent transposition of verses in the MSS is easy to understand, since it makes no difference to the sense), the similar metre and antithetical style, can all be paralleled in other poems of the period and are not characteristic of Southwell alone.

Some time in 1589, when Howard had been in close confinement in the Tower for about four years, Southwell became chaplain and confessor to the Countess of Arundel and lived for a considerable period at Arundel House in the Strand. Howard and Southwell wrote to each other from time to time, mainly on spiritual matters, and the more formal *Epistle of Comfort* was also written for the consolation of the recusant. Another prose work, *The Triumphes over Death,* was written in 1591 on the occasion of the death of Howard's half-sister, Margaret Sackville. Southwell would have had opportunity to write the poem while he was under the protection of the Countess of Arundel and the subject was appropriate for a patron over whom a death-sentence was hanging; but Howard, who is known to have engaged in literary work during his imprisonment, had equal opportunity.

The MSS perhaps provide a more fruitful ground for discussion. Robbie says that out of the four MSS, (Rawlinson 219 and Tanner 118 in the Bodleian, the Crowcombe Court MS now in the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, and the MS at Oscott College near Birmingham), two ascribe the poem to Arundel. This is true from the catalogue descriptions, but exa-

mination of the actual MSS shows that the matter is not quite so clear. The Rawlinson MS is easy of access, but the Crowcombe MS has had a chequered career and its description in the Report of the Commission on Historical MSS is rather misleading.

Rawlinson 219 (incidentally the fullest text) gives the name on a detached slip of paper of different quality and size, written in a different and apparently later handwriting from the rest of the MS; "A poeme of the contempte of the world and an exhortacion to prepare to dye, made by Phillipe earle of Arundell after his attaynder". This has been bound with the original MS.

The Crowcombe MS, photostats of the relevant parts of which were made available by the courtesy of the Folger Library in Washington, is a curious collection of accounts, copies of legal documents, several religious poems, lists of London parishes, etc. etc. written by different hands at different dates. Among these miscellaneous items is a copy of the letter known to have been written to Queen Elizabeth by Howard in 1585, but without any indication of the author, and on the next page and probably in the same hand follow the first verses of the *Meditation*, which is then continued in a different hand. Yet a third hand has annotated these entries; at the top of the letter is written "Philip Arundel", and at the end, there is the following note:

> After the writtinge of this letter he hastened to sea but the espiall followed him for he was secretly betraid & having sufficient warrāt brought him back again, by direktiō lodged him in the tower of londō, from thence he was brought to westmystr, frō westmyster to the tower again where he penned the hevenly meditation followinge & ended the way of all flesh.

In the same hand again there are the initials "ph. A." at the end of the *Meditation*. In the first hand, that of the letter and the first page of the *Meditation*, there is a heading, "written against Christmas 1587", and in the third hand, that of the notes ascribing the verses to Howard, there is a marginal note "of the miserie of mā in this life" and sandwiched between the date and the first line is a brief description partly repeating the marginal note and adding "of the paines of hell & the ioys of

heaven". There is nothing in the MS to show who these three scribes were; they all use the old-fashioned bastard secretary hand. Neither has it proved possible to ascertain the history of the MS earlier than about the middle of the eighteenth century. According to the dates of some leases on the verso of the last page of the Meditation, the copy must have been made between 1587 and 1590.

Again, the assertion that one of the MSS (the Crowcombe) contains work certainly by Howard can be offset by the fact that two of the MSS, Tanner 118 and Oscott, contain work as certainly by Southwell; the former gives the prose *Epistle of a Religious Priest unto his Father*, and the latter gives both this and *St. Peter's Complaint*. There are sufficient variations, especially in the order and number of the verses (e. g. Oscott gives 118 stanzas of the *Meditation* and Tanner 125 out of the 126 given in Rawlinson 219, and the order is different) to show that these are independent copies.

None of these MSS can be definitely connected with either Howard or Southwell. The Oscott MS was written by one Peter Mowle (about whom nothing is known) for Thomas Knyvett, between April 20, 1595, less than two months after Southwell's execution, and January, 1605. The Knyvetts were a Norfolk family, and so might have had some connection with either the Howards or the Southwells — or with both. The dates in both the Crowcombe and the Oscott MSS suggest that it is possible for the scribe to have had actual knowledge of the author whose work he copied. If the poem is not mentioned anywhere as Southwell's before its publication in 1606, this applies equally to Howard, who is only cited as its author by Thurston in 1896.

The question of piracy is also by no means proved. It seems to be based partly on the accusation brought against "W. H." by Pollard [25], and partly on the words in the dedicatory epistle,

[25] A. W. Pollard, *Shakespeare's Fight with the Pirates*, 1917, p. 31: "...such professional dealers in MSS as Thomas Thorpe and William Hall, as to whose doings Sir Sidney Lee has brought together so much useful information in his account of the publication of Shakespeare's sonnets. It

"Long haue they lien hidden in obscuritie, & happily had neuer seene the light, had not a mere accident conuayed them to my hands." Is not this giving a dog a bad name and hanging him? The words quoted need not be taken as "an unblushing admission" of piracy, even if the identification of "W. H." with William Hall the shady stationer be accepted. May not "W. H." have made a genuine discovery? The term "piracy" indeed seems rather an exaggeration here. An author had no rights in his manuscript, which became the property of that member of the Stationers' Company who entered it in the Register. The frequent quarrels arose when a work already entered to someone else was issued or a monopoly was infringed. This poem was duly entered under the date May 21, 1606, by Francis Burton as by "R. S. the author of *Saint Peter's Complaint*" [26], and printed in the same year by George Eld together with the dedicatory epistle by "W. H."

