I. INTRODUCTION
1. INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND

"One can hardly exaggerate the aristocratic character of Elizabethan literature" one writer asserts, says L.B. Wright. And "poetry in particular was the branch of literature regarded by professors of letters as unfit for profane hands, because poetry was an esoteric learning, the peculiar province of a small number of the elect, the learned, and the highborn." This observation illustrates the characteristic nature of the literature of the Elizabethan period; and the remarks are no less true of the poetical miscellanies of the Sixteenth Century. The writers of the poems in these miscellanies were mostly courtiers and the miscellanies were meant for the courtly circles. However dull and insipid for the most part the poems in these collections may appear to the modern reader they were always taken seriously because they were the work of the 'learned', the scholars, the 'elect', the 'highborn'. Puttenham remarked, "...the practice of

2. Vide Infra, *PP. 140-160
poetry was the prerogative of the gentle and not the base". It is to be noted that all the miscellanies are invari­
ably addressed to 'the gentlemen' readers.

It is fair to say that if by literature is meant the works that have stood the test of time and are still regarded as worth reading for their own sake then it is true that most of the poems in the miscellanies have not stood the test of time and are not read for their own sake. However, it is to be remembered that these collections of poems were quite popular at the time of their appearance, and some of them astonishingly so. And although "The poetry contained in them is mainly rather poor, yet a large amount of very good poetry can be culled from them. If the modern reader is somewhat surprised at the contemporaneous popularity of these miscellanies and is not readily

4. C.S. Lewis: English Literature in the Sixteenth Century (Excluding Drama). Drab Age Verse PP. 222-
271. (Most of the Histories of English Litera
ture hardly devote any space to these collections including the famous Legouis & Cazamin's).
prepared to give the certificate of 'very good poetry'
to 'a large amount' of it, the reason may very definitely
be assumed to be the change of attitude and taste towards
the poetry of the period. It is a commonplace of criticism
that the Elizabethans conceived of and valued, poetry
differently from the moderns. For them its literary and
aesthetic attributes and its social functions were
differently conceived.

The modern conception of poetry is mainly based
and conditioned by the Romantic theory of poetry. Poetry
is believed to be a spontaneous overflow of powerful
feelings; imagination, inspiration, unpremeditated
thoughts and naturally born genius are the main factors
in the Romantic theory of poetry. No amount of effort can
make a poet. The poet is born. He sings his hymns unbidden.
Moreover he is a prophet, a seer; universal brotherhood
finds itself recognised through his song.

6. Maurice Evans : *English Poetry in the Sixteenth Century*
   (Hutchinson's University Library, London)
   Chapter III PP. 36-46. G.K. Hunter :
   Humanism and Courtship PP. 3-36 in *The*
   Elizabethan Poetry edited by John Alpers.
7. Wordsworth : *English Critical Essays* (XIX Century)
8. Shelley : *English Critical Essays* (XIX Century)
10. Shelley : *English Critical Essays* (XIX Century)
In the sixteenth century very different social and intellectual climate prevailed that determined the nature and purpose of poetry. The poet was a product of society; it hardly occurred to men as was the case with the Romanticists that he was a creature of nature. He existed to serve particular needs of society. Like others he was a member of a social group. His art was a craft and like any craft, it could be learned and practised.

With practice came excellence. Labour and learning were considered necessary for the Elizabethan poet. And as the craftsman enjoys display of skill, so did the Elizabethan poet.

11. cf. John Buxton: The Elizabethan Taste Chapter I P. 27
12. W. Kenneth Richmond: Poetry and the People P. 109
13. Ibid P. 3
13b. Puttenham opens his treatise "Of Poets and Poesia" with this statement: "A poet is as much to say as a maker ... such as (by way of resemblance and reverently). We may say of God". Commenting on this statement Miss C. Ing remarks, "Many of those writers who are most eloquently impassioned in singing the divinity of poetry are the very same who go in to details of overse craft. Clearly, they see no shame in the divinely inspired poet's being a workman ... and it probably seemed to the Elizabethan critic that the truth of a poet's inspiration must show itself in his delight and care in labour ..." PP. 12-13. (C. Ing. Elizabethan Lyrics): Chapter I. The Elizabethan Temper in Poetry and Criticism.
It may be pertinent here to quote from Benjonson's Epitaph On My First Sonne:

Rest in soft peace, and, ask'd, say here doth lye
Ben Jonson his best piece of poetick.

'Ben Jonson' says Miss M.C., Bradbrook, "is not using the metaphor in the way in which it might have been used later, purely for its poignancy, measuring the beauty of the child against what he had loved next best in the world. He is speaking as a maker. One who saw in poetry a second creation. Put in lowest terms, poetry was a craft like that of the musician or an accomplishment like that of horsemanship. As such it could be learnt, used, if necessary put aside".

The most representative and important exponent of this sort of poetic doctrine in the age was George Puttenham in his Art of Poesy (1569-85)\textsuperscript{15}.

It should not be presumed that this was the only theory of poetry that was current during the Sixteenth Century in England. Nothing could be far from truth.

\textsuperscript{14} M.C. Bradbrook, \textit{Shakespeare and Elizabethan Poetry} Chapter III PP. 35 - 38.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid. P. 35
No other period in English history was more accommodating in allowing to exist different, even opposite modes of thought, simultaneously. The Elizabethans were great syncretists. Other doctrine of poetry that is similar to the Romantic theory and which may be called the doctrine of Platonic inspiration was also a favourite of the age. But it was the former – the mechanical and that of craftsmanship and skill – that was generally favoured by

16. cf. C.S. Lewis op. cit. P. 5
17. Lewis : PP. 318 - 322, Bradbrook op. cit. PP. 35-38
18. Shakespeare seems to favour Puttenham's view.

Miss Bradbrook (Shakespeare and Elizabethan Poetry Chapter III P. 25), after quoting Puttenham's passage on the Gardener's task in improving upon nature by his skill, comments "It was the memory of such a passage which justified the philosophic gardeners of Shakespeare's Richard II and indeed may have supplied the image of England as king's garden which runs through that self conscious and literary play"..

'Shakespeare again seems to be echoing Puttenham in The Winter's Tale, though here the argument is not used in defense of poetry as such, but as a general principle. Perdita says:

The fairest flowers o'th season
Are our carnations and streaked Gilly-Vors
(Which some call Nature's bastards)... and I care not
To get slips of them ... for I have heard it said
There is an Art, that in their piedness shares
With great Creating Nature (V. iii 81 ff.)

Polixenes defends the artificial improvement of Nature as 'An Art that Nature makes ...' (Bradbrook op. cit. P. 37)

Again at the end of Elizabethan period, Daniel though he takes up a position incompatible with ... Puttenham's and "will not allow verse to be governed "with all the rules of idle rhetoric" yet goes on to say that all excellences being sold us at the hard price of labour, it follows, where we bestow the most thereof we buy the best success". (Bradbrook, op. cit. P. 40)
The reasons are not far to seek. The notions of rationality and practicality governed the thinking of the writers and the critics. In no other age people had greater faith in the invincibility of reason than in the sixteenth century. The law of reason was paramount, and they never believed that it would fail them. The world they lived in and the universe around them was rationally constructed. Man was distinguished from other creatures and owed his superiority in the world to the gift of reason.

'Reason was the law whereby man could know what was befitting and unbefitting'.

This rationality was the reflection of the rationally constructed universe. God was its Great Artificer. And since the universe was 'artificially' created by an artificer its form, structure and mechanism were known. Its range and scope were comprehensible. Symmetry, proportion, harmony and order were its attributes. The great mechanism thus made up was conceived by the poets and writers of the sixteenth century under three heads:

(i) set of correspondences, (ii) the great chain of being, and (iii) the cosmic dance. Under the aspect of the set of correspondences, the world was thought to be arranged under the principle of parallelisms. The parallelisms and correspondences existed between the spiritual world and the physical existence, in the horizontal order one plane below another in order of dignity. "On the spiritual side were God in Trinity, the nine orders of the angels, minor spirits, and the soul of man; on the material side were the high heavens (where stood the throne of God), the solar system, the earth, man on his corporal side, the animals etc. To each of the series was assigned functions and purposes which found its analogues in the corresponding opposite series. It may be emphasised that most of the learning of the time consisted in finding out the analogies and correspondences and in acting in accordance with the principle of parallelisms and correspondences.

