

**Creating and Unmasking Credible Fictions:
Philip Sidney's Use of a Ciceronian Strategy**

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Declaration of Originality

This thesis has been composed by me, and is my own work.

Jennifer Richards

Abstract

Recent criticism on the Renaissance has drawn attention to an interest in the rhetorical methods of argumentation which were used to support, and lend legitimation to, new positions or ideas. Such methods of 'proof', which were designed to create belief, replaced the logical methods of argumentation of the medieval scholastics, which were designed instead to discover the true principles of a particular line of enquiry. I explore a different and complementary method for the creation of credibility, a method which derives from the same Roman rhetorical tradition, and which was promoted by Renaissance writers, including Philip Sidney. This method originates with Marcus Tullius Cicero, although Cicero himself suggests that he is inspired by the Socrates of Plato's dialogues. The claim of Plato's Socrates not to know the rhetorical techniques for producing eloquence, a claim which is meant to indicate that his speech is prompted by a genuine knowledge of true principles, is interpreted by Cicero himself as a rhetorical strategy for creating an ironic persona which conceals the studied nature of his expression and which thus gains him the credence, and trust, of his audience. In his rhetorical manuals Cicero imitates, and thus demonstrates, this supposed ironic strategy, for two seemingly contradictory reasons: on the one hand, he wishes to elevate the status of the art of rhetoric - the art held in contempt by Plato - showing that it is a legitimate and fundamental tool for intellectual enquiry; on the other hand, he wants to conceal the studied nature of his own eloquence so that his audience believe that he speaks as nature or truth prompts him. In the Renaissance Cicero's ironic method is imitated by Desiderius Erasmus and Baldassare Castiglione for these respective reasons: while Erasmus sets out to establish rhetoric as a proper instrument for the discovery of truth, Castiglione arms his courtier with a rhetorical strategy that will allow him to create the impression that his actions and words reflect his innately noble character. Cicero's ironic strategy, mediated through the writings of Erasmus and Castiglione, is explored by Philip Sidney in his own writings. In A Defence of Poetry, Astrophil and Stella, and the old Arcadia, Sidney explores the rhetorical techniques which help to create credible and persuasive personae; while in the early books of the revised Arcadia Sidney explores, in the characters of his two heroes, methods for the creation of a reputation for virtue. In these respects, Sidney appears to follow the example of Castiglione, who adapts Ciceronian irony to the rhetorical and political needs of the courtier; and yet, Sidney will also attribute to the rhetorical art a more Erasmian role: in the trial scene in the final book of the Arcadia, in which the heroes are forced to defend themselves against false allegations of criminal behaviour, Sidney makes an eloquent defence of the legitimacy of rhetorical techniques in the representation of virtue, and in the act of judgement-making.

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INTRODUCTION

Creating and Unmasking Fictions in the Renaissance

One of the characteristics of the new humanist learning of the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is its commitment to the revival of classical rhetoric as the basis of a method of intellectual enquiry which is intended to correct the errors of medieval scholarship. Lorenzo Valla's famous declamation in 1440 on the Donation of Constantine, the eighth-century forgery of a fourth-century grant, which attempts to legitimate the claim of the Roman Catholic Church to the Western Empire, is just one example of how the new method, with its attention to 'fact and phrasing', could be used to uncover the forgeries of the past.¹

The Renaissance, however, is not just a period of recovery. The 'flood of new texts and information', Anthony Grafton remarks in his study of forgery in Western Scholarship, was accompanied by 'streams of fraudulent matter', although the nature of the forgeries changed.² While in the Middle Ages forgeries frequently took the form of 'faked documents', attempts, as in the case of the Donation of Constantine, to 'equip a person or an institution with a basis for possession of lands or privileges', in the Renaissance forgeries were often in

the form of literary texts.³ Even Erasmus, revered by modern critics 'as one of the great exposers of error and mendacity', is not innocent of such tricks.⁴ In his 1530 edition of the works of St. Cyprian, Erasmus included a supplementary treatise, the 'De duplici martyrio', which he claimed '"was discovered in an ancient library"'. However, not only, as Grafton observes, is its style reminiscent of Erasmus's own treatises, but it 'takes a position highly sympathetic to Erasmus'.⁵ Thomas More also dabbled in forging literary texts. Appended to his life of Pico della Mirandola is a text which purports to be written by Pico and translated by himself, The XII Propertees or Condicyons of a Lover, but which is in fact his own work (it presents not an account of Neoplatonic love, as one would expect from Pico, but an allegorical Christian interpretation of the precepts of courtly love).

Why the need for such forgeries? In many cases the forgeries are the result of 'nostalgia', and a desire to create a version of the past 'to the taste of modern readers'.⁶ In other cases, though, forgery may be prompted by a perceived need to create intellectual legitimization for a particular tradition, individual or group of individuals, as Lisa Jardine argues in her recent study of Erasmus's letters. For, what the reader finds in these letters, according to Jardine, is not the expected evidence of a school of humanist thought at Louvain, the centre for theological study, led by prominent humanists such as Juan Luis Vives, but a

'publicity campaign, designed to bring Louvain and Vives (amongst others) together to the attention of a larger reading public'.⁷ These letters constitute a conspiratorial use of print by Erasmus and his 'friends' to replace one educational tradition with another, namely, the formal logic of the scholastics, based on 'fixed patterns of argumentation which guarantee that from any true premiss whatsoever one can only infer a true conclusion', with 'humanistic logic', that is, the topics-logic of classical rhetoric, based on a method of argumentation 'which can be counted on to win in debate'.⁸

As the example of Valla's declamation on the Donation of Constantine has shown, the humanists were concerned with the 'unmasking' of credible, and up to then credited, fictions; but, as Jardine's and Grafton's accounts of Erasmus's activities also suggest, prominent humanists were interested as well in the creation of credible fictions with a view to legitimating their own scholarly methods. In a recent article, Lorna Hutson suggests that sixteenth-century English humanists were interested in Valla's declamation not only because it offered them 'a rudimentary form of historical analysis' by proving the probability of its position, but because it reveals the techniques by means of which it establishes its own probability, namely rhetorical methods of argumentation which are designed 'to produce belief'.⁹ Thus, the same methods of argument which were used to reveal the false claims of medieval scholarship

could also be used (and indeed were used) by Renaissance scholars to fashion claims of their own which were not so much more truthful than those of their medieval predecessors which they debunked, as more credible.

As the title of my thesis suggests, I am interested in techniques used for the creation of credible fictions; however, I shall explore a strategy distinct from the methods of argumentation discussed above, a strategy which was used by sixteenth-century educationalists such as Erasmus and Castiglione, and which, I will argue, was actively promoted by Sidney in his writings in the 1580s. The strategy evolves from Cicero's sceptical reading of the eloquence of Plato's Socrates. Socrates's explanation for his eloquence in the Phaedrus, namely, that he is inspired by his knowledge of the intelligible forms rather than by skill in the art of rhetoric, is interpreted by Cicero as a rhetorical move itself which conceals Socrates's actual knowledge of this art from his audience. In his dialogue De Oratore Cicero both exposes and imitates this rhetorical move on the part of Plato's Socrates. On the one hand, his character Crassus insists on the spurious nature of the division made by Socrates between rhetoric and philosophy, and argues that Socrates was himself a consummate orator; on the other hand, Cicero's character Antonius claims, in imitation of Plato's Socrates, not to know the art of rhetoric, although, unlike Socrates, he eventually reveals that his ignorance is a pretence, a mask which conceals his actual rhetorical skill. Crassus unmaskes Socrates because he

wishes to establish oratory as an art essential to the philosopher as well as to the lawyer, while Antonius imitates Socrates because he aspires to a reputation for spontaneous and inspired eloquence. In the Renaissance, Erasmus and Castiglione are among the imitators of Cicero; like Cicero, they both claim to be disciples of Plato even though they actually owe an equal, if not a greater, debt to the rhetorical tradition disparaged by Plato. However, Erasmus and Castiglione represent, respectively, the different concerns of Cicero's two characters Crassus and Antonius: Erasmus claims Plato as the father of his ideas because, like Crassus in De Oratore, he wishes to establish the art of rhetoric as a tool essential to philosophical enquiry, while Castiglione expresses an allegiance to Plato, (and, for that matter, to a supposedly Platonist Cicero), as the source for his ideas because, in a similar fashion to Antonius in De Oratore, he wishes to suggest that the artificial expression of the courtier is the spontaneous product of his innately noble nature.

In chapters two and three I shall explore Sidney's debt to Ciceronian rhetoric in the light of Castiglione's Courtier and in chapter four, I shall explore his debt in the light of Erasmus's writings: for Sidney the art of rhetoric is a tool for the creation of credible fictions and, ultimately, for the representation and defence of truth itself. In his Defence of Poetry, Sidney articulates a method which is derived from the rhetorical tradition for making artificial and fictional characters

seem natural and genuine: the vivid imagining of situations, otherwise known as '*enargeia*', which involves a poet's or orator's actually striving to experience the emotions he wishes to convey to his audience. At the same time he partially conceals the rhetorical nature of the poetic art by suggesting that the poet should write as nature, or his knowledge of divine matters, prompts him.

In my study of Sidney's fiction I shall explore how he uses erotic narrative to dramatise the literary theory of the Defence. Not only is the relationship between lover and beloved in the old Arcadia and Astrophil and Stella analogous to the relationship between reader and text outlined in the Defence, but the protagonists of these narratives, Pyrocles and Astrophil, demonstrate the effectiveness of the rhetorical technique of *enargeia* promoted in this treatise. However, Sidney's sensitivity to the fact that there is no necessary connection between genuinely virtuous character and the rhetorical skill of giving a convincingly virtuous self-portrayal makes him heedful of the need for those of virtuous character to acquire seemingly duplicitous or manipulative rhetorical skills. In the much longer, revised Arcadia Sidney explores in the characters Pyrocles and Musidorus both the techniques used to create a heroic reputation, and the important role they ultimately play in the defence of virtue itself. The revisions he makes to the Arcadia suggest that Sidney was keen to impress on his readership not so much the importance of being virtuous as the

importance of effectively communicating one's virtuousness, a concern which is influenced by Sidney's Protestant sympathies: Sidney's desire to promote the rhetorical art coincides with his desire to champion and defend his own 'true' cause with the best rhetorical tools available for that task.

Notes

1. Anthony Grafton, Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship, (London: Juliet Gardiner Books, Collins and Brown, 1990), p.30.
2. Grafton, p.26.
3. Grafton, p.24.
4. Grafton, p.44.
5. Grafton, p.44
6. Grafton, p.26.
7. Lisa Jardine, Erasmus, Man of Letters: The Construction of Charisma in Print, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p.17.
8. Lisa Jardine, 'Humanistic Logic', pp.173-198 in The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy, eds Quentin Skinner, Eckhard Kessler, Charles B. Schmitt, Jill Kraye, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.175.
9. Lorna Hutson, 'Fortunate Travelers: Reading for the Plot in Sixteenth-Century England', Representations 41 (1993), p.85. See also Quintilian, who discusses the purpose of artificial proofs as being 'to produce belief', The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian, trans. H.E. Butler 4 vols (London: William Heinemann Ltd.; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1953), V viii-xii; cited in Lorna Hutson, The Usurer's Daughter: Male Friendship and Fictions of Women in Sixteenth-Century England, (London, New York: Routledge, 1994), p.72. See also Jardine, 'Humanistic Logic'.

CHAPTER ONE

Imitation at Two Removes: Plato, Cicero and the Renaissance

A defining feature both of the Italian Renaissance in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and of the Northern European Renaissance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is the recovery, and imitation, of ancient texts. It has been claimed that, in the Italian Renaissance, the interest in classical literature had two distinct phases: in the early part of the fifteenth century the humanists derived from Roman rhetoric an educational interest in creating capable citizens, men who were astute politicians and skilled rhetoricians able to plan according to the immediate needs of the state, while in the later part of the century, there was a revived interest in Plato's dialogues as read through the Neoplatonic commentary tradition of the third to sixth centuries A.D., which contributed to a renewed interest in the study of metaphysical reality. Thus, there was, in effect, a shift from a pragmatic or sceptical to an idealist intellectual paradigm, from a tradition which held that human knowledge is contingent, to a tradition which believed that universal and transcendent truths could be apprehended by the human mind.¹ Such a shift, while prompted by the increased availability of

Neoplatonic treatises, and the greater linguistic proficiency of the later humanists (Petrarch, for example, did not know Greek), can be shown to be related, also, to political developments.² Thus, Eugenio Garin argues that the Neoplatonic revival in the later part of the fifteenth century reflects the developing autocracy of Italian princes which replaced the republicanism of earlier in the century. 'The new [Italian] prince', he remarks, 'forced everybody from active political life and transformed culture into an elegant decoration of his court or into a desperate flight from the world', and he cites the example of Cosimo de Medici, the 'tyrant of the Italian Athens' who promoted 'a renaissance of the school of Plato' at the Florentine court for the very reason that he wished to consolidate his political power.³

But this conception of the separate influence of these two classical traditions in the fifteenth century, while it undoubtedly does parallel the shifting tastes and political and intellectual fashions of this period, also threatens to oversimplify the reception of classical learning in the period. For not only did the two traditions - sceptical and idealist - coexist in some form throughout the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance but particular writers would often subscribe not just to one but to both traditions. As William Bouwsma argues in his analysis of the Renaissance debt to classical learning, we can find in the writers of the Italian Renaissance a rather confused set of allegiances, springing from a strained synthesis of the two

antithetical traditions. The early Italian humanists, he writes, 'uneasily blended' the idealist and sceptical traditions, represented for him by Stoicism and Augustinianism respectively, which 'it neither distinguished clearly, nor, in many cases, was capable of identifying with their sources'.⁴ A similar kind of confusion can be discovered in educational treatises which belong to a later period, for example, The Education of the Christian Prince by the Northern European humanist Desiderius Erasmus and The Book of the Courtier by the Italian courtier Baldessare Castiglione, both of which belong to the early sixteenth century. For Erasmus and Castiglione subscribe explicitly to Platonic idealism in their respective treatises and yet they are also clearly inspired intellectually by the scepticism of the Roman rhetorical tradition. However, rather than concluding that the admixture of classical influences in the works of these two writers is 'uneasily blended', I will argue instead that it is not only intentional, but that it is derived itself from one of their classical models, namely Marcus Tullius Cicero.

Although one of Erasmus's intellectual aims, namely, his intention to replace the Aristotelian logic of the scholastics with the sceptical tradition of classical rhetoric, seems quite different from Castiglione's main concern, which, as I shall argue, is to present the sceptical rhetorical skills of the courtier as natural talents, both educationalists derive their ironic method of exposition from Cicero. In the rhetorical treatise De

Oratore Cicero attempts to give intellectual legitimacy to the rhetorical art, and he does so in part by responding to Plato's attacks on oratory in the Phaedrus and The Republic. Plato's hostility to rhetoric is most pronounced in The Republic, for it is here that he offers a method of philosophical enquiry which is meant to expose the fraudulence of mimetic arts such as rhetoric - arts which, according to him, confuse the important distinction between images and their originals. Cicero answers Plato's attack in his dialogue De Oratore in two ways: while his character Crassus argues that rhetoric is an art essential to the philosopher's study, and criticises Socrates for having divided the two disciplines, the character Antonius offers a method whereby the images created by rhetoric can be made to appear to be inspired by a knowledge of the truth, whether they genuinely are inspired or not, a method which Cicero implies is authorised by Plato's Socrates himself. Thus, while Socrates sets out to expose the illusions created by the rhetoricians, Cicero sets out, in contrast, to expose the rhetorical nature of Socrates's attempt to convey philosophical truths. But Cicero does not just unmask Socrates as a skilled orator; as the character Antonius reveals he also imitates Socrates's ironic method with the intention of making his own eloquence appear to be genuinely inspired rather than the product of technique and practice.

In this first chapter I will explore the ironic style of exposition of two representatives of the intellectual

culture of the sixteenth century, Erasmus and Castiglione. In his Praise of Folly Erasmus's persona Folly is both ignorant in the way that Socrates claims to be, namely, ignorant in the foolish eyes of mortals (though genuinely wise as a result of his knowledge of transcendent truths), and in the way of Antonius, namely, self-consciously 'ignorant' in an attempt to gain the trust of her audience; while in The Book of the Courtier Castiglione offers a method which is also borrowed from Cicero's Antonius, whereby the courtier creates the impression that he speaks and acts without premeditation. Moreover, both Erasmus and Castiglione will use their ironic method of exposition to reveal the rhetorical nature of their own fictions and, indeed, those of their opponents or superiors, whether scholars or rulers. It is important to recognise, however, that while Erasmus and Castiglione both draw their inspiration from Cicero, they do so for different reasons: for Erasmus the art of rhetoric is, as Cicero's Crassus insists, ultimately a tool for discovering probable truths, although its methods may initially appear to lead us away from the truth, while for Castiglione, in contrast, it is a tool for creating the appearance of truths, regardless of whether it actually leads to the truth or not.

Sidney's own considerable debt to, and interest in, Cicero's conception of the art of rhetoric is mediated through the influence of Erasmus and Castiglione; in chapters two and three I shall consider his interest in Ciceronian rhetoric in the light of Castiglione, while,

in chapter four, I shall consider Sidney's interest in Roman rhetoric in general in the light of Erasmus. In the present chapter, however, I will offer readings of Erasmus's The Praise of Folly and The Instruction of a Christian Prince and Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier which make clear their particular interests in Cicero. Since it is difficult to understand the aims and methods of Erasmus and Castiglione without first understanding Cicero's interpretation, and imitation, of the Socratic style, and, thus, the supposed Socratic style itself, I propose first to consider the attitude to, and practice of, the art of rhetoric by Plato and Cicero; I shall also consider the aims of another influential Roman rhetorician, Cicero's self-styled pupil Quintilian, in order to give a clear sense of the actual aims of the Roman rhetorical art, which are presented rather esoterically by Cicero.

1a. The Ambiguity of Images: Creating and Reflecting Reality

(i) Plato's Idealism

In Plato's Phaedrus the character Socrates draws attention to the ambiguous nature of words. Instead of opposing sets of terms, such as 'love' and 'hate', to one another, Socrates discovers that a single term such as 'love' can have two very different meanings. After listening to Phaedrus's relation of the speech of the famous orator Lysias, who condemns love as an irrational passion, Socrates, Plato's protagonist, offers two other

speeches, the one exploring the harmful, the other, the profitable, effects of seemingly irrational love. Although in his second speech Socrates praises the madness of lovers, and thus argues *against* Lysias, so that an oppositional relationship is established between the two characters, it is important to recognise that their positions are not simply antagonistic. As Socrates reveals in his two speeches there are two types of lovers: the first type limits himself to the love of physical beauty, and can be said thus to be in the possession of a harmful passion (238d *ff*); the second type, in contrast, is inspired by the love of physical beauty to an appreciation of its source, the *idea* of beauty, which induces in him a kind of 'heaven-sent' madness (244a *ff*).⁵ Recognising this distinction between the two types of love allows us to see that it is not simply the case that Lysias is wrong and that Socrates is right but, rather, that Lysias is *partially* right, and that it is only his lack of knowledge which prevents him from seeing that he is speaking about one type of love, and not about love generally. This recognition is important on two accounts: first, because it indicates that an individual already possesses some kind of unconscious knowledge of truth (as I will shortly explain), and, secondly, because it suggests that the process of discovering truth depends on an act of making distinctions in which the attention of an individual is 'turned away' from one possible meaning of a word to another.

But ambiguity is not simply a problematic theme explored in this particular dialogue; it is also a problem encountered by the reader who wishes to discover a coherent position throughout Plato's works. In the later parts of the Phaedrus Socrates explains that the method of division is called dialectic, and that the individuals who practice it are called 'dialecticians' (266c). He also argues that it is this method which is essential to the production of persuasive speech, enabling an individual to speak knowingly and, therefore, eloquently. Just as there are two types of love, so, it turns out, there are two types of rhetoric, or, rather, two types of eloquence. The first, practised by Lysias, is dependent for its persuasive power on mechanical proficiency in the art of speech-making. The second kind, practised by Socrates, is, in contrast, dependent on a knowledge of the thing being discussed, and is thus a branch of the art of philosophy. However, Socrates's interest in rhetoric in the Phaedrus seems problematic in view of another of Plato's treatises, the Republic, in which the character Socrates offers not only a different view of dialectic (here it is a method of abstract philosophical enquiry), but also a tendency to dismiss all the arts of representation, including rhetoric, as being unworthy of the consideration of a philosopher. But even in the Republic Socrates betrays an interest in rhetoric: for Plato famously exiles poets and painters from his model city-state on account of the fact that they create images (for Socrates words create images),

only to prove in the writing of the Republic itself that he is himself an expert creator of such images.⁶ This divided allegiance is also present in a different form in the Phaedrus. For although Socrates insists in the Phaedrus that he 'lay[s] no claim to any oratorical skill' (262d), suggesting instead that he is inspired by a knowledge of the forms (234d), it is difficult superficially to distinguish the inspired eloquence of Socrates from the 'ecstasy' of Phaedrus, an 'ecstasy' which is allegedly produced in the case of the latter by mechanical techniques. Is Socrates being disingenuous when he claims in the Phaedrus to have no skill in the art of oratory, and hypocritical in the Republic when he dismisses the art of the poets, painters and rhetoricians? In order to make sense of Socrates's apparently contradictory attitude to rhetoric we will need to understand further the distinction Plato makes between *kinds* of images.

Although at the heart of Platonic psychology there lies a belief in the innate capacity of human beings to apprehend the intelligible forms, Plato is simultaneously acutely conscious of the impressionability of the human mind, and this awareness determines his attitude to the role of the arts in the education of his ideal citizens outlined in the Republic. Because of his awareness of the potential influence of the poetic and dramatic arts on the developing moral character (*psyche*) of an individual,⁷ Socrates urges mothers and nurses to select fastidiously the kind of stories that they read to the

young guardians, the future leaders of his ideal republic, since childhood is a time in life when an individual's character 'is best molded and takes the impression that one wishes to stamp upon it' (377b). (Socrates is particularly anxious to see the Homeric epic poems removed from the curriculum, sensitive as he is to the, in his view, untruthful and immoral representation of divine action contained in them (378d ff).) But Socrates sees the formation of moral character not only as a process of acting upon or 'stamping' an individual, but as a process in which the individual acts, and thereby produces, his character. This view helps to explain Socrates's anxiety not only about the content of literary texts but about the mode of story-telling. He argues that a story can be told in one of two ways: either by narrating in the third person the actions of a particular character, in which case the story teller does not assume a fictional voice but remains true to himself, or by dramatising, that is, acting out himself, another person's actions (393c). Socrates is nervous about dramatic representation, one of the reasons being that he fears that, in the act of imitating, the qualities of the model will be actually assimilated by the actor, irreversibly affecting his own 'character'. 'Have you not observed', Socrates asks his interlocutors, 'that imitations, if continued from youth far into life, settle down into habits [*ethe*] and second nature [*phusin*] in the body, the speech, and the thought?' (395c-d). Plato

fears that what is assimilated by, or made to seem natural to, an individual may change him.

However, Plato does not want to prohibit all imitative practice in his ideal city-state; indeed, not only does he consider it to be an important part of the early formation of good character but part of the process of intellectual training. Plato contrasts those blind men, who have 'no vivid pattern [*enarges ... paradeigma*] in their souls' with the guardians who, in the same way that 'painters look to their models, fix their eyes on the absolute truth, and always with reference to that ideal and in the exactest possible contemplation of it establish in this world also the laws of the beautiful, the just, and the good' (484d). What is different, then, about the guardians is not that they are not imitators, but that they imitate an abstract entity known as the form of the Good rather than the objects of the physical world. The tool which they use to circumvent the physical world and to apprehend the form of the Good is 'dialectic': with the aid of reason the guardians treat 'assumptions not as absolute beginnings but literally as hypotheses', which enables them to move upward to 'that which requires no assumption', before they 'proceed downward to the conclusion'. As Socrates makes clear, the guardians make 'no use whatever of any object of sense' in this process, but only 'of pure ideas, moving on through ideas to ideas and ending with ideas' (511b-c), the end of their education being to liberate

themselves from their dependence on 'images', that is, the objects of the visible world.

The category of 'images' (*eikones*) includes for Plato not only the painted images and stories created by the painter and the playwright respectively but the objects of the visible world. For Plato there are two types of images, the status of which is determined by their different relation to the form of the Good. The lowest kind of image, that is, those which are furthest from the form of the Good, include 'first, shadows [*skias*], and then reflections [*phantasmata*] in water and on surfaces of dense, smooth and bright texture', while the other kind of image includes those things of which the former kind of image is a 'likeness', 'that is, the animals about us and all plants and the whole class of objects made by man' (510a). Although this second kind of image is, as Plato suggests, an object of the visible world, and, therefore, is substantial in a way that its reflection is not, its status as an image is derived from the fact that it is not an original but a reflection of an idea.

It is important to recognise that the status of images, whether they are primary or secondary, is determined by their relation to the forms. It becomes clear in the discussion of art in Book X that the images produced by artists belong to the first category because they are copies of visible objects rather than of the forms. A painter who paints an image of a bed is copying not the form or idea of a bed, as a carpenter can

be said to do, but the image of this idea, that is, an actual bed; the result is that he produces a product at 'three removes from nature' (597e). Among the creators of this secondary kind of image Plato also seems to include rhetoricians or sophists, as Glaucon's description of the man who can produce these images as a 'most marvelous Sophist [*sophisten*]' suggests (the connection is explored more fully in The Sophist (234b-c)). Not all depicted images, however, are at 'three removes from nature'. For example, the diagrams used by geometers, the 'very things which they mold and draw' (510d), are identical in status to the objects of the visible world. There are two things which distinguish the geometer from the painter: first, the images he uses represent ideas, not the objects of the visible world, and, secondly, he is fully conscious of the status of these images as *images*. The geometer uses 'visible forms', that is, geometrical diagrams, knowing that they are but a means to an end, so that he follows a course of inquiry 'for the sake of the square as such and the diagonal as such, and not for the sake of the image of it which they draw' (510d). The diagrams are used by the geometers to 'get sight of those realities [*idein*] which can be seen only by the mind' (510e). The same applies to the words used by the geometers to discuss their subject. 'Their language is most ludicrous', Socrates explains, 'for they speak as if they were doing something and as if all their words were directed towards action', when 'in fact the real object of the entire study is pure

knowledge' (527a). The language they use, like the images they draw, suggests that when they are working with phenomena they are actually thinking about invisible entities.

Since Plato uses the same word 'eikon' for both kinds of images it is necessary to be sensitive to the nature of their difference, since this can help explain his apparently contradictory attitude to images. It has already been pointed out that Plato is not hostile to all forms of imitation. Indeed, he can even be said to be an imitator, a creator of images. Plato's cave narrative, in which he asks us to imagine the journey of a man from a shadowy existence in the depths of a cave to enlightened freedom at its entrance, is itself called by him an 'image' ('eikona') (517a). Plato's 'image', however, is to be treated in the same way that the geometers treat their diagrams - as images of ideas.⁸ Thus, for example, he explains that the subterranean cave world is to be likened to 'the region revealed through sight', and that the light of the fire is to be taken for 'the power of the sun', while the light of the sun is to be identified 'with the intelligibility cast by the form of the good on the objects of that world (517b).⁹ In other words, Plato's commentary makes clear the relationship between the images presented in the narrative and the originals they represent. By pointing out the analogical relations between the idea and its image, in short, by drawing attention to the fact that the image is a symbol, he avoids repeating the mistake

made by the dramatic audiences in Books III and X and the cave prisoners in Book VII, who believe that the images they see have real being. At the same time, he makes it clear that the image which represents the goal of philosophical education signifies an idea (for example, the fictional 'sun' signifies the idea of the Good).

The image of the sun in the cave narrative has the same status, then, as the physical sun because, like it, it represents the intelligible form of the Good.¹⁰ The status shared by these images with the objects of the visible world can be made clearer if we take into consideration the advice Socrates gives to lovers in the Phaedrus and the Symposium. In the Republic Plato describes the process of ascent as a process of inquiry and conceptual study, while in the Phaedrus and the Symposium it is the experience of love, prompted by the sight of physical beauty, which leads the individual to a knowledge of the forms. Socrates's account of intellectual training in the Phaedrus and the Symposium could not seem further from his description in the Republic, and yet, the advice given to the guardian in this last treatise is applicable also to the lover depicted in the other two: Plato expects the lover to behave towards the object of desire in the same way that he expects the reader to respond to the images of the cave narrative. For the lover is to treat the physical 'beauty' of his beloved as an image of the form of Beauty in the same way that the reader of the cave narrative is to treat the fictional 'sun' as an image of the form of

the Good. As Socrates explains in the Symposium, the lover is attracted first to particular signs of beauty, for example the 'bodily beauty' of his beloved; from 'bodily beauty' he moves to 'the beauty of institutions, from institutions to learning, and from learning in general to the special lore that pertains to nothing but the beautiful itself - until at last he comes to know what beauty is' (211c).¹¹ The lover's progress is comparable to that of the geometer, the freed cave prisoner, and the reader of the cave narrative: he moves from a knowledge of 'visible forms' to hypotheses and, finally, to the forms themselves.

In Book X of the Republic Plato gives an account of the reincarnation of the human soul, its passing through the river of Forgetfulness before its rebirth in material form and descent into the world (614b ff), an account which reappears in a modified form in the Phaedrus (248c ff). Because of its pre-existence the soul already has 'knowledge' of the forms. Consequently, the end of the educational process is to help the individual recollect this knowledge, not to instil in him new knowledge. One of the advantages of discussing the educational process in the language of love is that it places more emphasis on the emotional, that is, the non-cognitive, nature of the discovery, making credible Plato's belief in an individual's intuitive knowledge of the forms. Plato achieves a similar effect in his description of the more cerebral educational process in Book VII, however, with the use of visual imagery. The analogy between seeing

and knowing, an analogy present in the Greek word *oída* (I have seen/I know), enables Socrates to disprove the educational theory of the rhetoricians and present his own account of the creation of 'character'. 'Education is not in reality what some people proclaim it to be in their professions', he explains. 'What they aver is that they can put true knowledge into a soul that does not possess it, as if they were inserting vision into blind eyes' (518b). Plato's educational theory, in contrast, does not attempt to instil knowledge in an individual (which he suggests is as futile as trying to give sight to a blind man), but to enable the individual to discover by himself what is true by 'turning' him, with the help of philosophical study or 'dialectic', towards the intelligible forms, the capacity to apprehend which he innately possesses.¹²

At the beginning of this discussion I considered whether Plato's character Socrates is guilty of being disingenuous when he 'lay[s] no claim to the oratorical art' in the Phaedrus, and of being hypocritical when he dismisses the artists in Book X of the Republic. The distinction made in the Republic between rhetorical and allegorical images, that is, between images which are taken to have some kind of reality in themselves and images which are taken to reflect an intelligible reality, helps us to see that there are, as far as Plato is concerned, two types of eloquence, the one rhetorical, the other philosophical. Socrates's own images, such as the cave allegory in the Republic, are designed not to

entertain an audience but, like his dialectical method in general, his elenctic questioning, to turn our attention away from the world of visible things to the intelligible world and its forms. In this respect Socrates's eloquence is philosophical rather than rhetorical. But how does Socrates produce a fictional narrative such as the cave story if not as a rhetorician? In the Phaedrus Socrates suggests that his eloquence, instead of being produced with knowledge of the rhetorical art, is inspired by the transcendent form of Goodness which he recognises as the source of Phaedrus's physical beauty. Thus, Socrates is not the author of his own words or images; they are authored by the forms themselves. He is 'well aware', he declares, that his eloquence does not originate in him 'for I know my own ignorance': 'I suppose that it can only be that it has been poured into me, through my ears, as into a vessel, from some external source, though in my stupid fashion I have actually forgotten how, and from whom, I heard it' (235c-d). Socrates's foolishness is the wisdom of one informed unconsciously by knowledge of the forms.

Socrates's claim not to know the source of his own eloquence appears to be a kind of wise naivety, however, only so long as we are willing to believe that it is possible for humans to apprehend the forms themselves, and, thus, that it is possible to be inspired by them. If we were to be sceptical of this capacity of the human mind then we would need to read Socrates's claim to be 'ignorant' differently. For although Socrates may claim

that his images represent metaphysical truths, we would no longer be able to accept that they were authored by those forms. When Socrates claims that his images reflect metaphysical truths we would have to recognise this as a matter of opinion, not knowledge, and, moreover, that the images themselves were authored by Socrates himself. For later critics of Plato, such as the rhetorician Cicero, what Socrates demonstrates in the Phaedrus is not his intuitive knowledge of the forms but a rhetorical strategy, a pretended simplicity, which conceals his knowledge of the art of speaking well.

Before looking at Cicero's interpretation and imitation of Plato's Socrates, I will first examine the rhetorical theory of Cicero's self-styled pupil Quintilian. My reason for this is that I wish to draw attention both to the sharp distinction between the arts of rhetoric and philosophy, a distinction which is intentionally obscured in Cicero's rhetorical treatises, and to Cicero's ironic pedagogic method, the method which he claims to have inherited from Plato.

(ii) Quintilian's scepticism

What is immediately evident in Institutio Oratoria is that Quintilian is keen to find a place in the education of the orator for the study of philosophy, and, indeed, to insist on the compatibility of the two disciplines. For example, at the beginning of Institutio he explains that he will 'make use of certain of the principles laid down in philosophical textbooks' and adds, in defence, 'that such principles have a just claim to form part of

the subject-matter of this work and do actually belong to the art of oratory' (I Pr. 11).¹³ Furthermore, he offers the young student of oratory a curriculum which includes the study of a number of subjects, such as geometry, as if, like Plato, he were preparing the orator for the study of universals. However, for Quintilian geometry serves, rather than informs, the art of rhetoric, its study helping to make the orator more persuasive, not more truthful (I x 34-49). (In the same way comic acting is studied because it gives the orator proficiency in the art of delivery (I xi 1-3).) Moreover, Quintilian is not interested in the study of universals; at the end of Institutio he has little patience for those who indulge in the study of abstract ideas in the search for true principles, and considers 'dialectic' to be of little help to the orator, 'since the orator's duty is not merely to instruct, but also to move and delight an audience' (XII ii 11).¹⁴ The orator, he argues, should be a '"wise man" in the Roman sense', that is, someone who is committed to political action, to 'the actual practice and experience of life', and not to speculative study (XII ii 7). The task of the orator, as Quintilian defines it in his discussion of artificial demonstrative proofs in Book V, is to discover not what is true *per se* but 'matters specially adapted to produce belief [*ad faciendam fidem*]' (italics mine) (V viii 1), and such a task allows him to use methods of persuasion which are denied the philosopher, such as techniques for the manipulation of the emotions of his audience. Indeed, in

Book VI Quintilian argues that it is the manipulation of the emotions which is the 'peculiar task of the orator' (VI ii 5), where the 'life and soul of oratory is to be found' (VI ii 7), and he goes on to offer a defence of its use. In the Athenian law court the orator was expressly forbidden to rouse pity or anger in his audience at the end of his speech, Quintilian explains, since the Athenians, influenced by their philosophical tradition, 'regard susceptibility to emotion as a vice, and think it immoral that the judge should be distracted from the truth by an appeal to his emotions' (VI i 7). For him, however, 'appeals to emotion are necessary if there are no other means for securing the victory of truth, justice and the public interest' (VI i 7).