A better argument is that Howard was already forgotten by 1606, while Southwell's works were still popular, and the bookseller may have been tempted to father the work on Southwell in order to increase his sales.

The subsequent history of the poem is short. Thurston suggests that it may have been suppressed by the authorities, but more probably it simply did not meet with public approval, possibly on account of its lack of merit, more likely because the well-worn mediaeval theme of the Four Last Things was out of date in a Protestant country in the seventeenth century.

Only one complete copy of this edition is known, and is now in the Huntington Library, Berkeley, California, which kindly provided a photostat for purposes of comparison. The poem as printed in 1606 seems to have been considerably tidied up by

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will be useful to remember that one of these began his career by procuring a MS of Marlowe's (his translation of the first book of Lucan's Pharsalia), and the other by getting hold of Robert Southwell's "A Foure-fould Meditation"; and that both Marlowe and Southwell were dead, and the works of one as a reputed atheist and of the other as a notorious Jesuit would be to an unusual extent at the disposal of anyone who had the courage to print them."

[26] Arber, op. cit.

the publishers; one significant variation from the MSS versions occurs where four verses (96 — 99 as counted in Rawlinson 219) on the Virgin have been omitted and a couple of verses on the apostles and saints substituted. Edmonds [27] speaks of a fragment of eight leaves containing thirty-five verses in the library at Lamport Hall; this was bought by the British Museum at a later date, but seems to have lost two leaves in the interval. This smaller fragment was reprinted by Thurston in *"The Month"* for October 1894 in an article *An Unknown Poem by Father Southwell.* In the following year Edmonds edited the whole poem, professing to have followed the Rawlinson MS; but there are many variations from this in his text, which moreover does not agree with any other version. This question may seem to have been treated at undue length, considering the merits of the poem and its lack of repercussions; but as may be seen, the problem of its authorship is not yet settled. Personally, I should prefer it to belong to Howard, who was not much of a poet in any case, but there still seems to be an equal case for Southwell.

III. SOUTHWELL'S THEORIES AND PURPOSE IN WRITING VERSE

M. Janelle has claimed that Southwell "represents an altogether different and hostile ideal, which was attempting to gain a footing in England [28], and gives a detailed account of the Jesuit theory of literature as expounded in Bencius, Possevinus and particularly Pontanus, all of whom were writing during the last decade of the sixteenth century [29].

Poetry, they say, like music and painting, is not an end in itself; the pleasure it gives should not be enjoyed and cultivated for its own sake, but should be made to serve the cause of virtue and religion. Human nature, however, is weak, and cannot or will not stand moral doctrine unadorned; then let this be

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[27] Ch. Edmonds, *A Foure-fould Meditation,* Isham Reprints No. 4, London 1895.

[28] Janelle, op. cit., p. 1.

[29] Janelle, op. cit., Chapter V, *A Jesuit Neo-classic.*

adorned as beautifully as possible. Since the best poetry has been written by the ancients, let the poet model himself on them, copying them whenever possible. Rules are sought for the production of poetry which will have the desired effect upon the reader, and all is reduced as far as possible to a formula. The poet should guard himself against being carried away by passion lest he fail in his purpose, and a Jesuit writer should moreover be especially attentive to cultivate a pure style and not to commit any barbarisms in language, since it is largely by the study of the humanities that the Society has gained its influence.

But apart from the final addendum, is all this specifically Jesuit? Benci in his *Orationes de laudibus poeticae* (1592) defends poetry as essentially good and God-inspired in spite of the evil uses to which it may have been put, and affirms that the first poets were those of the Old Testament; Southwell re-echoes this, but it had been said many times before, even during the Middle Ages [30]. Possevino's *Biblioteca Selecta* (Rome 1593) was an enormous compilation, intended more for teachers than for students, dealing with the whole range of studies and only incidentally with Poetry. In this section he quotes Scaliger, Minturno, Cinthio and others (who were most certainly not Jesuits) and refers to Castelvetro (who was on the Index). The *Institutiones poeticae* (Rome 1594) of Pontanus seems to be mainly a painstaking and uninspired compendium of the respected and voluminous Scaliger, pointing out that now all the Kinds of Poetry had been discovered, and everything worth while had already been said or done, there was really nothing left for the would-be poet but skilful re-arrangement. But in his desire for orderliness and good craftsmanship, is it not at least equally significant that Pontanus (Spanmüller) was a German as well as a Jesuit? [31]

The basis of all this theorizing is merely our old friend Aristotle's dictum that poetry should "teach and delight", an idea

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[30] See H. O. Taylor, *The Mediaeval Mind,* London 1925, 2 vol., for a fuller account.

[31] Saintsbury, *History of Criticism,* Edinburgh 1902, 3 vol., Vol. II, pp. 325 and 355 gives accounts of these writers which are interesting to compare with those of Janelle.

continued through the Christian Fathers (in so far as they took note of poetry at all), with a stronger emphasis on "teach"; and this is explicit in all the allegorical and didactic poetry of the Middle Ages.

Plato, who came into his own only with the Renaissance, exemplified what may be called the Puritan attitude to poetry when, in his Republic, he recommended that poets should be given all honour but asked to move on to the next town, or else if allowed to stay should be controlled into glorified schoolmasters. These conceptions of the functions of the poet and the proper purpose of poetry continued to be paid at least lip-service long after the Renaissance. We find the smuttiest writers of the eighteenth century, obviously enjoying their roll in the dirt, explaining that it is all done with a moral aim, though they have probably quite forgotten about the philosophers and the Christian Fathers. It is in fact only during brief periods of decadence and among very minor writers that the heresy of the irresponsibility of the artist appears, though opinions as to what or to whom the artist should be responsible may vary.