22. E.M.W. Tillyard, op. cit. 4. P. 23
23. Hardin Craig op. cit. Chapter I. P. 2
24. Ibid., P. 3
This picture of the creation was also chalked out vertically in terms of the notion of "the chain of being". The vast chain extended from the foot of God to the lowest of the created objects. It was a concatenation wherein each speak of existence had a place assigned to it. It included all the multifariousness of creation. Nothing was left out because nothing was regarded as superfluous. Each object in the chain was simultaneously bigger and smaller because if taken downwardly each object successively lost its virtue and upwardly each object gained progressively in virtue. "Here was ultimate unity in almost infinite diversity".  


The concept of "the Great Chain of Being" was a great stimulant of poetic imagination in the Renaissance. The notion was exploited by the poets, painters, prose writers and sculptors. The concatenated creation wherein nothing was redundant, where the great and the tiniest were interlinked made vivid the idea of a grand scheme. The thought of unity in the vast bewilderment, every object linked to the foot of the throne of God, made great appeal

to the mystically minded. The doctrine of plenitude implied in the multifariousness of the chain produced the most characteristic results in its expression in the Garden of Adonis in Spenser's *Faerie Queen* Book III.

The third great attribute of the Elizabethan world-picture was that of the 'cosmic dance'. This attribute embraced the whole creation. "Time and all its divisions were in dance". The stars danced. The angels in Heaven, in their various satrapies, were in perpetul dance before the presence of God. The greatest dance was that of the Great year lasting for six thousand years. The natural things on earth projected the planetary dance. The sea danced to the moon. The macrocosmic dance was reflected in the body-politic, and the microcosm.

The Greek philosophers first promulgated the idea. It was a commonplace in the Middle Ages. Elyot expounded it in his book, *The Governor*. Shakespeare shows his familiarity with the doctrine in his plays. But the most consummately exposition is found in Davise's "Orchestra" (1594)

27. Tillyard op. cit. P. 29
where it is the very subject-matter of the poem.\textsuperscript{28b}

The important point in the concept of the dance is that it implies the idea of mechanism and harmony. Creation was figured as an act of music and the universe was said to have been framed by a kind of harmony of sounds.

"The static battalions of the earthly, celestial, and divine heirarchies are sped on a varied but controlled peregrination to the accompaniment of music. The path of each is different, yet all the paths together make up a perfect whole."\textsuperscript{29}

The common denominator in all the three aspects under which the Sixteenth Century English men conceived of the world-picture, as explained above, was Order\textsuperscript{30}. It seems that the notion of 'correspondences,' the 'chain' and the 'cosmic dance' was cherished by the Tudor England for their possessing each the divine attribute of order. This idea of order in all the creation was one of the ruling ideas of the age, and perhaps the most characteristic.

\textsuperscript{28b} E.M.W. Tillyard : \textit{Poetry and its Background (1470 - 1870)} Chapter I. 'Orchestra'

\textsuperscript{29} Tillyard : \textit{The Elizabethan World-Picture} P. 94

\textsuperscript{30} cf. Hardin Craig op. cit PP. 11-14 and cf. Tillyard op. cit PP. 7-15.
It was all pervasive in the two extremes of creation, heavenly and earthly. It was the main cohesive and the unifying principle. The angels in heaven observed order in the several degrees and hierarchies. The planets moved in an orderly way in their several spheres. The four elements, earth, water, air, and fire have been placed one above the other in accordance with their respective attributes: earth being the heaviest is at the bottom; above it comes the water being lighter than earth and above it air because it is more light; fire being the lightest of the elements is placed above all the three. The animals and the vegetation and the minerals, too, are divided into similar ordered categories. The court of the king imitated on earth the heavenly order of God and his angels. Tillyard observes, "... the conception of order is so taken for granted, so much part of the collective mind of the people, that it is hardly mentioned except in explicitly didactic passages". 31 Ulysses' speech in *Troilus and Cressida* on "degree" or "order" is probably the most well-known. This passage includes vast cosmic and domestic dimensions. It is

31. Tillyard op. cit. Preface P.V.
a picture of immense and varied activity constantly threatened with dissolution, and yet preserved from it by a superior unifying power. Similar, but no less eloquent, and representative of the opinion of the ordinary educated man of the time is Hooker’s expatiation on Law (by which he means order). In the context of the chaos Hooker states: “Now if nature should intermit her course and leave altogether, though it were but for a while, the observation of her own laws; if those principal and mother elements of the world, whereof all things in this lower world are made, should lose the qualities which now they have; if the frame of that heavenly arch erected over our heads should loosen and dissolve itself; if celestial spheres should forget their wonted motions and by irregular volubility turn themselves any way as it might happen; if the prince of the lights of heaven, which now as a giant doth run his unwearied course, should as it were through a languishing faintness begin to stand and to rest himself; if the moon should wander from her beaten way, the times and seasons of the year blend themselves by disordered
and confused mixture, the winds breathe out their last
gasp, the clouds yield no rain, the earth be defeated
of heavenly influence, the fruits of the earth pine away
as children at the withered breasts of their mother no
longer able to yield them relief: what would become
of man himself, whom these things do now all serve? See
we not plainly that obedience of creatures unto the law
of nature is the stay of the whole world?"32

"So frequently", says Hardin Craig, "was the
world mechanism described, so necessary was it considered
for the intelligibility of every intellectual conception
and issue, so sublime and portentous was it felt to be in
its outlines and applications that one could hardly escape
it". Works on 'theology, law, medicine, and the arts,
natural history, ethics and politics: the encyclopaedias
of learning; the greater social and religious questions,
all were made to spring from the doctrines based on the
world order... The world order was simultaneously

'theological, legal, scientific psychological, and moral. It was poetry at work in the world ...' \(^\text{32}\)

The concepts of art were supposed to correspond with the concepts of the world picture. Critics like Puttenham as well as the poets of the age certainly had in mind, when they wrote about poetic art the constitution of the world-picture as was conceived then. \(^\text{34}\) Accordingly if the world was rationally made, poetry too had to be a rational product, an artefact, a mechanical thing, the work of a mechanic craftsman. According to the principal of analogy, the same intelligence, learning and skill had to be resorted to the craft of poetry as it was done in finding out correspondences between the perfection of God and His Heaven and the mundane world \(^\text{34b}\) (as well as the different levels of material existence). The Romantic heresy that powerful feeling has only to overflow in order to produce a work of art had not yet been invented. \(^\text{35}\)

\(^\text{33}\). Hardin Craig, op. cit. P. 14

\(^\text{34}\). John Buxton, op. cit. PP. 27-30

\(^\text{34a}\). cf. C. Ing. op. cit. P. 12.

\(^\text{34b}\). Vide Note 33.

\(^\text{35}\). John Buxton op cit. P. 33
Similarly, the principle of order and harmony that operated in the world-picture was applicable to poetry and other arts. Thomas Campion, who was doctor, poet, musician, says, "The world is made by symmetry and proportion, and in that respect compared to music, and music to poetry". Sir Henry Wotton, who was a diplomat, poet, connoisseur, extends the comparison (on the authority of L.B. Alberti) to architecture, by transporting the proportions of fifth that "there will indubitably result from either a graceful and harmonious content to the eye."

Others would have extended the comparison to painting and sculpture; indeed to all human experience.