One of the tenets which Quintilian inherits from Plato's contemporary antagonist, the Greek rhetorician Isocrates, is a belief in the existence in humans of an innate capacity for speech, and it is this capacity which his educational programme sets out to develop.¹⁵ Although Quintilian toys with the Platonic notion of innate knowledge of truth, he does so in terms that express distance from rather than an affiliation with this doctrine; his claim that 'our minds are endowed by nature with such activity and sagacity that the soul is believed (*creditur*) to proceed from heaven' (I i 1), suggests his lack of commitment to such an idea since the verb is kept in the passive voice. Thus, when Quintilian urges the young student of oratory to follow nature he is encouraging him to develop his talent for particular

styles of speaking. However, Quintilian is not only interested in developing in a student talents which he innately possesses; much of his educational programme is devoted to techniques of imitation which help form him into a skilled speaker. Thus, for example, Quintilian encourages young pupils to learn the works of model writers by heart so they 'will carry their models with them and unconsciously reproduce the style of the speech which has been impressed upon the memory' (II vii 3). Quintilian does not direct the student to discover his inherent knowledge here but encourages him to internalise new knowledge which, through the activity of memory, becomes *his* knowledge. The student is expected to be able to reproduce his models unconsciously; they blend with his own speech so that the distinction between copy and model is lost. Furthermore, Quintilian is less concerned to promote the idea of the inherent 'naturalness' of the acquisition; the impressions made on the memory of a youth are like the 'flavour first absorbed by vessels when new' or 'dyes to the primitive whiteness of wool' (I i 5). The 'colours' or tropes of rhetoric are permanently *acquired* by the orator: they become second nature to him.

The description of memory as a process of assimilating materials reappears in Book X, the book which deals with a more advanced stage of the orator's education. At the beginning of this book Quintilian argues that the orator should not try simply to master the 'rules of style' but acquire a facility ('*facilitas*') - his translation of the

Greek word '*hexis*' (habit) - in his use of these rules (X i 1). For Quintilian the words '*hexis*' and '*facilitas*' denote a state in which the orator has his skills (and materials) at his immediate command, so that he is able to give extempore speeches if the occasion arises. The student acquires '*facilitas*' or '*hexis*' by practising his various skills in reading, writing, and speaking; by repeating these actions rhetorical skills become habitual to him. The technique recalls the creation of moral virtue described by Aristotle in Book II of the Ethics; moral virtue (*ethos*), Aristotle explains, is the result of habit (*ethos*), 'whence also its name is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word "habit" [*ethos*]'.¹⁶ In the Republic Plato feared that the guardian who acts the part of another character will become like that character, while Aristotle, in contrast, urges the individual to perform the kind of actions that will create an appropriate character for him, because 'states [*hexeis*] arise out of like activities'.¹⁷ The process of 'becoming' outlined in the Ethics involves the assimilation of actions perceived to be appropriate to the future conduct of the good man; thus, the student aspiring to be virtuous repeatedly performs 'good' actions until they become instinctive. Quintilian's orator acquires '*facilitas*' or '*hexis*' as a result of his practice in much the same way that the Aristotelian good man acquired '*hexis*' through the repetition of particular actions. Quintilian describes this process of assimilation as follows:

We must return to what we have read and reconsider it with care, while, just as we do not swallow our food till we have chewed it and reduced it almost to a state of liquefaction to assist the process of digestion, so what we read must not be committed to the memory for subsequent imitation while it is still in a crude state, but must be softened and, if I may use the phrase, reduced to a pulp by frequent re-perusal (X i 19).

Through frequent re-reading the orator is able to consume his models so that they become a part of him.

Quintilian's oratorical facility means that the orator does not need to 'hunt' for his 'weapons'; they are immediately available '*as though they were born [innata]* with him and not derived from the instruction of others' (italics mine) (VII x 14). Quintilian seems to show affinity to Aristotle: like him he places more emphasis on the repetition of certain actions for the development of his particular virtue. Yet this comparison is limited, for while Aristotle suggests that it is practice that forms the nature of an individual, Quintilian reveals that it is practice which naturalises the skills to the orator whereby he can portray realistically fictional characters. Quintilian is creatively using the same process propagated by Aristotle in the Ethics as a means of moulding an individual's nature; the difference is that Quintilian's creation is not intent on reaching any final form but on naturalising the skills which will allow him to convince his audience of the veracity of his portrayal.

Quintilian's interest in the process of naturalisation is importantly reflected in his discussion of the term 'imitation'. When Quintilian uses the terms '*imitatio*'

and '*mimesis*' he is usually referring to the concept of '*prosopopoeia*' or impersonation, for which they act as synonyms. As he explains in Book VI, the term '*prosopopoeia*' applies to 'fictitious speeches supposed to be uttered, such as an advocate puts into the mouth of his client' (VI i 25). Quintilian's attitude to this kind of technique is ambivalent: '*prosopopoeia*' is both a practice which he considers essential to the early development of the orator and a practice which, in later books, he actually rejects. In Book III, for example, he considers '*prosopopoeia*' a 'most useful exercise' for it teaches an orator how to adapt speeches to suit his speaking character (III viii 49), and he praises Lysias for attaining 'extraordinary realism' in this field of expertise (III viii 51). Yet, in a later book, Quintilian argues that such imitation is actually of limited value to the orator for it produces an inferior copy of an original model. And, as he reasons, 'whatever is like another object, must necessarily be inferior to the object of its imitation, just as the shadow is inferior to the substance, the portrait to the features which it portrays, and the acting of the player to the feeling which he endeavours to reproduce' (X ii 11). Consequently, he offers an alternative imitative method. Rather than producing a derivative copy of his client's emotions Quintilian suggests that the orator should aim to experience those emotions himself and thus express them sincerely: 'if we wish to give our words the appearance of sincerity, we must assimilate [*simus* ...

similes (let us be like)] ourselves to the emotions of those who are genuinely so affected' (VI ii 27). As Quintilian explains, 'there are certain experiences [...] whereby things absent are presented to our imagination with such extreme vividness that they seem actually to be before our very eyes', and he goes on to add, that it is the orator who is 'really sensitive to such impressions who will have the greatest power over the emotions' (VI ii 29-30). It is from these imaginings, he explains, that an orator acquires the *enargeia*, or vividness, which makes us

not so much to narrate as to exhibit the actual scene, while our emotions will be no less actively stirred than if we were present at the actual occurrence (VI ii 32).¹⁸

The orator is expected to assimilate to himself the emotions of his client, not produce a copy of them. It thus appears that Quintilian has advised the orator against *copying* a character with pseudo-Platonic arguments only then to suggest that he 'realise' his character by making himself *like* his client. Rather like the poets and painters depicted disparagingly in Plato's Republic, Quintilian wants to create images that will be taken for the real thing. And the activity which he advises the orator to follow to achieve this effect parodies the imitative process of Plato's guardians: like the guardians in the Republic Quintilian's orator copies a 'vivid pattern [*enarges ... paradeigma*]' (484d), only in his case the pattern has an imagined, rather than a metaphysical, reality.

Since Institutio Oratoria is a rhetorical manual Quintilian is keen to display the techniques which he has used to produce his own seemingly natural eloquence: 'I have thought it necessary', he concludes his discussion of emotion in Book VI, 'not to conceal these considerations from my reader, since they have contributed to the acquisition of such reputation as I possess', and he adds somewhat proudly that such techniques have enabled him to show when necessary 'all the symptoms of genuine grief' (VI ii 36). Not suprisingly, Quintilian submits his master Cicero to a rigorous, rhetorical analysis, exposing to view his own methods of rhetorical excellence. Thus, Quintilian explains in Book X how Cicero's audiences often thought 'that some god had inspired [Cicero]' (X vii 14), when, in fact, 'the reason is obvious. For profound emotion and vivid imagination sweep on with an unbroken force' (X vii 14). For Quintilian Cicero is one of the masters of the technique of *enargeia*, although, as we shall shortly see, Cicero never explicitly acknowledges such expertise.

(iii) Cicero's Sceptical Idealism

Quintilian may have attempted the assimilation of rhetoric and philosophy in Book I of Institutio on the prompting of Cicero, who is more successful in attaining, and more convinced by the importance of, such an aim. It is in De Oratore, a text to which Quintilian often refers, that Cicero attempts his own synthesis of the two disciplines. It becomes apparent that Cicero is responding in his treatise to the prejudice of two

audiences: on the one hand, to the Roman people's distrust of the Greek philosophical tradition, and on the other hand, to the contempt in which the art of rhetoric is held by ancient Greek authorities such as Plato. Although it is Cicero's express purpose, as he declares in his preface to his brother Quintus, only to 'dispel that notion, which had always prevailed' that the great Roman rhetorician Crassus had 'no great learning' and that his fellow Antonius had 'none at all' (II ii 7),¹⁹ it becomes clear from the position taken by the character 'Crassus' in this dialogue that Cicero is simultaneously concerned to effect a reconciliation between the two disciplines of rhetoric and philosophy, and that, as regards this reconciliation, Cicero is self-consciously imitating Plato's Phaedrus. Indeed, the character Scaevola asks Crassus at the beginning of De Oratore if they can 'imitate Socrates as he appears in the Phaedrus of Plato', explaining that the plane tree standing in Crassus's garden has reminded him of the tree 'whose shelter Socrates sought' in this dialogue (I vii 28). Crassus agrees to his request, only adding comfort to the philosophically conducive environment with the contribution of cushions (I vii 29). But though Cicero self-consciously cultivates a comparison with Plato's treatise, it is important to recognise, first, that Cicero's dialectical method is one of synthesis, not division, and, secondly, that De Oratore is meant to correct the erroneous argument of the Phaedrus: for, as Crassus argues,

it is nearer the truth to say that neither can anyone be eloquent upon a subject unknown to him, nor, if he knows it perfectly and yet does not know how to shape and polish his style, can he speak fluently even upon that which he does know (I xiv 63).

Crassus's penchant for 'synthesis' is evident from the very beginning of his speech in Book III, where he laments the fact that he and Antonius have divided the labour of rhetorical exposition, the one treating the divisions of invention, arrangement, and memory, and the other, the 'proper method of embellishment' (style and delivery); for in so doing, he complains, they have 'separated from one another things that cannot really stand apart' (III v 19). Not only does Crassus insist on the interdependence of 'matter' and 'words' in an oratorical speech, but he claims support for this view by drawing upon the example of the universe, 'held together by a single force and harmony of nature' (III v 20). A few lines later and we find that Crassus has advanced his argument to include 'the whole of the content of the liberal and humane sciences' in 'a single bond of union' (III vi 21), preparing us for the claim that oratory and philosophy are one and the same subject. Crassus reminds his audience that initially rhetoric and philosophy shared 'a single title, the whole study and practice of the liberal sciences being entitled philosophy', until 'Socrates robbed them of this general designation', leading to the 'unprofitable and reprehensible severance between the tongue and the brain' (III xvi 60-1). What he offers in the next few pages is an historical survey of the 'post-Socratic' philosophical traditions which

underlines the erroneous nature of the Socratic division (III xvii 62-73). Even though he rejects the Stoic philosophers, the inheritors of Platonic idealism, because of their 'bald, unfamiliar, jarring' style of discourse (III xvii 66), preferring the style of discourse and thought of the sceptical Peripatetics and Academics, he makes it clear that all of these conflicting philosophical schools derive ultimately from one source, namely Socrates. He tells us that one of the founders of the sceptical Academic school, Arcesilas, began by selecting 'from the various writings of Plato and the Socratic dialogues the dogma that nothing can be apprehended with certainty either by the senses or by the mind', and he also 'initiated the practice - an entirely Socratic one it is true - of not stating his own opinion but arguing against the opinions put forward by everyone else' (III xviii 67). But Socrates is described by Crassus not only as a Sceptic but as a rhetorician; at the beginning of the discussion in Book I Crassus admits to having read Plato's Gorgias 'with close attention' at Athens, and claims that 'what impressed me most deeply about Plato in that book was, that it was when making fun of orators that he himself seemed to me to be the consummate orator' (I xi 47). By emphasising Socrates's scepticism, and his rhetorical skill, Crassus effects a reconciliation between the two disciplines of rhetoric and philosophy, albeit not the one that Plato's Socrates intended; at the same time, as his emphasis on the existence of a universal harmony suggests, Crassus is

also keen to present an idealist notion of the art of rhetoric, making the rules which underpin the art of discourse reflect the law of nature.

The character Crassus is an appropriate mouthpiece for a writer and thinker who is torn between the professions of philosophy and rhetoric, and who is usually represented by his critics as belonging to one or other of the two camps.²⁰ Thanks to Macrobius's commentary on Cicero's Dream of Scipio, Cicero's Platonic inheritance was recognised in the Middle Ages,²¹ and it was not until Petrarch's discovery of his Letters to Atticus in 1345 that the extent of his actual political involvement in the Roman republic was revealed, and his philosophical reputation damaged.²² Although for Petrarch Cicero's participation in the political intrigues of the Roman republic belies his philosophical commitments, his two adopted roles of philosopher and rhetorician need not be seen to conflict with one another, especially when, as in the case of De Oratore, the kind of philosophy he considers suitable for the orator is drawn from the sceptical tradition. However, in many of his philosophical works Cicero embraces a more Stoic system of thought, which derives many of its tenets from Platonism, and thus compromises the scepticism of his rhetorical treatises. In De Legibus, for example, Cicero departs from the sceptical conception of law as custom ('Law' is 'not a product of human thought, nor is it an enactment of peoples'), and suggests instead that it is 'something eternal which rules the whole universe by its

wisdom in command and prohibition'.²³ Such an attitude leads Cicero to offer a different version of the rhetorical myth of the creation of civilisation in his De Re Publica, suggesting that humans came to live in societies not merely for convenience but because 'nature has implanted in man' a desire for company.²⁴ This idealist inheritance is not completely lost in his rhetorical treatises, and can be found to coexist with his more sceptical interests. In De Oratore, for example, in support of his argument that 'the things possessing most utility also have the greatest amount of dignity' the speaker Crassus directs the attention of his audience first to the 'whole ordered world of nature', constituted in order to guarantee the safety of the universe, then to the forms of human beings, trees and ships, created so that no part is 'superfluous', and, finally, to the 'divisions' of a speech which, informed by the same rules of utility, 'produce charm of style' (III xlv 178-181). For him there is a rule of proportion which inhabits, and thus unites, each part of the universe, and which informs even human discourse. A similar conception of rhetoric is present in the Stoically-influenced De Re Publica; Scipio's argument that just as there is 'melody' in music and 'spoken discourse' so there should be among individuals in a republic, must be read in the light of his claim that 'harmony' is the expression of universal laws.²⁵ Cicero also adopts the Stoic notion of man as innately in possession of a knowledge of the laws of Nature, a notion

which is itself an adaptation of the Platonic theory of recollected knowledge, which he explores in the Tusculan Disputations.²⁶ Cicero's claim in this treatise that an individual is endowed from birth with 'seeds of virtue' reveals his debt to Plato's theory of recollected knowledge as explored in dialogues such as the Phaedrus. This idea is carried over into one of Cicero's rhetorical treatises, Orator. Cicero's description of the perfect artist in Orator, the sculptor of Minerva or Jupiter who, instead of imitating a physical model, discovered that 'in his own mind there dwelt a surpassing vision of beauty', is clearly indebted to Platonic theory, which he indeed acknowledges: just as the sculptor or painter possesses 'an intellectual ideal', and is enabled to create something that does not 'appear to the eye', so the orator conceives 'the ideal of perfect eloquence', the 'copy' (*effigiem*) of which can only be caught 'with our ears'. Such 'patterns of things are called *ideai* or ideas by Plato', he continues, and 'exist forever', depending for their apprehension on 'intellect and reason'.²⁷

The conflict between the idealist and sceptical positions which Cicero seems to espouse in his various works is not, however, easily resolved. Even though Cicero claims in Orator that there is an 'ideal of perfect eloquence' toward which the attention of the orator should be directed, he is simultaneously acutely conscious of the transience of linguistic customs which also claim the orator's attention.²⁸ Thus, Cicero appears

to be inspired in two ways: first, by his knowledge of the 'ideal of perfect eloquence', and, secondly, by contemporary, sometimes erroneous, customs of speech. Cicero's sensitivity to the demands of custom, and to the tastes of his audience, reminds us forcefully that he is a rhetorician, and, thus, that he is ultimately interested in producing belief rather than discovering truth. With this knowledge in mind we may be tempted to read Cicero's description of his eloquence in Orator, and particularly his account of his emotional susceptibility, with a different emphasis. Cicero explains that his ability to express emotion at the height of a speech is 'no great intellectual gift, but a vigorous spirit which inflames me to such an extent that I am beside myself'.²⁹ In contrast to Quintilian, who also recognises the efficacy of such personal expression, Cicero offers no description of the techniques which he uses to reach this state, claiming only that he possesses a 'genuine sympathy'.³⁰ His self-portrayal may recall Socrates's 'inspiration' in the Phaedrus. But is he a philosopher-rhetorician in the style of Socrates? It may be worth recalling here Quintilian's ironic representation of Cicero in Book X of Institutio Oratoria as one who seems to be inspired by 'some god', a representation which he soon deflates with his subsequent account of Cicero's oratorical method. In order to understand the nature of Cicero's art, that is, his ironic method, we need to return to De Oratore and consider the contribution made in the debate by Crassus's disputant, Antonius.

At first sight the character Antonius could not be further removed from the position of Crassus. In contrast to Crassus, Antonius believes that the study of philosophy has nothing to offer the orator: the man who has merely acquired 'such power as to be able to sway at his pleasure the minds of hearers invested with authority to determine some issue concerning the State' will, Antonius observes, 'on any other oratorical topic whatever be no more at a loss for words than famous Polyclitus', the painter who could depict subjects which 'he had never been taught to fashion' (II xvi 70). In his claim that the orator can speak persuasively on any topic, Antonius appears to draw inspiration from the very rhetorical tradition scorned by Plato. While Crassus attempts in his speech to address some of the concerns of Plato, Antonius seems, in contrast, to fly in the face of Plato's objections. Indeed, Antonius dismisses the Greek philosophical tradition and embraces instead the teachings of his rhetorical predecessors, insisting with Isocrates that oratorical virtuosity depends only on a combination of natural talent, imitation and practice. This he demonstrates with the example of Sulpicius, one of the characters present at the debate and a follower of Crassus. Sulpicius, he claims, would have never achieved such a level of oratorical skill had he not set about diligently to imitate Crassus: although 'Nature herself was leading him into the grand and glorious style of Crassus', Antonius explains, he developed his potential by cultivating a 'habit of speaking with every thought

and his soul fixed in contemplation of Crassus' (II xxi 89). Thus, to all appearances Antonius is profoundly anti-Platonic, even advising the orator to leave the reading of Plato's unhelpfully idealistic dialogues 'for a restful holiday [...] so as not to borrow from Plato, if ever he has to speak of justice and righteousness' (I li 224).

It is important to notice, however, that while Antonius follows Isocrates in insisting on a combination of natural talent, imitation and practice for the perfection of oratorical skills, he simultaneously describes the process of acquisition esoterically, giving an account of the effects rather than of the techniques of the rhetorical art. One of the reasons why Antonius fails to offer practical guidance is because he himself has apparently never followed the kind of practice he advises for young orators. 'I am not going to speak of an art which I never learned, but of my own practice [*consuetudine*]' (I xlviii 208), he insists at the very beginning of the debate. Even though he recognises the importance of imitation, as his example of Sulpicius's education suggests, he qualifies his discussion by adding that 'there are [also] many who copy no man, but gain their objects by natural aptitude, without resembling any model' (II xxiii 98). The extent to which Antonius himself is dependent merely on natural talent is never fully established however. As the character Catulus perceptively remarks, Antonius's discussion of the use of oratorical skill in history writing reveals the breadth

of his classical reading, and thus indicates that he is, after all, a student of the Greek intellectual tradition. In response Antonius admits that he has indeed read Greek treatises, but he simultaneously claims to have simply acquired a 'habit' of reading such works during moments of 'leisure' at Misenum. Any benefit he has derived as an orator from the reading of these texts has been, he explains, unconscious, being acquired in much the same way that the human skin tans through the action of the sun:

just as, when walking in the sunshine, though perhaps taking the stroll for a different reason, the natural result is that I get sunburnt, even so, after perusing those books rather closely at Misenum [...], I find that under their influence my discourse takes on what I may call a new complexion (II xiv 60).

Antonius suggests that the style or 'complexion' of Greek treatises has rubbed off on him without requiring any effort on his part; he has become eloquent effortlessly, or naturally. Mere contact with these books has been enough in itself to influence his own mode of expression. By promoting this notion of unconscious assimilation, at the expense of the practice of the careful study of Greek authors, he supports his original claim to have acquired his skills and knowledge without study.

Although Antonius's educational advice differs little from that of Isocrates in Against the Sophists, he departs from this Greek rhetorical master by insisting on the effortlessness of his own acquisition of oratorical skills. This new twist brings him closer, I suggest, to the character of Socrates in Plato's dialogues. Indeed,

Antonius chooses to illustrate the effect of these books on his oratorical skill with a simile borrowed from Plato. In the Republic Plato proposes an analogy between the sun and the form of the Good, which, he claims, is perceptible to man when he actively turns toward it, that is, when he engages in the study of philosophy; Antonius, however, imagines a sun which acts on the individual who merely *happens* to be standing within its light. Although Antonius's re-reading of the sun simile suppresses the intellectual activity promoted by Plato, and thus leaves him susceptible to the same accusation levelled at the poets and actors in Book III of the Republic that they create without a true knowledge of the source of images, his account makes sense if we read it in the light of Plato's Phaedrus, where Socrates suggests that he is inspired by the beauty of Phaedrus (in which he recognises the form of Beauty) to speak eloquently. For what Antonius is describing is a process of education in which philosophical texts are used unconsciously to discover what is already known, to deliver the *a priori* knowledge (the 'ideal of perfect eloquence') lying inert in the soul of man.

Antonius's imitation of Socrates, however, is *not* unconscious, as his reference to the Phaedrus in his discussion of the expression of emotions suggests. Antonius notes that it is impossible to rouse in an audience emotions such as indignation or hatred, or stir them to pity, unless the orator himself is 'visibly stamped or rather branded' by these emotions. At the

same time he insists that the emotions expressed by the orator should not be 'counterfeit' but genuinely experienced, and he offers his own practice as an example of what he means: 'I give you my word that I never tried, by means of a speech, to arouse either indignation or compassion, either ill-will or hatred, in the minds of a tribunal, without being really stirred myself' (II xlv 189). Although he recognises that emotional states are partly produced by the 'quality of the diction' used by the orator, Antonius does not offer to explain how this state of self-persuasion comes about (as Quintilian will do) (II xlvi 191). Indeed, not only does he not reveal any technique for its production, but he defers to the authority of Plato and Democritus, who have 'left on record' that 'no man can be a good poet who is not on fire with passion, and inspired by something very like frenzy' (II xlvi 194). Whereas the expression of emotion is for Quintilian a technique that can be deployed, for Cicero's Antonius, in contrast, it is an inspired act.

Although Antonius initially represents the orator as being exactly the kind of sophist condemned by Plato, his conception of the orator is influenced by Plato in more positive ways, so that, though he never claims that the orator has knowledge of the forms of virtue, he comes close to endorsing the view held by Cicero in the Orator that there is an 'ideal of perfect eloquence' innately known to the orator. Antonius appears to have arrived at this idealist position 'unconsciously', and thus to demonstrate the validity of the synthesis proved

analytically by Crassus: that rhetoric and philosophy are the same. It is important to bear in mind, however, that Antonius's 'unconsciousness' is more studied than he would like to own, as Cicero indicates at the beginning of Book II (II ii 7). Indeed, Antonius is acutely conscious of the expectations, and prejudices, of his audience. When Catulus notes Antonius's learning, and asks him 'whether it be that through some likeness to that godlike genius [Aristotle] you fall into the same track, or, as seems far more probable, you too have perused and learned those very maxims', the commonplaces of the rhetorical argument, Antonius admits to some study: he claims that he has always known 'that a speaker would be more pleasing and acceptable to a nation like ours if he were to show, first, as little trace as possible of any artifice, and secondly none whatever of things Greek' (II xxxvi 152-153). A few sentences later Antonius repeats this advice, explaining that he does not 'disapprove' of the study of philosophy,

if kept within limits, though I hold that a reputation for such pursuits, or any suggestion of artifice, is likely to prejudice an orator with the judiciary: for it weakens at once the credibility of the orator and the cogency of his oratory (II xxxvii 156).

Although Antonius never actually claims to have concealed his own studies we may remember that he began his speech by arguing that he gained his speaking skills from practice rather than the study of 'art' (I xlviiii) 208), only to compromise this position in his speech itself with the variety of his learned allusions. Crassus does not fail to notice this: 'I am delighted', he interjects

at the end of Antonius's speech, 'to see you at last known as a master of the theory, finally unmasked and stripped of the veil of your pretended ignorance' (II lxxxvi 350). Antonius's learned allusions should prompt us to think twice about accepting his earlier claim to be a naturally gifted orator. When Antonius describes the effect of reading Greek treatises as being like the tanning effects of the sun on skin, he is describing not so much what actually happens but an impression at which he thinks the orator should aim if he wishes to gain the credence of his audience. (This is how he is interpreted by Quintilian, and, much later, by Erasmus.³¹) What Antonius could be said to acquire from his 'superficial' study of philosophical texts is not so much forgotten knowledge of the form of 'perfect eloquence' but a method for making his rhetorical discourse seem to be prompted by a knowledge of the truth: he imitates not the creative process supposedly followed by Socrates but the mask of Socrates, the mask which supposedly conceals the artfulness of his eloquence.

1b. The Imitation of Cicero in the Renaissance

The popularity of Cicero in the Renaissance in general, and particularly among the Italian humanists, is well known. Equally well known is the influence of Cicero's De Oratore and Orator on Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier, where they are styled idealist treatises. Castiglione's interest in these texts is prompted not simply by the elegance of Ciceronian style

(as it was for many of his compatriots), but, I will argue, by Cicero's ironic appropriation of idealist discourse. Castiglione has his own political reasons for imitating Cicero; before exploring these reasons in any detail I will first consider the debt owed to Cicero by a very different Renaissance educationalist, Desiderius Erasmus, the individual credited with introducing intellectual reform in Northern Europe, and a thinker who shares with Castiglione the privilege of having been a counsellor to Charles V.³²

When considering the imitators of Cicero, Erasmus's is not a name which immediately springs to mind. In the Ciceronianus, for example, Erasmus attacks the follies of Cicero's foolish acolytes who, he claims, refuse to use any Latin word unless it can be found in one of the treatises of their venerable master. In contrast to these blind copyists Erasmus prefers to use a variety of sources, that is, to use any writer that will serve his end, which is the glorification of Christ.³³ Moreover, the interlocutors of the Ciceronianus, Nosoponus, Bulephorus and Hypologus, are fictional figures, which suggests that Erasmus takes as his model for the dialogue form not Cicero (whose figures, like Plato's, are historical) but Lucian.³⁴ An even more important consideration, however, is the fact that in texts such as The Education of a Christian Prince Erasmus names Plato as the source for his own educational theory. But Erasmus's classical inheritance is more complex than it might superficially seem. Indeed, Erasmus's educational

theory is as much inspired by sceptical educationalists such as Quintilian as it is by the idealism of Plato: in contrast to Plato's Socrates, whose supposed ignorance masks his knowledge of universal truths, Erasmus's mask of folly is literally just that, a dark glass through which he peers at Christian truths. Erasmus's scepticism concerning human knowledge makes him critical of the logical methods of the medieval scholastics, which are designed to reach a 'true conclusion', and keen instead to promote rhetorical methods of argumentation such as those laid out in Book V of Quintilian's Institutio Oratoria, which are designed, in contrast, to reach a probable conclusion.³⁵ What is interesting about Erasmus's attempt to reinstate rhetorical argumentation, however, is that he does so not simply by arguing his case, by inventing and arranging his proofs in the way of a rhetorician, but with the aid of a different, non-discursive rhetorical strategy. In The Praise of Folly Erasmus's ironic character Folly appears to imitate the irony of Socrates, concealing beneath her assumed naivety a knowledge of divine truths, when in fact she also imitates the irony of Cicero's Antonius, using the techniques of the rhetorical art to create a mask which will gain her the credence of her audience. But while Erasmus appears to approve of the duplicitous methods of Cicero's Antonius, he shares with Cicero's Crassus a conception of the art of rhetoric as a philosophical tool, a tool which leads us, he believes, to a



comprehension of the Christian truths as they are written in the Bible.

(i) Erasmus

The debate between rhetoric and philosophy which was initiated by Plato is revived in the Renaissance because it offers a framework for a contemporary conflict between the new rhetorical learning and the Aristotelian logic of the scholastics. The vigour of the debate is nowhere better illustrated than in the correspondence of the Neoplatonist Pico della Mirandola with the humanist Ermolao Barbaro. In response to Barbaro's criticism of the poor Latinity of the scholastics, and his contemptuous description of them as 'dull, rude, uncultured barbarians',³⁶ Pico argues that they are like 'the ancients who by their riddles and by the masks of their fables made uninitiates shun the mysteries';³⁷ he reminds Barbaro of the episode in Plato's Symposium in which Alcibiades compares Socrates's character and language to the Sileni figures, the grotesque statues which contain within themselves a deity, and applies it to the crude language of the scholastics,³⁸ thereby indicating that their supposedly barbaric expression masks a knowledge of divine mysteries. It seems that Erasmus read this correspondence. In the Adages Erasmus tells us that Alcibiades's parable is used 'either of some thing which, though on the surface [...] looks worthless and absurd, is yet admirable on a nearer and less superficial view, or of some man whose face and bearing promise far less than what he hides in his

heart'.³⁹ The image appears also in Erasmus's early spiritual treatise, the Enchiridion Militis Christiani (or The Handbook of the Christian Soldier), in which he argues the value of material transcendence and of allegorical exegesis. In this treatise Erasmus encourages his readers to leave behind the enticements of this world with the 'crowd' in 'Plato's cave, who, chained by their own passions, marvel at the empty images of things as if they were true reality',⁴⁰ and to recognise that the language of the Scriptures is like the Sileni of Alcibiades which 'enclose unadulterated divinity under a lowly and almost ludicrous external appearance'.⁴¹ As such examples suggest, Erasmus appears to have sympathised with Pico in his debate with Barbaro, despite the fact that Erasmus's interests as a humanist would lead us to expect him to take Barbaro's side.

The Sileni adage can aid our reading of the Handbook, helping us to understand its complex voice as a kind of Socratic irony which directs our attention away from the image itself to what it represents, and thus from earthly folly to spiritual wisdom. In his letter to Martin Dorp, written in 1515 in defence of the Encomium Moriae (or Praise of Folly), Erasmus claims that the Handbook offers an interpretative key to this complex and elusive text: 'in *Folly* I expressed the same ideas as those in the *Enchiridion*, but in the form of a joke' (215).⁴² The Praise does indeed seem to be constructed with the Handbook in mind. Commenting in the Handbook on the apostle Paul's words in his first letter to the

Corinthians ("If any among you appears wise in this world, let him become a fool in order to be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the eyes of God" (1 Corinthians I:19-20)), Erasmus concludes that 'there is no greater stupidity than earthly wisdom, which one must unlearn if he truly wishes to be wise'.⁴³ As a proponent of earthly wisdom in the form of rational scepticism, the character Folly vividly illustrates this idea. One instance of her foolishness occurs when she expresses admiration for those who use illusions in order to sustain a kind of ignorant happiness, such as the man who offers his wife fake jewels and pretends that they are of 'unique and incalculable value' (136). The wife, Folly notes, is made happy because she thinks her fake jewels are real while the husband is also content because he not only enjoys the satisfaction of having deceived the woman but saves himself a fortune (137). Folly's defence of such uses of fiction eventually makes it difficult for her to distinguish between the respective degrees of happiness:

between those in Plato's cave who can only marvel at the shadows and images of various objects, provided they are content and don't know what they miss, and the philosopher who has emerged from the cave and sees the real things (137).

If we read this in the light of Erasmus's views in the Handbook, in which Erasmus offers a 'correct' interpretation of the cave allegory, then we are forced to separate the persona of Folly from the voice of Erasmus, so that, in order to gather Erasmus's 'real' meaning we must read into Folly's comments the opposite

of what she intends. This technique of reading puts into practice the advice given in the letter to Dorp, and in the prefatory letter to Thomas More, and, indeed, in the Handbook itself. Thus, in the Handbook Erasmus urges the reader to approach the Bible as one approaches Alcibiades's Sileni, recognising that behind its 'lowly' and 'ludicrous' exterior there exists 'unadulterated divinity', and in the 1508 letter to More, Erasmus observes that 'my *praise of folly* has not been altogether foolish', encouraging us to find wisdom behind a veil of pretended ignorance (59), while in the 1515 letter to Dorp, he calls our attention to the example of 'the famous sages of antiquity who chose to present the most salutary counsel for life in the form of amusing and apparently childish fables' (216). To this extent, then, Erasmus appears to be as good as his word: the Handbook and the letters do make sense of the Praise, by encouraging us to read it allegorically, that is, for an 'other' meaning.

If we apply to the Praise the instructions of the letter to Dorp and the Handbook, reading into Folly's commitment to the material world the spiritualism of Erasmus, then we come close to the position actually advanced by Erasmus in the Handbook. Indeed, we find such a position straightforwardly advocated at the end of the Praise, where Folly reinvokes, and correctly reinterprets, the cave allegory, setting aside the ironic voice of the earlier chapters. The influence on Folly's thought is no longer rational scepticism but Christian

Neoplatonism: when Christians depict the soul as being a prisoner in the body, Folly observes, they 'come very near to agreeing with the Platonists' (202). Folly uses Plato's cave narrative to reinforce this connection: the position of the soul in the body is 'not unlike that [situation] in the myth in Plato, where those who were chained in a cave marvelled at shadows', and she contrasts such individuals who are attracted to the material world with the properly transcendentally-minded, those who have 'no thought for the body, despise wealth and avoid it like trash', directing 'their entire endeavour towards God' alone (202-3). By the end of the Praise Folly has come close to the position held by Erasmus in the Handbook, advocating a Christian renunciation of both the material world and human dependence on religious icons.

And yet the Praise shows a more complex set of allegiances. For the treatise does not resolve itself as easily as this survey might suggest: there is, in Erasmus's text, a third kind of foolishness which leaves the Christian wise man looking as foolish as the Platonic cave dweller. In an early chapter Folly reveals her debt to both Lucian and Plotinus when she borrows from them the image of the *theatrum mundi*. Whereas Lucian's and Plotinus's use of the theatrical image serves to reduce the significance of the events in the material world, when used by Folly it has the opposite effect, drawing our attention not only to the 'materiality' of this world, but to the need for us to recognise and abide by

its rules.⁴⁴ 'If anyone tries to take the masks off the actors when they're playing a scene on the stage and show their true natural faces to the audience', Folly explains, 'he'll certainly spoil the whole play and deserve to be stoned and thrown out of the theatre for a maniac' (104); in the same way, anyone who tries to reject the use of illusions in the material world will be failing to recognise that illusion is an essential element of that world. Folly's common sense here allows her to define a type of foolishness based on a refusal to follow the rules of decorum, the foolishness of someone who will not

adapt himself to things as they are, has no eye for the main chance, won't even remember the convivial maxim 'Drink or depart', and asks for the play to stop being a play (105).⁴⁵

Although Folly recognises, like Plato, that the visible world is not the real world, she reaches a different conclusion concerning our relation to it; she does not, like Plato, insist that we redirect our attention to the greater reality of the intelligible world, but encourages us to act in the visible world in accordance with its own rules, however foolish they may seem. Rather like Quintilian in Book VI of Institutio Oratoria Folly pragmatically recognises that there is a need to accommodate oneself to one's context. For Folly, it is the seed of folly, not wisdom, which 'creates societies and maintains empires, officialdom, religion, law courts and councils' (102), and this makes evident to her the usefulness of folly, or earthly wisdom, in the earthly context. This could not be further from the position

taken by Erasmus in the Handbook, and it would be tempting indeed to dismiss this passage as another instance of mere foolishness, were it not for the fact that the character called 'Erasmus', Erasmus's ironic self-portrait, enters the text several chapters later, and makes a somewhat similar point: that illusions are important to the art of communicating truths.