With this emphasis on the moral end is coupled the characteristic Renaissance insistence on the usefulness of studying the only available models of good literature, since the mediaeval vernacular literature was largely inaccessible owing to difficulties of linguistics or dissemination, and was in any case out of fashion. It was by no means only the Jesuits who counselled imitation of the ancients. That practice had already been enthusiastically carried on in the fifteenth century by the earliest humanists. In Italy by now it had been widened to include imitation of the best models in the native language, and in France, as seen in the treatises of Ronsard and du Bellay, those of other vernaculars also. Thus in limiting imitation to the ancients, these Jesuit theorists were rather reactionary.

All this had been discussed and re-discussed for long enough, and wending its slow way northwards, it can be paralleled in England about the same time as the Jesuits published their treatises by writers who were not even Catholics; Sir Philip Sidney says much the same thing less learnedly and more

delightfully in his *Apologie for Poesie*, and Spenser can be shown to have held the same ideas. Roger Ascham and Richard Mulcaster (Spenser's schoolmaster) had taught the same doctrines a generation earlier.

These Jesuit theories upon which Southwell had been nourished in Rome (for though they appeared in print when Southwell was already in England they were the formal expression of what had already been taught for some time past) were then nothing new. They were merely a clear statement, slightly modified to suit the Jesuit point of view, of theories which had been in process of elaboration before ever the Society of Jesus was founded. Admittedly, they had a great influence on the course of poetry in Italy, where Settembrini could say "Il Secentismo è il Gesuitismo nell'arte", and also in France, where the Jesuits had established many schools. But in England, where the Jesuits figured only as conspirators, played no part in education, and had as their only literary representative Southwell himself, it is surely an exaggeration to claim that these theories *qua* Jesuit theories had any real importance.

Southwell himself tells us very clearly and modestly what he is trying to do in the prose preface and the even more deprecatory verses published with the *Complaint:*

The Author to his loving Cousin [32]

Poets by abusing their talent, and making the follies and feyninges of Loue the customary subiect of theire base endeavors, haue so discredited this facultye that a Poett, a louer, and a lyer, are by many reckoned but three wordes of one significacion. But the vanity of men cannot counterpease the authority of God, who deliveringe many partes of Scripture in verse, and by his Apostle willing vs to exercise our deuotion in Hymnes and Spirituall Sonnettes warranteth the art to be good and the vse allowable. And therefore not only amonge the heathens whose gods were

[32] My own transcription from the Stonyhurst MS A/V 27, the only text to which I have at present access. I have added or substracted a few capitals and commas, as it seemed needlessly pedantic to keep the original vagaries of capitalization and puncuation when these were not Southwell's own. This preface is printed in Cawood's 1595 edition of *St. Peter's Complaint* and most other early editions, with the customary variations in spelling but none in wording.

cheifely canonized by their Poetes, and their paynym divinitye oracled in verse but even in the Old and Newe Testament it hath bene vsed by men of greatest piety in matters of most devotion. Christ himself by making a hymne the conclusion of his last Supper and the prologue to the first pageante of his Passion gaue his spouse a methode to imitate, as in the office of the Church it appeareth, and all men a paterne to knowe the trew use of this measured and footed style. But the Devill as he affecteth deitye and seeketh to haue all the complementes of divine honor applied to his service, so hath he among the reste possessed also most Poetes with his idle phansies, for in lieu of solemne and deuoute matter to which in dutye they owe their abilities, they now busy them selues in expressing such passions as onely serue for testimonies to how unworthy affections they haue wedded their willes. And because the best course to lett them see the error of their workes is to weave a new webbe in theire owne loome, I haue here laied a fewe course thridds together to invite some skillfuller wittes to goe forward in the same or to beginne some fyner peece wherein it maye be seene, how well verse and vertue suite together. Blame me not (good cosin) thoughe I sende yowe a blameworthy present, in which the most that can commende it, is the good will of the writer, nether art nor invention givinge it any creditt. If in me this be a faulte, yow cannot be faultles that did importune me to committ it, and therefore yow must beare part of the penance, when it shall please sharpe censures to impose it. In the meane tyme with many good wishes I sende yowe those fewe dittyes, add yowe the tunes and lett the meane I pray yowe be still a part in all your musicke.

Nothing need be added to so plain a statement. Janelle claims that Southwell's views on poetry are similar to those of his Jesuit masters in every point; that may be, but nevertheless there is also here nothing that cannot be paralleled amongst English Protestant writers of the same period, and nothing that had not been said much earlier.

Largely on the basis of his adaptation of Dyer's *Phansie,* and on the mistaken assumption that the *Complaint* was a direct answer to *Venus and Adonis,* it has been supposed that Southwell's conscious purpose was to reform poetry by means of pointed imitation, and there has been much hunting for his models. It seems to me that this is taking too narrow a view of what Southwell was trying to do, and that moreover it is a misunderstanding of one of the common poetic theories of the day. When he proposes to let profane poets see the error of their ways by weaving "a new web in their own loom", this

does not mean that he is going to botch up old poems; it means that he is going to do original work in the same "Kind" as these vain and amatorious poets. Certainly, he did imitate; every poet does until he "finds himself". A closer study of his work has shown how often his productions started as translations even if they did not finish as such.