Nature was much talked about in Tudor England. Consequently, she can hardly be ignored in the world-picture. Notions about nature influenced the conceptions of the writers of the Renaissance in the same manner as the general world-picture of the time. Moreover, man's relationship with nature rendered nature a factor of significant

36. Ibid P. 34
37. Ibid

cf. Tillyard : The Elizabethan World-Picture. P. 42
importance. Man and nature like other things in that integrated universe were not only inter-related but because of their closeness to each other were interlinked. 38

Broadly by nature was meant the phenomenal sublunary world. 39 And the sublunary world was made up of four elements: The four elements were earth, water, air, and fire. The elements were founded on the notion of hot, cold, dry, and moist. Earth the heaviest and hence the lowest was cold and dry. Water, lighter than the earth but heavier than the air and fire was cold and moist. Air had the quality of hot and moist. And fire, hot and dry. These four elements and their attributes as influenced by the stars, and the occasional extraordinary intervention of God explained the conduct of the sublunary world. 40

Since nature was part and parcel of the whole world-picture, it was similarly ordered and, rationally organised. To the Renaissance nature never meant 'the Romantic chaos of rocks, and stones, and trees'. It was

38. Craig, op. cit. Chapter I.
   Tillyard op. cit. P. 60
39. Ibid. PP. 41-42
40. Ibid. P. 56.
as perfect as the ordered macrocosm. Perfect garden, a replica of nature, was expected to mirror the idea, as if, 'one could have in small compass a model of universal nature made private'.

Hooker, always the most representative case emphasises the orderliness and rationality of the natural law and adds that it 'is an infallible knowledge imprinted' in the mind of man. In the celebrated passage quoted above he points to the 'order of the law of nature and states that it is the stay of the whole world'.

In this neat ordered picture of nature the neoplatonists introduced a somewhat unorthodox view. They added a soul to nature. In the hierarchical ladder, above man and below the angels they put nature as an intellectual being. She is Plato's "soul of the world", the metaphysical behind the phenomenal, world. She "imprinteth

41. John Buxton op. cit. P. 34
43. (Hooker : Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity) quoted Age of Shakespeare P. 43
44. Tillyard op. cit. P. 42
45. Ibid.
into matter with the soul of divinity all form generative and corruptible". She "directeth everything deprived of understanding to their end". She is Intelligence behind every natural phenomenon.

The renewal of this Platonic doctrine was responsible for the enthusiastic idealism of the Renaissance, says Miss M.C. Bradbrook. The picturesqueness of the world and some disorderliness were introduced in the mathematically neat ordered world of the medieval times.

But it should be noted that the introduction of Platonism did not imply a return to the Romantic chaos. It did not upset the medieval world picture inherited by the Tudors. "Nothing in it was at variance with laws of Nature, or offensive to God, or injurious to religion." Davies's Orchestra gives the right picture of the Elizabethan or

46. Ibid
47. Shakespeare and Elizabethan Poetry, Introduction PP. 9-14
    cf. C.S. Lewis op. cit. P. 4
48. Tillyard, op. cit. PP. 41-47.
Henrican Universe. The universe is tingling with anthropomorphic life: the teeming earth can almost be literally pinched with a kind of colic. But Davies depicts the universe in a state of perpetual dance; a grand ceremonial. Dance unfailingly implied orderliness, decorum, everything systematic.

"All art" it was said, "was then in truest perfection, when it might be reduced to some natural principle". Things could be graceful and harmonious when they could be done to natural principle which was also a rational principle. First follow Nature and your judgement frame. By her just standard which is still the same. This well-know couplet of Pope, tells Buxton, would have been acceptable to Wotton and Campion and their contemporaries, as to the Augustans.

49. C.S. Lewis op. cit. P. 4
   cf. The Elizabethan World-Picture PP. 96-99.
51. Buxton op. cit. P. 34.
52. Ibid.
The notions about the character of nature implied a kind of mechanism; orderliness and rationality like the organisation of the universe. It is apparent, in view of the mode of thinking as it prevailed that the poets and writers could hardly have failed to be influenced by the conception of Nature. While poetic theory was certainly influenced, it is interesting to see that most of the poems in the early Miscellanies written in "the terrible Poulter's measure and the flat plodding style which almost goes with it," stereotyped sameness of rhythm, as well as the creaking inversions, would have sounded to the Elizabethans as echoing the common notions of mechanical orderliness about nature. This in part explains the liking of the collections, and their popularity in the sixteenth century.

However, the Platonic notion of the presence of the metaphysical, behind the natural phenomenon influenced poetic theory, and was conducive in a way to the acceptance

52b. Vide ante PP. 1 - 10
53. cf. Tillyard, op. cit. P. 59
    Craig, op. cit. P. 14
54. Lewis op. cit. II. Drab Age Verse PP. 222-229.
of the style of the Miscellanies. Since for Plato the physical is merely a copy of the supersensuous, and the supersensuous or the supramundane is the only reality the importance of the physical nature is reduced to much insignificance.\(^5\) This idea of Plato was developed further by the neo-Platonists whose thought acquired great currency during the Renaissance.\(^6\) The neo-Platonists maintained that 'wisdom and reason' which were the other names of the supersensuous truth, by their very nature could not be presented directly, and, consequently had to be depicted through material images in which they were supposed to inhere.\(^7\) Only in this way the great invisible truths could be made visible. But the physical nature was tied to the factual and could not go beyond it. Only imagination, by virtue of the freedom of its nature, could, by exceeding the limits of nature, give better shape to wisdom and reason. Thus creations of the imagination improve upon nature: they are not merely copies of it. \(\text{Art and}\)

\(^5\) cf. Lewis, PP. 320-322.

\(^6\) Ibid. cf. Maurice Evans op. cit. PP. 12-14.

\(^7\) cf. Bradbrook, op. cit. PP. Introduction iii.

\(^7\) Lewis, P. 320
Nature in the poetic theory of the neo-Platonists, become rivals. The artist need not remain captivated to the truth of a foolish world. To improve upon nature, to embellish it became his creed.

The verse in the poetical Miscellanies, written according to the rhetorical notion of 'eloquence' is 'ornate' 'embellished' 'artificial'. This characteristic of the verse of the Miscellanies joined with the stereotyped, conventional uninteresting and 'insignificant' themes is exasperating to the modern reader. But the readers who regarded art to exist for overgoing nature and, embellishing nature, would have rather appreciated the aureation and rhetoric of the Miscellanies.

It is therefore likely that the conception of man, in the age should have analogies with the concept of the verse written. Never perhaps Man was of such great interest as in the sixteenth century Renaissance England. Man enjoyed 'a determinative position in the centre of the universe'.

58. Ibid.
59. Lewis, P. 322
60. Douglas L. Peterson: The English Lyric from Wyatt to Donne (Princeton University Press, New Jersey) Chapter I.
61. Hardin Craig, op. cit. P. 8
His position in the 'chain of being' rendered him of paramount importance. During the whole period when the notion of the chain of being was prevalent, from the Pythagorean philosophy to Pope, it was man's key-position in creation—a kind of Clapham Junction where all the tracks converge and cross—that so greatly exercised the human imagination. Man, as man lived with uncommon intensity. This fact and his relationship with his cosmic setting probably, gave to Elizabethan humanism its great force. The contemporary conception of man's constitution and his relative position in creation was that he contained in him samples of all the degrees of creation, and his anatomy corresponded with the physical ordering of the universe. His frame was compounded of the four elements, on the same principles as was the sublunar world. Man's physical life begins with food, and food is made of four liquid substances, the humours, which are to the human body what the elements are to the common matter of earth.

62. Tillyard: The Elizabethan World-Picture P. 60
63. Ibid. P. 60
64. Ibid. PP. 61-62
The brain was divided into a triple hierarchy: the lowest, the middle, and the highest. The lower contained the five senses; the middle contained the common sense, fancy and memory; the highest had in it the supreme human faculty the reason. The middle received the reports of the five senses from the lowest, and supplied the materials for the highest, to work upon, wherein was placed Reason. It was the faculty of reason that separated Man from the beasts and aligned him with God and the angels. Reason, consequently was the most valued attribute of man. Reason was divided into understanding (wit) and will, and on these two attributes Renaissance ethics was mainly based.