The notion that Erasmus might be calling attention to the importance of superficial appearances rather than the 'spirit' would seem, in the light of the Handbook to be wholly uncharacteristic. And yet this is the position attributed to Erasmus by Folly when, in chapter sixty three, she anticipates the objections of her author to her foolish doctrine. It might appear unwise to take seriously this characterisation of Erasmus's ideas, considering that these ideas are ascribed to him by Folly herself, and when we have been offered a clear guide to interpretation by Erasmus in the 1515 letter to Dorp. Yet, strangely enough, it is with Folly's depiction of the 'foolish' Erasmus, the image of Erasmus at a third remove from the author himself, that we come closest, I suggest, to detecting, and understanding, the essential doubleness of the Erasmian voice, the doubleness which brings Erasmus closer to Cicero's, rather than to Plato's, Socrates.

In an attempt to convince her audience of the wisdom of her foolishness, Folly gives a list of names of the wise men who embraced her way of life, among whom are Solomon ("I am the most foolish of men" (Proverbs xxx,

2)) and St. Paul ('"I speak as a fool, I am more"' (2 Corinthians xi, 23)) (190). It is at this point that Erasmus, whose objections to Folly's interpretation of these biblical passages she anticipates, is mentioned by Folly, and is styled by her as one of her own foolish acolytes: as one of the 'Greek pedants' 'bent on [...] catching out the many theologians of today by blinding them with the smoke-screen of their own commentaries' (190). With the discussion of a similar passage in the Handbook in mind we might expect Folly to portray Erasmus's objection in similar terms: that is, that Paul is only a fool in the eyes of 'worldlings'. However, this is only part of the argument Folly attributes to Erasmus in the Praise, for the character she depicts gives an expanded explanation, offering not so much a 'smoke-screen', as Folly warns us he is wont to do, but an argument in defence of the use of smoke-screens. According to her, Erasmus would argue that Paul does not claim to be more foolish than the other apostles but to be both their 'equal [...] in his ministry for the gospel' and their 'superior' (191). (The validity of this interpretation becomes clear when the whole biblical passage is given: 'Are they the ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool). I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in passions more frequent, in deaths oft' (Corinthians xi 23).) However, Paul calls himself a fool, Folly suggests that Erasmus would argue, because he

wanted this [claim] to carry conviction without his words sounding arrogant and offensive, so he made

folly his pretext to forestall objections, writing 'I speak as a fool' because it is the privilege of fools to speak the truth without giving offence (191).

Erasmus would explain that Paul's foolishness is only a pretence; it is an indulgent and shrewd response to the limitations inherent in fallen human judgement. Paul, Erasmus would suggest, is not so much a fool as a diplomat, one who knows how to *play* the fool, that is, one who pretends ignorance in a similar way to Antonius in De Oratore, or - according to Cicero - Socrates in the Platonic dialogues, thereby gaining the credence, and trust, of his audience.

Considering that Erasmus insists in the 1515 letter on the need for us to turn our attention away from the literal to the symbolic signification of images, the support attributed to Erasmus by Folly for 'illusions' seems wholly out of character, and would suggest that this passage is not to be taken seriously. However, the argument put forward by Erasmus on behalf of Folly is neither unusual nor at odds with the letter to Dorp. For example, the representation of Paul as a 'rhetorician' or actor comes from St. Augustine's De Doctrina Christiana, in the fourth book of which Paul's confession of folly is submitted to a rigorous rhetorical analysis.⁴⁶ Moreover, in the letter itself Erasmus gives several examples of Paul's uncomplimentary appraisal of Christ in which he stresses the human, rather than the divine, side of His nature (Paul calls Christ '"sin"' and also '"a cursed thing"' (234-5)), and draws our attention to the paradoxical behaviour of Christ, who 'took to himself the

synagogue of Moses, like the wife of Uriah, so that from it could be born a peaceful people', and who drank 'the sweet wine of charity' so that he could give 'himself freely for us' (235). Thus, although Erasmus's subsequent portrayal of Christ a few lines later as 'a sort of Silenus' does seem to suggest that we are meant to read His actions allegorically, recognising that within the earthly form adopted by Christ there exists the Son of God, he simultaneously reveals a respect for the incarnation of Christ, and, correspondingly, I suggest, for the literal level of the text: that is, for its specifically rhetorical, as opposed to its allegorical, function. There is good reason for this. As the letter continues it becomes clear that it is being used to defend not only the Praise but also Erasmus's controversial translation of the Greek New Testament. One of the more infamous details of Erasmus's New Testament is his correction of St. Jerome's version of the opening line of the Johannine Gospel ('*En archi en ho Logos*') from '*In principio erat verbum*' to '*In principio erat sermo*'.⁴⁷ The extent of the backlash to this decision is indicated in the letter Erasmus wrote to Thomas Wolsey in 1520, in which he asks for Wolsey's protection against his slanderers. Erasmus claims that he has heard that a man discredited him in front of a congregation, accusing him of trying to 'correct the Gospel of St. John'. 'Could anything be more foolish?', he asks. Not only was St. John writing in Greek, not Latin, Erasmus observes, but the word '*sermo*' is a

'better equivalent than *verbum* for the Greek *logos*' (Erasmus gives a full account of his philological reasons in the 'Apologia ... *In principio erat sermo*').⁴⁸ Using the methods of a grammarian Erasmus reveals where the real folly lies, and he thus draws attention to the importance of philology to the study of theology. It could be argued that this is not a new position to take - after all, in the De Doctrina Christiana, St. Augustine drew attention to the rhetorical nature of biblical language. But Erasmus's attitude to language is very different from that of Augustine, as his choice of the word '*sermo*' and his use of irony suggest. Erasmus chose the term '*sermo*', which 'signifies a literary conversation, discourse, disputation, or discussion', in preference to the term '*verbum*', which signifies one word, and as a result, Margaret O'Rourke Boyle argues, he 'emphasized the speaking activity of the *Logos* as the father's revelation to the forum of Creation'.⁴⁹ This emphasis is reflected in Erasmus's ironic voice. When Plato's Socrates uses language ironically, that is, when he uses 'visible forms' to represent ideas, he directs our attention away from the sign itself and to a more abstract (intelligible) level of signification, as the allegory of the cave in the Republic demonstrates. Augustine adopts a similar theory of figurative language, which he explores in Book I of the De Doctrina Christiana, (and which appears to be followed by Erasmus in the Handbook). Augustine warns the reader of the Bible that,

we must beware of taking a figurative expression literally. For the saying of the apostle applies in this case too: 'The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life'. For when what is said figuratively is taken as if it were said literally, it is understood in a carnal manner [...] he who follows the letter takes figurative words as if they were proper, and does not carry out what is indicated by a proper word into its secondary signification'.⁵⁰

Erasmus's irony helps both to direct our attention away from the literal meaning of the text, and to remind us of its importance. St. Paul's statement, 'I am a fool', then, is to be taken, according to Erasmus, first, in an opposite sense, as an indication of the spiritual rather than pragmatic and earthly nature of Paul's wisdom, and, secondly, in a rhetorical sense, as an indication of the pragmatic nature of Paul's wisdom: his knowledge of the art of speaking well.

In view of the contradictions which riddle the Praise it is tempting to see this text as an expression of Erasmus's awareness of the irony of his position: as someone who is interested in the human as well as the divine, and in the mimetic as well as the symbolic status of words or images.⁵¹ At the same time, however, the complexity of the text appears designed for a less self-reflective purpose, that is, to make it difficult for the reader to separate the strands of the different traditions, and, thereby, to undermine our confidence in our ability to recognise what is wise and what foolish. Erasmus has good reason for wanting to make this distinction a problematic one. His description of himself in the letter to Dorp as a 'humble artisan' suggests that he is conscious of the lowly status of the art he uses to discover truth (248); at the same time it

is his seemingly foolish skills which bring him closer to the truth, he suggests, than do the techniques of the scholastics, the masters of logical enquiry. For Erasmus questions in the Praise itself the wisdom of the generally accepted methods and aims of medieval philosophy, finding that its practitioners are men who 'know nothing at all, yet [...] claim to know everything', and whose 'total lack of certainty is obvious enough from the endless contention amongst themselves on every single point' (151). Rather like Crassus in De Oratore, who insists that the art of rhetoric is an essential tool for the study of philosophy, Erasmus establishes this art as an essential tool for the study of Christian truths, recognising that it is this art, which sets out to prove the probability rather than the certainty of a position, which will bring humans closest to an understanding of the divine.⁵² But this is not the only respect in which Erasmus is akin to Cicero's Crassus. Like Crassus, Erasmus also considers Socrates to be a skilled orator as well as a philosopher, namely, one who creates for himself a seemingly foolish persona in order to communicate the elusive and seemingly incomprehensible truths of the intelligible forms, and it is on this basis that he can thus claim him as a source of inspiration.

Erasmus's sceptical use of idealism both to create authority for his own position, and to challenge the authority of positions generally accepted as wise, is not restricted to the Praise but can be found in educational

treatises such as the The Education of a Christian Prince, a text which Erasmus contrasts encouragingly with the Praise in the letter to Dorp, describing it as offering 'plain advice' (215). Erasmus's desire to draw attention to his commitment to Platonism is nowhere more clearly displayed than in this educational treatise. In some respects he could be said to move closer in this text to Plato than he does in the ascetic Handbook (or, indeed, than do the Florentine Neoplatonists themselves), by virtue of the fact that he attempts here to base his actions in the political world on an apprehension of universal principles in much the same way that Plato does in the Republic. In the dedicatory letter to Charles V which prefaces this treatise Erasmus openly acclaims the importance of the Platonic ideal of the philosopher-king (203), and he also makes it clear early in the main text that his notion of the 'Christian prince' is informed by this prototype. 'A large section of the masses are [sic] swayed by false opinions', Erasmus complains, 'just like those people trussed up in Plato's cave, who regarded the empty shadows of things as the things themselves' (212); the good ruler, in contrast, is 'removed as far as possible from [their] low concerns and sordid emotions' (221). The Christian prince merits the title of 'philosopher' because he distances himself from ordinary people, following the example of God, who is 'swayed by no emotions', and ordering 'the world with the greatest good judgement' (221), in much the same way that Plato's guardian merits the title of 'philosopher' because he

distances himself from the unstable physical world in order to see, and imitate, the form of the Good. Erasmus wants to create a king who reflects in his political actions the organising principle of his divine author, in the same way that Plato wants to create a king who informs all of his actions with a knowledge of the source of his own being, the form of the Good. Erasmus's commitment to creating the character of the prince in accordance with eternal principles is further indicated by the theatrical metaphor he uses at the beginning of this treatise: if the appearance of royalty rather than the active possession of kingly virtues is all that is needed to make a king, Erasmus demands, then what is there 'to prevent the actors in a drama who come on the stage decked with all the pomp of state from being regarded real kings' (215)). Erasmus wants to create a prince who *is*, rather than who simply *seems* to be, kingly.

At the same time that Erasmus proclaims his allegiance to Platonic doctrine, however, he also reveals his sympathy with the humanist cause of the likes of Ermalao Barbaro, for, like Barbaro, Erasmus launches a biting attack on the investigative aims and methods of the scholastics. In contrast to the scholastics, who direct the prince to intellectual pursuits which are irrelevant to his secular role, Erasmus encourages the assimilation of the principles of 'right government' (203); the prince who has been properly educated understands that his virtue depends on his actions in this world, not on his

ability 'to argue about elements and primal matter and motion and the infinite' (203). (Erasmus may appear here to recall Machiavelli's rejection of Platonic political idealism in Il Principe.⁵³) Yet, even as Erasmus directs our attention to the need for a more secular education, he maintains his link with Plato by encouraging us to recognise that the prince acts with 'reference to the eternal powers' (thus indicating the coalescence of the Platonic Good with the Christian God), and by redefining the ends of the philosopher in keeping with the general intention attributed by Plato to his educational programme: a philosopher, Erasmus tells us, is not 'someone who is clever at dialectics or science [read Aristotelian logic] but someone who rejects illusory appearance and undauntedly seeks out and follows what is true and good' (214).

There are times, however, when the synthesis of idealism and pragmatism achieved in Erasmus's Education appears to become a conscious compromise rather than an actual reconciliation. Plato's educational theory anticipates the creation of a ruler who understands the idea of the Good and who can, as a result, create an ideal human society based on this apprehension, whereas Erasmus anticipates a ruler who legislates according to the immediate needs of the existing state. In the sub-chapter in which he discusses the legislative power of the prince, Erasmus reveals himself to be heavily influenced by Plato, so that many of his statements begin by claiming his authorial support: 'Plato too requires

[...]', 'Plato's opinion here [...]', or 'Plato does not allow [...]' (264-5). However, Erasmus's discussion is permeated by an awareness of the practical needs of the state, and by the fact that laws are, and must be, subject to circumstantial change. It is 'necessary', he writes, 'to adapt the law to the present circumstances of the state, just as treatment is adapted to suit the condition of the patient: some laws, appropriate enough when enacted, are still more appropriately repealed' (269). Instead of referring to an ultimate ideal, Erasmus looks at particular laws enacted in the past, for example, the law which 'was rightly introduced' in order to allow the seizure of stolen property by the prince or magistrate in an effort 'to prevent property going to the wrong person by some trick' (270), and then he determines its rightness or wrongness according to whether it works in practice; in the case of this law Erasmus argues for its repeal, recognising that it has been abused by magistrates whose enthusiasm for seizing stolen property has made them little better than the original thieves (271).

Erasmus's pragmatism can mean that he sometimes accepts the continuation of a law or custom despite its evident injustice, the most obvious example being the law of primogeniture. At the beginning of the treatise, while indicating his allegiance to the political ideal of Plato's Republic, namely that the leaders of a state should be drawn from among the most enlightened, Erasmus simultaneously recognises the difficulty of fulfilling

this requirement in the real world. Although, when we are on 'board ship', Erasmus reminds us, loosely borrowing an analogy from the Republic, 'we do not give the helm to the one who has the noblest ancestry of the company, the greatest wealth, or the best looks, but to him who is most skilled in steering', in 'practice' control of the state is usually given to a prince who is 'born to office, not elected' (206).⁵⁴ Since this is a contemporary custom, Erasmus concedes, and therefore difficult to change, 'then the main hope of getting a good prince hangs on his proper education' (206). In contrast to Plato, for whom philosophical education is seen as a way of ensuring the institution of real 'Justice' in his ideal state, Erasmus sees education as a way of alleviating, but not eradicating, bad social policy. Thus, Erasmus ignores Plato's insistence that society must be reorganised completely if the political realisation of ideal principles is to be ensured.⁵⁵ The effects of this compromise can be seen in Erasmus's educational programme. Even though he follows the early educational programme of Plato, appropriating in his own discussion Plato's agricultural imagery to describe the educational progress (it is the task of the educator to sow 'the seeds of morality [...] into the virgin soil of [the prince's] infant soul' just as it is the role of the 'dialectician' in the Phaedrus to 'plant' and 'sow' 'his words founded on knowledge' in the soul of his student (276e)), the forcefulness of the language used by Erasmus betrays his anxiety to turn an individual who is not

necessarily suited by nature to princely office into a proper prince. Maxims are not dictated to the prince (since such a method does not ensure that they will be well assimilated), but, rather, are 'carved on rings, painted in pictures, inscribed on prizes, and presented in any other way that a child of his age enjoys, so that they are always before his mind even when he is doing something else', ensuring that they are 'fixed in his mind, pressed in, and rammed home' (210). In contrast to the mentor of the Phaedrus, the Erasmian tutor does not get to 'select', in the first place, 'a soul of the right type' (276e).

Erasmus is not the only humanist to recognise the need for the reformer to compromise his Platonic political idealism. In the Utopia Thomas More's persona confronts a Platonic extremist who preaches a philosophy of contemplative withdrawal - recalling the position of Neoplatonists like Pico. 'More' offers a sensible corrective to Raphael's pessimistic insistence that 'there's no room at Court for philosophy'.⁵⁶ Recognising that Plato's notion of the philosopher-king is untenable in contemporary politics, 'More' suggests instead that philosophers should become princely advisers, and he counters the Platonic philosophy of Raphael with one more sensitive to the rules of social decorum: that is, 'a more civilized form of philosophy which knows the dramatic context so to speak, tries to fit in with it, and plays an appropriate part in the current performance'.⁵⁷ However, it is the character 'More' who,

sensitive to the 'dramatic context' in which he functions, ends up looking like a fool in his final refusal to challenge Raphael's stark vision of an ideal society, for fear that he might appear a fool to Raphael.⁵⁸ What the character 'More' gives expression to, I suggest, is Thomas More's own consciousness of the limitations, and dangers, endemic to the compromise between the humanist's idealist political vision and the politician's recognition that he acts in a far from ideal world. The fact that Book I of the Utopia, the so-called 'Dialogue of Counsel', was written shortly before More accepted a position on the King's Council, would seem to imply a personal element in its composition.⁵⁹ Given More's apparent enthusiasm for an ascetic lifestyle, his depiction of the split between the political and philosophical life as an acute and possibly irreconcilable one, and the portrayal of the sycophancy which surrounds political authority in Book I of the Utopia, have a particular resonance, suggesting that his career decision was very much a compromise.⁶⁰ In contrast, Erasmus's treatise, a treatise which actually does offer counsel to kings, is more optimistic. Not only does Erasmus refuse to polarise spiritualism and pragmatism but he attempts to synthesize the two traditions, as his use of Plato to authorise his pragmatic educational and legal theories suggests.

One of the dangers implicit in Erasmus's appeal to Platonism is that, in the process of supplanting one previously unchallengeable authority (scholasticism) he

creates another (the secular rule of the prince). This is an accusation sometimes aimed at the humanists, and, in particular, at the English humanist Sir Thomas Elyot, who can serve here as an example of this danger. Clearly influenced by Plato's Republic, and by the Christian Neoplatonic reconceptualisation of Plato's cosmos, Elyot, in The Book of the Governor, describes the ideal 'public weal' as being headed by a single sovereign, whose authority is determined by his representation of the single heavenly author, God, and who is supported in his duties of state administration by a class of men roughly analogous to heaven's angels, namely the governors or magistrates.⁶¹ The desire to create a new ruling elite was also linked, John D. Cox suggests, to the revival of Ciceronian rhetoric, which bases its conception of a hierarchy of styles on social classifications.⁶² 'Everything is order', writes Elyot, 'and without order may be nothing permanent and stable; and it may not be called order, except it do contain in it degrees, high and base'.⁶³ As Cox has argued, Elyot advances the interests of a new ruling class of learned men to displace the old nobility, and what he offers Henry VIII in return for his acceptance of this new class of men is the divine legitimation of his political power.⁶⁴ But does Erasmus, like Elyot, legitimate such a centre of power? Though Erasmus may construct a prince in the Education in terms of a Platonic ideal in the same way that Elyot does, the powers of his prince are limited. Not only is Erasmus's political ideal intended to remind

the prince of his subordination to divine authority, but the presence of Erasmus's scepticism in this treatise means that the political compromise offered by Erasmus is a forceful reminder of the limits of princely power. Not only is the prince not a legislator in quite the same way as the Platonic philosopher-king but the question raised by Erasmus concerning his genealogical claim to power leaves him dependent on the humanist for his legitimation. 'The custom in the old days', Erasmus observes, 'was to set up statues, arches, and plaques for those who have served the state well. But none are more worthy of such honours than those who have worked hard and conscientiously at the task of properly educating the prince' (207). Whereas Elyot relies on his Platonic allegiance, on his equation of virtue with intellectual merit, to legitimate the authority of the humanist governors, Erasmus, in contrast, elevates the political status of the humanist educators by calling attention to the split between the ideal and the actual, between the end and the means. In this respect Erasmus comes uncannily, and unexpectedly, close in intention and method to his Italian contemporary, the courtier Baldassare Castiglione - despite his different conception of the ultimate purpose of the art of rhetoric.

(ii) Castiglione

In the letter to Lord Michael de Sylva, Bishop of Viseo, which prefaces his treatise, Castiglione anticipates that sceptical critics will find his depiction of an ideal courtier 'superfluous' because the

'real' world is peopled by individuals who neither are, nor ever can be, perfect. Castiglione's defence against such a criticism is to place himself in a tradition of idealist thinkers, including Plato, Xenophon and Cicero, with whom, he facetiously explains, he is 'content to err'. Although he prefers to 'leav[e] apart the disputing of the intelligible world and of the Ideas or imagined fourmes', he is sure that if an 'Idea' of the 'perfect commune weale', as well as the 'perfect king' and 'perfect Oratour' exists 'in imagination', as Plato, Xenophon and Cicero have in turn held, then there must be a form of the 'perfect Courtier', at which the courtier should aim (13).⁶⁵ It is in Book IV, in which Castiglione's political vision is outlined, that his idealism is most apparent. Castiglione's speaker, the Lord Octavian, offers a justification of monarchy by calling attention to the divine right of the prince. Octavian explains to his audience that the combination of natural virtue and a good education (provided by the courtier), will not only enforce the rule of the prince, making him like a 'demy-God' in his own kingdom, but will actually make him like 'God'. Just as the heavens show 'in a glasse, a certain likenesse of God', so the virtuous prince on earth reveals himself to be like the Christian God, and therefore, appropriately enough, his temporal representative (276). Octavian's recourse to this kind of idealism, in which the structure of the earthly realm is found to be analogous to the organisation of the heavenly realm, is reinforced by

Bembo's subsequent Pythagorean description of the relations between the parts of the universe, translated almost verbatim from Cicero's De Oratore (D.O.:III xlv. 178-81)) (309-10).

In some respects Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier differs little from Thomas Elyot's The Book of the Governor, first printed in 1531, which also begins with a statement of its idealist intentions.⁶⁶ Despite such shared interests, critics are surprisingly unanimous in emphasising the differences between the humanist educationalists, which include Elyot, and the professional courtiers such as Castiglione. One of the first of contemporary critics to remark on these differences is G.K. Hunter. 'Long before Elizabeth's reign', Hunter observes with reference to the English political scenario, 'the Humanist ideal had shrunk to that of "the courtier" who was required, within a certain elegant and disdainful playfulness of manner [...] to have some knowledge of classical authors'. The classical learning which received its political reinstatement at the hands of the humanists, and which was used by men like Elyot to carve for themselves an influential position at court, according to Hunter, is put to more frivolous use by a new class of men, the courtiers, being used by them to create encomiums on 'tournaments', 'hunting', and 'amorous dalliance' instead of state policy.⁶⁷ For Daniel Javitch this assessment of the role of Tudor courtiers is also true of the Urbino court, the court depicted in Castiglione's treatise. He argues that

even when in Book IV the Lord Octavian 'tries to give a didactic role to the courtier' he is simultaneously forced to admit that the courtier needs the arts of dissimulation for winning first the favour of his prince, before he can set about fulfilling such a role.⁶⁸ In contrast is the definition Elyot gives of the role of the governors or magistrates in the Governor: insisting on the need in a public weal for 'one capital and sovereign governor' Elyot simultaneously recognises that 'one mortal man' cannot do all of the work of the state alone, and that he needs a class of 'lesser governors' 'aiding him in the distribution of justice', and thus becoming 'his eyes, ears and legs'.⁶⁹ For Javitch, Castiglione's treatise teaches court aspirants, dependent on the will of a powerful monarch and denied the freedom to advise on state policy, surreptitious ways of attaining their ends. For Joan Kelly, however, Castiglione's treatise also teaches court aspirants a form of self-deception: Bembo's claim in Book IV that the courtier is dedicated to a more spiritual quest, becomes, for her, little more than a symbolic attempt on the part of the courtier to 'renounce the power of self-determination that has in fact been denied [him]': to renounce, in short, in favour of the contemplative life the active life of political involvement in which he no longer plays a part.⁷⁰

The courtier is often held to differ from the humanist in a second important respect. Not only has he been politically disempowered but his social privileges are under threat from the appearance of a new class of men,

drawn from the lower gentry, who are keen to develop their own social influence. Thomas Elyot's treatise on the art of government nicely illustrates the interests of the newly upwardly mobile: in the Governor he attempts to undermine the traditional political power of the nobility, replacing them with an elite of educated men. In Castiglione's Courtier, in contrast, one of the first requirements demanded by Count Lewis of the ideal courtier is that he be a man of noble birth, the reasons for this being, first, that 'custom' would have it so, and, secondly, that 'both in armes and in all other vertuous acts [...] the most famous men are Gentlemen' (32). Count Lewis proceeds to explain this second observation with the claim that 'nature in every thing hath deeply sowed that privie seed, which giveth a certaine force and propertie of her beginning, unto whatsoever springeth of it, and maketh it like unto her selfe' (32). Whereas Elyot insists that high social rank should be based on the 'influence of understanding' which is distributed by God's grace, and while Thomas Wilson similarly questions, at the beginning of Arte of Rhetorique, 'the origin of social structure',⁷¹ Castiglione's speakers insist instead on the importance of inherited privilege, reinforcing the feudal equation of virtue with nobility. Count Lewis's discussion of the 'virtue' of gracefulness is purposefully vague. There are some men, he claims, who appear so naturally graceful that they seem 'not [...] borne, but rather fashioned with the verie hand of God' (32). One such man, he

offers by way of illustration, is Lord Hyppolitus (the son of the Duke of Ercole I), a man blessed with so 'happie a birth, that his person, his countenance, his words, and all his gestures are [...] fashioned and compact with this grace' (32-33). Lewis's claim that Hyppolitus derives his virtues from good fortune does not make Nature's distribution of talent a random affair; his description of Lord Hyppolitus's natural virtues, indeed, occurs just after he has insisted on the importance of the courtier's inherited social rank, and it becomes apparent, without being explicitly acknowledged, that Hyppolitus's happiness derives less from Nature's unpredictability than from the 'naturally' superior status of the house into which he has been born. The courtierly virtues, Count Lewis implies, belong to the traditional nobility, not to those 'untowardly Asseheades' of whom Sir Frederick Fregoso complains that they 'through malapartnesse thinke to purchase them the name of a good Courtier' (29).

Such arguments have left one of Castiglione's critics, Frank Whigham, convinced of the conservative nature of the Courtier. For him it is a reactionary response to a period of social change and class mobility, combining a desire to 'teach the members of an endangered aristocracy how to reascribe themselves the self-evident ascriptive status that their forebears had enjoyed' with a desire to conceal the stages of advancement from the upwardly mobile, that is, from those who might 'purchase' the name of a courtier.⁷² Thus, Castiglione wishes in the Courtier

both to 'grace' the members of the old aristocracy and to 'disgrace' (Hoby's apt translation of the Italian '*reprimere*') those hopefuls jockeying for a higher position on the social ladder. Such an interpretation appears warranted by the fact that Sir Frederick proposes the challenging debate in the first place with the expressed intent not only of 'disgrac[ing]' but literally of suppressing (*reprimere*) the social climbers (29). However, as I will show, the matter is somewhat more complicated than Whigham suspects.

Elyot and Castiglione may share a similar interest in political idealism, but the way in which they use this Greek tradition seems to be very different. While Elyot uses the Platonic ideal of a meritocracy to legitimate the political ambitions of a new class of men (the humanists), Castiglione, in contrast, showing an aristocratic bias in his interpretation of the Stoic 'seeds of virtue', and supporting this interpretation with Bembo's Neoplatonism at the end of the treatise, appears to reaffirm the social privileges of an established elite, who are struggling to maintain their political primacy in the face of increasing autocracy and social mobility. And yet, as a study of both the theme of imitation and the conflicting allegiances of Castiglione's speakers will demonstrate, this familiar perception of the conservatism of the Courtier cannot be taken so entirely for granted.

Taking into consideration the idealist pretensions of the Book of the Courtier, we should not be surprised by

the emphasis placed by Castiglione on the importance of natural instinct to the development of courtierliness. The assertion of Castiglione's speaker Count Lewis that the courtierly art cannot be 'learned' influences the style of discussion in the Courtier, giving the treatise the form of a descriptive, rather than a prescriptive, handbook, and so distinguishing it further from Elyot's Book of the Governor, which gives practical advice on education, and from Thomas Wilson's Arte of Rhetorique, which lays down helpful rules for oratorical delivery. The model or source of inspiration for the Courtier is Cicero's rhetorical treatises, Orator and De Oratore, which Castiglione interprets as idealist treatises. In these treatises, and in Orator in particular, Cicero appears to place so much emphasis on the importance of native judgement, which informs not only collective opinion but also the rules of art, that the focus remains almost always on the natural *effect* caused by particular tropes rather than on the techniques or tropes that bring about its creation; 'we shall lay down no rules', Cicero explains at the beginning of Orator, 'but we shall outline the form and likeness of surpassing eloquence: nor shall we explain how this is to be produced, but how it looks to us' (xiii 43), an intention shared by his character Antonius in De Oratore (I xlviii 208), who is insistent that the orator will be naturally pleasing if he studies nature, and follows his own instincts. The same sentiment is expressed by Castiglione's Count Lewis: in response to the demand for clarification of the

methods used by the courtier to acquire gracefulness, he explains that he is not obliged 'to teach [the Urbino courtiers] to have good grace, nor any thing els, saving onely to shew [them] what a perfect Courtier ought to be' (44). Precedence is superficially given by Cicero to natural instinct rather than artistic knowledge since it is the former, abetted by knowledge of the rules of art, which supposedly gives excellence to a speech; moreover, oratorical merit is ultimately determined, he claims, by the approbation not of learned fellow orators but of the people themselves, who are likewise guided by natural instinct.⁷³ Castiglione reaffirms both of these claims in his letter to de Sylva. At the end of the letter, for example, he submits his treatise to 'the judgement of the commune opinion', 'bicause for the most part the multytude, though they have no perfect knowleage, yet do they feele by the instinct of nature a certein savour of good and ill' (14), and a little earlier, he praises the works of Boccaccio, who allowed himself to 'be guided with witt and his owne naturall inclination, without anie other maner studie or regarde to polish his writings'. (Castiglione finds least successful those works in which Boccaccio studied hard 'to be most fine and eloquent' (11).)

This view, that natural instinct should inform literary composition, is shared and enlarged upon by the speaker Count Lewis in the first book of the Courtier. Side-tracked into a digression on techniques of literary imitation, Lewis recalls the advice of Antonius in

Cicero's De Oratore that 'there are many that follow no man, and yet climb they to a high degree of excellencie' (62), namely men who are endowed by nature with an ability to think and communicate lucidly, rendering unnecessary painstaking study. Antonius's advice to orators to follow nature informs Lewis's advice to the courtier's tutors: prospective courtiers should be prompted by their tutors 'in the way that their wit [*lo ingegno*] and naturall inclination [*la natural disposizion*] moveth them' (62). As proof of the truth of this doctrine he adduces the example of two modern writers, Petrarch and Boccaccio. While many people think that the excellence of their work is based on an eminent model which has since been lost, Lewis observes, he believes instead that 'their verie maister was witt [*l'ingegno*], and their owne naturall inclination and judgement [*giudico naturale*]' (61). Castiglione's commitment to the cultivation of natural virtues could not be more clearly announced: and yet, as the debate continues, this commitment is unexpectedly compromised.

Castiglione's concern to communicate with an audience means that he is acutely conscious of the need for clarity of expression. In the letter to de Sylva, for example, Castiglione explains that he has not imitated Boccaccio, the master of Italian letters, partly because of the antiquity of his language ('because the force and rule of speach doeth consist more in use, than in anye thinge els: and it is alwayes a vice to use woordes that are not in commune speach') (11), and partly because he

does not speak well the 'hard and secrete' Tuscan dialect (13). In the discussion of literary imitation in Book I Count Lewis shows a similar concern for the courtier to convey the 'dignitie and brightnesse' of his ideas to his audience, and he insists, consequently, that the courtier must frame them 'in a good order'. But like Castiglione in his prefatory letter Count Lewis also insists that the courtier make sure that the words he chooses for expression are 'apt, chosen, cleare, and well applyed, and (above all) in use also among the people' (56). Castiglione's awareness of the transient nature of literary tastes and lexicons gives us a different perspective on his unease with literary imitation. For his character Lewis argues against imitating classical authors not only because he thinks a writer should follow his natural instinct but because the style of early writers is often anachronistic, seeming awkward or strange to a contemporary audience; tastes change, he concedes, and new styles evolve to replace the old. One example he uses to illustrate this problem is the existence of new words in the Tuscan language, words which he thinks have gained precedence over older and more traditional words, and he borrows from Horace's Ars Poetica the seasonal metaphor of the cycle of linguistic change to reinforce this point; 'Time', he tells us, 'make[s] those first words to fall, and use maketh others to spring a fresh, and giveth them grace and estimation' (60).⁷⁴ What is interesting about this 'borrowing' is that Castiglione makes 'grace' [*grazia*], as well as

literary tastes, subject to the cycle of time, and in so doing, he both draws attention to the unstable nature of the phenomenon imitated by the courtier, and suggests that the gracefulness of the courtier is not so much an expression of heavenly harmony as the reflection of particular cultural tastes. Lewis's advice against imitation has to be modified in the light of this argument. Although it is useless to copy the exact phrases and words of the ancients, Lewis explains, the courtier should copy instead their practice of imitating 'the mistresse' 'custome': 'we must learne of their writings', he explains, 'that they learned by use and custome' (60).

Once alerted to the cultural sensitivity of Castiglione we may begin to detect in the Courtier itself the presence of an alternative, sceptical tradition at odds with the idealism so warmly embraced by Castiglione in the letter to de Sylva. Not only does Lewis join two antithetical traditions, but the many voices which participate in the dialogue, and which represent one or other of the traditions, are often consciously brought into conflict. Sometimes this 'clash' of interests is intentionally confrontational, as in the case of Gaspar's interruptions, which seem to be intended to force Lewis to clarify his vision; at other times, however, the 'clash' appears to be designed to undermine Lewis's position from a distance. This is the case with Sir Frederick Fregoso's speech in Book II, in which he presents a very different view of several topics already

treated by Lewis, including the topic of imitation. Whereas Lewis emphasises the importance of naturalness to the writer, Fregoso argues, instead, for the importance of perceptible dissimulation and self-conscious display whenever the courtier assumes a role that is not naturally his; when wearing a disguise the courtier should always leave some mark to 'betray' his real person, so, for example, if he disguises himself as a shepherd he may ride 'an excellent horse' or if he dresses as an old man he should make sure that his garments suggest his 'nimbleness', the intention of this being to delight an audience with the element of ambiguity (99).

For Virginia Cox the differences between Lewis and Frederick have 'been insufficiently recognised by critics': Frederick, she argues, 'casts a veil of doubts over his predecessor's arguments',⁷⁵ countering the importance attached to virtue by Lewis with an interest in the techniques of dissimulation, and accompanying all his proposals with an acute consciousness of audience expectations, much like a rhetorician. Though Frederick insists, like Lewis, that the courtier should be virtuous, Cox recognises that, because of 'his emphasis on techniques of manipulating appearances [...] he provides all the necessary hints for one less scrupulous than himself [...] to develop a fully-fledged art of simulation'.⁷⁶ In Book II, it seems, we move furthest away from Castiglione's idealism. However, in the Courtier we find that contradictory positions belong not

only to the various disputants but often, as Lewis demonstrates in his discussion of literary imitation, to the individual speaker. Castiglione's voice is equally divided. Although Castiglione sets the idealist tone for the first book and, indeed, for the treatise as a whole, not only does he express a willingness in his letter to de Sylva to 'leav[e] apart the disputing of the intelligible world and of the Ideas or imagined fourmes', suggesting his rather superficial interest in the Platonic theory of the forms, but he qualifies his own claim that there exists a form of the perfect courtier with the parenthetical aside 'according to that opinion'; moreover, Castiglione's persistent use of the term 'imagination' ('imagined fourmes', 'conceyved in imagination') leaves us unsure whether the form of the ideal courtier exists in a transcendent realm apprehended by the mind or, literally, in *his* imagination (13). As soon as we enter the proem to Book I we find the idealism endorsed in the letter further compromised by Castiglione's recognition of the difficulty of discovering the perfect courtier. For Castiglione quickly indicates that the model upon which the courtier is based is less an 'Idea' than the sum of contemporary fashionable tastes, the instability of which he fears will make his task impossible ('use maketh us many times to delite in, and to set little by the selfe same things' (16)).