Not only have we generally a rather hazy idea of what "imitation" really meant to the poets of the sixteenth century, but we have also a feeling that to borrow from another man's work is somehow wrong, or at least proves a lack of originality; in the modern code, plagiarism is a cardinal sin. This is part of the legacy left us by the Romantics, with their stress on the personal. Yet no one questions the originality of, say Wordsworth, though his better poems are full of echoes, particularly of Spenser and Milton, from whom on occasion he even lifts whole lines, and though he versifies the philosophical ideas of Coleridge or Hartley or Rousseau quite recognizably, whether approvingly or disapprovingly. This is all however what a sixteenth-century poet would have called *Wordsworth's imitatio.*

The practice of pious alteration of existing works, which was old-established and common all over Europe, was a lower form of *imitatio,* and had begun long before the theory was formulated in so many words. Parody or adaptation, both pious and impious, was widespread in mediaeval literature, and the custom has not died out to this day. It is not so long since General Booth of the Salvation Army adapted music-hall songs, quoting "Why should the devil have all the good tunes?" The practice was so common that any poet might have adapted poems without necessarily having any specific theory behind him.

Direct imitation was also not uncommon. The most familiar example of the period in England is now probably Raleigh's answer to Marlowe's *Passionate Shepherd,* where verse balances verse and often the very words are repeated; this is however a sophisticated example of the *imitatio* of a scholar poet. Such imitations have taken more and more the form of parody, until now our fear of being unoriginal has forced them to be mainly deliberate parody.

Apart from fortuitous or purely formal imitation, however, there was the more subtle *imitatio,* the theory of which had been developed out of a misunderstanding of Plato by the Italian Renaissance critics. Plato was misunderstood not only because his theory was difficult and not clearly expressed, but also because in modern languages "imitation" has the implicit meanning of "copying"; hence the mistaken insistence by some sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth-century critics (including the unimaginative Pontanus) on the more mechanical kind of "imitation", and the general misapprehension of the word to-day. What Plato himself meant is not so important for the present purpose as what his Renaissance commentators thought he meant, and what they made of it.

Ascham says in his *Scholemaster,* "This *Imitatio* is *similis materiei dissimilis tractatio* and, also, *dissimilis matereie similis tractatio*" [33]. Briefly, before the time that Southwell came to be writing, the accepted theory was that the whole body of poetry formed as much part of the poet's experience as the actual outward happenings of his own life, and he was at liberty to draw upon the sum total of what other poets had said because it was equally his own. Not only the ancients but also writers in the vernacular, if they were sufficiently good, might be used. For instance, Spenser, in *Colin Clout's Come Home Again,* wrote the events of his own life, but worked them into a pastoral poem (the traditional form for such themes) in which every episode is also a well-known theme of poetry — a poets' meeting, the horror of the sea (rather unexpected in the heyday of the seadogs, but good Ovid), a panegyric upon a monarch, appreciation of fellow-poets, praise of a mistress, contempt for life at court (with a certain smack of sour grapes) — so that it is impossible to disentangle what is literary and what is personal. This is a far cry from "copying", though it is an excellent example of *imitatio* [34].

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[33] R. Ascham, *The Scholemaster, in Elizabethan Critical Essays,* ed. Gregory Smith, I, p. 8.

[34] Cf. *Saint Peters's Complaint,* CXXI, CXXII.

Certain themes are even considered as conventional test-pieces by which the poet shows his attainment in his art — the list of trees from Ovid for example, or the list of flowers from Virgil's Gnat, which can still be found seriously treated as late as mid-eighteenth century in Cowper's *Task* [35] and amusingly parodied in Sheridan's *Critic* [36] Southwell's verses on "sleep" can be counted such a passage, or his series of poems on the feasts of the Virgin, a theme already treated by many others.

The most sensible way of taking Southwell's "imitation" then is to accept that he was following, with increasing success as his skill grew, the practice of his day. He read what he could in the circumscribed conditions of his life, and according to the extent of assimilation his work recalls in greater or less degree that of others. His adaptations of Dyer, or the similarities to poems in Tottel's *Miscellany* or *The Phoenix' Nest* are incidental to a larger purpose rather than main events in an attack on the profanity of English poetry as he saw it.

If he were seriously engaged in the attempt, with which he is credited by his modern critics, to reform English poetry by means of adaptation and recognizable imitation, it is strange that he should not have written a single sonnet. There were already examples in English as well as those of Petrarch and his followers in Italian, even if he had not come across the sonnets by Sidney which set such a fashion for the form. The sonnet was usually given to "vain and amatorious themes", and would therefore have provided an excellent point of attack, and moreover he could have found precedent for religious sonnets in the master of the "Kind", Petrarch himself. Again, though the pastoral was by this time widespread over Europe and had even found its way into religious poetry (the later version of Tansillo's "epic" is pastoralized) Southwell ignores the form completely.

The late W. H. Davies has explained most charmingly in his autobiography how, feeling that he had it in him to be a poet, and having heard that the Elizabethans had written good poems,

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[35] *The Task*, VI, 149—180.

[36] *The Critic*, Act II, Scene 2.

he spent a winter in a doss-house studying how it was done. It was a task that (*pace* some Romantic theorists) every aspiring poet must perform for himself, and Southwell, with equal modesty but less naivety and a great deal more theoretical knowledge, applied himself to his art in something of the same way. His first business was to see what had been done already.

Here it is worth while remembering that particularly at Douai but also at Rome the study of English was not held in contempt but encouraged. This seems to me to be of very much greater importance in the development of Southwell as a poet than the formulated theories of teachers with whom Southwell may or may not have come into contact at Rome. If Southwell had followed the counsel of these to the letter, he would have been only one more Jesuit poetaster, grinding out verses in the style of Ovid or Virgil — in fact, just the sort of thing he produced in the Latin verses of his student days.