The understanding, common both to man and angels, operated differently in each. The angels were already perfect in understanding but man could reach perfection only through labour and learning. Due to the Fall man's understanding had been dimmed. But his 'erected wit' could apprehend what perfection was. Since man possessed the capacity of 'nature' he could make good the loss. The capacity of 'nurture' differentiated man from angels. The
angels did not 'grow' because they were already perfect. But man could grow because he had scope for lacking perfection. The capacity to grow (nurture) called for 'education'. Hence the great emphasis on education and the high regard for learning in that age. 65

This medievalist picture of man underwent change under the influence of the new and secular doctrine of the world which grew up in Italy in the Platonic Academy and which reached England somewhat late in the sixteenth century. According to the traditional doctrine though man had in his own power to be governed by his higher faculties or animal passions 66 his characteristic qualities were determined by his position in the great hierachical order of the chain of being. "He could become a saint but not an angel"; similarly 'a swinishman but not a pig". 67 The Florentine doctrine from Italy taught that man could become any kind of creature he pleased. He had no specific nature; by his free will he could create his own nature. The epitome of this new conception of man is the famous speech that

65. These two paragraphs on P. 16 are a summary of the PP. 62-64, The Elizabethan World-Picture, Til yard.
66. Bradbrook op. cit. P. 9
67. Lewis, P. 12
Mirandola, the greatest representative of the new Theory, in his *De Dignitate* (para 3), puts into the mouth of the Creator:

"The nature of all other things is limited and constrained within the bounds of laws prescribed by me: thou coerced by no necessity, shalt ordain for thyself the limits of thy nature in accordance with thy own free-will, in whose hands I have placed thee. I have set thee at the world's centre, that thou mayest from thence observe more easily what is in the world. I have made thee neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, so that thou mayest with greater freedom of choice and with more honour, as though the maker and the moulder of thyself, fashion thyself in whatsoever form thou shalt prefer. Thou shalt have the power to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are animal; thou shalt have power, out of the soul's judgement, to be reborn into the higher forms of life, which are divine" (trans. by E. Forbes, J.H.I. Vol. III (1942), PP. 347-354). There was no impassable

68. Bradbrook, PP. 10-11. cf. Lewis, P. 13
barrier that prevented us from turning ourselves into

gods. Picino, the master of Mirando-la maintained that
'we were a kin to the highest orders of created beings'⁶⁹

Unlike the orthodox Christian view that we were forced
into these bodies by way of punishment or fate, he holds
that we came into these our bodies by our own choice
because we loved them. Soul which is immortal, being
superior has sway over the body, and, in the incarnate
state the soul has the power to conquer 'her partiality
for this individual organism'. There was nothing to prevent
it from recovering her original primitive dominions over
the entire created universe, from becoming all powerful
and almighty which once it was. ⁷⁰

This newly found dignity of man, in accordance
with the principle of decorum prevalent then, was to be
accompanied by befitting mode of conduct - 'ceremonious'
way⁷¹. Man who was made in God's image, who was the choicest
creation of God and who was given dominion over the whole
created world 'must never forget the dignity of his

⁶⁹* Lewis, Ibid
⁷⁰. Ibid.
⁷¹* Buxton, PP. 19-23
Man must distinguish himself to assert the unique quality of his condition. There was ritual of the church, and the ritual of the court. These were to impress the glory of God and the majesty of the Queen or King. Ceremony implied such ritual, formality; it was the mark of civilized behaviour. Elemental passions, like the sexual desire, and hunger etc. are common to man and beast. Man, because he was different from the beasts and exalted in position must satisfy his elemental passions by 'imaginative adornments' to become him. George Chapman in his addition to Hero and Leander introduces ceremony at the beginning. Leander has been 'blunt in his violent love'. Ceremony rebukes him for violating the norms of civilized behaviour: his seduction of Hero.

Not being with civil forms confirmed and bounded,

For human dignities and comforts confounded.

Leander's indecency has been degrading to human dignity and is worse than his immorality. Similarly, it is incumbent upon sane and civilized persons to satisfy hunger with elegantly prepared dishes and in an elegant manner. Otherwise it
were simply animality. 72

It is easy to mark affinity between this concept of man as outlined above, and the poetry of the verse collections under review. The newfound conception of human dignity chimed with the practice of rhetorical decoration of ordinary themes. The mannered language of the verse found counterparts in the mannered wooing and ceremonious conduct of aristocratic readers for whom and by whom the poems of the Miscellanies were written. In the mechanistic structure of the poems the sixteenth century reader might have felt the reflection of man’s mechanistic constitution as spelt out in terms of four elements and humours, and the divisions of man’s mind in different sections. 73

The system of the Elizabethan world-picture73b was immanent, inclusive and inescapable. It was sublime and portentous and was meant to provide for everything. To man it spoke in thousands of ways. It was not possible for him to escape the sound of its voice. In understanding it,

72. Ibid.
73. Peterson, PP. 24-38
73b. Vide ante PP. 1-10
in working it out and in acting in accordance with it were the ends and purposes of the Renaissance thinkers. Every intellectual conception or issue emanated from it. The instrumentation and methodology of it constituted the several philosophical theories and schools of thought of the Renaissance. These theories and concepts made the intellectual and imaginative climate under which the writers of the age worked. 74

In the complex of the philosophical thought of the Renaissance, the Aristotelian doctrine is the most important single constituent.

According to Aristotelian doctrine the path to the destination of truth is through ratiocination. Ratiocination was the way of exploring the world howsoever much we may dislike the haggling and logic-chopping of the scholastics. It was considered to be the only road to the true nature of things. And it is not surprising because the brains were the only capital of the men then. 75

Reason had been established as the formal cause.

74. Craig, Chapter, I.
75. This paragraph is a condensation from Craig, op. cit. PP. 5-15.
But reason could not be used freely. Its area, and mode of operation were limited. The 'examination' of the universal phenomena and analysis of material objects were not its aims. It had its province limited to the discovery or rediscovery of a universe whose form and shape and purpose were already known. The laws that governed the world were not the creation of any mundane authority or power but the legacies of the past ages or the fiats of an unimpeachable God whose authority was unquestionable. The consultation of authority and the correct use of logic were the only means to know the truth of things. From this was derived the supreme value that was attached to reasoning and the great preoccupation with matters of thought.

The Aristotelians classified the objects of human knowledge into ten categories: substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, situation, possession, action, and the state of being acted upon. This continued to offer the sole method of intellectual attack on the corpus of experience during the Renaissance. Newton and his
followers had not arrived yet and Matter, space, and time had not undergone change in their traditional meanings. The world was a static world of nature at which man looked; he took vital interest in it because it was made for his own good. But with his unaided powers it was intelligible to him only through his mind. Accordingly faith in intellect was unshaken and intellection was the rule. 76

The majority of the poems in the Miscellanies manifest the kind of cerebral activity which can be expected from the habits of the currency of intellection. Absence of fancy, lack of variety of themes, flatness of treatment discursiveness and didacticism of a number of poems 77 illustrate the fact of the matter. The readers to-day may find the poems monotonous for being cerebral. But this will amount to ignoring the currency of one of the major aspects of Elizabethan thought. The educated readers of the sixteenth century rather thought them pleasing, and satisfying as well.

Aristotelianism, however, did not always appear in unadulterated form. It was corrupted (if one may use the

76. See Note 74 above.
77. Peterson: *Lyric from Wyatt to Donne.*
term) with neo-Platonic ideas, christian dogma, and even with strands of stoicism. In an age of transition when various influences from several quarters were contending, this phenomenon is not surprising. Neo-Platonism was present when Christianity was being shaped, therefore, its spiritualism and mysticism had much in common with Christianity. Aristotelian cosmology was not antagonistic to the Christian, because the doctors of the church had helped to shape it. 78 The result was that neo-Platonic cosmology, Christian cosmology and the Aristotelian, did not differ much.

Aristotelian cosmology was founded on Aristotle's physical and logical works. It was very vast in extent, was scientific, rather than idealistic. The conception of God and soul for the Aristotelians was a physical and logical matter. God was an unmoved mover, of all things, an energy of quiet self-contemplation. Soul did not become a disembodied spirit. It remained a part of the Aristotelians' physical science and in accordance with the doctrine of form soul was the ultimate expression of physical body. 79

78. Vide Note 76 above.
79. Ibid.
Neo-Platonism initiated protest against the rigidities and pedantries of scholasticism. Christianity further modified Aristotelianism and offered itself as an instrument to the aspirant of truth even more acceptable than neo-Platonic magia. The world according to Christian dogma is not an object explicable in physical terms alone but is permeated by the Divine presence. Earth was God's foot-stool; man was the child of God playing his allotted part—an Almighty ever present as comforter, to guide, to instruct, to reprove his wayward off-spring. Nevertheless, while interpreting the cosmic machine which was for the most part the creation of Aristotelian thinkers, Christianity never dared to reconnoiter beyond its boundary line.