While it is important, then, to draw attention to the fact that the various speakers do not 'together' provide

a coherent and single portrait of the courtier, it is also necessary to notice that the individual speakers often provide an equally incomplete or contradictory account. What we are often left with, despite the efforts of a particular speaker to conjure for us a complete picture of the courtier, is merely an *impression* of what the ideal courtier should be like, and very little understanding of what contributes to his perfection. Castiglione's source for this kind of effect is clearly Cicero, from whom he has learned the importance of declaring an allegiance, even if disingenuously, to idealist philosophy. For although Cicero and his character Antonius depict the rhetorical art in terms similar to those used by Plato in the Phaedrus to describe his own art, they are in fact imitating the effects of Plato's expression, and concealing from us the self-conscious artistry of their own compositions. Rather like Cicero in Orator and his character Antonius in De Oratore, Castiglione's Lewis sets out both to present the studied effects of the rhetorical art as if they came from nature, and to lead us to believe that the transient object of imitation is a stable entity representative of a higher truth. Cicero is not, however, the only literary influence portrayed in a rather one-sided way by Lewis. Lewis's representation of Petrarch as one of the Italian literary masters who followed his own 'naturall inclination' rather than any established model does not entirely fit with the advice Petrarch gives on literary imitation in his letters.

Petrarch himself no doubt had the cunning advice of Cicero's Antonius in mind when he described in a letter to Boccaccio the imitative practice of his scribe Giovanni Malpaghini of Ravenna: 'I won't say that he will avoid all imitation, but he will conceal it, so that his work won't resemble any particular author but will appear to bring Italy something new out of the work of the ancients'.⁷⁷ In Book I of the Courtier, then, Lewis gives the imagined Urbino court an account not so much of Petrarch's actual imitative practice as of the effect Petrarch wished to produce.

Count Lewis's ambiguous discussion of literary imitation might appear something of an overly complex and unnecessary digression in a book dedicated to a variety of courtierly skills. This is certainly the view of the character Emilia Pia, who breaks up the discussion rather abruptly: 'me thinke (quoth she) this your disputation hath lasted too long, and hath beene very tedious' (64). But the debate does have an important part to play, throwing light on the important issue of nature versus custom in the creation of courtierly virtues. Indeed, the debate on literary imitation functions as a complement to an earlier discussion on the nature of courtierly imitation - the imitation of persons rather than texts - which forms part of the courtier's education. Just as the courtier's natural instinct for literary creation cannot be taken so entirely for granted, so the 'privie seed' of the courtierly virtue

turns out to be less essential an entity than Lewis would have us believe.

Although Lewis insists that the courtier should always aim at clarity of expression if he is to convey the 'brightnesse and dignity' of his ideas to his audience, such lucidity is not always a feature of his own discourse. For example, Lewis's discussion of the intricate interrelation of the respective influences of nature and nurture on the development of the courtier exasperates the Lord Cesar, provoking him to remark on what he sees as contradictions inherent in Lewis's argument on the quality of gracefulness: 'you have saide sundry times that it is the gift of nature and of the heavens, and againe, where it is not so perfect, that it may with studie and diligence be made much more' (43-4). Lewis's emphasis on the naturalness of the courtier's manners, that is, his suggestion that gracefulness derives from the nature of the courtier, because it is contradicted by his simultaneous claim that these effects can be acquired with practice, is seen by Cesar not as a clear doctrine that might inform an interested audience but as a means of obscuring the actual stages of the production of the courtier's manners from such an audience.

Support for Cesar's criticism can be found in Count Lewis's equivocal discussion of the courtier's 'privie seed', which complements his discussion of courtierly imitation, and to which I will now turn. When Lewis describes the importance of noble birth to the ideal

courtier he simultaneously, and unexpectedly, places great emphasis on the importance of a good education. Men who are 'trained up in good nurture', he explains, 'most commonly [...] resemble them from whom they come, and often times passe them'; however, if they do not have any one to train or nurture them they may 'growe (as it were) wilde, and never come to their ripenesse' (32). Almost immediately afterwards, however, Lewis claims that there are some men who 'through the favor of the Starres or of nature' seem to have been 'borne indued with such graces, that they seem not to have been borne, but rather fashioned with the verie hand of God' (32). (Such a twist resembles that in Antonius's claim in De Oratore, subsequent to his description of the importance of imitation, that 'there are [also] many who copy no man, but gain their objects by natural aptitude, without resembling any model' (II xxiii 98).) It is not surprising that Cesar should be confused. In response to Lord Cesar's request Count Lewis, in a statement which recalls the position of Cicero's Antonius, insists that the quality of gracefulness is something that cannot be 'learned' (44); however, he then goes on to add that the lucky individual who is not unapt by nature, 'ought to beginne betimes, and to *learne* his principles of cunning men [*ottimi maestri*]' (44). Before jumping to the conclusion that this reference to 'cunning' constitutes a Machiavellian turn in Lewis's conception of the courtier, we need to be conscious that the term 'cunning', Hoby's translation of '*ottimi*' (excellent) means here 'wise' or

'skilful', although its modern sense of 'crafty' was also in existence in the sixteenth century. Yet when Lewis goes on to describe the act of imitation that will secure the courtier the full development of his inherent nature our suspicions *should* be aroused. Just as the literary artist selects excellent models in order to imitate their gracefulness, so the courtier, intent on the composition of his character, sets out to 'steale his grace from them that to his seeming have it, and from eche one, that parcell that shall be most worthie prayse' (italics mine) (45). For Lewis the act of creation is not a process of discovery, as it is for Plato, or as Cicero's Antonius pretends it to be, but a process of theft. Lewis's theory of imitation is reflected in the advice he gives to the courtier on the subject of gracefulness, which forcefully reminds us of his debt to Cicero's crafty 'Antonius'. For Lewis declares that the courtier should copy the example of the orator and conceal the art he has used to acquire his skills:

And I remember that I have redde in my dayes,
that there were some most excellent Orators,
which among other their cares, enforced
themselves to make everie man believe, that they had
no sight in letters, and dissembling their cunning,
made semblant their Orations to be made verie
simply, and rather as nature and truth ledde them,
than studie and arte, the which if it had beene
openly knowne, would have put a doubt in the peoples
minde, for feare least hee beguiled them (46).

Count Lewis's description of gracefulness as a natural gift is modified by his acceptance of the possibility of stealing gracefulness from a model, of making such a quality *seem* inherent in or natural to the imitator. This equivocation about the source of gracefulness

inevitably reflects on the question of inherited virtue. Count Lewis's assertion that it is noble birth which guarantees the development of virtue is not left unchallenged: Gaspar Pallavicin wonders how noble birth can be essential to a courtier when many of the virtues of his trade are found in those of lower rank, and when, indeed, many of those born into noble families are seen to be 'heaped full of vices' (33). 'Nature', he claims, reminding us of Cicero's democratic universalism, 'hath not these so subtile distinctions' (34). Since the 'first seede' (33) is to be found in all things, he insists, the possession of virtue cannot be dependent on social rank. Although he does not completely agree with Gaspar, Lewis does not attempt to refute his arguments. The ideal courtier should be nobly born, he concedes, not because this guarantees his innate virtue but because this is the social ideal and therefore gives him a head start over his adversaries (34). Gone is the concern for the development of innate virtue; instead we are left with an awareness of the role played by social customs, and the courtier's exploitation of them, in shaping his identity. Thus, when Gaspar asserts in Book II that the courtier might develop his wrestling skills by engaging in fights with his social inferiors, since 'no comparison is there made of noblenesse of birth, but of force and sleight', Sir Frederick quickly expresses his disapproval. The courtier should only fight with such men if he is sure he can prove himself against them, for there is nothing more unseemly, he suggests, than the

sight of a 'gentleman overcome by a carter' (97-8). If nature is a force that lacks respect for social distinction in her distribution of virtue then it is necessary that the courtier call attention to his talents and so secure his social position.

When describing the education of the courtier Lewis depicts the practice of imitation not only as a theft, but as an act of usurpation: the courtier, he insists, should 'evermore set all his diligence to be like his maister, and (if it were possible) chaung him selfe into him' (45). Although Lewis's educational advice seems to be nothing more than an elaboration of the educational theory of the Roman rhetoricians Cicero and Quintilian, the suggestion he makes that imitative practices can elevate an individual in status, that it can change an apprentice into his 'master', jars with the notion of a preordained social structure advocated by Lewis in his discussion of the courtierly 'privie seed'. The existence of the possibility of self-advancement, which is suggested by this example, supports the view that Castiglione is not simply trying to turn the clock back in an attempt to reinstate a rigid feudal hierarchy, as Whigham argues, nor simply intending to express allegiance to a powerful monarch, as other critics have claimed.⁷⁸ Indeed, despite the emphasis on the fixity of the natural social order in both Book I and Book IV, there is a simultaneous recognition that nature, as Octavian declares, 'hath not appointed such narrow boundes to the dignities of men, that one may not come up

from one to another', a recognition that the social status of an individual is subject to alteration: 'many times meane souldiers arise to bee Captaines: private men, Kinges: priests, Popes: and scholars, maisters' (299). The courtier envisaged by Castiglione is much closer to Elyot's governor than is usually allowed, in respect of his potential for political ascent (a similarity which is strengthened, as we shall see, with the discussion of the advisory role given to the courtier in Book IV). But there is one important difference between Elyot and Castiglione. Whereas Elyot makes it clear in the Governor that the power of the magistrates complements the power of the prince, Castiglione, in contrast, offers a more dynamic account of the relations between the prince and the courtier, depicting the courtier as being at once subservient to, and influential on, the prince, helping to create his own princely 'virtue'. In this respect Castiglione comes closer to the position taken by Erasmus in the The Education of a Christian Prince, the treatise in which he set out both to create a good prince and to remind the prince of the source, and limitations, of his power.

It is in Book IV of the The Book of the Courtier that the Lord Octavian tries to explain the function of the courtierly arts so carefully described in the preceding books, and the relationship of the courtier to his prince. Although at the beginning of the Courtier Castiglione claims to teach the courtier how 'to serve [his prince] perfiteley in every reasonable matter',

thereby gaining the 'favour' and 'praise of other men' (15), by the time we have reached Book IV the courtier has been promoted to the position of adviser and tutor to the prince, and The Book of the Courtier itself has become an educational treatise for princes in the fashion of Erasmus's The Education of a Christian Prince, including within its scope debates on the right form of government, and the duties that pertain to princely office. This is a strange turnabout in a treatise which has dedicated itself so far to the development of ornamental skills in the courtier (singing, dancing, the playing of instruments), and to shaping the career of a social group defined increasingly by their political dispossession, a 'turnabout' to which the Lord Octavian, the principal speaker in this book, appears to be sensitive. For Octavian admits that the 'precise fashions' of the courtier, 'the setting forth of ones selfe' and 'merry talke', which belong more to the 'entertainment of women and love', can indeed 'womanish' a man, (and thus detract from his serious political role at court); at the same time, however, he recognises that it is by these means that the courtier shall win the 'favour' of the prince, an essential requirement if he is to 'set him in the way of vertue' (260-1). The seemingly frivolous pursuits of the courtier turn out to be 'political' skills necessary for winning him the friendship of his prince. Once he has attained the prince's friendship the courtier can 'breake his minde to him' and 'enforme him franckly of the truth of every

matter meete for him to understand, without fear or perill to displease him' (261). He becomes, in short, a political adviser.

For Daniel Javitch and Joan Kelly the fact that the courtier's influence rests as much on his ability to charm the prince, 'beguiling him with wholesom craft', as it does on his ability to 'enforme' him 'franckly of the truth of every matter', indicates the extent of the courtier's political demotion.⁷⁹ But this interpretation underestimates the potential efficacy of the courtier's 'charm', his Ciceronian eloquence, assuming that direct counsel is more politically meaningful than indirect methods of communication, when, as we know from Cicero's *Antonius*, it is such indirect techniques which lie at the heart of persuasive oratory: it is better for the orator to have his hearer 'so affected as to be swayed by something resembling a mental impulse or emotion, rather than by judgement or deliberation' (II xlii 178). Octavian's insistence that the same skills which purportedly 'womanish' the courtier are also the means of his political advancement indicates the paradoxical nature of the courtier's existence, at once subservient to and influential over his prince.

The extent of the courtier's subservience depends on how the prince's virtue is seen to be determined: that is, whether we consider his virtue to be inherited or acquired through instruction. This is a point which we never fully resolve, mainly, I suggest, because of the conflicting account given by Castiglione of the prince's

education. The principal sources for the educational theory expressed by Octavian are Cicero and Aristotle, although there are other important influences tightly woven into the debate, for example, the teachings attributed to Protagoras in Plato's treatise of that name. Thus, in response to Octavian's claim that the princely virtues are to 'bee learned', the Lord Gaspar insists instead 'that they are given the men that have them, by nature and of God' (266), and to support this argument he cites the Promethean myth recounted in Plato's Protagoras. But there is one important difference in Gaspar's version of this myth. Like Plato's Protagoras he emphasises the democratic nature of Mercury's distribution of the virtues of 'justice and shame'; however, unlike Protagoras he uses the story to explain the naturalness of these virtues to humankind: Mercury willed, Gaspar asserts, that these virtues 'shoulde be *imprinted* in every man' (267). In contrast to Protagoras, who uses the story to demonstrate that knowledge of justice is not 'innate or automatic' but is 'acquired by instruction' (323c), Gaspar uses the story to affirm that these virtues are a gift of grace, that 'God hath graunted these vertues to men, and they are not to be learned, but be naturall' (267). As if to reinstate the original version of the myth, however, Octavian then proceeds to give an account of the educational process which emphasises the importance of practice to its success - although the immediate source

of his inspiration is Aristotle, not Plato. 'The morall vertues are not in us altogether by nature', he declares,

because nothing can at any time be accustomed unto it, that is naturally his contrarie: as it is seene in a stone, the which though it bee cast upward ten thousand times, yet will he never accustome to goe up it selfe (267).

If the moral virtues were natural to us, he reasons, then we would not be able to accustom ourselves to vice so easily. Like Aristotle, then, Octavian suggests that we are 'borne apt to receive' the moral virtues, but not actually in possession of them, thereby emphasising the importance of 'practice' to the cultivation of disposition. However, rather like Count Lewis in Book I, Octavian appears unwilling to commit himself to any one particular educational theory. No sooner has he described the courtier as having an innate *capacity* to receive the moral virtues than he adopts the subtly different Ciceronian doctrine of the 'seeds of virtue', bringing his argument suddenly closer to that of Gaspar by suggesting that all individuals already innately possess these virtues. The role of the educator, it turns out, is to 'stirre up and quicken in us those moral vertues, whereof wee have the seede inclosed and buried in the soule, and like the good husbandman till them and open the way for them', thus 'weeding' out 'the briars and darnell of appetites, which many times so shadow and choke our mindes, that they suffer not to budde nor to bring forth the happie fruites' (268). Returning his attention to Gaspar's argument Octavian suddenly concedes 'in this sorte then is naturally in every one of us

justice and shame, which you say Jupiter sent to earth for all men', with the result that education is finally seen to depend on a combination of natural inclination and practice. If 'the roote of these vertues [...] potentially engendred in our mindes', Octavian concludes, 'bee not aided with teaching, [it] doth often come to nought' (268). Just as in Book I Count Lewis leaves us unsure whether the courtier inherits the virtue of gracefulness, or whether he acquires it through practice, so here the Lord Octavian leaves us uncertain whether the courtier merely fosters virtues already latent in the prince, or whether, in the fashion of the Erasmian educator, he makes sure the princely virtues are 'fixed in, pressed in, and rammed home' to a mind that is not necessarily naturally attuned to receive them (210).

Octavian's political idealism leads him to endorse the supremacy of the prince, and to require the subservience of the courtier, thus leaving the latter little political freedom. At the same time, however, he undermines this conservative ideal by emphasising the importance of imitation or practice to the apprentice prince, in which attempt he is unconsciously supported by Gaspar who, in his re-telling of the Promethean myth, reminds us of the democratic ideal of human virtue. Such observations imply the suitability of other candidates for the role of governor, such as, for example, the courtier himself. Indeed, it is notable that in the process of creating this divinely approved prince the status of the courtier is simultaneously augmented, so much so that the Lord

Julian feels compelled to object to his apparent ascent. If the courtier acts as the prince's educator, he reasons, then he must necessarily be his superior (296). His objections are quickly answered by Octavian, who insists on two preconditions for the prince's education: first, that the prince be naturally apt for study and, secondly, that the prince have the opportunity to practise the precepts taught him by the courtier. There is, as Octavian observes, no difficulty in fulfilling these conditions for since the prince 'may' be of 'noble progeny' he will incline anyway 'to vertue of hys owne naturall motion, and through the famous memorie of his auncestors, [if he is] brought up in right good conditions' (276). His noble blood ensures that he will develop the right 'habits' naturally, just as it ensured the suitable disposition of the nobly born courtier. Moreover, Octavian adds, because of his position as head of the realm the prince will have the opportunity to practise his skills in a way denied the courtier, and will consequently quickly surpass his tutor in virtue. But Octavian's response is again inherently ambiguous. While he reaffirms the importance of inherited virtue he simultaneously draws attention to the role played by practice, reaffirming our suspicion that the courtier, if given the occasion to practise the skills which he knows only theoretically, could also prove a proper prince.

In Book IV, in the discussion of the prince's education, we find the same discrepancy between a described effect and the techniques of its production

which we found in the discussion of the courtier's education in Book I. Moreover, in both books the ambiguity concerning the determining factors of character formation appears ironically to be increased at the very moment when an explanation is being offered. One of the results of this ambiguity in Book IV is that we can never be sure whether the prince's character depends more on innate virtue or on a good education, and, consequently, we can never be sure of the prince's natural right to the office he inherits, or the exact nature of his relationship with the courtier. Although Octavian repeatedly asserts the subordination of the courtier to the prince, the 'naturalness' of his servile role is not self-evident. Not only may the courtier be endowed with the same abilities as the prince, lacking only the occasion to practise them, but in the educational role imagined for him by Octavian he is temporarily the master of the prince. It might be useful at this point to recall the theory of imitation espoused by Count Lewis in Book I: his claim that it is the aim of the imitator to emulate and surpass the art of his master suggests that the prince will quickly equal the standard set by the courtier. Even so, the dynamic nature of the relations between the prince and the courtier cannot help but undermine the absoluteness of the prince's authority. Sometimes the courtier appears to be subservient not only to the prince but to a superior, divine author of whom the prince is the earthly representative; at other times, however, it is the prince who appears to be dependent on

the 'favour' of the courtier. Such uncertainty, while not actually denying the primacy of the prince, does make problematic the power relations between the prince and the courtier, the stability of which commentators on the Courtier have usually taken for granted.

The dynamism of the courtier's political relationship with his prince is represented also, I suggest, in Bembo's account of Neoplatonic love which ends Book IV. At first sight, Bembo's Neoplatonism, which Wayne Rebhorn describes as promoting 'a world-denying ecstasy',⁸⁰ appears to reaffirm the courtier's political dependence on the prince. Indeed, the use of Neoplatonism to reaffirm princely temporal power was a regular feature of Italian politics. Eugenio Garin observes that the 'reorientation' from humanism to Platonism coincided with the transition from republicanism to monarchy, from 'social co-operation' to autocratic rule: 'the new prince forced everybody from active political life and transformed culture either into an eloquent demonstration of his court or into a desperate flight from the world'.⁸¹ Joan Kelly makes a similar argument: Bembo's Neoplatonism, she claims, acts as a palliative for the politically dispossessed courtier, giving him the illusory satisfaction of resigning 'the power of self-determination' which he has actually been denied.⁸² However, what Bembo's vision actually offers, I believe, is a 'veiled' account of the courtier's influence on the prince in his role as educator, and a mask which conceals the rhetorically

constructed, as opposed to the inherited or inspired, nature of his identity. Bembo's vision offers the courtier a genuine, not a wishful, appraisal of his 'power of self-determination'. To argue this point I shall draw an analogy first between the courtier and the male lover in Bembo's narrative, and, then, between the courtier and the female beloved in Bembo's narrative.

Although it is the courtier who has usually been seen by critics as effeminate, as a result either of his interest in self-ornamentation or of his political demotion, and who, therefore, can be seen to be analogous to the female beloved, it is important to note that the same analogy can be drawn in the case of the prince.⁸³ Not only is the Urbino prince, Guidobaldo, an 'imperfect man', having been physically weakened and rendered impotent by gout, but his place at the head of the table is taken throughout the debate by a woman, the Duchess Elizabeth Gonzaga. (Guidobaldo, we are told in Book I, usually withdraws from company after supper 'by reason of his infirmitie' (20).) But the analogy between the prince and the female beloved is strengthened by the fact that Bembo intends his narrative in the first place as an illustration of how the older courtier can rival his younger counterpart as a lover, and by the similarities between Octavian's account of the moral education of the prince and Bembo's account of the moral education of the female beloved. Once the lover has apprehended the form of Beauty, Bembo tells us, he returns to the beloved and shares with her some of the beauty he has apprehended,

taking care 'not to suffer her to run into an error, but with lessons and good exhortations seeke alwaies to frame her to modestie, to temperance, to true honestie', thus 'sowing vertue in the garden of that minde'. Having achieved such an end, Bembo tells his audience, the lover 'shall also gather the fruites of most beautiful conditions, and savour them with a marvellous good relise' (314). In much the same way the courtier, according to Octavian, educates the prince, inculcating in him moral virtues, with the result that 'dayly he shall see spring', in the mind of his prince, 'such beautiful floures and fruites, as all the delicious gardens in the world have not the like', and he will be rewarded with 'great contentation', knowing that he has given his prince one of the most valuable of gifts, virtue (273).

If we see the female beloved as being representative of the prince then the shift from courtly love in Book III to Neoplatonic love in Book IV can be seen to have genuine political significance for the courtier. The courtly lover, as C.S. Lewis describes him, is an 'abject' being whose only virtues are 'obedience to his lady's slightest wish, however whimsical, and silent acquiescence to her rebukes, however unjust'.⁸⁴ This extreme form of altruistic service, C.S. Lewis suggests, was modelled on a particular political contract: the obedience offered by the lover to his female beloved, who is usually his social superior, is analogous to the loyalty professed by a vassal to his feudal lord.⁸⁵

For the courtly lover freedom can only be obtained by a complete rejection of his vocation, as Andreas Capellanus, the twelfth-century writer on courtly love, warns his dedicatee, Walter, in the third book of his treatise The Art of Courtly Love. He has described the arts of love in the preceding two books, he explains, not to bring his friend success in this field but to enable him 'once instructed' in these arts to refrain from such action and 'win an eternal reward'.⁸⁶ However ironic we may suspect Capellanus's *volte face* of being, what we cannot here doubt is the essential incompatibility of secular love for a woman with a more spiritual kind of love: 'no person could be pleasing to God', Capellanus insists, 'by any good works as long as he seeks to devote himself to Love's services'.⁸⁷ The courtly lover cannot attain spiritual freedom because he remains a slave to the whims of his beloved, an arrangement Capellanus finally dismisses with contempt. Who would want to reveal himself, Capellanus asks, 'such a fool and madman as to try to obtain what forces him with oppressive serfdom to subject himself to another's dominion, and to be wholly tied to another's will in all things?'.⁸⁸ (We may take as an example the chivalric hero and lover Lancelot, who, according to Chrétien de Troyes, did not prove his worth until he had learnt to put his lady first before his own honour, and who is depicted in The Quest for the Holy Grail as a knight unable to fulfil his spiritual quest on account of his love for Guinevere.⁸⁹)

In Neoplatonic love, however, the immediate, physical object of desire is not the sole end of the lover's devotion; the Neoplatonic lover recognises the existence of a divine being *superior* to the proximate beloved, to whom he directs his service in the hope of advancing his spiritual self-interests, and the beloved becomes an instrument in his personal self-improvement. Thus, Pico della Mirandola describes how the lover uses the beauty of the beloved as 'a means to looking within [him]self at the proportion and fitting quality of that figure even apart from that gross and material body in which [he has] seen it'.⁹⁰ The introduction of a third party, and the recognition of the lover's implicit self-interest in the love relationship, present differences that unsettle the privileges of the beloved, giving the lover an independence greater than that possessed by his 'abject' courtly predecessor. Moreover, the beloved is reduced to a state of dependence if he or she wishes to advance his or her own spiritual status. In his Commentary on Plato's 'Symposium' on Love, Marsilio Ficino suggests that there are benefits to be derived by both parties, but he also recognises the different quality of those benefits. While the pleasure obtained from the relationship is greater for the lover because both his sight and intellect are satisfied, Ficino claims, the exchange is more useful for the beloved, since he gains beauty of the soul from his contact with the lover.⁹¹ When Ebreo Leone applies these ideas to his vision of heterosexual Neoplatonic love in The Philosophy of Love,

we can see how far we have come from the courtly love arrangement. As Philo explains to his beloved Sophia, spiritual love is superior to corporeal love because it gives rather than receives; in the same way the love of a benefactor is superior to that of the beneficiary, and the love of the man to that of a woman.⁹² According to the courtly love tradition it was the male lover who sued his female beloved for favour, and the female beloved who acted as the benefactor of her lover. The picture is here inverted; it is the female beloved who has become dependent on the male benefactor, and who seeks rather than inspires self-improvement. As this redistribution of power suggests, there is no reason to suppose, if we consider the courtier's role as educator to the prince, that Bembo's Neoplatonism offers the courtier merely a palatable justification for his supposed political marginalisation.

But the representational status of the female beloved is not fixed. Although it seems clear that Bembo intends the Neoplatonic lover to be identified with the courtier, an analogy between the courtier and the Neoplatonic female *beloved* is equally noticeable. For like the female beloved the courtier uses his physical beauty to attract to himself the attention and the favour of his 'lover', the prince. This second analogy also throws light on the relationship between the prince and the courtier, providing an imaginative account of the way in which the courtier might win the favour of his prince with the aid of his personal attractions. But, as a

study of Bembo's theory of beauty reveals, this second analogy also unexpectedly helps to establish the nature of the courtier's gracefulness as the product of rhetorical skill, rather than divine inspiration, and thus reveals that Bembo's Neoplatonism, like Count Lewis's idealism in Book I, is an ironic mask which conceals the sceptical rhetorical art of the courtier. Not only does Bembo allow for the independent or artful as well as the inspired creation of beautiful things in his account of Neoplatonic beauty, but he borrows his terms for describing beauty from the craft of painting, the craft depicted by Lewis in Book I as an art of dissimulation.

For the Middle Platonists and the Neoplatonists there were two ways of explaining the phenomenon of beauty; they could describe it either as a harmonious arrangement of parts (beauty as proportion), or as a quality of participation in the divine. For Cicero, beauty, whether of a rhetorical speech or Nature itself, is a product of proportion: a decorous speech, that is, one which is ornamented with the figures of speech appropriate to its content, is naturally pleasing because it recreates the same harmonious effects which are found to be so beautiful in the natural world, although on a much smaller scale (III xlv 178-181). Likewise, for Bembo, the beauty of the courtier pleases the prince because it reflects the harmony of a greater scheme in which he finds his security, namely the political hierarchy. By establishing the representative nature of the courtier's

art, and the representative nature of the material world itself, Bembo succeeds in affirming the importance of the body as a sign of moral virtue; the body marks the 'inwarde goodnesse' of the soul, he declares, just as the buds of a tree provide proof of its fruitfulness (309). The relationship between the respective 'beauties' of the body and soul is not simply reflective, however, as Bembo later indicates when he calls the physical manifestation of gracefulness 'the true monument and spoile of the victory of the soule' (311). Bembo advances the idea that the body not only takes after the soul but is in some way immanently infused with it. Thus, beauty is attained 'when [the soul] with heavenly influence beareth rule over the martiall and grosse nature, and with her *light* overcommeth the darknesse of the bodie' (311) (*italics mine*). The suggestion that the body's beauty derives from the light of the soul suggests the influence of Plotinus's ideas on Castiglione's aesthetics, an influence possibly at odds with the Ciceronian debt so far discussed. For Plotinus, the father of the revived Platonic ontology, the classical notion of beauty as harmonious proportion is inadequate because it fails to explain how simple things can be beautiful, and it is replaced by the concept of beauty by participation. The Ciceronian artist who in the Orator was advised to look into his own mind and copy the vision of beauty he finds there is comparable to Plotinus's artist since he is also searching for his interior form, but when the Ciceronian artist copies the form he produces a proportionate object

whose beauty derives from its *likeness* to the original object, whereas the Plotinian artist 'run[s] back up to the forming principles from which nature derives',⁹³ and produces an artifact whose beauty derives from the fact that it has 'some share of the art'.⁹⁴ In the same way, the beauty of the human body, Plotinus argues elsewhere, derives from its participation 'in a formative power which comes from the divine forms', and not simply from the harmonious arrangement of its parts.⁹⁵

Plotinus's ideas were disseminated in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries through the works of Italian Neoplatonists Ficino and Pico. While Ficino attempts to syncretise Plotinus's concept of beauty with the position held by Cicero and the fifth-century Neoplatonist Proclus,⁹⁶ Pico reveals his primary allegiance to Plotinus, not only by recognising the failure of the theory of proportion to explain the existence of 'simple' beauty, but also by denying the representative nature of the body's beauty. As Pico remarks, an ugly body can just as easily contain a virtuous soul as one which is more pleasing to the eye. Beauty, therefore, does not depend on the harmonious relation between parts but is 'a certain quality' which 'lights the fire of love in human hearts';⁹⁷ for Pico it is quite clear that 'the material body is not the source and fount of this beauty but that it is of a nature wholly averse and detrimental to such beauty'.⁹⁸ Pico's tentative admission that the pleasing arrangement of bodily parts can *sometimes* indicate a virtuous soul is soon lost as a result of his deep

suspicion of the material world, and his desire to see the heavenly lover transcend to the contemplation of 'worthier' objects as quickly as possible. Despite the emphasis Bembo places on the importance of physical beauty in the Courtier, he acknowledges that the body in which 'beautie shineth, is not the fountaine from whence beautie springeth' (313). In stating this much he appears to echo the sentiments of Pico; in fact he is following standard Neoplatonic doctrine which insists on the derived nature of physical beauty, and which encourages the ambitious contemplator to ascend to its source. But, curiously, alongside Bembo's recognition of the inferior quality of human beauty, and the need ultimately to renounce the pleasures of the material world, there exists an emphasis on the body which it is difficult to pass over. The body's importance is invoked not only by Bembo, who alludes to its representative nature, and by the other debaters in the books of the Courtier, who variously describe the actual qualities of the ideal courtier, but by Octavian, who claims that in education the 'bodie [should] bee cherished before the soule' (283). When Octavian uses the term 'bodie' here he is referring not only to the actual limbs of a human being but, by analogy, to the unreasonable or appetitive part of the soul; he is following the educational advice of Aristotle to establish good 'instincts' in an individual before developing his intellectual capacity: 'therefore ought there to be a ground made first with custome, which may governe the appetites not yet apt to

conceive reason' (283). But the corporeal sense of Octavian's 'bodie' reappears in Bembo's discussion of beauty. As Bembo explains, when the form or idea of Beauty, which exists independently of the body, discovers a

face well proportioned, and framed with a certaine lively agreement of several colours, and set forth with lights and shadowes, and with an orderly distance and limits of lines, thereinto it distilleth it selfe and appeareth most welfavored, and decketh out and lightneth the subject where it shineth with a marvellous grace and glistering (304).

The form of Beauty may give light to 'grosse nature' as Bembo earlier argued, but the material into which it descends has already been prepared for its reception. Thus, the physical body stands in relation to the soul not only as its mirror image but as a suitable receptacle, so that the creation of beauty is envisaged not simply as an infusion of gracefulness that produces a beautiful body but as an infusion into a body already gracefully arranged. Bembo's coalescence of the concept of proportional beauty with the idea of beauty by participation suggests Ficino's Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love as the source for his Neoplatonism. While Ficino reveals his debt to Plotinus by defining beauty as a 'certain grace' which shines 'through the influence of its own Idea', he also shows the extent of the influence of the notion of beauty as proportion on his conception of beauty by emphasising that this 'certain grace' 'does not descend before the matter has been appropriately prepared' in terms of the arrangement, quantity, shape and colour of its parts.⁹⁹ As Bembo's

allegiance to Ficino makes clear, even in this idealist narrative we re-encounter the old problem which has dogged us throughout the Courtier: whether it is the courtier's innate 'seeds of virtue' which inspire his self-expression or whether he is the author of his own image? Bembo's contribution to this debate is to suggest that 'beauty', the quality whereby the courtier attracts to himself the favour of his prince, is something that he can create: in short, the courtier can *become* beautiful.

Bembo reinforces the notion that the courtier can make himself beautiful by choosing to discuss the beauty of the Neoplatonic female beloved in the terms of the painting art, rather than in the terms of sculpting (the art chosen by Plotinus to describe the creation of a virtuous self in the Enneads).¹⁰⁰ For Bembo's description of a face 'set forth with lights and shadowes, and [with] an orderly distance and limits of lines' suggests that he is aware of the new painting techniques such as chiaroscuro and perspective, techniques which enable an artist to create images that might appear to have real being.¹⁰¹ While the artistic work produced by the Neoplatonic sculptor participates in the beauty of the form which he has apprehended, the work of the Italian painter appears to be similarly inspired, even though it is actually the product of his skill in the art of painting. Bembo's decision to describe the beauty of the Neoplatonic beloved in these terms is particularly revealing in view of the debate between Lewis and John Christopher in Book I concerning the relative merits of

painting and sculpture. When John Christopher insists that sculpture is the superior art because it is of more 'travaile' and more 'dignitie' (78) Lewis meets his attack by claiming that though both arts aim to 'set out a thing' it is the painting art which is the more successful. John Christopher then complains that the painting art is 'an artificiall following of nature', and observes that as a representative art it scarcely attains the achievements of sculpture: the truth and property that nature maketh', he claims, can,

not bee followed better in a figure of Marble or Mettall, wherein the members are all rounde proporcioned and measured as nature her selfe shapeth them, than in a Table, where men perceive nothing but the outwarde sight, and those colours that deceive the eyes: and say not to me, that being, is not nigher unto the truth than seeming (79).

Count Lewis defends his chosen art from the accusation of 'seeming' rather than 'being' by employing John Christopher's arguments; the painter, he suggests, needs the same knowledge as the sculptor to produce well-proportioned figures. This claim, however, cannot obscure the fact that while the sculptor creates rounded limbs as nature does, the painter's art creates limbs 'in a round wise'. In contrast to the sculptor, who creates something that clearly is an imitation of nature, the painter creates a fiction which will be credited with 'being'. Although the painter requires the same knowledge as the sculptor, Christopher observes, he must also have 'an other craft', one which will help him to 'frame' his subject in such a way that it will seem like perfected nature. Rather like the painter, who makes his

fictional images appear to reflect nature, the courtier makes his created beauty appear to reflect a divine source; he uses his rhetorical art to construct for himself an image or self which appears to be not only natural to him but to assign to him his naturally superior social place.

Castiglione's Book of the Courtier is, I conclude, hardly an affirmation of a conservative political ideal which protects the privileges of an established 'noble' elite and promotes autocratic rule. Indeed, it offers a more unstable account of the relations between the courtier and the prince, and hence of the exact *locus* of power, than is usually recognised. For this reason it needs, I suggest, to be considered alongside the supposedly more serious political treatises of humanists such as Erasmus. However, Castiglione's treatise can also be set alongside Erasmus's treatises for a different reason. For like Erasmus Castiglione sets out to establish the legitimacy of his art, as well as to defend the place of his pupil in the active political world of his day. While Erasmus clearly promotes a different type of rhetoric to Castiglione (he is attempting to replace the scholastic logic of the Middle Ages with rhetorical methods of argumentation), he nonetheless makes his point with the same non-discursive methods of persuasion used by Castiglione, imitating the ironic mask of Cicero's Antonius which blurs the distinctions between the idealist and sceptical, the philosophical and rhetorical, traditions. But Erasmus is different from Castiglione in

one important respect: his aim is not ultimately, or not only, to create fictions which will be taken for truths, or which will become truths, but to use the art of creating credible fictions as a means of discovering, or revealing, truths. In this respect Erasmus's interests coincide with those of the Protestant rhetoricians, who, like him, used their skills to explore, and communicate, biblical truths or - as we will see in chapter four, with the example of Philip Sidney - as a tool to create convincing representations of virtue. What it is less easy to see, however, is what Castiglione's art, namely, his interest in naturalising fictions, has to offer Protestants. This is a question I will seek to answer in the next chapter with reference to the early writings of Philip Sidney.