It is difficult for us to-day to appreciate the fact that for a serious writer there was still the choice of language; should he aspire to European fame by writing in Latin, or should he be content to write only for a small circle of his own countrymen? Half a century later, when there was already a flourishing tradition of English poetry, Milton was still to describe in a well-known passage [37] how he deliberately made his choice between Latin and English (for much the same reason as Caesar had for saying he would rather be the chief man in a village than the second man in Rome). But when Southwell began to write, there was a different state of affairs. The poetic language of Chaucer and his successors could no longer be used, on account of the rapid changes in pronunciation; in any case, there is no hint that Southwell ever knew these poets. Wyatt and Surrey had started a new tradition, but as Saintsbury [38] remarks, they were poets of more promise than performance, and they look more promising to us than they could have done to their contemporaries, because we have seen the fulfilment. Their frequent effect of uncertainty and fumbling experimentalism was perhaps

[37] *The Reason of Church Government*, 1641 (World's Classics, p. 110).
[38] *History of Criticism*, vol. II, p. 159.

due to difficulties of language and particularly the changing stress in many words. One of Spenser's great problems had been this very question of language, and the more we read of his immediate predecessors the more surprising is his mastery. With the publication of *The Shepheards Calendar* in 1579, the battle of the New Poetry was won; as yet however Spenser was a lone leader, though his followers were soon to flock thick.

It was only seven years after the appearance of *The Shepheards Calendar* that Southwell came to England, young and enthusiastic, acquainted with the latest scholarly theories of poetry. He had already written Latin verses, and had begun a translation into English of one of the most fashionable poems of the day. His choice of English may have been due to his modesty, or it may have been proof of his patriotism, or it may have shown how seriously he took his mission to England, since here he could indeed make his poetry serve as the handmaiden of his religion; or all three reasons may have played their part.

Now, at home and yet exile, what models could he choose?

IV. SOUTHWELL'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE TRADITION OF ENGLISH VERSE

Normally such a young poet as Southwell would have gone to Court or sought a patron connected with the Court, not only in the hope of becoming known and picking up employment, but also because there the intellectual life of the time was concentrated to an extent that is really hard for us to understand in these days of easy communication and wealth of printed books and periodicals. Spenser, in his pathetically eager welcome of Raleigh's visit to him in Ireland, or his reminiscences of his meetings with Sidney and Raleigh in London, can show us something of what it meant to be distant.

Southwell, as a poet of good family, might have gone to Court, although a Catholic. Elizabeth was an avowed Protestant, but she was not against Catholics as Catholics. She was more concerned with her subjects' loyalty than with their religious

tenets (as she told the Catholic Earl of Worcester [39], and she had an appreciation of the arts. Persecution there certainly was, yet it was sporadic, flaring up after each political plot or scare only to die down again afterwards. I have no wish to minimize the persecution of Catholics; it did exist, and was carried on in the savage spirit of the time. In Catholic writings on the subject, however, great emphasis is put on the religious side and little on the political, whereas the average Englishman's suspicion of Catholicism was (and still is) at least as much political as religious. If a man carried his Catholicism (or for that matter Calvinism) reasonably quietly, he was left in peace, except perhaps during the periodical flare-up consequent on conspiracies; if he flaunted unorthodox beliefs, he was asking for trouble — and got it.

However, as a Jesuit, Southwell was not only debarred from Court (the very idea of his presenting himself is grimly humorous), but practically cut off from ordinary life — a circumstance which those who have imagined him as the friend of Shakespeare and Sidney and Spenser (the last two moreover distinctly anti-papist) seem to have overlooked. As a Jesuit and so in the eyes of the law presumably a spy in foreign pay and certainly a conspirer against the peace of the realm, he was forced to live a secret and contricted life, hidden away in the houses of Catholic sympathisers. Therefore Southwell as a poet was more or less thrown back on his own resources. He had however the advantage of a better education than most Marian priests, and at Rome he had come into contact with the world of letters. In England, he had good fortune in so far as he was sheltered in the houses of families in which there was a certain already rather old-fashioned literary tradition. The names of Vaux and Howard are familiar to us from Tottel, and at least the Howard household still carried on some poetical activity.

It would be useful to know what Southwell read, but this we have no means of knowing except from the little we know of his education in general and from the traces or echoes in his work. A full examination of these would be fitter for a text with

[39] W. H. Hadow, *English Music*, London 1931, p. 52.

commentary than in such an essay as this, so let us only point out briefly that the roots from which he grew fall into three main divisions.

First comes Latin, both the classics and Mediaeval Latin Christian verse. As soon as Southwell begins to write in English, however, Ovid and Virgil are forgotten. It is also significant that he does not attempt the classic metres with which even Spenser dallied. The only approximation is the curious half-rhymed dactylic measure of *Fortune's Falsehood*. His only direct translation from Mediaeval Latin poetry is a fairly close but uninspired rendering of Thomas Aquinas' *Lauda Sion Salvatorem*, but he has frequent variations on well-known themes. A glance through a collection of Mediaeval Latin poetry [40] will call to mind many phrases and conceits in Southwell. There are also, as may be expected from his profession, reminiscences of the Latin scriptures.

Second comes Italian verse of the more fashionable order. Southwell knew Petrarch at first hand, since there is at least one direct translation to be found among the shorter poems [41] besides many images which he may have taken straight from the source but which had by this time become common stock for the poets of the day. He does not seem to have known Dante, who in any case at that time was quite overshadowed by Petrarch. The most evident borrowings are those from the Counter-Reformation poets such as Tansillo and Valvasone.

Thirdly, there is a selection, apparently not very wide, of the current English verse from Tottel onwards. English poetry earlier than Tottel seems to have been unknown to him. There is not a hint that he knew Spenser or Sidney, though some of Spenser's work was already in print, and though Sidney's works were widely circulated in MSS. Yet he knew Dyer, a friend of Sidney's and a well-known court poet of the day, most of whose work has been unfortunately lost. There is more than a hint in *Love's Garden Grief* that Southwell knew Nicholas Breton's *Garden*

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[40] Such as e. g. H. R a b y, *Latin Christian Poetry*, Oxford 192.