Thus what we assume Christian thought as possessed by the Elizabethan educated men was nothing else but a modified and extended form of Aristotelianism. In this modified and enlarged form Aristotelianism could make enough provision for the immortality of soul, life after

80. Ibid
81. Ibid.
death, good versus evil. Apparently little distinction
might have been felt between Aristotelian thinking, neo-
Platonic thinking and Christian thought. The fact is
that all three joined hands in effecting human good during
the Renaissance. A sort of enlightened Christian Aristo-
elianism was in evidence. This enlightened Christian
Aristotelianism in the 16th century is fairly and typically
represented by Richard Hooker. Hooker's views regarding
Christian dogma involving related matters that exercised the
mind and thought of average sophisticated reader of the day
are fairly summed up in his definition and discussion of
law.

Hooker was a church man. His famous controversy
with the Puritan Traverse led him to probe deeper into the
greater meaning and relevance of Christian doctrine. 'Of
the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity' is a defence virtually,
of the light of reason and common sense in the face of
religious dogmatism and obscurantism. It is a most persua-
sive and eloquent plea in matters of Christian religion in
view of the practicality of life.

82. Craig, PP. 23-31. cf. Lewis, PP. 451-463
Hooker begins his great work with a consideration of the nature of Law. His definition of general law is so consummate, comprehensive and careful that it covers everything: in religion, philosophy and science. Law is at once the inherent tendency of things and a principle of regulation. "That which doth assign unto each thing, the kind, that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the form and measure of working, the same we term law." To determine the genus, species, property, and accident; to govern the activity within the function, and to determine the position of each creature relative to other creatures— that was the province of law. In terms of law Hooker finds no repugnancy but harmony and order everywhere. Two major aspects of law, the Law of Nature and the law of the scripture are not opposed but are harmonious. They are complementary. Both emanate from God.

Since to understand God is beyond the capacity of man, Hooker does not consider 'the natural, necessary and integral operations of God', but only those in which God has a voluntary purpose— eternal decrees which we term eternal laws. God in this aspect of His Majesty
is a law both to Himself and to all other things. In His workings counsel and wisdom prevail. Reason is the rule of his eternal laws. Nothing is done without cause, everything has an end and purpose: "nothing else is done by God, which to leave undone were not so good" (This is an instance of this great writer's consummate skill whereby the mystery, the external workings of God and the law of Reason have been ranged together).

The eternal law assumes its name according to the kind of things that are subject unto it. It may be divided under the Law of Nature, the Law of Reason, Celestial Law and the Divine Law. The Law of Nature controls all natural agents; the Law of Reason is the principle of operation amongst all reasonable creatures; Celestial Law functions in the orders of the angels; and Divine Law is that which is revealed by God. The characteristic of the human law is that it is made both of the Divine Law and the Law of Reason. It is based on expediency.

The world is sustained, by the obedience of the creatures to the Law of Nature. The course of the Law

82b. Craig op. cit. P. 24
of Nature, however, may be obstructed by the defect in the matter of natural things due to the Fall. But appetite promotes obedience. The desire to seek perfection which has been implanted in all earthly things is incentive, too, to observe the Law of Nature. Man resembles God in his matter of working because God created man in His own image. Being a copy of God man seeks perfection of God. However, Man has will and knowledge. The freedom implied in will and knowledge does not bring Man into conflict with God, because will and knowledge themselves are the attributes of God. (Man's unity with God makes him united with his fellow beings. This fact makes him understand that he is a part of the whole. The desire to seek perfection or goodness obliges him to prefer the good of others).

Man seeks divine perfection or goodness through actions natural to him. Actions are accompanied by affections such as joy, grief, fear and anger. But these are instinctive and it is not in our power to keep sway over them. The provision of will comes to our rescue. Will is in a position to control them. But will itself is subordinate to Reason. The light of God given reason is necessary
to direct the Will on its way to the truth of nature because Reason helps in knowing good from evil. Since will is subordinate to Reason will cannot be headstrong; things which are impossible are not sought by 'reasonable' Will.

A situation may arise, nevertheless, where evil may prevail over reasonable persuasion. Appetite which in itself is 'good' may be tricked by sensible impression backed by custom. The combination of both may delude Reason and a secondary world of evil may be set up. But this usurpation of the natural world by evil is temporary, and is destined to fail and give way to natural good. Man is attracted by evil, if at all, Hooker believes, because of the goodness that is attached to evil.

The important thing to note is that this phenomenon of evil in Hooker's Aristotelian philosophy provided sufficient scope for tragedy in the world and perdition of the human soul.

The influence of such views as Hooker's about the freedom of the Will and its enslavement, and the human problem involved in it is very conspicuous in the sonnets
of Sidney, Graville and Shakespeare's Dark Lady Sonnets - where enslavement of will by love is the theme. The poems in the Miscellanies might not take up the matters of Will and its corruption by evil in the sense that the Sonnets of Sidney, Greville and Shakespeare's take up. But the complaints and please of courtly lovers in all the collections, and, in some poems, the desire to renounce love might imply rejection of evil for the sake of the attainment of perfection or goodness.

It has been remarked, "It was the Platonists who made the world less tidy and more picturesque which was given mathematical neatness by the middle ages". It would appear so, if we concentrate, as has been the usual practice, only on the love-poetry of the late Sixteenth Century.

83. Peterson, PP. 212 - 284.
84. Peterson, for instance, opens Chapter III (op. cit) on Wyatt with these words, "Wyatt appears to have been constitutionally at odds with the values and moves of court society", and goes on to demonstrate Wyatt's complete rejection of courtly norms of life on the basis of rationality and Christian ethics. PP. 87-119
Treatment of Platonism from the point of view of love has over-stressed its importance. However, all the Platonic enthusiasm and idealism never meant the introduction of chaos into a world of 'rational certainty and completeness'. The fact is that basically the thought of the 'Symposium', the source of Platonic philosophy - is cold and ruthless, and the more fervid the more ruthless. Plato's thought in its own day did not find better ground to sprout than Greek pederasty. "The lowest rung of his ladder is perversion; the intermediate rungs are increasing degrees of asceticism and scientific clarity; the topmost rungs are mystical contemplation." A man who reaches it has, by hypothesis, left behind forever the original human object of desire and affection. In such a scheme of things hardly any place is left for 'original human desire and affection'. There is no question of preferring one beautiful object over others. Such a scheme is not conducive to heterosexual love, fidelity and the lover's desire for married

85. Lewis, op. cit. PP. 9-10
86. Ibid.
87. "Bembo, in his great defence of love at the end of the 'Courtier' bids his lover take physical love for a stately to climb up to another fauve higher than it... And thus shall he behold no more the particular beauty of one woman, but an universal, that decks all bodies'. P.14, Maurice Evans, Op. cit.
bliss. Platonism of the poets merely meant that the lady's soul was even more beautiful than her person though both were the images of the First Fair.88

It is pertinent to observe that when Platonism was mentioned, it was not the Platonic eroticism of which the men of the period exclusively thought, and thought first. Platonism was primarily a doctrine of daemonology which meant that the space between earth and moon was inhabited with airy-creatures - called daemons. (Not demons). They were not necessarily evil spirits but the mass of mysterious spirits who could be invoked by high magic or magia89. They were capable of fertile unions with the human species. But the loves of such creatures, by nature, could not be Platonic. It was for such ideas about Platonism that the Elizabethans would not have been puzzled when Drayton in Polyolbion (V. 178) said that he would not play the 'humorous Platonist' by maintaining that Merlin's

88. Lewis, P. 10
89. 'Not demons "They were not necessarily evil spirits but the mass of mysterious spirits who could be invoked by high magic or magia (not goetia the art of calling up evil spirits, demons, for innocent traffic with the unseen" Lewis, P. 10.
father was an "incubus daemon".