Notes

1. In this thesis the term 'idealism' describes the position which holds, first, that 'universals have a real, objective existence', and, secondly, that they can be apprehended by the human mind. Although this position was named 'realism' in the Middle Ages I have chosen the term 'idealism' in accordance with the predilection of literary critics: see, for example, Jonathan Dollimore, who contrasts the notions of 'idealist' and 'realist' mimesis, Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries, (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1984), p.71. My use of the term 'idealism' must also be distinguished from its use in contemporary philosophy, where it means a position which holds that no 'material objects or external realities exist apart from our knowledge of them, the whole universe being thus dependent on the mind or in some sense mental', The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards vol. 7 (New York: The MacMillan Co. and The Free Press; London: Collier MacMillan Ltd., 1967), p.77.

I use the term 'scepticism' to describe a position or attitude which questions 'the reliability or the knowledge claims made by philosophers', Edwards, p.449. A sceptic, in the sense in which I use it, is someone who doubts not the existence of, but our ability to apprehend, a universal reality.

2. For an explanation in the former terms of the burgeoning interest in Neoplatonism in the fifteenth century see Nesca A. Robb, Neoplatonism of the Italian Renaissance, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1935). For an account of the main areas of conflict between Neoplatonism and humanism see Frances A. Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), pp.159-168.

3. Eugenio Garin, Italian Humanism: Philosophy and Civic Life in the Renaissance, trans. Peter Munz (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), p.78.

4. William J. Bouwsma, 'The Two Faces of Humanism, Stoicism and Augustinianism in Renaissance Thought' in Heiko A. Oberman and Thomas A. Brady eds, Itinerarium Italicum: The Profile of the Italian Renaissance in the Mirror of its European Transformations, (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1975), p.52.

5. Plato, 'The Phaedrus' in The Collected Dialogues of Plato including the Letters, eds Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). All quotations from Plato's works will be from this edition and will be given in parentheses in the text, according to the Stephanus pagination, for example (273d). See also the distinction Plato makes in the 'Symposium' between 'earthly' and 'heavenly' love: 'Now you will all agree, gentleman, that without Love there could be no such goddess as Aphrodite. If, then, there

were only one goddess of that name, we might suppose that there was only one kind of Love, but since there are two such goddesses there must also be two kinds of Love. No one, I think, will deny that there are two goddesses of that name - one, the elder, sprung from no mother's womb but from the heavens themselves, we call Uranian, the heavenly Aphrodite, while the younger, daughter of Zeus and Dione, we call Pandemus, the earthly Aphrodite', 180d.

6. For a description of words as images see 'The Sophist': if a painter, Plato's 'stranger' in this treatise argues, shows his paintings to children from a distance then he can beguile them 'into thinking that he is capable of creating, in full reality, anything he chooses to make'. We can find 'a corresponding form of skill in the region of discourse', which makes 'it possible to impose upon the young who are still far removed from the reality of things, by means of words that cheat the ear, exhibiting images of all things in a shadow play of discourse, so as to make them believe that they are hearing the truth and that the speaker is in all matters the wisest of men', 'The Sophist' (234b-c). R.C. Cross and A.D. Woozley explore this connection, see Cross and Woozley, Plato's Republic: A Philosophical Commentary, (London, Melbourne, Toronto: MacMillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966) pp.221 ff.

7. Although all quotations from the 'Republic' are taken from Plato's Collected Works, where the term '*psuche*' is translated as 'soul', I have chosen to adopt Desmond Lee's suggested translation of this term as 'character' in the Penguin edition. Lee recognises the variety of meanings attributed to the term: 'The Greek word [*psuche*] is used to cover [...], both the principle of life (its original meaning was the breath of life) and the seat of mental functions [...]. So it sometimes means personality or character. But it can also carry the religious and moral connotation of the English word "soul"'. It is used in Book X in this last meaning; however, in book III Plato is discussing moral action, and hence the term 'character' seems more appropriate. See Plato, Plato: The Republic, trans. Desmond Lee (Penguin Books, 1974) n.1 p.100.

8. I am indebted to Paul Suttie's discussion of the relationship between Plato's cave narrative and the geometer's images in 'Allegory in Action: The Relation Between Literal and Figurative Meaning in the 1590 Edition of Spenser's The Faerie Queene' unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Edinburgh 1994, pp.30-5.

9. Plato's invitation to Glaucon to 'apply' his 'image [...] as a whole to all that has been said', 'Republic' 517a-b, is often seen to imply a connection between the cave narrative, the sun simile, and the divided line. A discussion of their possible points of connection is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, I have found

useful Cross's and Woozley's account of, and contribution to, the critical debate concerning this issue; for them the lowest level of the divided line, and the shadows cast on the cave wall, represent the images produced by rhetoricians as well as other human artists.

10. Coulter observes that Plato's distinction between the two types of images was used by Neoplatonists such as Proclus to reinstate the educational value of Homer's poetry. Proclus argued that Homer's fiction is symbolic as well as mimetic, pp. 47 ff. The Literary Microcosm: Theories of Interpretation of the Later Neoplatonists, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976).

11. A related account of the lover's ascent appears in the 'Phaedrus': 'as soon as [the lover] beholds the beauty of this world, [he] is reminded of true beauty, and his wings begin to grow; then is he fain to lift his wings and fly upward', 249e.

12. 'The true analogy for this indwelling power in the soul and the instrument whereby each of us apprehends', Socrates explains, 'is that of an eye that could not be converted to the light from the darkness except by turning the whole body. Even so this organ of knowledge must be turned around from the world of becoming together with the entire soul, like the scene shifting periactus in the theater, until the soul is able to endure the contemplation of essence and the brightest region of being', 'Republic' 518c.

13. Quintilian, The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian, trans. H.E. Butler 4 vols (London: William Heinemann Ltd.; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963). All quotations from Quintilian will be from this edition and will be given in the text in parentheses, for example (I Pr 11).

14. Quintilian does not, however, reject all branches of philosophy. Indeed, he considers moral philosophy or ethics to be 'entirely suited to the orator', XII ii 15, and physics to be useful because it provides the orator with the knowledge with which he can support his case, XII ii 20-22.

15. In 'Nicoles or the Cyprians' Isocrates explains that we are inferior to animals in terms of their physical prowess 'but, because there has been implanted in us the power to persuade each other to make clear to each other whatever we desire, not only have we escaped the life of wild beasts, but we have come together and founded cities and made laws and invented arts; and, generally speaking, there is no institution devised by man which the power of speech has not helped us to establish' in Isocrates, trans. George Norlin 3 vols. (London: William Heinemann Ltd.; New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1924), vol 1, 6-7. For an account of the importance of practice to the development of rhetorical skills see Isocrates's short speech 'Against the Sophists' in Isocrates, vol 2.

16. Aristotle, 'The Nicomachean Ethics' in The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation, ed. Jonathan Barnes 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 1103a 17-19.
17. Aristotle, *ibid.*, 1103b 21.
18. This technique is discussed further in chapter two, see pp.164-5, p.201 n.41.
19. Cicero, De Oratore, trans. E.W. Sutton 2 vols (London: William Heinemann Ltd.; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1942). All quotations from De Oratore will be from this edition and will be given in the text in parentheses, for example (II ii 7).
20. James J. Murphy, for example, explores Cicero's contribution to rhetoric without considering his philosophical position, while Stephen Gersch, in contrast, focuses on Cicero's contribution to Middle Platonism. See James J. Murphy, Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from Augustine to the Renaissance, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), and Stephen Gersch, Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism: The Latin Tradition, 2 vols (Notre Dame, Indiana: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), vol. 1.
21. Hans Baron argues that it was Macrobius's aim in his translation of, and commentary on, Cicero's 'Dream of Scipio' 'to prove that, despite his championship of the active political life, Cicero had been aware that religious contemplation was on a higher plane'. In this way he helped to disguise 'Cicero's philosophy of civic participation', Baron, In Search of Florentine Civic Humanism: Essays on the Transition from Medieval to Modern Thought, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), vol. 1, p.120.
22. See Petrarch's letters to Cicero: 'why did you abandon retirement proper to your age, profession and fortune. What false dazzle of glory led you, an old man, to implicate yourself in the wars of the young? What tempted you to dealings that brought you to a death unworthy of a philosopher [...]. How much better it would have been for you, the philosopher, to have grown old in country peace, meditating, as you yourself write somewhere, on eternal life, not on this transitory existence', Petrarch, Letters from Petrarch, trans. Morris Bishop (Bloomington, London: Indiana University Press, 1966), pp.206-7.
23. Cicero, De Re Publica, De Legibus, trans. Clinton Walker Keyes (London: William Heinemann; New York: G.P.Putnam's Sons, 1928), II iii 8.
24. Cicero, *ibid.*, I xxv 40.

25. Cicero, *ibid.*, II xlii 69.

26. Cicero, Tusculan Disputations trans. J.E. King (London: William Heinemann; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1966), III i 2-3. There is one extremely important difference between Plato and Cicero: while Cicero is influenced by Plato's doctrine of innate knowledge as it is expressed in the 'Phaedrus' and the 'Meno', he develops this theory by placing the forms in the human mind. Thus, the notion of 'seeds' of knowledge is a Stoic contribution to Platonism. See Gersch: 'the view that the Forms dwell in or are sustained by the mind is a deviation from Plato which is of great significance for the future development of the Platonic tradition', Stephen Gersch, Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism: The Latin Tradition vol.1 (Notre Dame, Indiana: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), p.153.

27. Cicero, Orator trans. H.M. Hubbell (London: William Heinemann Ltd.; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1939) ii 9-11.

28. For an example of the discrepancy between rules and usage see Cicero's discussion of pronunciation, Orator, xliv 149-xlvi 162.

29. Cicero, *ibid.*, xxxviii 132.

30. Cicero, *ibid.*, xxxvii 130.

31. See Quintilian, Institutio: 'some would have it that rhetoric is a natural gift though they admit that it can be developed by practice. So Antonius in the de Oratore of Cicero styles it a *knack derived from experience*, but denies that it is an art: this statement is however not intended to be accepted by us as the actual truth, but is inserted to make Antonius speak in character, since he was in the habit of concealing his art', Quintilian, II xvii 5-6. See also Erasmus: 'Didn't Cicero himself teach that the highest form of art was the concealment of art?', Erasmus, The Ciceronianus: A Dialogue on the Ideal Latin Style. Dialogus Ciceronianus, trans. Betty I. Knott in the Collected Works of Erasmus: Literary and Educational Writings 6, ed. A.H.T. Levi (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1986), p.368.

32. For an account of Castiglione's service to the Emperor Charles V see J.R. Woodhouse, Baldasar Castiglione: A Reassessment of The Courtier, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1978). Woodhouse notes that Charles V 'kept a copy of the Cortegiano along with the Bible, at his bedside', p.4. Erasmus's Institutio Principis Christiani (The Education of the Christian Prince), dedicated to Prince Charles (later Charles V), was printed in 1516, a few months after Erasmus had been appointed as counsellor. See 'Institutio Principis

Christiani', trans. Neil M. Cheshire and Michael J. Heath, in Collected Works of Erasmus: Literary and Educational Writings 5, ed. A.H.T. Levi (Toronto, Buffalo, London, 1986), p. 200. All quotations from the Education will be from this edition and will appear in parentheses in the text, for example, (203).

33. See the Ciceronianus: 'the first concern of the Ciceronians should have been to understand the mysteries of the Christian religion, and to turn the pages of the sacred books with as much enthusiasm as Cicero devoted to the writings of philosophers, poets' etc., p.387. See also Marc Fumaroli's discussion of the anti-Ciceronianism of the humanist scholars. The refusal of Erasmus to imitate Ciceronian style is, for him, an expression of his insistence on intellectual independence vis-à-vis 'monarchic power', Marc Fumaroli, 'Rhetoric, Politics, and Society: From Italian Ciceronianism to French Classicism' in James J. Murphy ed., Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1983), p.259.

34. Virginia Cox distinguishes between fictional (Lucianic) and documentary (Platonic and Ciceronian) dialogue. The first type presents 'an infinitely flexible method for the informal presentation of ideas'; the second type 'undermine[s] the absolute control the author exercises over the speakers', The Renaissance Dialogue: Literary Dialogue in its Social and Political contexts, Castiglione to Galileo, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.33. Unlike Cox, however, I consider it possible that a writer such as Erasmus may have been influenced by both traditions. For a discussion of Erasmus's debt to Lucian see Walter M. Gordon, Humanist Play and Belief: The Seriocomic Art of Desiderius Erasmus, (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1990), and for a discussion of Erasmus's and More's translations of Lucian see chapter 3, Erika Rummel, Erasmus as a Translator of the Classics, (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1985).

35. See pp.3-4.

36. For the translated correspondence of Pico and Barbaro see Quirinus Breen, Christianity and Humanism: Studies in the History of Ideas, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), pp.3-68. Breen, p.13.

37. Breen, p.19.

38. For an account of the Sileni see Plato, 'Symposium', 215a, 216d, 221e. For a discussion of Erasmus's debt to the correspondence of Pico and Barbaro see Daniel Kinney, 'Erasmus' Adagia: Midwife to the Rebirth of Learning', in The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies, vol. II no.2 (1981), pp.169-192.

39. 'Adages', Collected Works of Erasmus, Adages II vii 1 to III iii 100, trans. R.A.B. Mynors, (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p.262.

40. Erasmus, 'Enchiridion Militis Christiani' ('The Handbook of the Christian Soldier') trans. Charles Fantazzi in Collected Works of Erasmus, Spiritualia, Enchiridion, De Contemptu Mundi, De Vidua Christiana, ed. John W. O'Malley (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p.86.

41. Erasmus, Handbook, pp. 67-8.

42. All quotations from the Encomium Moriae will be from Betty Radice's translation of this text in Penguin Classics, and will appear in the text in parentheses, for example, (215). Although Radice's translation also appears in the Collected Works of Erasmus, I have chosen to use the Penguin edition for this particular text for convenience, since it contains both the 1506 prefatory letter to More, the 1515 letter to Dorp, and A.H.T. Levi's helpful introduction. Erasmus, Praise of Folly and Letter to Martin Dorp 1515, Erasmus of Rotterdam, trans. Betty Radice, (Penguin Books, 1986).

43. Erasmus, Handbook, p.39. All quotations from the English New Testament are from the King James Bible unless stated otherwise.

44. Plotinus describes life as a kind of theatrical play, and death as a 'changing of body, like changing of clothes on the stage'. Plotinus's perspective allows him to attach less importance to the frightening events of human experience: 'when men, mortal as they are, direct their weapons against each other, fighting in orderly ranks, doing what they do in sport in their war-dances, their battles show that all human concerns are children's games, and tell us that deaths are nothing terrible'. 'We should be spectators of murders, and all deaths and takings and sackings of cities, as if they were on the stages of theatres, all changes of scenery and costume and acted wailings and weepings', Plotinus, Plotinus in Six Volumes: Enneads, trans. A.H. Armstrong (London: William Heinemann Ltd.; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), III, 'On Providence (1)', 15-16. Lucian reduces the significance of human endeavour in a different way; in 'Icaromenippus, or the sky-man', Menippus gives an account of what cities look like from the moon: 'I suppose you have often seen a swarm of ants, in which some are huddling together about the mouth of the hole and transacting affairs of state in public, some are going out and others are coming back again to the city'. For Menippus 'the cities with their population resembled nothing so much as ant-hills', in Lucian, trans. A.M. Harmon 8 vols (London: William Heineman; New York: The MacMillan Co., 1913), vol. 2, 19.

45. The larger context of this quotation is worth

including here: 'let us suppose some wise man dropped from heaven confronts me and insists that the man whom all look up to as god and master is not even human, as he is ruled by his passions, like an animal, and is no more than the lowest slave for serving so many evil masters of his own accord. Or again, he might tell someone else who is mourning his father to laugh because the dead man is only just beginning to live, seeing that this life of ours is nothing but a sort of death. Another man who boasts of his ancestry he might call low-born and bastard because he is so far removed from virtue, which is the sole source of nobility', pp.104-5. Folly is clearly referring to the doctrine preached by Jesus on the Sermon of the Mount. The point is, I think, that Jesus also explored God's laws with the use of fictions (parables) to help humankind understand them. The 'wise man' may also be Menippus who, having 'dropped from clouds', gave a rather harsh representation of human life, 'Icaromenippus, or the sky-man', 2.

46. For St. Augustine's application of the three styles of Ciceronian rhetoric to Scripture and the writings of the Church Fathers see 'On Christian Doctrine' in A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, ed. Philip Schaff (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co.: Grand Rapids, 1956), IV 7.

47. See Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, Erasmus on Language and Method in Theology, (Toronto, Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p.5. The Greek text is from The Greek New Testament, Being the Text Translated in the New English Bible, 1961, ed. R.V.G. Tasker (Oxford: Oxford University Press; Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1964), p.140.

48. Letter 1060 in Erasmus, Collected Works of Erasmus: The Correspondence of Erasmus, Letters 993 to 1121, 1519 to 1520, trans. R.A.B. Mynors (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1987), p.170.

49. O'Rourke Boyle, p.22.

50. Augustine, III v.

51. Victoria Kahn, for example, suggests that we should see the Praise 'as an exploration uncharacteristic by Erasmus of the complexities, difficulties, and inevitable ironies of his own prudential position' in Rhetoric, Prudence and Skepticism in the Renaissance, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), p.89.

52. For Erasmus divinity finds its expression in Scripture, hence the importance of the art of rhetoric. See O'Rourke Boyle, p.22.

53. 'A great many men have imagined states and principedoms such as nobody ever saw or knew in the real world, for there's such a difference between the way we really live and the way we ought to live that the man who neglects

the real to study the ideal will learn how to accomplish his ruin, not his salvation', Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince, ed. and trans. Robert M. Adams (New York, London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1977), p.44.

54. In Plato's version the shipmen choose a pilot who complies with their wishes, 488a-e.

55. The philosopher-king 'will take the city and characters of men, as they might a tablet, and first wipe it clean - no easy task. But at any rate you know that this would be their first point of difference from ordinary reformers, that they would refuse to take in hand either individual or state or to legislate before they either received a clean slate or themselves made it clean', 'Republic' 501a.

56. Thomas More, Utopia, trans. Paul Turner, (Penguin Books, 1961), p.63.

57. More, p.63.

58. More, p.132.

59. For the background to the composition of the Utopia see D. Baker-Smith, Thomas More and Plato's Voyage, An inaugural lecture given on 1st June 1978 at University College Cardiff (Cardiff: University College Cardiff Press, 1978), p.8.

60. For a discussion of More's sense of compromise see chapter one in David Norbrook, Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance, (Routledge: London, Boston, Melbourne, Henley, 1984).

61. Sir Thomas Elyot, The Book Named the Governor, ed. S.E. Lehmborg (London: Dent; New York: Dutton, 1962), pp.3-5.

62. John D. Cox, Shakespeare and the Dramaturgy of Power, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p.45. A similar point is made by Fritz Caspari, Humanism and the Social Order in Tudor England, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1954).

63. Elyot, p.7.

64. John D. Cox, p.44.

65. Baldassare Castiglione, The Book of the Courtier, trans. Sir Thomas Hoby (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd.; New York: E.P. Dutton and Co. Inc., 1975). All quotations are from this edition and will be given in the text in parentheses e.g. (43). The Italian Text referred to is Baldasar Castiglione, Il Libro del Cortegiano, ed. Vittorio Cian (Firenze: Sansoni, no publishing date given). I have chosen to follow Hoby's spelling of the names of Castiglione's characters; some particularly

archaic spellings, however, have been modernised e.g. Sir Frederick rather than Sir Fredericke.

66. For details of Castiglione's influence on Elyot see Fritz Caspari, Humanism and the Social Order in Tudor England, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), p.85.

67. G.K. Hunter, The Humanist as Courtier (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), p.31.

68. Daniel Javitch, Poetry and Courtliness in Renaissance England (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978), p.26.

69. Elyot, p.13.

70. Joan Kelly, Women, History and Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly, (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p.43.

71. Frank Whigham, Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: The University of California Press, 1984), p.2.

72. Whigham, p.6.

73. See Cicero's discussion of prose rhythm in Orator: 'Do they ever have the feeling that something is lacking, that a sentence is harsh, mutilated, lame or redundant? People do in the case of poetry, for the whole audience will hoot at one false quantity. Not that the multitude knows anything of feet, or has any understanding of rhythm; and when displeased they do not realize why or with what they are displeased. And yet nature herself has implanted in our ears the power of judging long and short sounds as well as high and low pitch in words', li 173.

74. Horace, 'Ars Poetica', Classical Literary Criticism: Aristotle, On the Art of Poetry; Horace, On the Art of Poetry; Longinus, On the Sublime trans. T.S. Dorsch (Penguin, 1965), p.81.

75. Virginia Cox, p.58.

76. Virginia Cox, p.57.

77. Petrarch, Letters, p.198.

78. It is perhaps worth pointing out that in the course of his career Castiglione was elevated from the position of a satellite at Guidobaldo's court to the diplomatic servant of the two most powerful men in Europe, Charles V and Pope Leo X. By the time of his death in 1529, he 'might have expected to live on into a period of wealth, independence and power beyond the wildest dream of his youth'. See Woodhouse, p.7.

79. See Javitch, p.26, and Gadol, p.45. See also Joseph Antony Mazzeo's chapter 'Castiglione's Courtier' in Renaissance and Revolution: The Remaking of European Thought, (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1967), pp.136-8.
80. Wayne A. Rebhorn, 'Ottaviano's interruption: Book IV and the Problem of Unity in Il Libro de Cortegiano', Modern Language Notes 87 (1972), p.39.
81. Garin, p.78
82. Kelly, p.43. See also Mazzeo, for whom Bembo's love vision is a 'contemplative ideal' which 'scarcely affects the political and social realities, the status of the ruler's subjects. It is by no means insignificant that Castiglione left the knowledge of government to one man and offered harmless erotic ecstasies to the rest', p.137.
83. For a description of the courtier's feminine ways see Lisa Jardine's chapter on 'Dress code, sumptuary law and "natural" order' in Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1983); see also Kelly, p.44-45 (where she comments also on the possibility of drawing an analogy between the female beloved and the prince), and Whigham, pp.116-130.
84. C.S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition, (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), p.2.
85. An alternative view to that of Lewis is offered by Eugene Vance, who makes this contract the subject of wishful thinking, and not an existing arrangement. The love service depicted in romance literature of Chrétien de Troyes, he holds, reflects the desire of the lower nobility to maintain their special relationship with their lords. See Eugene Vance, 'Signs of the City: Medieval Poetry as Detour' in New Literary History 4 (1973), pp.558-574.
86. Andreas Capellanus, Andreas Capellanus on Love, trans. P.G. Walsh (Duckworth, 1982), p.287.
87. Capellanus, p.287.
88. Capellanus, p.291.
89. See Lancelot's confession to the hermit: 'I have sinned unto death with my lady, she whom I have loved all my life, Queen Guinevere, the wife of King Arthur. It is she who gave me abundance of gold and silver and such rich gifts as I have distributed from time to time among poor knights. It is she who exalted me and set me in the luxury I now enjoy. For her love alone I accomplished the exploits with which the whole world rings. She it is

who raised me from poverty to riches and from hardship to the sum of earthly bliss. But I know full well that this bond is the sin that has earned me Our Lord's dire wrath which He showed me undisguised last night', in The Quest of the Holy Grail, trans. P.M. Matarasso, (Penguin Books, 1969), p.89.

90. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Commentary on a Poem of Platonic Love, trans. Douglas Carmichael (Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1986), p.101.

91. Marsilio Ficino, Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love, trans. Sears Jayne (Dallas: Spring Publications, Inc., 1985), p.58.

92. Leone Ebreo, The Philosophy of Love (Dialoghi d'Amore), trans. F. Friedeberg-Seeley and Jean H. Barnes (London: The Soncino Press, 1937), p.181.

93. Plotinus, V. 8. 1. 1.37.

94. Plotinus, V. 8. 1. 1.19.

95. Plotinus, I. 6. 2. 11.28-9.

96. Sears Jayne notes that Ficino attempts to 'reconcile two Platonic theories of beauty: Proclus's view that beauty is an arrangement and Plotinus's view that it is a quality in which things participate', in Ficino, Marsilio, Commentary on Plato's 'Symposium' on Love, trans. Sears Jayne (Dallas: Spring Publications, Inc., 1985), p.103, note 25.

97. Pico, p.94.

98. Pico, p.64.

99. Ficino, p.93.

100. Describing the ascent to the vision of absolute Beauty, Plotinus advises the student first to study beautiful works of art, then to search the souls of the artists themselves and lastly, to 'go back into yourself and look; and if you do not yet see yourself beautiful, then, just as someone making a statue which has to be beautiful cuts away here and polishes there and makes one part smooth and clears another till he has given his statue a beautiful face, so too you must cut away excess and straighten the crooked and clear the dark and make it bright', I. 6. 9. 11.8-15.

101. For a discussion of the emergence of naturalist methods in painting see Giorgio Vasari, The Lives of the Artists, trans. George Bull, (Penguin Books, 1975), and especially the preface to Part Three in this treatise. For an account of Italian painting techniques see Lucy Gent, Picture and Poesy 1560-1620: Relations between

Literature and Visual Arts in the English Renaissance,
(Leamington Spa: James Hall, 1981).

CHAPTER TWO

Sir Philip Sidney's 'Defence of Poetry':
The Art of Being Persuaded

2a. Protestant interest in 'The Book of the Courtier'

Among the treatises that can be classed as 'favourite reading' of the Elizabethans, John Guy writes, are Erasmus's New Testament, Paraphrases, Colloquies, and Adages, Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans, and Sir Thomas Hoby's translation of Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier.¹ This last treatise, The Book of the Courtier, might seem somewhat out of keeping with the rest of this reading list, which is otherwise clearly orientated towards moral instruction: for not only is the Courtier, unlike the other treatises, written by a professional courtier rather than a humanist, but the emphasis placed by Castiglione in this treatise on the arts of dissimulation make it seem an unusual choice for Protestant educationalists. Taking into consideration Roger Ascham's attack in The Schoolmaster on the purveyors of courtly love, the translators of Italian romances and Italianate Englishmen, we might expect to find Castiglione's treatise given short shrift by this eminent Protestant educationalist.² But this is not the case. 'To join learning with comely exercises', Ascham

observes, 'Conte Baldassare Castiglione in his book Cortegiano doth trimly teach; which book, advisedly read and diligently followed but one year at home in England, would do a young gentleman more good, iwis, than three years' travel abroad spent in Italy'.³

Ascham's mention of the Courtier is clearly calculated to advertise the new translation by his friend Thomas Hoby, which first appeared in 1561.⁴ Even so, we might wonder what a dedicated Protestant educationalist such as Ascham, and a former Marian exile such as Hoby, have in common with an Italian courtier like Castiglione. (We might also observe that the Courtier was dedicated by Hoby to the eminent Protestant peer Lord Hastings.) David Norbrook and Fritz Caspari offer some help here. 'Castiglione's Book of the Courtier did in fact contain enough didactic matter to attract mid-century humanists', Norbrook explains, perhaps with Hoby's own justification of his translation in mind;⁵ moreover, Castiglione's 'anti-ecclesiastical satire', he suggests, seems to have increased its attractiveness to Protestants.⁶ Caspari, shedding a different light on the matter, argues that the Courtier suited the Elizabethan political world: he considers it significant, for example, that Hoby's translation - the first *English* translation - did not appear until thirty years after the publication in 1528 of the original Il Libro del Cortegiano. It was not until Elizabeth's reign, he remarks, 'that the court reached its climax as a social and cultural center, and that, in consequence, Castiglione's doctrines became more

directly relevant'.⁷ Caspari's sense of the Elizabethan court world must be understood in the light of his attitude to the distinctions between courtiers and humanists: the educational treatise of the English humanist Thomas Elyot, The Book of the Governor, is described by Caspari as a contemporary and contrasting counterpart to the Courtier, which indicates for him 'the need [in the reign of Henry VIII] for a man different from the Italian courtier, for an independent individual, capable of governing, able to act and decide on his own'.⁸

The reasons given by Norbrook and Caspari for the success of the Courtier do not seem, however, entirely to justify the importance attached to the treatise not only by Ascham and Hoby but also by later Elizabethans such as Sir Philip Sidney. Indeed, Castiglione's interest in the creation of the appearance of truth seems to be directly antithetical to the Protestant inheritance of humanist rhetoric which is promoted by Continental figures such as Melanchthon. Responding to the accusation made by Pico della Mirandola on the behalf of the scholastics that 'eloquence is a forced sort of adornment, something like rouge on the face, to be used only for pleasure, or to deceive men', Melanchthon explains that Pico has not defined the term 'eloquence' properly, thus failing to see that it is in fact also 'the faculty for proper and clear explicating of mental sense and thought'. Melanchthon compares rhetoricians to painters who 'copy bodies truly and properly': 'the object of the

rhetoricians [...] is to paint, as it were, and to represent the mind's thoughts themselves in appropriate and clear language' (55-6).⁹ (This role is accorded to oratory in the late sixteenth century in England by Protestants such as Henry Peacham, who describes speech in The Garden of Eloquence (1577) as the means 'whereby we open secretes of our hartes, & declare our thoughts to others', and no doubt reflects the importance attributed by them to personal expression.¹⁰) If we set this analogy against Castiglione's comparison of the courtier to the kind of painter who sets out to make his object 'more sightly to beholde' (94), in a treatise in which painters are depicted as artists whose skill is 'an artificiall following of nature' which is meant to 'deceive the eyes' (79), then we can see the extent, and the nature, of the differences. For Melanchthon eloquence is an instrument essential to the philosopher and the theologian, to the seeker of truth, while for Castiglione rhetorical techniques are essential to the courtier who is intent on creating the appearance of truth, and thus in producing belief. Castiglione's courtier appears to be far removed from the humanist rhetorician described by Melanchthon, and closer to the 'subtle and secret papists' accused by Ascham of attempting to bewitch 'overmany young [English] wills [...] to wantonness'.¹¹

But the Courtier is, nonetheless, an important treatise for Protestant educationalists and activists. Different sixteenth-century Protestant thinkers will, of course, have different reasons for their interest in

Castiglione's treatise and it needs to be pointed out that it is not the intention of this chapter to explain the general relevance of the Courtier to the Protestant movement, but rather to explain its unexpected relevance to one particular Protestant writer, Philip Sidney. Castiglione's handbook on courtierly practices might seem an appropriate text for Sidney, who, after all, was one of Elizabeth's courtiers.¹² Even so, like Ascham, Sidney reveals, in the words of Katherine Duncan-Jones, 'schizoid responses to Italian culture' in his writing: although Sidney's interest in Italian painters such as Titian is evident in the pictorial style of the new Arcadia, in the letters which he wrote to his mentor Hugh Languet from Venice in 1573-4 he suppresses all reference to such an interest.¹³ Moreover, the conventional assumption that Castiglione's courtier is an emasculated version of the earlier Italian humanist hardly seems to suit the conception we have of Sidney as a militant Protestant and a central player in the attempt to create a powerful Protestant league among the Northern European nations.¹⁴ Such considerations might seem to make Castiglione's Courtier a less relevant manual for Sidney to consult. And yet Sidney *is*, I will argue, influenced by the Courtier.

In chapter one I argued that the conception of the courtier as an emasculated version of the humanist scholar and politician is misconceived; indeed, Castiglione inherits from Cicero an interest in conflating the idealist and sceptical traditions in order

to legitimate his rhetorical art, and thereby to wrest some measure of power back from the increasingly absolutist ruler he serves, an interest which is shared and practised by Desiderius Erasmus, the leading light of humanist reform in Northern Europe. Castiglione's imitation of Cicero is imitated in turn by Philip Sidney. Although A Defence of Poetry is written not as a dialogue but as a tightly structured examination it shares with the Courtier a tendency self-consciously to juxtapose its seemingly sceptical position with arguments drawn from the idealist tradition, making it difficult for us not only to locate the actual position taken by the author, but to detect the original source of particular ideas. Sidney's reason for doing so is similar to that of Castiglione: that is, an interest in the creation of credibility, with a view to gaining 'influence' over an audience, through the appropriation of a familiar idealist vocabulary for an essentially sceptical position. Rather than representing 'nature' in his art (as his language sometimes suggests is the case), Sidney sets out instead to naturalise the artificial in his art. But Sidney also imitates Castiglione in another respect. The twists of Sidney's argument, while demonstrating how the conflation of idealism and scepticism can be used to legitimate the poetic voice, simultaneously allow us to glimpse the tension between the two positions, so that Sidney could be said not only to bring about a coalescence of two opposed positions but, in the treatise as a whole, to argue ironically, the effect of which is

the destabilisation of the speaking voice of the Defence. Sidney brings us to the brink of belief, and then suddenly prevents us from believing completely, and he does so for two reasons: first, to alert the reader to the insidious influence of the poetic art, and, secondly, to reveal to the reader a method whereby he can become similarly influential.

Very few critics, however, have been willing to take seriously the self-contradictions which riddle Sidney's Defence of Poetry. One of the more recent critics to note the existence and nature of the contradictions in the Defence is Jonathan Dollimore. Sidney's claim that 'the poet ranges "only within the zodiac of his own wit"' suggests to Dollimore Sidney's conviction that 'the poet is not imitating a pre-existent, eternal ideal, but one which he himself creates'.¹⁵ However, as Dollimore observes, in other sections of the Defence Sidney 'affirms the contrary', speaking 'of poetry's "universal consideration", its "perfect pattern", and the "idea or fore-conceit of the work"'.¹⁶ Dollimore deals with the problem by suggesting that the conflict is unconscious on the part of Sidney: that it is the mark of an age in transition, a shift from Neoplatonic essentialism to Baconian realism.¹⁷ O.B. Hardison similarly finds that there are 'two discordant voices' in the Defence, and he divides the text accordingly into two parts. The first part, which stretches from the exordium to the digression, is dominated, he holds, by the 'familiar voice of humanist poetics', and the remaining part, by

the voice of 'incipient neo-classicism'. The Defence, in other words, appears to embrace the voices of two important but very different traditions, from which Hardison concludes that the two parts of Sidney's poetic treatise were written, like the old and new Arcadia, at different times, and consequently reflect the respective interests of those times.¹⁸ The divided nature of the Defence has also been endorsed by Victoria Kahn. Basing her interpretation on the reference to Xenophon's *Cyrus* made early in the Defence (24),¹⁹ which suggests to her Sidney's interest in developing the reader's prudential virtue, she argues that in the later parts of the treatise Sidney 'retreats to the "aesthetic" position', and that he moves from a defence of poetry 'in terms of its power to persuade to a defence of poetry as mere "play"'.²⁰ For Kahn, Sidney is arguing here *in utramque partem*, with the intention of making the Defence a training ground for the reader's judgement.²¹

None of these positions, however, is wholly adequate. Hardison's and Kahn's division of the Defence into two parts fails to account for the fact that the treatise is in any case riddled *throughout* with contradictions. Moreover, Hardison and Dollimore ignore the possibility that the text's contradictions are actually intentional, while Kahn fails to see that there is an important link between the seemingly incongruous interest in aesthetic effect in the later sections of the Defence and the style of argumentation in the treatise as a whole. Understanding the aims of Sidney's Defence in the light

of Castiglione's Courtier means that we must move not only beyond Hardison's description of the treatise as unconsciously divided, but also beyond Victoria Kahn's interest in the persuasive power of probable arguments at the expense of the persuasive power of figures and tropes.