[41] The first four lines of *What Joy to Live* are a fairly close translation of Petrarch, sonnet xc.

Plot, though poems on gardens are fairly common in fifteenth and sixteenth century MSS, and the mediaeval habit of allegory was still strong. It seems as if his acquaintance with English poetry was purely fortuitous, and probably even confined to the family MSS collections of the houses in which he stayed.

It has been suggested [42] that he was kept in touch with what was going on in the world of letters by Antony Copley, a very minor poet and distant relative with whom he had friendly relations, and possibly by Thomas Lodge; but this is mere conjecture. If he had had any extensive acquaintance with the literature of the day, it seems scarcely credible that he should have remained so little affected by it, though on the other hand it cannot be too often repeated that what seems important to-day, with our knowledge of further developments, need not at all have seemed so important at the time when it was written. It should also be remembered that Southwell was writing too early to see the published work of the more exciting people. Yet if he had been acquainted more widely with English poetry, would he have written "licence my *single* pen to seek a fere" at a time when so many poems with a didactic or even definitely religious flavour were appearing in the early song-books?

The mention of song-books again suggests an interesting point. There is nothing in Southwell's poems to suggest that they were written with music in mind. His verse is emphatically spoken verse; the compact antitheses would be lost in song. It has often been remarked how the golden age of English music moulded verse. As far back as Wyatt it is plain to be seen with what sure grace his songs flow, and with what hesitancy and difficulty his sonnets are written; at one moment he flounders about among haphazard stresses, and at another his mastery is equal to that of the greatest. As the century advances, so does the general sureness of touch — though this may be as much due to the more established pronunciations, as to the prevalence of musical education, a point which has hitherto been somewhat neglected. It is strange that in Southwell, with his double heritage of

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[42] H. Thurson, „The Month", February 1895, *Father Southwell the Euphuist*; also Janelle, op. cit., p. 54.

English and Italian, there are none of those flowing cadences that follow the musical phrase, none of the refrains which often form beautiful repetitions and echoes even in serious and reflective poems (though naturally the more nonsensical hey-nonny nonny type would be not appropriate to the sententious nature of his verse).

In an age of metrical experiment, he is no innovator. He is content to reproduce the old metres — there is not one he uses which cannot be already found in Tottel, with the exception of "In worldly meryments lurketh much misery" *(Fortune's Falsehood)*. But though as a metrist his range is not wide and he does not attempt any of the more delicate lyrical measures, what he does handle he handles more than competently. There is no hesitancy: he avoids both the uncertainty of stress and the laborious thumping effect which are often so distressing in Tottel. The whole effect is one of neatness and balance, but his work is informed with a spirit which lifts it above these more prosaic virtues. As a measure of his poetical quality, it is merely necessary to observe how he uses the old fourteeners, lifting a measure which only too easily becomes a dull jogtrot into something of brilliance and grace.

What is also remarkable, considering Southwell's long absence abroad and his education, is the quality of his English. Though the *Complaint* is crammed with conceits, the actual words of both this and the other poems are simple, and there are very few of Latin origin, and none, I think, of those nonce-words and inventions so often to be found in other writers of the same period. There is no undue display of learning, and an even marked avoidance of the usual Renaissance ostentation of classical mythology.

What then, since he brought nothing new in the way of theory, metre or language, is Southwell's particular contribution to English poetic tradition?

It seems to me that Southwell, together with such poets as Dyer and Raleigh (little of whose poetic work has come down to us), and perhaps Greville (whose poems were published only after his death), has a certain importance in bridging the gap

between Wyatt at the beginning and Donne at the end of the century. This is not a question of form; both Wyatt and Donne were interested in technique and experiment and were more subtle metrists than they are usually given credit for, while Southwell was content to keep to the regular beat of familiar verse-forms. But Wyatt could think as well as feel, and in Donne intellect is so blended with intense emotion that they cannot be disentangled. It is in spirit that Southwell may be regarded as one of the links in an apparently broken continuity; he, like Dyer and Raleigh, had the rare gift of combining the didactic with the lyrical, and in spite of the impersonal presentation of his poems, they are written with a vivid personal sincerity. Here are no metrical exercises of a fashionable versifier, and if he plays tricks with words (and what Elizabethan did not?), it is not for the sheer joy in verbal ingenuity, but strictly in order to emphasize his meaning.

A more striking, though not more important, contribution may be sought in Southwell's Italianate element. This weaves two strands into the rope, the first strengthening the conceited style already found as early as Wyatt, and the second, which was soon to fray, introducing an alien spirit which never became part and parcel of the English tradition but which is found again in Crashaw; many generations later there is something like it in Francis Thompson.

On the Elizabethan conceit much has been written; it has generally been taken as an importation from Italy dating from the reign of Petrarch, though I think that in England the ground was already prepared for it by the "aureate" style of the fifteenth century poets. There is a good account of its origins in mediaeval logic and its vogue, especially in England, in Courthope's History of English Poetry, vol. III, chapter VI. Be all this as it may, in Southwell the conceit surely had an Italian origin, since his most ambitious and probably his earliest poem in English was begun as a translation from a heavily conceited Italian work. It is also just to point out the art of the conceit as cultivated in Jesuit epigrammatic verse. The fact that *St. Peter's Complaint* had such success was certainly due in some circles to this

conceited style, and though such a style was current earlier, it was to grow more and more far-fetched and elaborate until it culminated in the extravagances of the metaphysical poets. It is difficult to say now how far the success of the *Complaint* was due to the conceit as an already established fashion, or how far its success may have itself helped to establish the fashion; but certainly Southwell's conceits should be mentioned as at least having encouraged other practitioners.