The Platonists, as every student knows, were deeply conscious of God's immanence in the creation. God imposed his divine ideas upon the primordial chaos and the conjunction of the form and the first matter produced the universe. This newly created universe of the neo-Platonists was held together by the love of God. The all-embracing miracle of love made one atom to cohere with another; the stone fell to the ground for the love it bore to the earth; the matter struggled above in its desire to attain purer form; divine love met matter to seek fresh incarnation in matter, thus completing the circle. It is in this context of the Neo-Platonic conception of the integration of the world that Othello's address to Desdemona acquires terrifying irony:

Perdition catch my soul
But I do love thee; and when I love thee not
Chaos is come again. (III iii 91)

All-embracing operation of love through the universe was a guarantee against the ever-encroaching cosmic chaos.

90. Maurice Evans, P. 13
Not dissimilar was the Neo-Platonic conception of the 'music of the spheres' which implied harmony in the universe. Unity, harmony, proportion then, were no less cherished ideals of the Platonists than of the medieval scholastics. The Neo-Platonists inculcated "a worship of beauty, interpreted as geo-metrical proportion." It is

91. "This attitude... part classical, part medieval, was shaped by the principles of 'decorum'. Decorum meant consistency and fitness of style, every detail in a composition being suited to its purpose, occasion, audience, its material, characters, and formal conventions. It might also carry with it the Neo-Platonic taste for symmetrical 'proportion' transmitted from the Italy of Raphael by such books as Castiglione's Courtier. L.G. Salinger, The Age of Shakespeare P. 23 and Part II. P. 91.

Miss C. Ing. Commenting on Puttenham's Art of Poesie relates, "I suspect that in the background of his reading or talking lay some such discussion as Pica Della Mirandolla's of the sight as a kind of archetype of the senses. He was undoubtedly the most serious of the writers of his time who dabbled in visible poetry, and if we examine the effects on poetic structure of his ideas, we shall have seen all that is significant in such ideas. - Puttenham chooses his forms from a sense of their suitability to subjects; or rather, as his purpose is to exemplify the forms, he chooses his subjects from a sense of their suitability to forms. To recognise that certain forms may suit some subjects more happily than others may show as much imaginative perception as to feel that certain subjects flow more happily into some forms than into others... there is some sense of integral relation between matter and manner. Thus, for aspire, Puttenham finds it proper to use the subject of Her Majesty's high-aspiring nature, and the subject of God as single high source of good spreading below. Her Majesty again supplies matter for the steady magnificence of the crowned pillar, and for the all encompassing perfection of the roundell. The pillar may be used by the lover when he praises royal state in his lady... " The Elizabethan Lyric, PP. 89-91.

in tune with Puttenham who says "all things stand by proportion and without it nothing could stand to be good or beautiful".\textsuperscript{92}

Castiglione's \textit{Cortegiano} (trans by Thomas Hoby 1561) on which the Elizabethan gentleman modelled himself, and, which was instrumental in spreading Neo-Platonic ideas in England, expresses the desire of orderly and harmonious (always the highest term of praise-) living. Through this book the many-sided English gentleman was trying to see life steadily and see it whole.\textsuperscript{93} Graceful versatility, harmony of mind and body and cultivation of the soul through love were the postulates.\textsuperscript{94} That love could be an educator of the senses was a new ideal and was the result of the Neo-Platonism in the Renaissance. It impelled Sidney to seek education through his love for Stella and to aspire for

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{92} Ing. op. cit. P. 42 quoted.
\item \textsuperscript{93} cf. Buxton, op. cit. P. 7 also vide note No. 91
\item \textsuperscript{94} "From him (Cartiglione's \textit{Courtier}) the Elizabethans learned to admire a graceful versatality, a harmony of mind and body, the cultivation of the soul through courtly love". (\textit{Age of Shakespeare} P. 23)
\item "The whole of human experience might be investigated by human intelligence, and it was the duty of the courtier, who would serve and advise his prince, to comprehend it" Buxton, P. 27
\item "The ideal of the Renaissance in every country of Europe was no longer the saint, but the man of the world, the courtier or the magistrate, Elyot's \textit{Governor}, or Machiavelli's \textit{Prince}" Evans, P. 12 \textsuperscript{cf. Bradbrook, op. cit. P. 13}
\item \textsuperscript{95} Evans, M. PP. 12-13 also \textit{Age of Shakespeare}, P. 23
\end{itemize}
honour in battles in Netherlands. It made of Queen Elizabeth a Belphoebe inspite of the knowledge that she was a tyrannical and difficult woman. The enthusiastic idealism of the Neo-Platonists fostered a high and picturesque conception of the world among the Elizabethans whose criteria of hygiene, decency and humanitarianism would confound a modern man. Glory and magnificence were the supreme virtues in the age. Their response to the beauty of these ideals was the first step to the development of the Magnanimous Man. They called out the best qualities of the courtier. Cultivation of art, and, the embodiment of beauty were his duty. Appearing in a tournament with all the paraphernalia, writing a poem describing a tourney, sending a sonnet to a lady accompanied with some device or jewel were the means to educate oneself in virtue and gentle discipline.

For the generation of Sidney it was not unusual to exalt passion of love. The Elizabethans were practical enough to understand the naturalness of the passions. But the exaltation must remain in agreement with civility. It

96. Tillyard, P. 40
97. Bradbrook, op. cit. P. 24
was the moral duty of the poet to impose form on measureless passions. Sidney while addressing Stella (the Platonic idea of goodness) in his sonnet sequence calls her his 'wit' (understanding) as well as "virtue". In his Arcadia Sidney confirms that love leads to 'virtue'. The same line of thought is continued in the 'Apologia'. He admits that the poet may indulge in flattering the senses; but then he makes "the too much loved earth more lovely". 'Our infected will' wants to keep us shackled in our appetites but 'our erected wit' aspires for 'perfection'. The wit of the poet holds him coolly in all his exaltedness and circumvents the agitation of the passion. In sonnet (XXXI) to the moon, Sidney identifies himself with the disconsolate luminary not by sensuous reverie but by a sudden sprong of dialect. In the beautiful poem 'Nightingale' the poet seems more interested in listening to the majestic cadence of his lines than to the pain and anguish of the bird; 'a sorrow and music; the poor bird's rape is a matter of great bewailment, but she gets a dry scholastic answer for her grievous suffering, 'Since wanting is more woe then

98. *Age of Shakespeare*  P. 94
99. *Ibid*
too much having*. In "Thine earth now springs, mine fadeth" the antithesis serves to amplify the poet's 'craving', but at the same time, by the balancing act, it re-embodies his belief in order. The disturbance of the passions was a fact with the Elizabethans but for the same contemporaries of Puttenham, 'it was a piece of joy to be able to lament with ease', 'to play the physician in verse', causing 'one odour to expel another'.

Thus the most Platonic of the poets is most conscious of balance, order and harmony. Disorder, unruliness and chaos were the most repugnant terms for the 16th century Englishmen wheresoever found in the world and whatsoever the philosophical notions of the persons.

There is no variety, no 'picturesqueness' in the themes of the poems in the Miscellanies for the most part. There are no idealisms and ardours of love. But that does not mean that the poems were not liked by the Platonist readers. The metrical regularity of the verse; the continuous, clockwise beat of the end-stopped lines of large part

100. Ibid.
101. cf. Tillyard : Elizabethan World-Picture
of the poems would certainly have been felt as pleasing to the ears of those who believed in "the music of the spheres". But the 'harmoniousness' of the music was also allied to 'symmetry' and 'proportion'.

Symmetry and proportion were the underlying principles of the 'picture' of the whole universe. The Platonists understood this. So there were shaped poems in the form of an 'Altar' or a 'Pillar'. There is the firmness of outline and neatness of structure of the poems in the Miscellanies. Geometrician certainly liked such matter but no less the Platonist. Symmetry and proportion made everything beautiful.