The point at which Sidney launches into a discussion of the state of contemporary English poetry in the section towards the end of the Defence, which is unfortunately known as the 'digression',²² is considered by both Hardison and Kahn to mark the treatise's change in tone. Contrasting the digression with the earlier parts of the treatise, O.B. Hardison observes that 'instead of images of freedom and flight' the 'emphasis is on control and guidance' and that 'instead of imagination, "unflattering Reason" is to assist the poet'.²³ Hardison is right, I believe, to recognise that there is a shift in emphasis from freedom to restriction in the last sections of the Defence; however, he is mistaken in interpreting this reversal as a sudden inversion of the argument, as an unexpected and final shift in perspective. In the following sub-chapters I will explore the thematic tension between freedom and restriction not only among the various parts of the Defence but within its individual 'parts', and will focus on how this tension relates to two important relationships explored in the treatise: the relationship between the poet and nature, and the relationship between the poet and the reader. For in the Defence Sidney urges

us to consider, first, whether the poet is tied to representing nature (or creatively tied by his own fallen nature) or whether he is able to recreate a new and better nature, and, secondly, whether the reader is simply influenced passively by the text he reads, or whether he is expected to read actively, exercising his skill in judgement. What Sidney offers the reader in the 'digression', I will argue, is something of a compromise: the poet not only conceals the rhetorical nature of his expression, but naturalises to himself feelings and states of mind of which he may have little or no direct experience, states which he attains as a result of his prudent use of the rhetorical effects which he encounters in his own reading of literature. Thus, the reader learns from being affected passively by the texts he reads how to write persuasively himself, and, thus, how to influence others.

2b. A Defence of Poetry

i. Freedom from nature

From the very beginning of the Defence it seems clear that it is the quality of imaginative freedom which distinguishes the poetic art from the other disciplines. For example, when Sidney declares that the philosopher and historian, are merely 'actors and players [...] of what nature will have set forth' he underlines the limitations under which these particular scholars work (23), and he contrasts their lesser pursuits with those of the true disciple of knowledge, the poet who

disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or, quite anew, forms such as never were in nature [...] so as he goeth hand in hand with nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging only within the zodiac of his own wit (23-24).

The poet, unlike the historians and philosophers, is not 'tied to' nature but is able to invent either an improved version of the natural world or a quite different world; he is able to bring forth 'so rich [a] tapestry' as could never be found in nature, and 'grow in effect another nature' (24). The 'golden' world of the poet not only rivals but, it would seem, surpasses the 'brazen' world of nature (24). The independence which is here accredited to the poet, however, is weakened by the simultaneous claim, included in the passage above, that the poet creates 'hand in hand with nature'. This comment would seem to imply that the poet's imagination is constrained by nature in some way, a constraint reinforced by the subsequent observation that it is in the poet that Nature's 'uttermost cunning is employed' (24);²⁴ the poet here appears not as a rival of but as a servant to nature, an appearance which, if taken seriously, threatens to diminish the poet's claim to independence and to align him more closely with the historians and philosophers who are tied to nature.

When Sidney suggests shortly afterwards that 'the highest point of man's wit' can happily be compared with the 'efficacy of nature' he appears to suggest once again that the poet is the equal, not the the servant of

nature, and thus to resolve the problem discovered in the passage above. This reassertion of the poet's independence is further reinforced by Sidney's claim that honour should be shown to God, the 'Maker of that maker', since it is He who has set man 'beyond and over all the works of that second nature' (24). Not only does Sidney displace Nature from her hallowed position with the epithet 'second', reminding us of her created status on the Platonic ladder of being, but he places 'man' in command over her; by virtue of his divine inheritance, 'man' becomes a superior creator to Nature, producing 'with the force of a divine breath [...] things [...] surpassing her doings' (24-5).²⁵ However, neither the certainty of the poet's creative superiority, nor his independence from that 'second' or fallen Nature, is long maintained. As Sidney suddenly and quirkily reminds the reader, the scope of poetic creativity is not unlimited: for, while the aim of the poet is still to represent nature (in the sense of an original, prelapsarian Nature), he is prevented from attaining that goal by his own fallen nature: the poet approximates rather than recreates an original Nature, Sidney explains, 'since our erected wit maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected will keepeth us from reaching unto it' (25). The independence and the superiority of the poet are short-lived: he cannot escape the restrictions imposed on him by his own nature. His wings are clipped and he (temporarily) falls back to the 'brazen' earth with a bump, and we return to our previous puzzlement.

ii. The affective text

The tension between freedom and restriction, described above, affects not only the complicated relationship between the poet and nature but also the troubled relationship between poetic texts and their readers. At the same time that Sidney attempts to clarify the extent of the poet's dependence on nature, he also discusses in what way the poet can 'substantially' change nature, that is, influence the human nature of the reader. Although the poet bestows on the world exemplary figures like Xenophon's Cyrus, new 'Cyruses', or prudential leaders, can only be made if the reader 'will learn aright why and how that maker made him' (24): if the reader, as Victoria Kahn suggests, will actively exercise his judgement in the act of reading. Alongside the rational independence here accorded to the reader, however, there also exists a possibly contradictory recognition and commendation of the affective influence of the poetic text, an influence which threatens to deprive the reader of his judgemental autonomy, and leave him as a passive and impressionable recipient of ideas. For example, at the beginning of the treatise we are told that the existence of native American songs proves both the naturalness of poetry (that is, its cultural universality) and the potential of this primitive people to be acculturated through the 'sweet delights' of European poetry (20). Sidney's description of the effect of poetry in these terms draws attention to the insidious or unconscious way in which its images instruct the reader, an idea that is

reinforced in a later depiction of poetry as a 'medicine of cherries' which even the most wicked and 'hard-hearted' of men 'steal to see' (41). Importantly, it is this very effect of poetry which Sidney admires. Sidney disapproves of philosophy on the grounds that unlike poetry it cannot 'strike, pierce, [or] possess the sight of the soul' (32) but requires instead 'attentive studious painfulness' on the part of the reader (39). For Sidney the success of poetry lies in its ability to appeal to the affections of the reader.

The importance of the use of judgement in the act of reading appears again to be dismissed in the later sections of the Defence in which Sidney discusses the weakness of history as an instructive medium. Sidney argues that poetry is superior to the other arts, including history, because the poet, 'not enclosed within the narrow warrant of [nature's] gifts, but freely ranging only within the zodiac of his own wit', can 'grow in effect another nature' (24); the poet has the ability, in other words, to improve on the fallen natural world. The historian, in contrast, is tied to the representation of the events of this 'foolish world', with the result that he cannot present the best or most appropriate examples of virtues and vices (38). To illustrate this point Sidney offers for our examination the history of the cruel Severus, the Roman dictator who lived happily and died peacefully despite a life of iniquity; examples of this kind, he complains, are 'many times a terror from well-doing' (38). Sidney's reference to Severus recalls

Machiavelli's similar interest in history in the Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livy. Rather than excluding such difficult examples from his treatise, however, Machiavelli suggests that it is by their careful consideration that the reader becomes immune to their effect. Thus, when he describes the wicked life of Severus he ascribes his comfortable and fortunate death to his efficiency and good luck; he explains this exception to the rule by offering a reason for Severus's success which weakens its potentially harmful effect on the credulous reader. Machiavelli is convinced that with a careful weighing of cause and effect it will be revealed 'on what principle a good kingdom should rest'.²⁶ For Sidney, however, it appears to be the image of an action that 'stirreth and instructeth the mind', and thus a text which offers a virtuous or noble model will necessarily be more successful: 'so the lofty image of such worthies most inflameth the mind with desire to be worthy, and informs with counsel how to be worthy' (47). The 'lofty image' provides the impetus to good action, by comparison with Sidney's conceived historical text, which is tied to the depiction of events as they are:

And then how will you discern what to follow
but by your own discretion, which you had
without reading Quintus Curtius? (36)

Sidney here dismisses the skill that made Machiavelli's historical readings so novel and his reader so actively involved;²⁷ Sidney's ideal reader appears to be more like Caxton's medieval romance hero, Blanchardyn, who chanced to see the stories of Hector, Troilus and Aeneas in a

tapestry, and was 'sore mouyd and styryd' with 'a wylle for to be lyke unto those noble and worthy knyghtes'.²⁸ Sidney's confidence in the affective power of the poetic text also recalls the description Antonius gave in Cicero's De Oratore of his own education as a process of unconscious assimilation, that is, as a process in which the casual reading of philosophical texts spontaneously prompted his native capacity to speak eloquently (II xiv 60). Sidney seems to share with Antonius a confidence in human nature; as he explains in the Defence, we naturally possess a knowledge of good and evil: 'learned men' have claimed, he argues, 'that where once reason hath so much overmastered passion as that the mind hath a free desire to do well, the inward light each mind hath in itself is as good as a philosopher's book'. We already know that 'it is well to do well, and what is well, and what is evil'; the question is whether we can be 'moved to do that which we know', or be 'moved with desire to know' (39). The only difference between Antonius and Sidney is that whereas the former chooses philosophical texts to inspire the recognition of such knowledge, the latter believes it is poetry alone which produces such an effect.

In the first few sections of the Defence, then, Sidney appears to be interested in poetry as an art that *moves* or *stirs* in the reader a recognition of his 'inward light' and a desire to shape his actions accordingly, and he rejects the alternative type of analytical reading offered by Machiavelli, which is based on his pragmatic

conception of human nature. Sidney appears to give his greatest support to affective reading in his discussion of the relevance of verse to poetry, in which he establishes that the true business of poetry is not rhyming but the 'feigning notable images of virtues, vices, or what else, with that delightfull teaching' (27). The purpose of the poet, in short, is to create images of virtue which will instruct the reader at the same time that they delight him. However, almost as soon as this purpose is established Sidney proceeds to consider the case against poetry, exploring the accusation of the anti-poets that poetry is full of lies (54). In his reply to these critics Sidney does not invoke the efficacy of feigned virtuous images as he did in his discussion of history; rather, he introduces a new twist to his defence by accepting the charges against poetry and admitting 'that being abused, by the reason of his sweet charming force, [poetry] can do more hurt than any other army of words' (55). Poetry, it turns out, has the power to conceal as well as to reveal the 'inward light': it has the power both to persuade its uncritical reader to act virtuously and to mislead its unsuspecting reader to act wrongly. Such an admission augurs the need to recall the dismissed skill of 'discretion' for the use of the reader at a moment when we least expect it.

iii. What is good poetry?

In the early part of the Defence Sidney leaves it unclear whether the poet is constrained by nature in his attempts to create, or whether he has the freedom to

create independently, and thus to 'grow in effect another nature'. This is a problem which reappears in a different form in other parts of the treatise, and especially in Sidney's discussion of the object of poetic imitation. Although Sidney asserts unequivocally that the poet should imitate good things, it is not clear whether he means by this that the poet should literally imitate something good, namely something beautiful or morally outstanding, or whether he should imitate, in the sense of produce (or 'figure forth'), credible poetry, that is, poetry which is good because it is persuasive. This final tension which I wish to explore is a familiar one from our reading of Erasmus and Castiglione: for it is here that we can see Sidney's attempt to bring together the two antithetical traditions of Platonic idealism and rhetorical scepticism.

Sidney's sudden acknowledgement of the dangers of poetic manipulation comes at an important moment in the Defence, for until this late point we have considered poetry only in its ideal form, in the form Sidney calls 'eikastike (which some learned have defined: figuring forth good things)', and we now encounter a second kind of poetry, 'phantastike (which doth, contrariwise, infect the fancy with unworthy objects)' (54). Whereas the icastic imitator gives 'the eye either some excellent perspective, or some fine picture, fit for building or fortification, or containing in it some notable example', Sidney explains, the phantastic imitator offers instead 'wanton shows of better hidden matters' in order to

delight an 'ill-pleased eye' (54-5). The distinction between these two types of poet rests on the fact that they imitate different kinds of objects; the icastic imitator produces something which is useful to the reader while the phantastic imitator simply sets out to please the reader. The terms icastic and phantastic recall a similar distinction between types of imitative arts in Plato's Sophist. In Plato's text, however, the nature of the distinction is quite different: Plato's stranger distinguishes the icastic artist who, like the bed-maker described in Book X of the Republic, 'creates a copy that conforms to the proportions of the original in all three dimensions' from phantastic artists who, like the painters, actors and rhetoricians attacked in the Republic, abandon the truth and 'put into the images they make, not the real proportions, but those which will appear beautiful' (236b). (We may remember the distinction made by John Christopher in The Book of the Courtier between the art of sculpture and painting; while the sculptor produces something real, 'measured as nature her selfe shapeth them', the painter, in contrast, uses colours to 'deceive the eyes', relying on techniques such as perspective and chiaroscuro to create 'seeming' rather than 'being' (79).) The Platonic distinction between the two types of imitation, however, can still be found in Sidney's text. Early in the Defence Sidney contrasts the 'right poets' (the artists who are distinct from both the 'actors and players [...] of what nature will have set forth') with the 'meaner sort of painters', who literally

copy what is put before them. The 'right poets', Sidney explains, 'bestow that in colours upon you which is fittest for the eye to see'; and in the act of imitating they 'borrow nothing of what is, hath been, or shall be; but range, only reined with learned discretion, into the divine consideration of what may be and should be' (26). Rather like the artist envisaged in Plato's Republic Sidney's 'right poets' copy not the world around them (itself a disgraced copy) but the forms themselves. The result is that the images which they create are 'real' in the sense that they are based not on what they see in the actual world but on an apprehension of a universal Nature.²⁹ Importantly, this early 'Platonic' distinction between good and bad artists need not be seen to conflict with the later ethical distinction made between icastic and phantastic poets in the Defence; for example, in the argumentum to the Ion in his Latin edition of Plato's dialogues Jean de Serres adapts the distinction made by Plato between the two types of poetry so as to lend it a moral perspective.³⁰ Sidney's allegiance to a Platonic conception of poetry is reinforced more strongly by the fact that he endorses the idealism implicit in Plato's conception of good imitation (the notion that the good poet imitates a universal form latent in his own nature). Sidney's claim that the poet 'ranges' into 'the divine consideration of what may be and should be' must be read in the light of his earlier analogous claim that the poet soars into 'the zodiac of his own wit' (24). Like the reader, whose possession of 'natural' knowledge we have

already noticed, the poet is endowed with a native insight into the 'divine consideration of what may be and should be'. In short, a poet is by nature endowed with a knowledge of and an ability to depict virtue. For Sidney, then, the 'right poet' or icastic imitator is someone who discovers in his own 'wit' his inherent knowledge of virtue which he then recreates in poetic images; he is tied to a universal Nature (implicit in his own nature), and therefore freed from his physical fallen nature. Not surprisingly, Sidney here dabbles with the notion of divine inspiration; he notes that the 'oracles of the Delphos and the Sibylla's prophecies [...] did seem to have some divine force in it' (22), and he quotes the same Latin 'proverb' ('*orator fit, poeta nascitur*') (63), which appears in Serres's argumentum: Plato's attribution to poetry of 'a certain divine spirit', Serres suggests, 'might signify that true and genuine poetry is not so much composed by industry and labor as produced by a certain divine impetus, whence the well known saying, *Oratem fieri, poetam nasci*'.³¹

Sidney's description of *icastic* imitation appears in a section which is headed by a reference to an Aristotelian view of imitation, suggesting the importance of the Poetics, as well as the Platonic texts, as a source for Sidney's poetic theory. Sidney's suggestion that the poet should copy the painter who depicts not what is literally before him but what 'is fittest for the eye to see' is a clear echo of Aristotle's own advice to the tragic poet to copy 'the example of good portrait-

painters, who reproduce the distinctive features of man, and at the same time, without losing the likeness, make him handsomer than he is'.³² Aristotle's claim here that art enhances its original must not be seen as an example of cosmetic tampering; rather, it should be understood in the light of what he says in the Physics that art often 'completes what nature cannot bring to a finish'.³³ The artist, according to Aristotle, does not alter nature but works alongside her, bringing objects to a more perfect state. The relevance of these ideas to Sidney is obvious; not only does he commend poetry for presenting a 'golden' version of the 'brazen' world of nature but he also describes the poet as working 'hand in hand with nature'. The reference to Aristotle also helps us to understand the nature of the relationship between the idealistic poet, the reader and the text as conceived by Sidney. When Sidney claims that the poet shapes the nature of the reader he is arguing that the poet presents to the reader images which will make him virtuous, images, that is, which will awaken his inherent capacity for virtue.

These idealist claims of the Defence are, however, challenged from within the text, by a more sceptical strain of thought. Even though the reference to Aristotle reinforces the idealist pretensions of the text it does not help to explain, for example, the provocative claim in the same passage that the poet 'grow[s] in effect another nature'. This claim breaks any connection between the poet and nature (however 'nature' is

conceived); indeed, it appears to reinforce the proclaimed independence of the poet from nature, and so undermine the Aristotelianism of Sidney's position. The existence of this ambiguity could perhaps be ignored were it not for the fact that when Sidney *explains* Aristotelian mimesis he does not describe it as a completion of natural processes, as we would expect, but as a 'counterfeiting' and a 'figuring forth' (25).³⁴ In reminding us of the fictional nature of the poetic world Sidney breaks the link with nature carefully cultivated by Aristotle, and suggests the influence of a different tradition on his ideas, a tradition in which the images created by the artist are the product of his rhetorical know-how. Sidney's allegiance to this alternative tradition is suggested also in the passage of the Defence in which he expresses his scepticism about Plato's notion of divine inspiration: Plato 'attributed unto poesy more than myself do', he declares, 'namely, to be a very inspiring of a divine force, far above man's wit, as in the forenamed dialogue [i.e. the Ion] is apparent' (60).

If we accept the presence of this second, rhetorical influence on Sidney's theory then we arrive at a slightly different conception of the skill of the poet; the poet should try to avoid not only *phantastic* imitation, that is, the imitation of 'unworthy objects', but *fantastic* imitation, that is, the creation of objects which appear unnatural or fabulous to an audience.³⁵ (He sets out not to produce a true image of something, as Plato required, but an image which will *appear* to be a true

representation, as Quintilian required.) Such a shift in the meaning of the word *phantastic*, strange as it may seem at this point in the Defence, is warranted by the discussion which takes place in the ensuing section, the so-called digression. Alerted to the existence of poetic abuse by the anti-poets, Sidney undertakes a survey of contemporary poets; what he finds to complain about is not their failure to portray virtuous images but their failure to portray images *convincingly*. The advice that he gives to these poets in this section is based on two assumptions: that they are not only writers but also readers (or rather, readers who would be poets) who need to understand better 'why and how' to imitate poetic texts, and that they are prompted by a desire to create characters which are not simply virtuous but which are convincing and rhetorically persuasive. It is in this penultimate section of the Defence that we arrive at a different understanding of the use of the idealist perspective in the Defence, and begin to resolve an earlier problem: just how should we read literary texts?

iv. What is fittest to nature

Sidney's discussion of poetry in the Defence is influenced by classical rhetorical theory and this is nowhere more clear than in the section of the treatise known as the 'digression'. For it is here that Sidney proves himself to be a true Ciceronian, by claiming, like Cicero, to follow the example of 'nature', and berating contemporary writers who imitate too slavishly the rules propounded by their master. There are many writers who,

Sidney complains, over-use the rhetorical 'figure of repetition', which is advocated by Cicero for the expression of anger, in a 'familiar epistle, when it were too too much choler to be choleric' (71). Such writers fail to convince their readers that they are angry, he observes, because they have misjudged the effect of a figure; they have followed the rules of rhetorical theory rather than the example offered by experience. The same complaint is implicit in his representation of contemporary love poets, writers who, he protests, 'so coldly [...] apply fiery speeches, as men that had rather read lovers' writings [...] than that in truth they feel those passions' (70). These unsuccessful poetic lovers fail to impress their mistresses because they write by the book instead of expressing what they feel. Like Cicero himself, then, Sidney offers 'nature' as the better guide to oratorical and poetic excellence. The need for the poet to copy 'nature' could not be more emphatically expressed than in Sidney's advice to the poet to follow the practices of the courtier who 'follow[s] that which by practice he findeth fittest to nature' rather than the example set by the scholar who, in his verbose renditions of such emotions, 'flieth from nature' (72). Curiously, however, this argument seems to mark a break with the earlier part of the Defence in which Sidney celebrates the creative independence of the poet, his freedom from nature. Indeed, we may well wonder at this point if there is any difference between the poet who follows that which he 'findeth fittest to

nature' and the moral philosopher who was dismissed by Sidney for doing precisely that, for 'follow[ing] nature' (23). Any resolution of this dilemma, I suggest, depends on what we consider Sidney's understanding of the concept 'nature' to be.

Sidney's invocation of the natural art of the courtier suggests immediately the conservative influence of the ideal of the courtierly art described by Count Lewis in Book I of Castiglione's Courtier, the ideal which is based on the supposed Ciceronian precept that education is a development of an individual's inherent virtue (62). Acceptance of this doctrine led Count Lewis to reject the imitation of classical models: Boccaccio and Petrarch excelled in their art, he suggests, because 'their verie maister was witt [*l'ingegno*], and their owne naturall inclination and judgement [*giudico naturale*]' (61), and he advises contemporary court-writers to show a similar independence from written models. Sidney, likewise, is suspicious of the benefits derived from close imitation, as both his condemnation of the too diligent imitator of Cicero and his rejection of the practice of filling 'Nizolian paper-books' with borrowed 'figures and phrases' reveal (70). Like Count Lewis, he shows an apparent confidence in the native ability of the poet; his claim that the courtier should imitate what is 'fittest to nature' seems to be a reaffirmation of the claim which opened the digression: 'no industry can [the poet] make, if his own genius be not carried into it' (63). Sidney's conception of native ability, moreover,

is influenced, like that of Count Lewis, by his perception of the importance of inherited social status. Like Count Lewis, Sidney transforms Cicero's democratic 'seeds of virtue' into an aristocratic creed; he discusses his conception of the perfect poet and the form of perfect poetry in the language of social distinction, and he connects the writing of good poetry with the possession of noble blood. Thus, when Sidney complains about the state of contemporary English poets he berates his fellow practitioners for being 'base men with servile wits', concerned only with getting their work into print (62): in other words, 'lower-class' men who write to gain employment and financial support. The Earl of Surrey is one of the few English poets who is complimented, because Sidney seems to find evidence of 'many things tasting of a noble birth, and worthy of a noble mind' in his writing (64); in short, Sidney finds in his writing signs of his inherited social rank. A lack of nobility, however, is generally evident in the majority of contemporary poetry, Sidney suggests, and is manifested in its failure to represent the natural hierarchy of society (of which the nobleman is presumably the guardian). Sidney complains of a failure in English poetry not only to 'marshal[...]' words 'into any assured rank', with the result that 'readers cannot tell where to find themselves' (64), but to observe the strictures of literary genre, with the result that 'plays be neither right tragedies, nor right comedies, mingling kings and clowns' (67). There is a tendency, Sidney notes, to 'thrust in the clown by the

head and shoulders to play a part in majestical matters with neither decency nor discretion' (67), an insensitivity to poetic and social decorum which also manifests itself in stylistic excess. English poetry is 'base' not only because it is not written by men of noble birth but because it fails to imitate the structure of society in which the superior place of nobleness is firmly fixed 'by nature'. Its writers, Sidney complains, are akin to

those Indians, not content to wear earrings at the fit and natural place of the ears, but they will thrust jewels through their nose and lips, because they will be sure to be fine (70).

Like the Indians, the poetic and courtierly apes are ridiculous figures because in an attempt to appear 'fine', that is, to be upwardly mobile, they fail to recognise what is tasteful and appropriate, and consequently reveal themselves to be nothing more than 'base men with servile wits'; in short, they reveal themselves to be little better than savages. Sidney's criticism of contemporary English poetry reads as a pointed attack on social mobility - as a reaffirmation of a conservative ideal in which social rank is conceived to be both determined and permeated by nature. Not surprisingly, it is Cicero's conception of the inherent quality of 'virtue' (here undemocratically interpreted as noble blood) which is 'naturally' most suited to Sidney's apparent ideological position.

In associating noble birth with nobility of expression Sidney shows a commitment to a particular courtierly

adaptation of humanist republicanism which became popular in the sixteenth century. In The Book of the Courtier Count Lewis's claim that the courtier must be a man of noble blood is merely one position which is introduced as part of a wider debate concerning the 'nature' of the courtier; in Annibale Romei's The Courtier's Academie (1585), however, this doctrine is left unchallenged: noblemen and women, according to Romei, are held in estimation because they seem to be born with 'a better inclination, and disposition unto vertue'.³⁶ Sidney's support for such a doctrine appears to be proof of his aristocratic arrogance, a characteristic evident also in the defensive account he gives of his lineage in the Defence of Leicester.³⁷ What is curious in this convention, though, is the degree to which the term 'courtierly' functions as a synonym for the terms 'natural' and 'virtuous'. An interesting example of this type of conflation is offered by George Puttenham in The Art of English Poesie. The courtierly poet should choose to write in the language which is 'naturall, pure and the most usuall of all his country', a language, Puttenham suggests, such as that of the court.³⁸ For Puttenham regional dialects are less 'natural' because they are less well known in the court and, one suspects, because they are perceived as being less refined. It is this kind of attitude which helps to account for the seemingly ridiculous assumption made by Sidney that the wearing of earrings is ultimately more natural than the wearing of noserings or lip-rings, when obviously the 'naturalness'

of such jewellery is the result of its being a fashion indulged in by his peers.

Yet we must be cautious about supposing that Sidney is ignorant either of the strangeness of his New World analogy or of the fact that 'custom' has been suddenly substituted in this instance for the much vaunted term 'nature'. There is much in the Defence to suggest that Sidney is conscious of the irony inherent in his discussion of naturalness.³⁹ The fact that Sidney can portray an American Indian at one moment as incapable of acculturation, comical in his attempts to improve his social appearance, and yet, in another instance, stress his natural susceptibility to the acculturating influence of poetry (20), ought to call to our attention the possibility that Sidney is playing with the term 'nature', and not simply prescribing a rather rigid social structure in which character is 'naturally' already fixed. Indeed, the rather tortuous sentence in which Sidney attempts to explain why the poet should follow the example set by the courtier rather than the scholar, while simultaneously setting out to establish the greater naturalness of the courtierly art, can also be seen, on closer inspection, to present a very different perspective on the notion of naturalness itself. The courtier is praised by Sidney because in his art he imitates

that which by practice he findeth fittest to nature,
[and] therein (though he know it not) doth according
to art, though not by art

whereas the scholar

using art to show art, and not to hide art (as in these cases he should do), flieth from nature, and indeed abuseth art (72).

There are two points that need to be noted here: first, that the courtier follows not nature itself but what 'by practice he findeth *fittest* to nature' and, secondly, that the scholar is berated not for failing to follow nature but for failing to 'hide' his art. The scholar is unnatural only because his artificiality is evident in his writing. In contrast, the courtier is praised for his ability to follow unconsciously the rules of art, thereby concealing their presence in the act of composition. Sidney appears here to be suggesting that the difference between the courtier and the scholar lies in the fact that the courtier has assimilated or naturalised the rules of art, and that he is therefore able to make his compositions appear to be natural or inspired, and his words appear genuinely to reflect his mind. Sidney's source for this conception of the courtierly art, and for its expression, is, I suggest, Castiglione's Courtier.

The conservative assumptions of Count Lewis in The Book of the Courtier, unlike those of Annibale Romei in The Courtier's Academie, are not left unchallenged. Not only does Sir Frederick question Count Lewis's elitist view of the distribution of talent, but Count Lewis himself weakens his earlier arguments, saying that the courtier follows a model not in order to discover his own 'privie seed', as we had been led to believe, but to 'steale his grace' from his master (45). Count Lewis offers us an image of literary usurpation which threatens

to topple the hierarchy of relations he has so carefully constructed. The threat increases when Count Lewis makes a connection between the courtier and the orator, for he compares the courtier not to those orators who claim to follow nature, whose language reflects their natural character, but to those who

made semblant their Orations to be made verie simply, and rather as nature and truth ledde them, than studie and arte, the which if it had beene openly knowne, would have put a doubt in the peoples minde, for feare least hee beguiled them. (46)

In this instance Lewis recalls Antonius's recognition in De Oratore that 'any suggestion of artifice, is likely to prejudice an orator with the judiciary' diminishing 'the credibility of the orator and the cogency of his oratory' (II xxxvii 156), a recognition which follows close on his own claim to possess natural eloquence, and which suggests that he has been more keen in his prior discussion of the art of rhetoric to illustrate the end at which he aims than to disclose the actual methods he uses. Antonius's admission throws light on Cicero's intention in treatises such as Orator, where he attempts to conceal the sceptical nature of his rhetorical position by appropriating idealist vocabulary, insisting in this treatise, for example, on the existence of 'an ideal of perfect eloquence' (ii 8-10); in the same way, the character Count Lewis throws light on Castiglione's interest in the Courtier, that is, his concern to present virtue, manifested visibly in the actions and appearance of the courtier, as a reflection both of his innate worthiness and of a metaphysical truth. Sidney does

something similar, I suggest, in the section of the Defence that I have been discussing. His recommendation that the poet should follow 'that which he findeth fittest to nature' suggests at first sight that he has taken literally Antonius's advice in De Oratore, especially when he refers directly in the middle of this discussion of natural virtue to Antonius and his fellow speaker Crassus. However, Sidney's description of these two characters recalls not the emphasis in De Oratore on the appearance of naturalness achieved by Crassus and Antonius but the astute rereading of their self-presentation by Castiglione's character Count Lewis, which is itself authorised by Antonius's brief revelation of the studied nature of his eloquence in Book II of De Oratore (II xxxvi 152-xxxvii 156). Crassus and Antonius, Sidney explains, are

the great forefathers of Cicero in eloquence,
the one (as Cicero testifieth of them)
pretended not to know art, the other not to set
by it, because with a plain sensibleness they
might win credit of popular ears (which credit
is the nearest step to persuasion, which
persuasion is the chief mark of oratory)
(71-2).

Just as the unexpected acknowledgement of the role played by dissimulation in De Oratore and the Courtier forces us to reconsider the treatment of the theme of innate virtue so, in the Defence, Sidney's canny admission that he understands Cicero's 'art' must make us reconsider the emphasis placed in this treatise on the importance to poetic expression of either knowledge of intelligible reality or natural eloquence. For Sidney the poet is not constrained entirely either by the need to represent a

pre-existing nature, or by his own given 'nature': rather, like Castiglione's courtier, he is able to 'grow in effect a new nature', that is, to give an artificial creation a natural appearance.

Cicero's De Oratore is an important source for Castiglione's discussion of imitation in the Courtier for one overriding reason: Cicero's Antonius offers the Renaissance courtier a way of naturalising skills (and, indeed, emotions) which will help him to advance his social status in an age which places value on inherited nobility - an age, that is, in which nobility can still be equated with aristocratic birth. Sidney's interests are similar to those of Castiglione in this respect. Indeed, the Defence of Leicester, I suggest, is as much a tribute to Sidney's anxiety concerning his aristocratic legitimacy as it is a self-assured reassertion of his social rank. As H.R. Woudhuysen has suggested, in view of Sidney's disinheritance from the Leicester estate with the birth of Lord Denbigh in 1581, his social position in the 1580s was anything but stable.⁴⁰ Moreover, the techniques explored in the Defence have wider, related, implications for Sidney's political interests, pointing to a way of legitimating a political and religious movement (Protestantism) which, as I shall argue, is based on the creation, as well as the discovery, of its origins. (Sidney's posthumous image as a leading aristocrat seems, curiously, to be bound up with the promotion of the Protestant propaganda from the 1590s onwards.) But before I consider the significance

of the poetic technique described in the Defence for specifically Protestant modes of expression, I would like first to consider what Sidney's espousal of courtierly imitation means for his theory of reading in this treatise, and, thus, how the reader-poet is actually able to create 'a new nature'.

The advice Sidney gives to both contemporary love poets and the users of 'Nizolian paper-books' has to be read in the light of his allusion to Crassus and Antonius. Sidney berates not only those who imitate their masters too diligently but contemporary love-poets who fail in their writing to convince their readers 'that in truth they feel those passions, which easily (as I think) may be betrayed by that same forcibleness or *energia* (as the Greeks call it) of the writer' (70), and he thus implies the appropriateness to poetic composition of the rhetorical technique of self-persuasion. In The Art of Rhetoric Aristotle describes the effect of *energeia*, that is, the use of metaphors which convey action to lend animation, and, thus, credibility, to a scene described by the orator; in The Poetics, however, Aristotle describes a somewhat different technique, with which *energeia* was to become confused, whereby the poet-actor imagines the action he wishes to portray, and, thus, having persuaded himself of its veracity, is enabled to portray the action more vividly (*enargestata*), and more persuasively, to his audience.⁴¹ Quintilian contributes to the confusion between the two techniques in the Institutio Oratoria, for he uses the term

'*enargeia*', to describe what he says 'Cicero calls *illumination* and *activity*' (I ii 32), and describes a technique whereby the orator visualises the scene he is describing so that he appears 'not so much to narrate as to exhibit the actual scene', with the result that his 'emotions will be no less actively stirred than if [he] were present at the actual occurrence' (VI ii 32). For Aristotle, the techniques described in the Poetics and the Rhetoric help a poet-actor or an orator to portray actions dramatically, while for Quintilian, the technique of *enargeia* enables the orator to create a persona, or a version of events, convincing enough to influence the emotions and judgement of an audience in court. What is important for both Aristotle and Quintilian, however, is the necessary susceptibility of the poet or orator to the emotions he portrays (which for Plato was a reason to criticise poetry). By imagining a scene vividly the poet or orator is able to invoke in himself feelings which will become natural to him and which will inspire both his speech and his audience. When Sidney complains that contemporary love poets 'coldly [...] apply fiery speeches' he is accusing them not simply of experiencing love through other people's writings but of not reading love poetry receptively. The cold love poets, like the diligent imitators, need to change not their reading material, or their actual experience, but their imitative practices; they should read not analytically with 'attentive studious painfulness' but try instead with 'attentive translation (as it were) [to] devour [their

models] whole', that is, complete with the emotion that inspires their composition (70).⁴² Sidney's representation of the reader as a devourer of poetic texts is an important development; not only does it echo Quintilian's description of the creation of 'naturalised' habits as the consumption and digestion of other people's writings (X i 19) but it is an interesting departure from earlier images of poetry in the Defence. Poetry has already been represented as 'food for the tenderest stomachs' (34), as 'a medicine of cherries' (41), and as a means of sweetening 'wholesome things' (40), images which imply poetry's insidious educational influence. Sidney's later description of the reader as a devourer of poetry, however, figures the reader not as a passive recipient of ideas (as the earlier images imply), nor as a detached decoder of texts (as someone who needs to resist the affective influence of the text), but as someone who is actively and passionately engaged through the process of imitative reading in growing 'another nature', or as Castiglione might put it, in 'chaug[ing] him selfe into' his master (45). Thus, Sidney's ideal reader is not one who is simply influenced by the text, nor one who simply exercises his skill of judgement on the text, but one who knows how to use prudently the emotions he experiences in the act of reading.

v. Riding Pugliano's horse

In one of the early sections of the Defence, Sidney tells the reader that he can only become another 'Cyrus'

if he will 'learn why and how' Xenophon created the fictional Cyrus. This suggestion has led Victoria Kahn to argue convincingly that Sidney gave poetry the educational role of developing the skill of judgement: 'To learn aright "why" and "how" Xenophon made Cyrus', Kahn explains, 'is to imitate the poet's own imitative process, not merely the image of Cyrus'.⁴³ Kahn's explanation of this passage has been recently endorsed by Lorna Hutson: 'Sidney praises Xenophon's Cyropaedia above other fictional discourses - certainly above the Amadis de Gaule', she writes, 'because attention paid to the emplotment of its examples will enable the reader to reproduce their instructive potential'.⁴⁴ As Kahn and Hutson suggest, Sidney's Defence appears to be designed to develop the reader's skill in the first two parts of the rhetorical art, that is, the discovery and arrangement of rhetorical resources, namely arguments, and, thus, his virtue of prudence, his ability to discover 'the means of material provision in a practical situation'.⁴⁵ It is for this reason, Hutson suggests, that the Amadis de Gaule is replaced by Sidney with the Cyropaedia: the former, unlike the latter, 'does not enable the reader to read "for the plot"', that is, 'to become the man capable of discerning the potential for the persuasive emplotment of circumstances', but produces instead a man 'whose heart is moved to become the agent of someone else's plot'.⁴⁶

The emphasis Kahn and Hutson place on the importance to Sidney of the exercise of judgement is made more

credible by the knowledge we now have, thanks to Lisa Jardine's and Anthony Grafton's scholarship, of Sidney's own reading practices. If Gabriel Harvey's marginalia are to be trusted it appears that he and Sidney read Livy's histories together at Leicester House between October 1576 and February 1577, just before Sidney's embassy to Emperor Rudolph II.⁴⁷ "Scrutinizing them [...] from all points of view", Harvey writes in his copy of Livy, 'we' applied "a political analysis" to the text; "our consideration", he further adds, "was chiefly directed at the forms of states, the conditions of persons, and the qualities of actions".⁴⁸ Harvey's reading practice is designed not only to inculcate knowledge about possible forms of action available to a diplomat but to act also as a 'trigger for action',⁴⁹ in short, to make the reader, in this case Sidney, a man of action. Further evidence of Harvey's influence can be found in a letter signed by Sidney (dated 22nd May 1580), in which he advises the soldier and statesman Sir Edward Denny to study histories in preparation for the 'trade of our lives'.⁵⁰ Sidney's sympathetic identification with Denny suggests that he is describing an educational programme similar to one which he may have undertaken in preparation for his own political career (perhaps under the supervision of Harvey). The list of history texts which he gives includes such authors as Herodotus, Thucidides, Xenophon, Cicero, Livy, Sallust, Caesar, Tacitus, as well as more nearly contemporary writers such as Machiavelli and Melancthon. Walter Reichelt notes the

similarity between the reading list offered here by Sidney and that offered in Methodus ad facilem historicum cognitionem (1566) by Jean Bodin, the early modern historiographer who 'believed that a statesman could find a thoroughly comprehensive education through a careful, analytical survey of history'.⁵¹

The importance to Sidney of the exercise of judgement in the act of reading is revealed, then, not only in the margins of Harvey's copy of Livy but in the letter he wrote to Edward Denny, in which he endorses Harvey's belief in the importance of history reading for training a man of action. However, although there is an interest in the Defence, as Kahn notes, in preparing the reader for action by training the reader's judgement, Sidney makes poetry, and not history, the means of such edification. Moreover, despite the fact that the reader is encouraged to enquire into the 'why and how' of literary composition (and so exercise his judgement), there exists a concurrent disapproval of the discretionary reading essential to history and an approbation of the affective influence of poetry. (Tellingly, the distinction between romance heroes and classical military heroes is not such a clearly defined one in the Defence as Hutson suggests; indeed, we find Theagenes, the hero of the Greek romance An Ethiopian Romance, cited alongside Cyrus in the Defence on more than one occasion (24, 27).) For Kahn the 'logical contradictions' of the argument are proof that the reader should not imitate 'any single example but rather the

activity of judgement that produced the defensive rhetoric of Sidney's text'.⁵² But it is difficult, I think, to dismiss Sidney's approval of the affective power of the text as just another 'logical contradiction' when the emphasis placed on *enargeia* in the digression, and the description of Sidney's rhetorical awakening in the peroration is taken into consideration. Kahn places too great an emphasis, I suggest, on the first two parts of rhetorical composition, and attaches too little importance to style and delivery. For Sidney advises the poet to imitate not just the activity of judgement which produces probable arguments but the activity of self-persuasion which helps to win him the credence of an audience, and in this respect he is following the advice of Cicero's Antonius, who considers non-discursive or emotional, rather than discursive, proofs as the mainstay of persuasive oratory (II xlii 178).