It is not altogether appropriate to describe the second Italianate aspect of Southwell's work as a "contribution" to poetic tradition in England, since it is rather a transitory and isolated phenomenon. This aspect can best be shown by a brief account of *St. Peter's Complaint.*

In this poem particularly, as in the prose *Mary Magdalen's Tears,* there is a certain exclamatory, perfervid, ecstatic style which one cannot but feel is alien to English, then as now. It is even rather repellent, recalling something of the tone of those "petits livres religieux" against which Von Hügel warned converts. This note is much less marked or altogether absent in Southwell's shorter poems; neither is it continued in the many productions founded on the *Tears* and the *Complaint,* all of which it must be confessed are sorry enough. It is not to be heard again till Crashaw, who also imported it from Italy, but independently, and who also failed to acclimatize it. This "sweet inebriated ecstasy" wears a difference in the less sensous and more strictly disciplined poet, for Southwell and Crashaw were men of very different natures, but it is recognizably the same. We cannot show that the later poet knew the earlier, and Southwell and Crashaw were not the only poets, nor the only Catholics, to travel to Italy. Where then does this peculiar note come from?

Professor Mario Praz, in his very learned and subtle book on two later poets, Donne and Crashaw, *Seicentismo e Marinismo in Inglilterra* [43] has succeeded in showing how the Counter Re-

[43] M. Praz, *Seicentismo e Marinismo in Inglilterra,* Firenze 1925.

formation, with its curious blend of amorous sensualism and spiritual fervour as expressed in the revived cult of the saints and martyrs, even touched the distant shores of Protestant England, recognizably in the case of Crashaw, much less so in that of Donne.

Another and more intimate cause was the cult proclaimed by the Council of Trent. The idea of martyrdom found a fertile soil in the seventeenth-century soul already so sensitive to all that made appeal to the senses, refined in pleasure as in pain. Since sensuality and eroticism were the dominant notes of this psychology, it is natural that the cult of saints began to assume an unheard-of intensity, for the soul could not do otherwise than carry over into religious terminology the same interests and sympathies which affected it through worldly objects. Its experiences were in the field of sense, and the greatest ideal force to which it could aspire was a spiritualization of sense. The passion for eloquence and rhetoric could be satisfied by the cult of heroic saints and martyrs, and the militant order of the Company of Jesus kept the exploits of earlier "athletes of the faith" continuously in view. Contrition and indulgence were cardinal virtues in the Jesuit morality, and hence arose the typical cult of the Magdalen.

Professor Praz is writing of poets of a slightly later date, and does not mention Southwell; but his admirable and rich analysis of the Italian literary, artistic and religious background also explains the atmosphere in which Southwell began his career as a poet.

It is not always the best poet of a particular period in a particular country who is most immediately attractive to a foreigner, partly because the lesser poet may express more of the ephemeral spirit of the time, and partly simply because he may be easier to understand, for the subtler beauties of word and rhythm are difficult to appreciate. The poet who seems to have turned Southwell from his earlier Latin exercises towards his first attempts in English verse was Luigi Tansillo, a Neapolitan poet now justly forgotten but who set a fashion which was to sweep Europe.

Tansillo had died in 1568. His more improper verses were published during his lifetime, but like certain other not altogether edifying poets (had not Aretino himself translated the psalms?) as well as better men, he had also engaged on a long religious poem, *Le Lacrime di San Pietro*. It is not at all clear how great a part real religious sentiment played in many of these fashionable productions. Tansillo's poem at least does not suggest a particularly repentant sinner in spite of his extravagance of language; in fact there is a distinct air of enjoyment, as of a good actor delighting in his skill when playing a part.

The *Lacrime* was widely circulated in MS, and published in a fragmentary form in 1560. The whole poem did not find its way into print until 1585. It was much admired, and frequently imitated and translated. It is difficult, owing to the prevailing practice of circulation in MS and the rarity of early editions, to assign dates to these productions, but besides the copious flow of Italian "tears" arising from this source, such as Valvasone's *Lacrime della Maddalena*, frequently printed together with Tansillo's poem, there was a Spanish translation by Montalvo apparently as early as 1587 [44]. There was also a version by Juan Sedeno, mentioned as the translator of Tansillo's famous *Tears* with approval in *Don Quixote*, but this seems to have been lost, and no one seems to know anything about Sedeno.

In France, the *Lacrime* was translated first by Malherbe (*Les Larmes de Saint Pierre*) some time before 1587, when it first appears in print [45], and also by Robert Estienne about 1595, the latter apparently from Montalvo (at least the French version seems closer to the Spanish than to the Italian). All these translations change Tansillo's ottava rima to metres more easily handled in their particular vernacular, but the renderings are

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[44] *El Llanto de San Pedro, compuesto en estancias italianas por Luys Fransilo* [sic] *y traducido en redondillas por Luys Galves de Montalvo, Primera parte del Tesoro de divina poesia, recopilado por Esteban de Villalobos, in Biblioteca de autores espanoles*, XXXV, Madrid, 1855.

[45] According to G. Lanson, *Histoire de la littérature française*, Paris 1916.

fairly close and in differing degrees keep the spirit of the original.

The earliest edition of Tansillo in the British Museum only dates from 1592. This gives the longer, later version of the poem, with its pastoral additions of nymphs and shepherds cavorting in the company of saints in a truly Renaissance gallimaufry. In spite of this, as early as 1905 Thurston [46] recognized the source of Southwell's poem, but comparing the British Museum edition with the Complaint, concluded that in the English poem the treatment of the subject was entirely original.