Of greater immediacy and potency, in terms of intellectual influence, than the factors so far considered, was the influence of humanism, on poetry. In the sixteenth century its effect on literature is a truism. Like any great movement humanism was a new way of life. The activities of its exponents accompanied with vehement demerciation of the middle ages which were going out, made it look revolutionary.

102. cf. Ruxton op. cit. P. 33
103. Ruxton, PP. 219-220
104. Ibid. cf. Note 91.
It brought a change of outlook in life, opened up new horizons of thought and action. But in some ways, it is important to notice, it was a priggish, even narrow and superficial movement. 105

Admiration for energy and freedom for which the Renaissance is known was certainly its contribution. But energy and freedom could not be chaotic or unrestrained. From the beginning humanism in England was associated with Christianity. Discipline, order, restraint were the means through which forcefulness of action was to be canalised. 106

In the literary sphere, in addition to providing new sources of inspiration, humanism initiated a temper and those critical principles that led to centre attention on stylistic matters rather on content. 107

The days of Elizabeth may have seemed 'spacious' to those who lived under the great Queen, but the space was seen differently from ours. The terms in which the age was proud of itself and was aware of itself were the terms which showed it to possess a new power over the moral

106. Ibid PP. 8-11
107. Lewis, op. cit. PP. 19-21
contents of life; this was coupled to a sense of release from the muddle of the past, from the medieval tendency to spin schemes and dreams and leave the practice to founder in the mud.\textsuperscript{108} The age was aware of concentrating on "this world, a world of solid and colourful objects; and, of using eloquence to produce a human rather than a theoretical order by actualising the moral ideals that God had supplied. But this was very far from supposing that forceful action or liberty from restraint were goods in themselves.\textsuperscript{109}

Forceful action. Yes. But it must be "of the right kind".\textsuperscript{111} Man was widely admired in the period for his power to remould himself and his destiny. Even the staid Erasmus said that Prometheus was a figure to be admired and imitated. But this ideal of "Promethean man" was not late nineteenth century an archist or even radical vision; rather it was part of a priggish course in self-improvement.\textsuperscript{112} Self-consciousness in virtue certainly seems to be a recurrent feature of the Renaissance, as of

\begin{flushright}
\begin{itemize}
\item 108. G.K. Hunter \textit{op. cit.} P. 8
\item 109. Ibid
\item 111. Ibid.
\item 112. See Note 105 above.
\end{itemize}
\end{flushright}
its idol Cicero.

The "Promethean" men of the English Renaissance—Raleigh, Sidney, Burghley—were devoted to self-conscious moral platitudes as were the "irregular" dramas of the populace. Both visualised energy reaching out to touch an immutable set of moral norms; "the spaciousness" of the Queen's reign was seen as stretching between the little that man had done and the great deal that man could do, but what man could do was not to be determined by the limits of human energy but was everywhere bound in by a divinely appointed frame of order.113 Discovery of "those things which are pleasing unto God" were to lead from self-conscious probity to action—and this was seen at its highest as the kind of action which would reduce "divers cities, countries and nations to civil order and politic life" (Starkey's Dialogue between Pole and Lupset ed. Burton, P.22)114

Both the pleasures of self-conscious rectitude and sense of Divine Mission in the power to order secular

113. Ibid P. 9
affairs point to a truth about the Elizabethan court.  
Elizabeth and her establishment remained at the centre of the national consciousness throughout the 'spacious days' we admire so much, and this would seem enigmatic if we were to suppose that the main national effort of the time was in the direction of freedom and naturalness. For the court of Elizabeth was neither natural nor free. Its ritual was artificial to the last degree, despotic and repetitive. The sovereign was a painted idol rather than a person; the codes of manners it encouraged were exotic, Petrarchan and Italianate. Yet this artificial and insincere world had the power to harness the diverse energies of high and low alike. Its artifice does not seem to have cut off the sovereign from her people, but on the contrary seems to have focussed more clearly on what they wanted to see – a manifestasim of Divine order or earth and a guarantee of the meaning of secular energy in terms which recalled the ritual of divine service. 

The artificiality, the elaborateness due to the

115. Ibid
116. Ibid
117. Ibid
rhetorical schemes, the ornateness, orderliness due to the regularity of the Poulter's measure; all these qualities of the verse of the poetical collections correspond to the ritual of the Divine service in the Elizabethan court. Typical Elizabethan poets Sidney and Spenser might have had somewhat different concept of art from the writers of the poems in the Miscellanies, but the highly rhetorical and mannered nature of their (Sidney & Spenser) styles is an established fact. Sidney, Spenser and Lily are 'artifical' writers, but this hardly means that they were out of touch with their time. As the artificiality of the court was an efficient means of expressing its serious and indeed religious sense of "space" that was open to it, so the artifice of these writers was part of a serious attempt to display what were generally taken to be the deepest values of the age. Exquisiteness of form in Lyly, Spenser or Sidney is no more an argument for superficiality of treatment than are the love-locks and silk stockings of the courtiers a sign of effeminateness; 118

118. Ibid
one supposition is as crass as the other. The common modern assumption is that the "real" Elizabethan qualities are found in popular rather than courtly literature of the time. The formality of the court writers is usually seen not as an effort to impose order on the chaos of secular experience but as an attempt to emasculate the "natural" vitality of the Elizabethan spirit. For authors like Greene, "wild, reckless, defiant of all past tradition, of all conventional laws, the English drama owed no teacher, no source of poetic inspiration, but the people itself." If this view were correct, then Sidney, Spenser Lyly would indeed be coterie pedants, only coming alive when their natural vitality broke through their sense of decorum.

Lewis defined humanism as a discipline whose critical principles and critical outlook were formed from the studies of Greek and Latin. Contrary to common assumption, humanism thus defined turns out to be the first form of classicism. This definition implies that

119. Hunter, op. cit. P. 10
120. Lewis, op. cit. P. 18
humanists in the modern sense as those opposed to the asceticism and strictness of puritanism hardly existed. It is not unusual to make a distinction that amounts almost to a contrast between humanism and the 'neo-classical' school. But the neo-classicists are the humanist's lawful heirs. The worst of all neo-classical errors, that which turned Aristotle's observation on Greek Tragedy into arbitrary rules and even foisted on him rules for which his text furnishes no pretext at all, began not with Richilieu nor Chapelain but in 1570 with Castelvetro. Scaliger's critique of Homer is very like Rymer's of Shakespeare. Swift's contempt for natural science in Laputa, Johnson's in his critique of Milton's educational theory, Chesterfield's request that Stanhope should stick to useful books and avoid 'jimcrack natural history of fossils, minerals, plants etc., are all in the spirit of Vives and Erasmus. The differences between the humanists and the neo-classics have to be sought for by minute study: the similarities leap to the eye. There appears to be no

121. Ibid
122. Ibid P. 19
123. Ibid
warrant for regarding the Elizabethan literature as the progeny of the one and the 'Augustan' as the progeny of the other. It would not be wrong to assume that the great literature of the 1580's and 190's was something which humanism, with its unities of Gorboduc and English hexameters, would have prevented if it could; but it failed to prevent because the high tide of native talent was then too strong for it. 124 The oft talked about condemnation of the living medieval Latin as 'barbarous', and appreciation of the dead Latin of the past, by the humanists, proceeded from this line of thought of humanists.