Although Kahn's claim that the reader is expected to imitate not the fictional image but the act of judgement which informed its creation seems absolutely right, and although, as she points out, the complications of the Defence do demand the exercise of judgement, it is important to bear in mind the affective power which is simultaneously given to poetry. For while the Defence is a treatise concerned with the dangers of poetry's potentially insidious influence (as both the example in the exordium, when Sidney describes how Pugliano's enthusiasm almost persuaded him 'to have wished [himself] a horse' (17), and the experience of Sidney's ironic and

hyperbolic praise of poetry in the peroration, prove), it is also a treatise about the importance of this influential power. What Sidney learns from his encounter with the rhetorically proficient Pugliano is not how to *become* but how to *ride* a horse; Pugliano teaches him the efficacy of enthusiasm or 'self-love' for the management of emotions. The Defence does not begin simply with a story about the effect of forceful oratory but with an explanation of the success of forceful oratory. And having revealed that the source of rhetorical mastery lies in 'self-love', which I understand in this particular context as denoting 'self-conviction', Sidney then goes on to declare 'if Pugliano's strong affection and weak arguments will not satisfy you, I will give you a nearer example of myself' (17-8). (This emphasis does not, of course, revoke the importance of the skill of judgement; after all, as Sidney admits, 'if I had not been a piece of a logician before I came to him, I think he would have persuaded me to have wished myself a horse' (17).) A Defence of Poetry, then, begins not so much as a defence of poetry but as an attempt to prove the efficacy of a particular rhetorical technique. And the reader of the Defence will gain an understanding, and the use, of this technique if he, like Sidney, in some way succumbs to the charm of the rhetorician.

vi. Poetry and history: Sidney and Amiot

In contrast to the analytical treatment of historical texts advocated by contemporary educationalists, and despite his apparent commitment to the development of his

own prudential or judgemental skills, in the early part of the Defence Sidney appears to offer a rather old-fashioned view of reading. Unlike histories, which require the application of discretion if they are to be made educationally valuable, poetry, Sidney argues, provides 'lofty image[s]' which 'inflameth the mind with desire to be worthy, and informs with counsel how to be worthy' (47). As I observed above, the reader described in the earlier part of the Defence appears sometimes to be closer to Caxton's romance-hero Blanchardyn, the knight who saw a picture of the noble Hector and Aeneas and was 'moved' with a desire to emulate them, than to the prudential reader, the new Cyrus, described by Kahn. (The relationship between Caxton's reader and Sidney's reader is closer than it might appear at first sight, for although Caxton's translation of Blanchardyn and Eglantine (1489) is presented as a history, not as fiction, for Caxton as for Sidney the truthfulness of the events described in the story is less important than their educational value.) Yet there is one obvious way in which the two writers disagree. For Caxton the 'overriding purpose of history, just as for fiction, [is] edification' and therefore a formal distinction between the two disciplines is irrelevant;⁵³ for Sidney, in contrast, a distinction between fiction and history appears to be essential because the purpose of the Defence is to prove the superiority of poetry to other forms of educational writing. Sidney's claim that poetry is superior to history because it *is* fiction flies in the

face both of Caxton's nonchalance and of Sidney's own advice to Edward Denny; moreover, it contradicts the educational spirit of the age, which emphasises the important role played by the reading of history in the education of future statesmen. As Amiot remarks in his preface to Plutarch's Lives, history can provide a practical education for a man of action because it 'helpeth not it selfe with any other thing than with the plaine truth', while poetry, in contrast, 'doth commonly inrich things by commending them above the starrs and their deserving'.⁵⁴ Sidney's contrary claim that it is precisely because poetry can fly 'above the starrs' that it is the most useful form of educational writing, would seem to suggest how determinedly Sidney has pitted himself against the new historiographers. However, Sidney's attitude to history is more complicated than his dismissive statements in the Defence imply. After all, Xenophon, the writer who was listed among the historians in Sidney's letter to Denny, is offered as an example of a good teacher in the Defence, albeit he is classified there as a poet (24).

Amiot is concerned with establishing the important contribution made by history, rather than by poetry or philosophy, to the education of a man of action. Although he begins his defence of history with a reference to the Horatian poetic maxim that art should teach and delight, Amiot makes it quite clear that he is aware of a distinction between poetry (fiction) and history. Such a distinction is important, for it becomes

manifest that it is because history relates true events that it can offer the 'next best thing' to, or even a substitute for, real action. Although many critics claim that leadership skills can only be derived from practice, Amiot upholds 'that a wise governor of a common weale, or a great Captaine can be made of such a person, as hath never travelled out of his study, and from his bookes'.⁵⁵

Amiot explains:

the reading of histories is the school of wisdom, to facion mens understanding, by considering advisedly the state of the world that is past, and by marking diligently by what lawes, maners, and discipline, Empires, kingdoms and dominions, have in old time bene established, and afterward mainteyned and increased: or contrariwise chaunged, diminished, and overthrowen.⁵⁶

The use of judgement in the act of reading, as Kahn explains with reference to Sidney, develops in the reader the prudential virtue that is essential to the successful career of a statesman; reading is an effective substitute for governmental experience. But Amiot also claims that history is an effective substitute for real action for another reason, namely that histories depict past events 'so lively',

as in the very reading of them we feele our mindes to be so touched by them, not as though the thinges were alreadie done and past, but as though they were even then presently in doing, and we finde our selves caried away with gladnesse and grieffe through feare and hope, well neere as though we were then at the doing of them.⁵⁷

What Amiot here appears to be describing is the effect of the rhetorical technique of *enargeia*, the technique which, in the words of Quintilian, does not 'narrate' so much as 'exhibit the actual scene', and which is used by

the orator to stir 'actively' not only his own emotions but those of the audience so that they feel as if they 'were present at the actual occurrence [...]' (VI ii. 32). History is a substitute for real action because it rhetorically recreates the moment of historical action, a moment that can be imaginatively reenacted by the receptive reader. Such a technique of educational imitation is derived not from Aristotle's Ethics but from his Poetics, and it requires for its appreciation a reader who is sensitive to its effect. Amiot is not the only educationalist to promote such a technique for the reading of history. For example, in The Book of the Governor Thomas Elyot advises that a young boy should be schooled in the art of 'portraiture' so that when he

happeneth to read any noble and excellent history, whereby his courage is inflamed to the imitation of virtue, he forthwith taketh his pen or pencil, and with a grave and substantial study, gathering to him all the parts of the imagination, endeavoureth himself to express lively and (as I might say) actually in portraiture, not only the fact or the affair, but also the sundry affections of every personage in the history recited, which might in any wise appear or be perceived in their visage, countenance or gesture.⁵⁸

When Amiot refers to the affective power of history he invokes the poet Lucretius who, he observes, described how pleasant it is to read about other people's trials in the comfort of one's own familiar surroundings. Although such an invocation shows the influence of classical conceptions of poetry on Amiot's conception of history, he does not acknowledge any connection between the two disciplines. Sidney, in contrast, while paying lip service to the distinction between history and poetry

made by historiographers like Amiot, and while exploiting it for his own rhetorical ends, shows a simultaneous consciousness of the fragility of this distinction. History claims to base itself on truth, Sidney notes, and yet it often depends more on the 'notable foundation of hearsay' (30), while 'even historiographers', despite the fact that '([...] their lips sound of things done, and verity be written on their foreheads) have been glad to borrow both fashion and, perchance, weight of the poets'; moreover, history, he asserts, has 'either stale or usurped of poetry their passionate describing of passions, the many particularities of battles, which no man could affirm' (20). The distinction between poetry and history is further obscured by Sidney's apparent appropriation, in his defence of poetry, of the arguments used by Amiot to defend history. Like Amiot, for example, Sidney contrasts his chosen discipline with philosophy and law: his complaint that philosophy teaches with 'attentive studious painfulness' echoes Amiot's claim that 'reasons and demonstrations are generall, and tend to the prooffe of things, and to the beating of them into understanding',⁵⁹ while Amiot's declaration that it is better to be educated by history rather than 'civill lawes and ordinances' since 'it is more grace for a man to teach and instruct, than to chastise and punish',⁶⁰ anticipates Sidney's own condemnation of justices who 'seeketh to make men good rather *formidine poenae* than *virtutis amore* (31). Moreover, just as Amiot claims that historical examples 'declare what is to be done, but also

worke a desire to doe it',⁶¹ so Sidney similarly insists that it is the 'lofty image' of poetry which 'inflameth the mind with desire to be worthy, and informs with counsel how to be worthy'. Sidney, in short, has taken many of Amiot's arguments in support of history and applied them to a defence of poetry. His reason for doing so, I suggest, is not simply to 'underscore' the educational value of poetry by borrowing the arguments of an historian, as Elizabeth Story Donno has argued, but to imply the spurious nature of the distinction made so carefully by Amiot between history and poetry.⁶² Despite recognising a nominal distinction between the two disciplines Sidney also acknowledges what Amiot refuses to admit: the importance of the art of poetry to that most truthful of genres, 'history'.

The relationship between rhetoric and history is well established in the Renaissance, thanks mainly to Cicero's recognition in De Oratore of 'the great responsibility the orator has in historical writing' (II xv 62). Indeed, for Cicero there is no incompatibility between the historian's commitment to truth and the orator's interest in rhetorical excellence, as his character Antonius makes clear in De Oratore: 'History, which bears witness to the passing of ages, sheds light upon reality, gives life to recollection and guidance to human existence, and brings tidings of ancient days, whose voice, but the orator's can entrust her to immortality?' (II ix 36).⁶³ Sidney's recognition of the relationship between the two disciplines is indicated by the

appearance in the Defence of Antonius's account of history: 'I am *testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae, nuntia vetustatis*' claims Sidney's historian in defence of his discipline (30). However, in the Defence the quotation is unexpectedly truncated, so that it omits Antonius's claim for the importance of oratory to history; moreover, it appears in the mouth of Sidney's caricature of a loquacious and ignorant historian, a 'tyrant in table talk' who knows 'better [...] how this world goeth than how his own wit runneth' (30). Since Sidney accuses historians in the same passage of imitating the poets by basing their reports on 'the notable foundation of hearsay', then it might seem reasonable to suppose that we are meant here to recognise the importance of rhetoric to history (which his caricature has failed to do), that is, that it may (as Antonius suggests) actually contribute to, rather than conflict with, the truthfulness required in this discipline. The Welsh historian Humphrey Lhuyd is the possible butt of Sidney's humour here;⁶⁴ in his Breviary of Britayne Lhuyd attempted to breathe new life into the Brutus myth of Geoffrey of Monmouth, a myth which had been discredited by Protestant historians such as William Camden, an historian who had been encouraged in his plan to write about 'Britain' by Sidney.⁶⁵ But Sidney's discussion of the relationship between history and poetry needs to be seen in the larger context of the Defence, a treatise which explores the efficacy of rhetorical techniques for the creation of credible fiction, and

which identifies falseness as a lack of attention to rhetorical decorum. Indeed, if we take this interest into consideration then it seems possible that Sidney objected to histories such as the Breviary of Britayne not so much because they are not truthful *per se* but because they do not appear to be truthful.⁶⁶ If this is Sidney's concern, however, then it would seem to put him in a position contrary to that of sixteenth-century historians such as Camden, men whom he seems to have admired, and to put in question his Protestant allegiance, since for Protestant historians it is the truthfulness of history which makes it a genre suitable for legitimating the Reformation. Yet, as I shall argue in the remainder of this chapter, Protestant historiography is more complex than this overview has so far suggested: so that, for example, in Edmund Spenser's A View of the Present State of Ireland the character Irenius may reject the 'forged and fabulous' chronicles of the Irish, but, as he indeed acknowledges, he is forced, all the same, to base his own historical reportage on them, taking from them 'a likelihood of truth';⁶⁷ while in 'The Ruines of Time', Spenser himself actually conflates the poetic with the historical both in form and in content in an attempt to create a Protestant version of history.

2c. Rhetoric and Protestant History

Sidney's commitment to Protestantism is suggested by many of his friendships and activities in the 1570s and 1580s. On the continent Sidney's mentor and

correspondent was the Huguenot Hugh Languet, an activist who saw in Sidney a potential leader of the international Protestant cause,⁶⁸ while at home he was closely allied with his uncle, the Earl of Leicester, a patron and protector of radical reformers such as Thomas Cartwright.⁶⁹ In the early eighties Sidney himself offered protection to Protestant radicals: not only was he a member of a parliamentary committee in 1581 which revised the Bill of Sedition (the changes made to which ensured the 'relative' safety of outspoken Protestants like John Stubbs, who had lost a hand as a result of his anti-Alençon propaganda),⁷⁰ but he established the radical reformers James Stile and George Gifford as his personal chaplains.⁷¹ Sidney's literary skills were often harnessed to the Protestant cause. In 1579, at the instigation of his uncle and other members of the Leicester faction, Sidney penned a controversial letter to Elizabeth urging her to drop marriage negotiations with the Catholic Duke of Alençon and devote herself instead to the interests of her Protestant people,⁷² while in 1584 he began translating two 'Protestant' works into English: Philippe de Mornay's A Worke Concerning the Trewenesse of the Christian Religion, and the Psalms of David.⁷³

But not all of Sidney's literary efforts and actions fit so neatly into his Protestant career. Indeed, while in Prague in 1576 Sidney made a visit to the expatriate Edmund Campion, a Jesuit Professor of Rhetoric who thought he detected in Sidney a potential convert to the

Catholic faith.⁷⁴ As far as Sidney's literary works are concerned, both his defence of fiction in A Defence of Poetry and his fictional writings themselves can be said to challenge rather than to reinforce his Protestant allegiance: in its celebration of the persuasive power of fiction, A Defence of Poetry runs counter to the position of radical reformers like Stephen Gosson, who were deeply suspicious of the deceptive potential of the art of rhetoric (which was often associated with Catholicism); while his own fictional writings, with their attachment to courtly love intrigue, appear to be frivolous and youthful when set next to his later, more pious translations of Protestant literature. Tellingly, the attitude of Sidney's close friend and Protestant ally Fulke Greville to his literary works is one of embarrassment.⁷⁵ In his Life of Sir Philip Sidney Greville makes two significant points: that Sidney is best remembered as a man of action, not as a man of letters, and that the educational medium of Protestant reformers is best provided by history, not poetry.

Sidney's Defence is often interpreted as a response to Stephen Gosson's The Schoole of Abuse, published in 1579. Indeed, one of Gosson's objections to poetry, that it has an insidious power to affect the character of its audience, is the very quality Sidney praises in his justification of the poetic art, suggesting that Sidney had Gosson's treatise in mind when he composed the Defence. Since Gosson is one of the most prominent of the Protestant 'anti-poets' it is worth considering his

objections to poetry in some detail. For Gosson, it seems, poets and dramatic artists are little better than the artists condemned by Plato in Book X of the Republic for corrupting human nature. Contemporary playwrights, he complains, offer 'straunge consortes of melody, to tickle the eare; costly apparel, to flatter the sight; effeminate gesture, to ravish the sence; and wanton speache, to whet desire too inordinate lust', which 'by the privie entries of the eare, slip downe into the hart, & with gunshotte of affection gaule the minde, where reason and vertue shold rule the roste'.⁷⁶ They have the power to undermine the 'character', even the gender, of an individual, transforming 'nature' into something monstrous. In a subsequent work, Playes Confuted in Five Actions, Gosson argues that the boy actors, used in the Elizabethan theatre to play women's parts, are particularly vulnerable to the emasculating effects of dramatic action; there is a danger, Gosson warns here, that in acting as women they will become as women.⁷⁷ Gosson's concern with the threat posed to 'nature' by the poetic art is prompted, however, not by an immediate concern with the issue of gender but by a concern for the security of the state and the national religion.⁷⁸ Contrasting the men of times past, 'English' men who 'could suffer watching and labor, hunger & thirst, and beare of al stormes with hed and shoulders', with the effeminate men of his own day, men who are 'so weake, that wee are drawne with every threade; so light that we are blown away with every blaste' and too eager to rush

into theatres 'where we are soonest overthrowne',⁷⁹ Gosson draws an alarming picture for his reader of the state of the national defences. Instead of fortifying the defences of the nation, English men idle away their time in the theatres, unconscious of the fact that their strength is being undermined while they pursue pleasure. 'Let gunns to gouns, & bucklers yeeld to bookes', he warns, and England will be susceptible to foreign invasion, and he reminds his readers that their Catholic enemies 'do but tarry the tide', waiting for an opportunity to begin an invasion that would mean the imposition of a false Christian doctrine on the nation.⁸⁰ For Gosson the threat to 'nature', or rather, to truth, is presented not only by contemporary playwrights but by Catholic powers waiting in the wings.

Although in 1579 Pope Gregory XIII had landed a force in Ireland, his would-be 'spring-board' for an invasion of England,⁸¹ thereby exacerbating the fears of zealous English Protestants, Gosson's distrust of Catholic missionaries is prompted mainly by the perceived danger of an 'invasion' effected by Catholic propaganda from within the state. Protestant radicals had been alerting their countrymen to such a danger for many years; indeed, Roger Ascham drew the attention of Protestants to the danger of Catholic subversion in The Schoolmaster early in the 1570s; the 'secret papists at home have procured bawdy books to be translated out of the Italian tongue', he warns his readers, 'whereby many young wills and wits, allured to wantonness, do now boldly contemn all swere

books that sound to honesty and godliness',⁸² and the educational programme he outlines in this treatise is designed to develop a young man's resistance to such temptations. The popular perception of Catholic missionaries as cunning rhetoricians stems from their being seen as the purveyors of an attractive but 'fictional' or false doctrine, although it was no doubt fuelled by the underhand means which Jesuit missionaries were forced to adopt in a hostile country,⁸³ and by their portrayal in Protestant literature as malevolent deceivers: Spenser's depiction in Book I of the Faerie Queene of the infamous Duessa, whose outward beauty hides her inward foul corruption, and Archimago, whose story-telling skill succeeds in diverting the Redcross knight from his true (Protestant) quest,⁸⁴ are obvious examples. Even popular ballads alert their audience to Jesuit intrigue, such as the ballad attributed to William Elderton, 'A Triumph of True Subjects', which warns that Catholic missionaries 'will talk so divinely, with fancie to feede you/ and rattle out Rhetorique your mindes to amaze'.⁸⁵ In the Life of Sir Philip Sidney, first printed in 1652, Fulke Greville reveals the endurance of such images; he alerts his readers to the need to forestall the 'creeping Monarchie of Rome', led by the Jesuit 'Arch-instruments' and 'mist-raisers', and, like Gosson many years earlier, urges his compatriots to throw away their books and adopt a more active, that is, a more military, form of self-defence.⁸⁶

Sidney's emphasis on the affective power of the text, and the confidence he expresses in the educational value of fiction, seems both out of place in an age in which the threat from Catholicism is ever-present and out of tune with the educational doctrine of his Protestant peers. Although Sidney appears to have shown his Protestant friends active support on several occasions, he seems willing nonetheless to compromise his religious and political position when it comes to literary matters. Indeed, A Defence of Poetry offers several examples of an apparent compromise, the most notable being Sidney's often quoted description of the clash within an individual between his 'infected will' and his 'erected wit' (25). Although Sidney does not entirely condone the Neoplatonic confidence in human nature as this important example shows, he simultaneously seems reluctant to endorse fully Calvin's emphasis on the weakness and corruption of human nature. Alan Sinfield notes that this kind of conflict has been 'traditionally smoothed over' by Renaissance critics with the use of the term '"Christian Humanism"', a term which implies an 'harmonious co-operation between religion and literature founded upon a noble reciprocity between divine power and human dignity'.⁸⁷ Although Sinfield himself finds the term '"Christian Humanism"' attractive, he prefers to identify Sidney as a puritan and a humanist 'in respective theological, political and social contexts'.⁸⁸ Even so, while recognising Sidney's commitment to humanism in the Defence, Sinfield also perceives that in

this treatise Sidney attempts to convince Protestants of the benefits of the poetic art. In the Defence, he suggests, Sidney offers three arguments which are 'designed to appeal to protestants': first, he emphasises that there are three types of poet (the divine, the philosophical and ethical); secondly, he insists that the function of poetry is didactic; and thirdly, he 'appeals to the fall to validate his argument', claiming that of all the arts it is poetry alone which can 'entice [the "infected will"] to virtue'.⁸⁹ In his exploration of Sidney's Protestantism in the Defence, Sinfield thus allies himself with an earlier critic, Andrew Weiner, who similarly argues that Sidney is concerned in the treatise 'with correcting what he considers an inadequate conception of the nature and function of poetry' rather than with attacking puritans like Gosson.⁹⁰ For these two critics Sidney is first and foremost a Protestant activist before he is a humanist poet, although for Sinfield the tension between the two positions is never fully resolved.

One reason why Sidney can be claimed as a Protestant poet by these critics, I suggest, is that he chooses to defend poetry in terms familiar to Gosson, a man who, like Sidney, had received a classical education.⁹¹ Although Gosson condemns contemporary drama and poetry in The Schoole of Abuse he simultaneously recognises that literature can be a useful component of an educational programme: the 'right use of auncient Poetrie was to have notable employtes of woorthy Captaines, the holesome

councils of good fathers, and vertuous lives of predecessors set downe in numbers'.⁹² (In a similar way Fulke Greville rejects poetry in the early pages of A Treatise of Human Learning as 'an idle mens profession',⁹³ but later recognises that, when based on 'truth', poetry 'beautifies the same;/ Teacheth us order under pleasures name;/ which in a glasse shows nature how to fashion/ her selfe againe, by ballancing of passion'.⁹⁴) The kind of educational position taken by Sidney in some parts of the Defence, for example where he discusses the educational efficacy of poetry's 'lofty image[s]', is therefore not antithetical to the position taken by Gosson. However, if we also draw attention to Sidney's discussion, in the 'digression', of the process of naturalising fiction and of creating manipulative rhetorical personae, then it can be seen that Sidney actually goes much further than Gosson allows, advocating the very type of poet Gosson saw fit to vilify in The Schoole of Abuse. The argument used by Sinfield and Weiner that Sidney can be defined as a Protestant writer because he advocates in his Defence a didactic role for poetry, is no longer useful to us because it forms only part of Sidney's argument. But Sidney is not really out of touch with his Protestant allies, even though he appears in the Defence to be defending what could be seen as a 'Catholic' art of poetry. In its defence of the techniques of this type of rhetoric the Defence is neither a petulant nor a rebellious response to Gosson's iconoclastic attack on poetry, but a serious attempt both to justify the use of

courtierly rhetoric for Protestants, and to provide for its Protestant readers an insight into the rules of this art, thus helping them to resist the arts of their enemies and, at the same time, to wield the same rhetorical power over their enemies. Such a reading allows us to re-imagine the nature of Sidney's controversial relationship with Thomas Campion; rather than being *almost* converted to Catholicism, as Campion optimistically thought, Sidney perhaps responded to this famous teacher of rhetoric in much the same way that he responded to his riding master Pugliano, letting himself be *almost* persuaded in an attempt to acquire the rhetorical skill of his master.

The question with which we are left, however, is what Sidney's promotion of rhetoric means for Protestant historiography. Although both Luther and Calvin insisted that Protestantism found its verification in Scripture alone there was an increasing interest among sixteenth-century Protestant reformers in the use of history to legitimate the Protestant Church.⁹⁵ One of the most famous of the Protestant historical works, John Foxe's Acts and Monuments (1563), set out to establish the antiquity of the Protestant church, discovering its roots in the true Roman church of the apostles and, at the same time, presenting the apostolic claim of the Roman Catholic church as '*aequivocè*, that is, in name only, and not in effect or matter'.⁹⁶ Guided by the Book of Revelation Foxe divides church history into a number of periods, each of which spans three hundred years: the

first period (from the time of the apostles) denotes the suffering of the church, the second, its flourishing, the third, its decline and the fourth period, the coming of the Antichrist. The end of the fourth period (marked for Foxe by the appearance of John Wycliffe and Jan Huss), heralds the Reformation of the church. As Foxe's survey of church history suggests, Protestantism is a fundamentalist movement, a movement back to the practices of an 'original' Christian church. (The emphasis on the fundamentalist nature of Protestantism needs to be stressed, for it helps to explain both the Protestant suspicion of 'fiction', seen as a creation without divine authorisation, and their preference for history, the genre of 'recovery'.) Foxe's history, with its 'monuments' or narratives of Protestant martyrs, is designed both to legitimate the Reformation by affirming the rightness of the reformed religion, and to provide examples of the heroic suffering of the faithful, examples which are meant to inspire their readers to complete the Reformation which the Marian exiles saw prophesied in the Book of Revelation.⁹⁷ Given its propagandist aim the question of Foxe's historical veracity is a vexed one; it is difficult to ascertain whether Foxe consciously manipulated his material to fit it to the established interpretation of the Book of Revelation or whether his material seemed to him to fit naturally the framework in which he was working. What can be ascertained more immediately, however, is the importance to Foxe that his work be *perceived* as

truthful, for it is on this quality that his attempt to legitimate the Reformation depends. In the opening pages of Acts and Monuments Foxe explains that he was moved to write such a work because of the inadequacy of existing accounts of church history: many important moments have been lost, he complains, 'either through obtrectation [sic] or flattery of writers; who, not observing "legum historiae", as Tully required, seemed either not bold enough to tell the truth, or not afraid enough to bear with untruth and time'.⁹⁸ In his 1570 dedication to Elizabeth Foxe offers his Catholic detractors a barbed response to their accusation that his Acts contains a "'thousand lies"': 'they themselves altogether delight in untruths, and have replenished the whole church of Christ with feigned fables, lying miracles, false visions, and miserable errors'.⁹⁹ Taking into consideration his impressive use of sources, and his scepticism of the sometimes fabulous tales of Geoffrey of Monmouth, then Foxe's historiography is impressive according to modern criteria.¹⁰⁰ But, all the same, it is worth bearing in mind the different view of John R. Knott, who finds that though 'Foxe and his protagonists' condemn Catholic theatricality, and contrast it with their own plain speaking, they have their own 'kinds of playing, [...] making their commitment to plainness a dramatic statement'.¹⁰¹

Although Foxe's 'monuments' may well be an early example of the attempt by an historiographer to preserve the records of ancient times, the 'monuments' erected by

Sidney's Protestant biographers in his honour are certainly not examples of something similar: or at least, they are not *just* this. For Mary Sidney, Edmund Spenser and Fulke Greville, the desire to create emotive Protestant propaganda clearly outstrips the desire to produce a faithful portrait of a Protestant activist. In their attempts to historicise Philip Sidney they succeeded in turning a man who seems to have been a volatile and unbridled figure into a national Protestant hero,¹⁰² and in transforming an unpleasant death resulting from a gangrenous wound after an insignificant battle into a moment of martyrdom. Although Foxe is an obvious precedent for these 'biographies', a more immediate precedent is, I suggest, A Defence of Poetry. Alan Hager argues that the creation of the 'mirage of Sidney' is not a case of self-fashioning in the style of Sir Walter Raleigh but a case of 'the image-making of a second [partial] party', making Sidney a passive object of reconstruction.¹⁰³ However, not only had Sidney anticipated in the Defence the myth-making potential of poetic histories, as Hager notes, but he had also offered approbation of and an insight into the rhetorical technique of *enargeia*, the device used by Mary Sidney, Spenser, and Greville to bring Sidney's cause to life again.

The works of Sidney's 'biographers' share in common two important intentions: one is to recall for their contemporaries the need for more militant action on the part of Protestants (in this sense Sidney becomes a

'lofty image' which the readers are meant to emulate); the other is to keep alive the memory of Sidney, thus, in the words of Spenser, 'eternizing' the 'noble race' of the Dudleys.¹⁰⁴ They are interested in the 'writing' of history in two respects: first, with reference to the future in an attempt to influence events to come and, secondly, with reference to the past in an attempt to influence the perception of bygone actions. Importantly, both Mary Sidney and Edmund Spenser choose poetry as the medium for their celebration of Philip Sidney, and both aim to produce a vivid, rather than a precise, account of past events which is intended to inspire political action. Mary Sidney's poem entitled 'To the Angell Spirit of Sir Philip Sidney' appears in the preface to the Psalms, which she and her brother jointly translated, and alongside a dedicatory poem addressed to Elizabeth I, in which Mary Sidney urges the Protestant 'Deborah' to 'Sing what God doth, and do What men may sing'.¹⁰⁵ At first sight this poem appears to be a personal lament for the loss of a dearly held brother; however, once placed in its prefatory context it quickly becomes, as Margaret Hannay argues, 'a powerful political statement', reminding Elizabeth that she has not yet fulfilled her duty as a Protestant ruler.¹⁰⁶ The poem is powerful, I suggest, because of the rhetorical skill with which the Countess relives an event which took place more than a decade earlier, and thus reaffirms the importance of a cause neglected but not forgotten. Not only does she invoke the presence of Sidney, suggesting that he lives

on in his translation of the Psalms (his 'Immortal monuments'), and in her own writing ('So dar'd my Muse with thine it selfe combine, as mortall stuffe with that which is divine'), but she also manages to recreate the moment of his death ('Deepe woundes enlarg'd, long festred in their gall/fresh bleeding smart') and re-experience her mourning ('Ah memorie what needs this new arrest?').¹⁰⁷ In this poem Mary Sidney sets out discreetly to invoke in Elizabeth the feelings of remorse and sorrow that will make her more susceptible to the harsher message of the juxtaposed dedicatory poem, in which she reminds Elizabeth, with rather less discretion, of her responsibility for the failure of the Protestant military effort in the Netherlands.

In Spenser's poem 'The Ruines of Time' there is a similar desire to revitalise the memory of Sidney's 'heroic' death (and thus the cause for which he died), which he achieves by adopting a role akin to that visionary poet of the Book of Revelation ('Whilest thus I looked, loe adowne the Lee,/I sawe an Harpe stroong all with silver twynne').¹⁰⁸ At the same time, Spenser, like Mary Sidney, emphasises the continuing existence of Sidney (again to remind his reader of the continuing Protestant struggle). With a gesture that looks back to the Ovidian motif of metamorphosis but which simultaneously looks forward to the Christian resurrection of the faithful, Spenser writes a history of the death of Sidney which becomes an account of his transformation into a 'living' Protestant hero. The

description of Sidney's apotheosis at the end of this poem works on three levels: on the first, historical level Spenser describes the return of Sidney's corpse to England in a 'curious coffer made of *Heben* wood'; on the second level he describes the resurrection of Sidney's soul and its return to heaven; while on the third level, in his characterisation of Sidney as a 'Bridegroome', he offers Sidney as a Christ-like figure who presages the coming of the true Church.¹⁰⁹ Like Foxe's Acts and Monuments, Spenser's poem exploits the imagery of Revelation, interpreting Sidney as a Protestant martyr with a place in a prophesied Reformation; however, unlike Foxe, Spenser does not fit events into an historical framework provided by the Book of Revelation but becomes, like St. John himself, a visionary for whom the distinction between past, present and future has no meaning. The distinction for Spenser between the historian and the poet necessarily collapses in a way in which it did not so clearly do for Foxe nor, indeed, for William Camden, the historian whom Spenser claims to follow in the Ruines, and whom he praises for having secured the 'moniments' of Roman Britain. At the end of the poem Spenser's narrator offers his vision as a 'moniment',¹¹⁰ thus making clear his dual role both as a recorder of past events, that is, as someone who supplements existing accounts, and as a creator of 'images'; the Ruines both remembers and gives birth to a Protestant hero.

Of the three 'biographers' Greville is the only one who chooses not to use the medium of poetry for his account of Philip Sidney, yet this does not make him any less a poet in Sidney's own terms. Indeed, the Life of Sir Philip Sidney, in the final pages of which Greville depicts the generosity of the wounded Sidney, has contributed most to the myth of Philip Sidney as the ideal Renaissance courtier and soldier.¹¹¹ But Greville is also a poet in a different sense. Greville's Life is not just a 'biography' of a great Protestant hero; it is also a political treatise which uses the image of the heroic Sidney to lend authority to the international Protestant policies which it advocates. While praising Sidney for the contribution he made to the Protestant cause, Greville simultaneously attacks both the Catholic nations for their attempt to expand their influence in the New World, and the Protestant nations for their apparent lethargy. While the Protestant princes live 'fettered within the narrowness of their Estates, or humours', he complains, Spain has 'all the Western lands laid as a *Tabula Rasa* before him; to write where he pleased'.¹¹² Spain, in short, has the opportunity to 'write' the international map as it chooses. Recognising the futility of attacking the problem at its root, that is, sending a force directly to Spain, Greville suggests that the Protestant nations imitate Spain and 'plant' their own colonies in the New World. As Greville's argument for colonisation suggests, radical Protestants were as much concerned with the creation of new worlds as

they were with the rediscovery of old, and that they were, moreover, willing in the process to imitate the 'art' of their enemies.