Again Praz comes to the fore. In an extremely interesting article in the Review of Modern Languages for July, 1924, he compares Southwell's poem not only with the earlier shorter version (the two texts are compared with full illustrations), but with MS fragments preserved in Rome, and shows that Southwell at least started with the idea of translating Tansillo's *Lacrime*. The original draft of the Complaint in the Stonyhurst autograph MS is a painful translation of Tansillo, struggling through the first stanzas with many scratchings-out and second thoughts, collapsing into a more or less literal prose version, and finally breaking down after two lines of the fourteenth stanza. Praz shows moreover that Southwell probably started his poem with the MS of Tansillo's poem in its fragmentary form in front of him [47] (incidentally the reason for supposing that the *Complaint* had already been begun in Rome before 1586, when Southwell left for England). This first draft was afterwards worked into a poem of twelve verses which, in a more polished form, are scattered through the final production [48].

The subject of the English poem was suggested by Tansillo; naturally the incidents are the same, since both poems are found-

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[46] H. Thurston, *Father Southwell and his Peter's Plaint*, "The Month", September, 1905.

[47] This is questioned by Janelle, op. cit., p. 212.

[48] These verses are found in all three MSS of the shorter poems as a complete poem, and in their revised form are worked into the longer *Complaint* as verses 10, 11, 28, 29, 14, 17, 30, 21, 22, 20, 23, and 131, in that order.

ed on the Biblical narrative, and undoubtedly Tansillo colours the *Complaint,* but in the end Southwell neither translates nor imitates. In the final version of the *Complaint,* here and there an image or a phrase in Tansillo is tightened up or more rarely elaborated, but on the whole Southwell's poem suggests that though he started to translate, either he no longer had access to the poem, or more probably he felt he could do the thing better himself and so struck out on his own.

Now it is just this note of hysterical repentance found in Tansillo and Valvasone, this fashion for tears, "quella lacrimosità che pullulando dal canzioniere del Petrarca era andata ingrossandosi in fiumana nel Cinquecento" as Praz so nicely puts it, which it is claimed that Southwell introduced into England [49]. But on the contrary, it is just this very note which Southwell tones down even in the *Complaint;* and it is noticeable how afterwards, both in the prose subsequent to *Mary Magdalen's Tears* and in the poems subsequent to the *Complaint,* he becomes more restrained and less ecstatic, les Italianate and more English. Is this due to his homecoming and his different surroundings, or is it the inborn nature of the Anglian (he was a Norfolk man) asserting itself?

Certainly there was a great number of "Tears" in England around this time, and certainly most of them are due to the success of the *Complaint.* But again, it is just very note of exultant repentance which is missing in them; as far as the Counter-Reformation cult of contrition is concerned, the English "imitations" read like Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. They may be dull, they may be bad, but they do not give that sense of acute discomfort experienced when reading Tansillo, a feeling doubtless not shared by the Frenchman who has written on Southwell or by the Italian who has written on Crashaw, brought up as they are in quite a different tradition.

It is not this hysterical note which his imitators recognized in Southwell; attracted by the brilliance and novelty of his style, they sought in his matter something that was more familiar,

[49] J a n e l l e, op. cit., and C. D e v l i n, *Robert Southwell and Contemporary Poets,* "The Month", September and October 1950.

and found it, whether it was really there or not. Whatever its ultimate origin, in practice it was transformed into something linking up the present with the past. In considering Southwell's specific contribution to poetic tradition, it is not so much what was really in him which is important as what his imitators thought was in him, and their imitation of the *Complaint* is more of the outward form than of the inward spirit. They take so much as is consistent with their own ideas, but I do not think it can be proved that those ideas are modified. The very fact that Southwell continued to be published for so long in "expurgated" editions, and even in Scotland, goes to show that it is not the new note of the Counter-Reformation which was his real attraction. Can it then be legitimately counted as his peculiar contribution to tradition?

Taking this view, I feel that much of the recent accounts of the wide "influence" ascribed to Southwell, affecting Marlowe the atheist, Spenser the puritan, and Shakespeare the playwright of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth,* should be taken with more than a grain of salt. In any given period, there are ideas and attitudes and feelings "in the air", and it is very difficult to say exactly how they percolate from one author to another. It is not permissible to base "influence" on general resemblances which may be mere coincidences due to a fashion, to a common stock, or to the spirit of the time. "Influence" in such cases as Southwell's may be discussed only on a basis of direct quotation, obvious imitation, or definite biographical fact. We have proof in many contemporary allusions and references, besides the certain proof of his many editions, that Southwell was widely read, and consequently we may expect him to have had some effect on other writers of his day, but without much more material than will ever be available to us now, it is misleading and unprofitable to seek for his influence too particularly in individual poets.

Southwell's poetical work has never been quite lost through all the centuries which divide him from us, and he can still be read with pleasure as an Elizabethan minor poet — but no more. He will not be regenerated as Donne has been within the present *century, simply because there is not so much in him. Still less*

can he be forced into the role of a major poet. Such a poet must have, besides a sufficient output of work on a high level, and besides work on a much greater scale than anything Southwell ever attempted, so wide a range that he represents different things to different people according to their nature, that he appeals to different ages in different ways, and he must feel poetry as his vocation — which does not prevent him from doing a more immediately useful job of work as well.

Southwell's range is narrow, and his output small. If he had lived longer, the latter might have increased, but there is nothing to show that the former would have widened, and indeed all his training was rather against the probability. He was a good craftsman, and an honest and sincere poet with a fiery fervour and glowing imagination which lift him above the practitioners of wit for wit's sake and the dull sententiousness of much other English religious verse of his time, whether we share his faith or not. Let us then take him for what he is and rejoice in what he has done rather than sigh after greater things.