The origin of the process of rules and unities lies, in the humanists' curious conception of the "classical" period in a language, the correct and normative period before which all was immature or archaic and after which all was decadent. Scaliger tells that Latin was 'rude' in Plautus 'ripe' from Terence to Virgil, decadent in Martial and Juvenal, senile in Ausonius. Vives says much the same. Vida, more wildly, makes all Greek poetry after

124. Ibid.
Homer a decline.125

When once this superstition was established it led naturally to the belief that good writing in the 15th or sixteenth century meant writing which aped as closely as possible that of the chosen period in the past. All real development of the language to meet the changing needs of new talent and new subject-matter was thus precluded. This was not what the humanists had intended. They had hoped to retain Latin as the living esperanto of Europe while putting back the clock of linguistic change to the age of Cicero.126 From that point of view humanism is a great archaising movement. By adopting this method the humanists killed the medieval Latin. Before they had ceased talking of a rebirth it became evident that they had really built a tomb.127 Fantastic pains and skill went to its building. Bembo's friend Longolius is reported to have bound himself by oath to abstain not only from

125. "The fact is that it is to the humanists that we owe the curious conception of the 'classical' period in a language, the correct and normative period in a language before which all was immature or archaic and after which all was decadent" Lewis, op. cit. P.21

126. Lewis, P. 21

127. Ibid.
every word but from every number and case of a word that
could not be found in Cicero.\(^{128}\) A negative conception
of excellence arose: it was better to omit a beauty
than to leave in anything that might have the shadow of
an offence (Sealiger: Poetics V. ii)\(^{129}\) Man vied with
one another in smelling out and condemning 'unclassical'
words, so that the permitted language grew steadily
poorer (Vives: De Causis, II).\(^{130}\) The energy of neo-
Latin poets was wasted on a copying of the ancients so
close as to approach forgery or conjuring. The results
often please but only as a solved puzzle pleases. Ingenuity
is certainly admirable, but only rarely does real poetry
force its way through the doubled and trebled artifice.

All this was destined to have a serious effect
on vernacular poetry. A time was coming, says Lewis, when
English poets would bring to their works habits formed by
the trade in classic niceties,

The dangerous craft of culling terms and phrase
from languages that want the living voice.\(^{131}\)

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128. Ibid.
129. Quoted. Lewis P. 21.
130. Quoted. Lewis P. 21
131. Ibid. P. 22
The artifice due to verbal and rhetorical ingenuity of the verse of the Miscellanies is surely similar to this sort of linguistic conception. The lifelessness and stiffness of most of the poems no less points to this notion of the style of the humanists. In the 80's and 90's when the characteristic great Renaissance poetry, apparently opposed to this notion of writing, was being composed the popularity of the Tottel's Miscellany and The Paradise of Dainty Devices, must be in part due to the prevalence of such sort of the teaching of the humanists.

Not dissimilar to this curious notion of language and style, was the humanist's curious view about the subject-matter of the works of the ancient writers. The humanists misread the classics as they misconceived the medieval Latin.

Both, the medievalists themselves and the humanists, of course, saw the ancients through the medium of their own taste and temper. We, no doubt, do the same. The misreading of the ancients through the humanists, it seems, inhered in the humanistic temper itself.
Contrary to our modern ideas, no doubt, influenced by the Romantic movement, the humanist temper, for one thing, 'was not a surrender to the sensuousness or to the spiritual suggestions of the Greek imagination: it was not even a delight in the myths as good 'yarns'. Myth interested these 'early classicists' much less than it had interested Dante or Chaucer. Machail in his Latin Literature says that even Valerius Flaccus, though a good poet, "cannot wholly destroy the charm of the Golden Fleece". Vives (De Tradendis III), speaking of Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica, blames it for 'vaynnesse of matter', argumenti teritas. The same theme which, for the later humanists, almost saves a bad poem, for his predecessor almost damns a good one. Scaliger's attitude is the same. He scolds Homer for his 'old wives' tales'.

Evidently, for the humanists, the attraction of

132. Ibid. P. 23
133. Ibid
134. Quoted. Lewis P. 23
135. Ibid.
136. Quoted. Ibid.
ancient literature lay in a different direction. It is nowhere more clearly revealed than in Vives' praise of the Latin language. Vives says, (*De Tradendis, III*), "It is copious by reason of the great multitude of excellent wits that have laboured in the manuring and augmentation thereof, and hath moreover a sweetness in the sound meddled with a certain weight and gravity, not as in some tongues brutish and rustic but liuelie expressing the image of a right prudent and valiant man born and nurtured in a well order'd commonwealth." Preference for Latin appears to be temperamental. Gravity, prudence, the well ordered civitas, on the one hand, boorishness and rusticity on the other, are the clues. Whatever else it is, humanism emphatically is not a movement towards freedom and...

It is the impulse of men who feel themselves simple, rustic, and immature, towards sophistication, urbanity, and ripeness. These complexes were very much common with the 16th century Englishmen who came to realise their backwardness by suddenly coming into contact with the

137. Ibid
138. Ibid
139. Ibid
advanced continental civilizations. All this one can find in the Romantic desire for the primitive and the spontaneous. The metaphor of "broken fetters" which some have used to describe the 'revival of learning' is 'emotionally misleading'. The desire was for order and discipline, weight, and decorum.\textsuperscript{140} The affinity of Vives' concept of style with the style (described above) of the Miscellanies is obvious. As regards the subject-matter, the themes of courtly love might be classed as light and stereotyped, but they are of the conservative cast and hallowed by time. The poems in praise of the Mean state give further colouring of gravity to the collections.

Two special objects of humanist aversion, the chivalrous romance and scholastic philosophy, may also be mentioned. Both the puritans and the humanists ridiculed chivalric stories.\textsuperscript{141} This was natural for the persons who wished to be grave, and moral; although as far as the common reader was concerned, the humanist attack on romances was not very successful.\textsuperscript{142} As far as scholastic

\textsuperscript{140.} Ibid P. 24
\textsuperscript{141.} cf. Lewis P. 29
\textsuperscript{142.} Ibid
philosophy is concerned, it is important to remember not that the humanists are well known for philosophical thinking. Consequently their attack on scholastic philosophy was not philosophical attack at all. This is clear from the words of Vives and Erasmus. Your philosophers, says Vives, (De Causis, I), are straw-splitters, makers of unnecessary difficulties, and if you call their jargon Latin, why then we must find some other name for the speech of Cicero. The more filthie barbarisme they have in their style the greater theologians they doe account themselves, says Erasmus. "Call ye Thomas Aquinas a doctor?" asks Johan Wessel, and comments, "He knew no tongue but the Latin and barely that." These are not the terms in which a new philosophy attacks an old one: they are unmistakeably, the terms in which at all times the merely literary man, the belletrist, attacks philosophy itself. The schoolman advanced, and supported propositions about things: the humanist replied that:

143. Ibid
144. Quoted. Lewis PP. 29–30
145. Ibid. P. 30
146. Ibid.
words were inelegant. Words like 'realitas' and 
identificatio were condemned not because they had no 
use but because Cicero had not used them. C.S. Lewis 
succinctly concludes that "the war between the humanists 
and the schoolmen was not a war between ideas; it was on 
the humanists' side, a war against ideas. It is a 
manifestation of the humanist tendency to make eloquence 
the sole test of learning; embittered by the fact that in 
the universities of that age the teachers of eloquence 
usually had less secure and lucrative posts than their 
 enemies".

In England humanism, linked with Puritanism, 
carried the day in 1550 at Oxford. The works of the 
scholastics were 'cast out of college libraries', and 
'those most noble authors', as Anthony Wood says, condemned 
for 'barbarism, ignorance of scripture, and much deceit', 
and 'publicly burned...' (History of Antiquities of Oxford).

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147. Lewis (op. cit. P. 30) concludes that the antagonism 
between the humanists and the schoolmen was not 
a war between ideas: it was, on the humanists side, 
a war against ideas.

148. Ibid P. 30

149. Ibid
as a result he adds, there was soon nothing to be heard in the University but 'poetry, grammar, idle songs and frivolous stuff'. Bruno describes England in 1584 as a country "widowed of good learning in philosophy and the mathematics - all their doctors be doctors of grammar, full of obstinate ignorance, pedantry, presumption, and boorish incivilitie". 150

Under the milieu suggested here, the 'eloquent' verse of the Tottel's Miscellany, 'The Handful (1566,84) 151 and A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions (1578) with its mannerisms, grammatical and rhetorical devices, embellishments and its common place themes, must have been welcomed and appreciated. Tottel's Miscellany, the largest epitome of the eloquent poems, had run into nine editions 152 by 1584. Of the 'Handful', although we have record of two editions (1566, 1584), there were probably more, of which no trace is left. And the 'Gorgeous Gallery' in which every rhetorical means has been carried to extremes appeared only once (1578) perhaps because it came, too late. 154

150. Ibid. 
151. Peterson, op. cit. PP. 127-129
154. Ed. Rollins Introduction P. XXIV