Notes

1. John Guy, Tudor England, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University press, 1991), p.416.
2. Roger Ascham, The Schoolmaster (1570), (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967), pp.66-9.
3. Ascham, p.55.
4. Ascham, 'and I marvel this book is no more read in the court than it is, seeing it is so well translated into English by a worthy gentleman, Sir Thomas Hoby, who was many ways well furnished with learning and very expert in the knowledge of divers tongues', p.55.
5. See Hoby's epistle to Henry Hastings which prefaces the Everyman edition of the Courtier, especially pp.2-3.
6. Norbrook, p.49.
7. Caspari, p.82.
8. Caspari, p.83.
9. Breen, pp.55-6.
10. Henry Peacham, The Garden of Eloquence (1577), (Menston: The Scholar Press Ltd., 1971), Aii.r. For a discussion of sixteenth-century views on rhetoric see Brian Vickers. '"The Power of Persuasion": Images of the Orator, Elyot to Shakespeare' in James J. Murphy, Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1983), pp.411-35. Vickers suggests that in England prior to Shakespeare there was a naive assumption 'that rhetoric's primary purpose was to express thought or reveal the mind', p.417. This is a position with which I disagree. For the importance of the notion of self-expression to the Protestants see Jonas Barish, The Antitheatrical Prejudice (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1981), chapter four.
11. Ascham, p.68.
12. For an account of Sidney's career as one of Elizabeth's courtiers see Katherine Duncan-Jones, Sir Philip Sidney: Poet Courtier, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1991), and James M. Osborn, Young Philip Sidney 1572-1577, (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1974).
13. Katherine Duncan-Jones, 'Sidney and Titian', in English Renaissance Studies Presented to Helen Gardner, ed. John Carey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p.1.
14. See Osborn, chapters 22-3.

15. Dollimore, p.74. Dollimore quotes from Geoffrey Shepherd, ed. An Apology for Poetry, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1973), p.100.

16. Dollimore, p.74; Shepherd, pp.101, 109, 110. Dollimore recognises that the ambiguity in the Defence needs to be stressed for 'it concerns the ontological status of what poetry represents and, therefore, its didactic function', p.75.

17. Dollimore: 'the ambiguity found in Sidney's Arcadia can be seen as preparing the way for Bacon's subversion of idealist mimesis', p.82.

18. O.B. Hardison, 'The Two Voices of Sidney's Apology for Poetry', English Literary Renaissance, 2 (1972) p.97.

19. Philip Sidney, A Defence of Poetry, ed. Jan Van Dorsten (Oxford University Press, 1989). All quotations from the Defence will be from this edition and page numbers will be given in the text in parenthesis e.g. (24). Kahn argues that 'to learn why and how Sidney made the Apology is to imitate the activity of judgement, the decisions of decorum, that are manifest in the rhetorical structure of the work', p.41.

20. Kahn, p.189.

21. Kahn, p.188.

22. The division of the Defence into the parts of the classical oration (*exordium, narratio, propositio, partitio, confirmatio, reprehensio, peroratio*) was first made by Kenneth Myrick. He refers to the passage in which Sidney considers the state of English poetry as the digression in accordance with Cicero's advice to the orator: 'direct you, before you come to the peroration, to make a digression by way of embellishment' De Oratore trans. Watson 1860 II 19 (p.104). See Kenneth Myrick, Sir Philip Sidney as a Literary Craftsman, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1935, Rpt.1965), p.53.

23. O.B. Hardison, p.94.

24. See S.K. Heninger, who argues that the poet is constrained by the demand for naturalism: 'only the poet is exempt from strict adherence to the observed data - but even he, it may be assumed, like the metaphysician must build upon the depth of nature because even he, though lifted with the vigour of his own invention, is nonetheless required to walk hand in hand with nature. The poet's fiction must maintain a manifest relationship with actuality.' S.K. Heninger Jr., Sidney and Spenser: The Poet as Maker (University Park, London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989), p.283.

25. Both S.K. Heninger and Baxter Hathaway discuss this passage in some detail. S.K. Heninger offers two interpretations of the term 'second nature': first, that

it may be the 'sense-perceptible world that Nature oversees as the agent of God - it is "second" in the sense of *altera natura*, the physical world that projects the cosmic design ever-present in the mind of the deity'; secondly, that it signifies the fictional world of the poet. Heninger rejects outright the possibility that this term refers to a postlapsarian world, although he does not explain why, pp.298-9. Hathaway, in contrast, claims that Sidney creates a 'marvelous world' that is a 'second nature', p.89, but rather than emphasising the fictional nature of this world, he aligns Sidney with Neoplatonic critics such as Scaliger: 'we can just as well say that the poetic concept that the poet creates is a cosmos with its own laws of government, so that a poet must create a Platonic ideal world by his creative imagination, not merely by sprucing up the ordinary world around us', Marvels and Commonplaces: Renaissance Literary Criticism (New York: Random House, 1968), p.96.

26. Niccolo Machiavelli, The Discourses of Niccolo Machiavelli, trans. Leslie J. Walker (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950), p.238.

27. For a discussion of Machiavelli's conception of history reading as 'a test of judgement' see Timothy Hampton, Writing From History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1990), p.69.

28. William Caxton, Caxton's Blanchardyn and Eglantine c.1489. From Lord Spencer's unique imperfect copy, completed by the original French and the second English version of 1595, ed, Leon Kellner (London: Early English Text Society, 1890), p.15.

29. For a discussion of the metaphysical reality of the Elizabethan poetic image see Rosamond Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery: Renaissance Poetic and Twentieth-Century Critics, (Chicago: Phoenix Books, University of Chicago Press, 1961), p.35.

30. Serres argues that images which are eikastike '"delight while teaching, and they teach with genuine honesty, since they are contained in a praiseworthy subject matter"' while an image which is phantastike '"spreads muck as it chooses, and by its seductions introduces many false and vicious things into the souls of men"', see S.K. Heninger Jr., 'Sidney and Serranus' Plato', English Literary Renaissance 13 (1983), p.151.

31. Heninger (1983), p.154.

32. Aristotle, 'The Poetics', Complete Works, 1454b1.

33. Aristotle, 'The Physics', Complete Works, 199a15.

34. Hathaway suggests that while '"counterfeiting" (*contraffare*) could mean imitating closely, realistically [...] it could mean creating an imaginary world', p.56.

35. Geraldini Cintio makes a similar argument in 'An Address to the Reader by the Tragedy of Orbecche'. For him 'false art' is art which similarly appears to be incredible, Tuve, p.38.

36. Annibale Romei, The Courtiers Academie (London) (1598), trans. I. Kepers (New York, Amsterdam: Da Capo Press, 1969), p.187.

37. 'I am a Dudlei in blood that Duke's daughters son and do acknowledg though in all truth I mai justli affirm that I am by my fathers syde of ancient and allwaies well esteemed and welmatched gentry yet do I acknowledg I sai that my cheefest honor is to be a Dudlei and truli am glad to have caws to sett foorth the nobility of that blood whereof I am descended which but uppon so just caws without vain glori could not have been uttred since no man but his fellow of invincible shamelessness woold ever have cald so palpable a matter in question. See 'The Defence of Leicester' in Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Philip Sidney: The Defence of Poesie, Political Discourses, Correspondence, Translations, ed. Albert Feuillerat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), p.65-6.

38. George Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie, eds, Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), p.144.

39. Katherine Barnes was one of the first critics to note the ironic tone of Sidney's voice in the Defence. See Catherine Barnes, 'The hidden persuader: The Complex Speaking Voice of Sidney's Defence of Poetry' Publications of the Modern Language Association, 86 (1971), pp.422-7.

40. H. R. Woudhuysen, 'Leicester's Literary Patronage: A Study of the English Court 1578-1582', unpublished D. Phil dissertation, Oxford 1980, pp.259-60. Woudhuysen makes two other points on this important issue: first, that the quarrel on the tennis court between Sidney and the Earl of Oxford was not simply a conflict between 'supporters and opponents of the marriage, or Roman Catholics and Protestants, but between the ancient and the ennobled, the comparatively new and undistinguished, the nobility against the gentry'; and secondly, that both Henry Sidney and the Earl of Leicester had used Robin Cooke to create for them spurious family pedigrees, pp.259-60.

41. Aristotle, 'The Poetics', Complete Works, 1455a23-5. Donald Clark argues that 'Sidney is the first in England to insist on the vividness of realization which comes from the poet himself being moved'. He suggests Aristotle, Quintilian and Scaliger (Poetice) as the sources for Sidney's concept of 'energia'. This 'vivifying quality', he argues, 'had survived the middle ages, and appears in Wilson's Arte of Rhetorique as "an evident declaration of a thing, as though we saw it even

now done"', see Donald Lemen Clark, Rhetoric and Poetry in the Renaissance: A Study of Rhetorical Terms in English Renaissance Literary Criticism, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1922), p.85.

42. Contrast Sidney's attitude to imitation with that of Cintio, who argues that the 'light of judgement' should guide the poet in his composition. This judgement can be acquired in two ways: either by talking with learned men or by diligent reading. Poets must carefully follow the best writers, not only because this will 'stimulate the judgement' but because it will 'stimulate the young poet to practice composition'. Cintio explains that the reader will catch the activity' of the poet who wrote 'and it will awaken in him a flame that little by little will set his mind on fire and fill him with the fury that the Greeks call enthusiasm'. The reader will then feel urged to put pen to paper. 'On the Composition of Romances', in Allan H Gilbert, ed., Literary Criticism: From Plato to Dryden, (New York, Cincinnati, Chicago, Boston, Atlanta, Dallas, San Francisco: American Book Company, 1940), p.265.

43. Kahn, p.41. On the use of analysis in Elizabethan reading practices see also Duhamel's discussion of Elizabethan rhetoric, which includes John Brinsley's description of the way in which classroom reading should be undertaken: '"In the first Margent, towards the left hand, together with the severall parts of the Theams (as Exordium, Narratio, Confirmatio, Confutatio, and Conclusio, being set in great letters over against each part) to set also the heads if [sic] the severall arguments; chiefly against the confirmation as causa effectum: like as Aphthonius doth set his places a causa, a contrario. And in the latter side of the page, towards the right hand, to set the severall tropes or figures"'. pp.135-6 - quoted from E.T. Campagnac, ed., 'John Brinsley's Ludus Literarius' (Liverpool, 1917), p.185 in P. Albert Duhamel, 'Sidney's Arcadia and Elizabethan Rhetoric', Studies in Philology 45 (1948), pp.134-150.

44. Hutson, (1994), p.107.

45. Hutson, (1993), p.89.

46. Hutson, (1993), p.93.

47. Lisa Jardine and Grafton, Anthony: '"Studied for Action": How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy', in Past and Present 1990 Nos. 126-129, p. 37.

48. T. Livii Patavini, Romanae historiae principis, decades tres, cum dimidia (Basle, 1555), p.93. Cited by Lisa Jardine and Grafton, Anthony, (1990), p. 36.

49. Jardine and Grafton, (1990), p.40.

50. 'Letter to Denny' in Osborn, p.539. Jardine and Grafton notice that Sidney's advice to Denny to practice

'Arithmetike, which sportingly you may exercise" [is] echoed in Harvey's "To be read with diligent studie, but sportingly, as [Sidney] termed it" in his copy of Sacrobosco'. They claim that Harvey saw Sidney's letter, and that he may even have written it, p.39.

51. Walter R. Reichelt, 'Sir Philip Sidney's Reading Lists and Sixteenth Century English Education', unpublished Ph.D Dissertation Columbia University 1977, p.26.

52. Kahn, p.188.

53. see Joseph M. Levine, Humanism and History: Origins of Modern English Historiography, (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1987), p.38.

54. Amiot's preface, in Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans, (1579) vol. 1 (London, 1895), p.11.

55. Amiot, pp.13-4.

56. Amiot, p.12.

57. Amiot, p.17.

58. Elyot, pp.24-5.

59. Amiot, p.10.

60. Amiot, p.11.

61. Amiot, p.10.

62. Elizabeth Story Donno, 'Old Mouse-eaten Records: History in Sidney's Apology', Studies in Philology, 72 (1975), p.298.

63. For a discussion of the relationship between rhetoric and history in the Renaissance see Nancy S. Struever, The Language of History in the Renaissance; Rhetorical and Historical Consciousness in Florentine Humanism, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970). See also Nancy Struever, 'Topics in History', History and Theory, Beiheft 19 (1980) pp.66-79.

64. For Sidney's and Languet's mocking references to Lhuyd see Osborn, pp.140, 141, 146, 147, 150.

65. For Camden's contempt for Geoffrey of Monmouth see F.J. Levy, 'The Making of Camden's Britannia', Bibliothèque D'Humanisme et Renaissance, 26 (1964), pp.70-97. Levy claims that Sidney encouraged Camden while at Oxford to write a history (Camden and Sidney shared Thomas Thornton and Thomas Cooper as tutors at Oxford), p.83.

66. Hutson's argument that Valla's declamation on the Donation of Constantine attracted humanists not simply because it exposed a medieval forgery but because it reveals the techniques it uses for establishing the probability of its own argument seems relevant to me here, see p.3.

67. Edmund Spenser, A View of the Present State of Ireland, ed. W.L. Renwick (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p.39.

68. The letters Sidney received from his mentor Hugh Languet are an important indication of the high regard in which he was held by his contemporaries, and of the contribution he was expected to make to the Protestant Cause: 'God has bestowed mental powers on you which I do not believe have fallen to anyone else I know, and he has done so not for you to abuse them in exploring vanities at great risk, but for you to put them in the service of your country, and of all good men' (letter to Sidney, June 11, 1574), Osborn, p.204.

69. Eleanor Rosenberg, Leicester: Patron of Letters, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), p.139.

70. For a detailed account of the passage of the Bill of Sedition (1581) see J.E. Neale, Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments 1559-1581, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1953).

71. Alan Sinfield, Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p.184.

72. Feuillerat, pp.51-60.

73. For an account of the importance of the Psalms to the Protestants see the introduction to Philip Sidney and Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, The Psalms of Sir Philip Sidney and the Countess of Pembroke, ed. J.C.A. Rathmall (New York: New York University Press, 1963).

74. See Campion's letter to John Bavand: 'a few months ago Philip Sidney came from England to Prague, magnificently provided. He had much conversation with me - I hope not in vain, for to all appearance he was most eager. I commend him to your sacrifices, for he asked the prayers of all good men, and at the same time put into my hands some alms to be distributed to the poor for him, which I have done. Tell this to Dr Nicholas Sanders, because if any one of our labourers sent into the vineyard from the Douai seminary has an opportunity of watering this plant, he may watch the occasion for helping a poor wavering soul. If this young man, so wonderfully beloved and admired by his countrymen, chances to be converted, he will astonish his noble father, the Deputy of Ireland, his uncles, the Dudleys, and all young courtiers, and Cecil himself. Let it be kept secret'. Quoted in Duncan-Jones, (1991), p.125-6.

75. Fulke Greville goes to great lengths to read the Arcadia as a political allegory; he also suggests that this was a youthful work, adding 'that when [Sidney's] body declined, and his piercing inward powers were lifted to a purer Horizon, he then discovered, not onely the imperfection, but vanitie of these shadowes, how daintily soever limned', Life of Sir Philip Sidney, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), p.16.

76. Stephen Gosson, Markets of Bawdrie: The Dramatic Criticism of Stephen Gosson, ed. Arthur F. Kinney (Salzburg: Salzburg Studies in English Literature, 1974), p.89.

77. Gosson, p.178.

78. Recent interest among Renaissance critics in the theme of cross-dressing has tended to focus on issues of gender at the expense of religious concerns. For example, although Laura Levine's insightful article points out that the anti-theatrical tracts 'appear to revolve around the anxiety that there is no such thing as a stable identity', p.126, she explores this concern only in relation to gender determination. 'Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminisation from 1579-1642', Criticism 28 (1986) 121-43.

79. Gosson, p.90.

80. Gosson, p.106.

81. E.E. Reynolds, Campion and Parsons: The Jesuit Mission of 1580-1, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1980), p.34.

82. Ascham, p.67.

83. For example, Robert Parsons arrived in England 'disguised as an army captain in a uniform of buff trimmed with gold braid, and a hat with a feather in it', Reynolds, p.68.

84. For the disrobing of Duessa see I viii 46-49 of the Faerie Queene, and for examples of Archimago's story telling see I i 29-32 and the first canto of Book II, Edmund Spenser, The Faerie Queene, ed. A.C. Hamilton (London, New York: Longman, 1977).

85. [William Elderton], 'A Triumph for True Subjects' (1581) in Old English Ballads, ed. Hyder E. Rollins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920), p.67 from Carol I. Weiner, 'The Beleaguered Isle, A Study of Elizabethan and Early Jacobean Anti-Catholicism', Past and Present, 51 (1971), p. 43.

86. Greville, (1907), p.82.

87. Alan Sinfield, Literature in Protestant England 1560-1660 (London, Canberra: Croom Helm; Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1983), p.21.

88. Sinfield, (1983), p.21.
89. Sinfield, (1983), p.23-4.
90. Andrew D. Weiner, 'Moving and Teaching: Sidney's Defence of Poetry as a Protestant Poetic', The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 22 (1972), p.92.
91. For an account of Gosson's educational background see the introduction to Markets.
92. Gosson, p.82.
93. Fulke Greville, 'A Treatise on Human Learning' in Poems and Dramas of Fulke Greville, First Lord Brooke, ed. Geoffrey Bullough (Edinburgh, London: Oliver and Boyd, 1939), stanza 111.
94. Greville, (1939), stanza 114.
95. See chapter three, F.J. Levy, Tudor Historical Thought, (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1967).
96. John Foxe, The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe, vol 1 ed. Rev. Stephen Reed Cattley (London: R.B. Seeley and W. Burnside, 1839), p.7.
97. See margins of the Book of Revelation in the Geneva Bible (London: Christopher Barker, 1582), especially Revelation xiii.
98. Foxe, p.4.
99. Foxe, p.503.
100. This is the view of Levy, (1967), pp.102-3.
101. John R. Knott, Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563-1694, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.70. Foxe's own interest in emotive rhetoric will be explored in chapter four.
102. In her biography of Sidney Duncan-Jones stresses his volatile temperament. For a more iconoclastic enquiry into Philip Sidney's image see Alan Hager's chapter, 'The Exemplary Mirage: Fabrication of Sir Philip Sidney's Biographical Image and the Sidney Reader' in Dennis Kay's edition, Sir Philip Sidney: An Anthology of Modern Criticism, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987), pp.45-60.
103. Hager, p.54.
104. Edmund Spenser, 'The Ruines of Time' in The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser, eds William A. Oram, Einar Bjorvand, Ronald Bord, Thomas H. Cain, Alexander Dunlop and Richard Schell (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1989), p.230.

105. Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, 'To the Thrice Sacred Queen Elizabeth' in Mary R. Mahl and Helene Koon eds, The Female Spectator: English Women Writers Before 1800, (Bloomington, London: Indiana University Press; Old Westbury, New York: The Feminist Press, 1977), p.69.

106. Margaret P. Hannay, Philip's Phoenix: Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.151.

107. Mary Sidney, Psalms, p. xxxv-viii.

108. Spenser, 'Ruines', p.258.

109. Spenser, 'Ruines', p.260.

110. Spenser, 'Ruines', p.261.

111. 'The scene has been described scores of times, but despite the familiar details the most obdurate heart will melt at Fulke Greville's account of the scene which he witnessed', Osborn, p.145.

112. Greville, (1907), p.86.

CHAPTER THREE

Sidney's 'Fiery Speeches': The Art of Being in Love

Sidney's Defence of Poetry is a useful introduction to his literary writings, and especially to Astrophil and Stella and the old Arcadia, with which it is roughly contemporaneous. For the principal heroes of these fictions, namely Astrophil and Pyrocles, are, I will argue in this chapter, fictional versions of the ideal reader described by Sidney in the 'digression' of the Defence. Although both Astrophil and Pyrocles participate in love plots, in each case the relationship between lover and beloved explored in the narrative also dramatises the theory of imitation outlined in A Defence of Poetry, which is itself inspired by Cicero's De Oratore as mediated through the influence of Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier. Thus, Astrophil and Pyrocles treat their respective beloveds as texts which influence them, as well as women whom they, in turn, seek to influence; what they learn from their reading of their beloveds is the importance of a charming and graceful self-presentation to the creation of credible fictions. In order to achieve graceful self-presentation the two lovers disguise the sexual nature of their desire, by representing their sexual energy as a kind of divine fury, and the studied, as opposed to

spontaneous, nature of their self-expression, by making their words and actions seem to be inspired by the beauty of their beloved. Moreover, the style of these two fictional texts is also reminiscent of the style of the Defence and, in turn, the style of De Oratore or the Courtier: we not only respond to the persuasive rhetoric of Astrophil and Pyrocles but watch them in the act of creating credible fictions in much the same way that we watch Cicero's Antonius or Castiglione's Count Lewis demonstrate the way in which seemingly inspired discourse or actions can be fashioned. Sidney employs this pedagogic style in the political arena as well as in erotic narrative. In the final section of this chapter I shall examine the letter Sidney wrote to Queen Elizabeth in 1580, and explore the way in which Sidney's ironic style becomes a tool for both creating and unmasking political fictions in much the same way that the ironic style of Octavian in Book IV of the Courtier enabled him to augment and to undermine the power of the prince, suggesting that his supposedly divinely-authorized position is actually rhetorically constructed.

3a. Creating Credible Personae

(i) Astrophil

Since Sidney's sonnet sequence Astrophil and Stella was written in 1582, the same year as the Defence, it is not surprising to find that Sidney puts into practice there the literary theory outlined in his theoretical treatise.¹ Indeed, Sidney's persona Astrophil can be considered to be an example of the ideal reader depicted

in the Defence, the reader who learns from the models he imitates how to create credible fictions. But Sidney's sequence is not just a literary example of the poetic theory outlined in the Defence; indeed, like the Defence it is itself a pedagogic work which teaches through demonstration a poetics based on the concealment of its rhetorical technique. In this respect Sidney can be said to imitate in Astrophil and Stella the style of Cicero's De Oratore and Orator, and to inherit from these treatises an ironic style of presentation. Although one of the more important sources for Sidney's sonnet sequence is Petrarch's Canzoniere, in which antithesis, inversion and oxymoron are conventional devices used to convey the experience of being in love, the contradictions evident in Astrophil and Stella, like those in Cicero's treatises, also owe something to an inherent tension between its pedagogic aims and method. For Sidney's sequence, while seemingly intent on giving voice to turbulent emotions, is concerned simultaneously to show how an impression of such emotional turmoil can be achieved by means of the concealment of rhetorical techniques. Because of its pedagogic aim, and its partial revelation of its method, however, we are left unsure about the representational status of its images: that is, whether Astrophil's speech reflects Sidney's actual emotional state, or whether Sidney has instead created with the aid of his art a persuasive fiction which is meant to be taken as a reflection of his emotional state.

The tension between truthfulness and truth-likeness, and the concern with literary imitation, are themes which are introduced at the very beginning of the sequence. In the first sonnet Astrophil reveals that his interest lies as much in the production of credible love poetry (the 'fiery speeches' of the Defence) as with the object of love itself. Rather than beginning his sequence with praise of his mistress, Astrophil tells us instead about his attempts at poetic composition and his experience of writer's block. In order to find 'fit words to paint the blackest face of woe' - in other words, to communicate his despair - Astrophil tells us that he tried initially to imitate the 'inventions fine' of other poets, hoping that 'thence would flow/Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburnt brain'.² But the attempt proves unsuccessful: 'Invention, nature's child', he claims, 'fled step-dame study's blows'. It is not until he is finally encouraged by his muse to 'look in [his] heart, and write' that he appears to find relief for his pent-up emotions. The exhortation from Astrophil's muse resembles the advice given to the reader of A Defence of Poetry, the text in which Sidney berates contemporary love poets for imitating their literary predecessors instead of using their 'own' emotions to inspire their writing. It also resembles the advice of Protestant moralists such as Stephen Gosson; for as Jonas Barish observes, in their attacks on the theatre Protestant moralists are motivated by a belief in the importance of expressing one's 'essence': 'one has only to descend into

one's own being, consult one's deepest feelings, and report them honestly to the world'.³

The appearance of a strong personal element in Astrophil and Stella is greatly augmented by the ease with which several sonnets seem to lend themselves to topical interpretation, making Astrophil, for some critics, a straightforward pseudonym for Sidney himself.⁴ For example, sonnets 24, 35, and 37, each of which plays with the adjective and proper noun 'Rich', are clearly meant to invoke the name of Lord Rich, the husband of Penelope Devereux (assumed to be the Stella of the sonnet sequence); while sonnet 33, in which Astrophil laments his failure to love Stella when he had the possibility of realising his desire ('I might (unhappy word), O me, I might,/And then would not, or could not, see my bliss') accords with the knowledge we have of his relationship with Penelope: Penelope's father, Walter Devereux, the first Earl of Essex, had suggested a match between Sidney and his daughter on his death bed in 1576, a proposal in which Sidney appears at that time to have shown little interest.⁵ Other sonnets depict a world which would have been familiar to Sidney: in sonnet 30, for example, Sidney refers to the affairs of state in the Netherlands, in Ulster, and at the Scottish court, in all of which Sidney and his family had a political interest.⁶

In what sense, however, is Astrophil a mask for Sidney? It is difficult to gauge the extent to which Astrophil actually represents Sidney's feelings and thoughts because Astrophil is as much an ironic mask as a

pseudonym for Sidney. The first sonnet of the sequence, which begins 'Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show', seems to suggest two ideas: on the one hand, that Sidney is genuinely in love and wishes to express this experience through a persona 'Astrophil'; on the other hand, as an interpretation of the word 'fain' as a pun on 'feign' suggests, that Sidney may be genuinely in love and may wish to express this experience, but recognises that there is a great difference between actual experience and its poetic representation - in which case Astrophil is not so much a pseudonym as a character through which Sidney explores the issue of literary expression. Indeed, as Astrophil continues, describing how he 'sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe', it becomes even clearer that Sidney is concerned in this sequence not just with writing about love, but with the 'why and how' of writing credible love poetry. Sidney's sensitive recognition of the fact that there is no necessary connection between experiencing real emotion and being able to present oneself persuasively as someone who is experiencing real emotion is nowhere better expressed than in sonnet 45. Here, Astrophil notes that although Stella often sees 'the very face of woe/Painted in my beclouded stormy face' she remains unmoved, whereas when she hears a fable about lovers her 'tears' springs did flow'. Since fictional suffering is more successful in moving Stella than real suffering, Astrophil urges Stella to consider 'that you in me do read/Of lover's ruin some sad tragedy:/I am not

I, pity the tale of me'. Because of such instances of ambiguity we need to be careful not to equate Astrophil with Sidney. As Maurice Evans has warned Sidney's readers, the "personal" mode of poetry represents to Elizabethans a dramatic exercise in first-person writing rather than the exposure of the poet's bleeding heart'; 'unlike romantic poetry', he adds, 'the object of the sonnet is ritual and ceremonial rather than autobiographical', and this, for him, is nowhere more true than in Sidney's sequence.⁷ This is a view shared by Richard B. Young: commenting on Astrophil's apparent allusion to Sidney's heraldic arms ('a blue arrow on a gold background') in the final line of sonnet 65, 'Thou bear'st the arrow, I the arrow head', Young remarks that the identification of Astrophil with Sidney here 'is a means by which Sidney, the real historical figure, in a sense lends his reality to Astrophil, the dramatic character, as a kind of concrete "existential" value'.⁸ Astrophil is not to be confused with Sidney; rather, Sidney lends his character Astrophil details from his own life in an attempt to enliven him. The autobiographical details in the sequence thus function in a similar way to the lawyer's technique of 'naming' imaginary figures, which (Sidney explains in the Defence) helps 'to make [the] picture the more lively' (53).

Sidney's sonnet sequence is concerned primarily, it seems, with the issue of imitation, that is, with the question of how to portray emotions convincingly. In the first sonnet Astrophil rejects the imitative techniques

of his peers, preferring truthful *self-expression*. Astrophil's rejection of Petrarchanism is made explicit in sonnet 15: he attacks those who 'poor Petrarch's long-deceased woes/With new-born sighs and denized wit do sing'; 'You take wrong ways', he tells them, 'those far-fet helps be such/As do bewray a want of inward touch'. His anti-Petrarchanism is evident also in sonnet 6, where Astrophil distinguishes himself from those lovers who 'speak'

Of hopes begot by fear, of wot not what desires,
Of force of heavenly beams, infusing hellish pain,
Of living deaths, dear wounds, fair storms and
freezing fires.

In contrast to these artificial poets, who clumsily reproduce the conceits of Petrarch, Astrophil is able to 'speak what I feel'. Thus, while the 'tears' of one poet help him to 'pour out his ink' Astrophil claims instead that 'all the map of my state I display,/When trembling voice brings forth, that I do Stella love'. Astrophil affects a similar poetic independence and simplicity in sonnet 2. Having been told by his muse in the previous sonnet to 'look in thy heart, and write' Astrophil begins the second sonnet with a poetically unconventional but seemingly more truthful account of the burgeoning of his love for Stella: 'Not at first sight, nor with a dribbed shot,/ Love gave the wound [...] /I saw, and I liked; I liked, but loved not'. (This contrasts nicely with the account of love at first sight given by Petrarch in the third sonnet of the Canzoniere: 'your eyes, lady, caught and held me fast'.⁹) In sonnet 54 Astrophil defends his unconventionality, scorning the court ladies interested

only in what he considers to be superficial tokens of love. 'Because I breathe not love to every one,/Nor do not use set colours for to wear', Astrophil complains, the ladies of the court believe '"He cannot love"'. 'Dumb swans', he rebukes them, 'not chattering pies, do lovers prove;/They love indeed, who quake to say they love'. And in sonnet 74 he proudly declares his independence from classical sources: 'I never drank of Aganippe well,/Nor ever did in shade of Tempe sit'.

Astrophil's anti-Petrarchanism, however, is itself conventional. As Richard B. Young has observed, it had become a convention 'by the time of the Pléiade, to deny any Petrarch affiliations', while simultaneously following Petrarch closely.¹⁰ Sidney's debt to Petrarch is clear; like Petrarch he offers a blazon of his mistress's beautiful features (sonnet 9), he intersperses sonnets with songs, and he usually uses the Italian rhyme scheme, modifying it only with the adoption of the final couplet introduced into the English sonnet by Thomas Wyatt. Moreover, despite Astrophil's claim in sonnet 6 to disavow Petrarchan antithesis, his own sequence ends, with sonnet 108, with just such a device: 'in my woes for thee thou art my joy/And in my joys for thee my only annoy'. Even Astrophil's claim to speak from the heart is Petrarchan. In sonnet 252 Petrarch claims that if he could have anticipated the popularity of his sonnets he would have 'made them from the earliest time/In count more copious, in style more rare', rather than singing 'in hope but of relieving/My heavy burden, trusting

thereby merely/To ease my heart'.¹¹ Moreover, Astrophil has also inherited from Petrarch an interest in creating the appearance of personal expression. For Petrarch is as concerned to create the impression of natural eloquence as he is to express himself naturally. As we observed in chapter one, in his letters Petrarch echoes approvingly the imitative advice given by Antonius in Cicero's De Oratore, and thus throws light on the self-consciousness of his aiming at the appearance of naturalness in his own literary expression: 'I won't say that he will avoid all imitation', he writes to Boccaccio about the imitative practice of his scribe, 'but he will conceal it, so that his work won't resemble any particular author but will appear to bring Italy something new out of the work of the ancients'.¹² Sidney, then, can be seen to be continuing a tradition which is promoted by Cicero, and practised by Petrarch himself: Astrophil's claim in sonnet 74 that 'I never drank of Aganippe well', rather like Antonius's claim about the naturalness of his eloquence disguises the rhetorical construction of his expression.

Petrarch is one of the writers considered to herald the beginning of the Renaissance, and one of the characteristics that his sonnets possess which makes him 'worthy' of this categorisation is their apparent expression of individuality.¹³ How does Petrarch achieve this effect? The autobiographical element in Petrarch's Canzoniere has contributed to the sense of their representing a real drama, a sense which is no doubt

reinforced by the ease and elegance with which Petrarch 'conceals' the literary influences on his expression.¹⁴ But there are other devices used by Petrarch which serve to define the personal tone of his sequence, such as the very different, and more aggressive, expression of desire which can be found in some of the poems, allowing us to catch a glimpse of the complexity of the Petrarchan voice. In sonnet 12 of the Canzoniere Petrarch imagines a time when Laura has grown old, her golden hair turned gray and the light in her eyes dimmed; at such a time, he claims, he would have the courage to reveal to her the extent of his suffering, and receive from her 'belated sighs'.¹⁵ Stephen Minta comments on the emotional complexity of this sonnet: 'on one level', he observes, 'the poet is playing an entirely passive role' which is intended to elicit the reader's sympathy; 'on another level', however, 'the poem can be read as a sonnet of biting reproach', implying that Laura will one day regret having rejected him.¹⁶ In the first sestina of the sequence Petrarch reveals once again a more assertive and complex 'self' than his adopted petitioning role usually allows: he imagines an occasion when he is alone with Laura 'And she not free to change, or with green wood/To blend and 'scape my arms, as on the day/When Phoebus chased her here below on earth'.¹⁷ Unlike Phoebus, who was frustrated in his attempt to rape Daphne when she turned into a laurel (*lauro*), Petrarch imagines the full sexual conquest of his Laura. A similar shift from a position of passive adoration to one of more threatening

self-assertion can be found in Astrophil and Stella. In the second song Astrophil's love affair reaches a crisis, when Astrophil steals a kiss from the sleeping Stella. (Astrophil is encouraged to take such a liberty when, by a sudden change in his fortunes, Stella begins to look more favourably on his suit.) Astrophil's response to the anger of the disturbed Stella, however, is ironic self-chastisement, not self-abasement or repentance - 'Fool, more fool, for no more taking'. In the tenth song Astrophil imagines a sexual encounter similar to that described by Petrarch in his first sestina:

Think of my most princely power,
When I, blessed, shall devour
With my greedy lickerous senses,
Beauty, music, sweetness, love,
While she doth against me prove
Her strong darts but weak defences.

Like the normally subservient lover of the Canzoniere, Astrophil imagines an inversion of the power relations, fantasizing rape. The political imagery of the tenth song can be found in other poems in the sequence. In the fifth song Stella is portrayed both as a tyrannical prince who needs to be deposed ('I lay then to thy charge, unjustest tyranny') and a subject who has rebelled against 'nature's law' ('Thou, sweetest subject, wert born in the realm of love,/And yet against thy prince thy force dost daily prove'). In sonnet 69, the sonnet which marks the first turning point in Astrophil's fortunes, he declares that Stella has 'Of her high heart giv'n me the monarchy', and he thus revokes her supposed sovereignty as depicted in sonnet 40.

In sonnet 30, as we have seen, Sidney refers to

political events in the Netherlands, Ireland and Scotland which would have been familiar to his readers, and which thereby invite us to identify *Astrophil* with Sidney. It is not surprising, considering the familiarity of the political context referred to in this sonnet, that critics have felt justified in searching for clues in the sequence as a whole to Sidney's own political interests, and that an alternative tradition of biographical reading, one which takes Elizabeth I, rather than Penelope Devereux, as Stella's alter ego, has been created. Arthur Marotti observes that when Sidney wrote *Astrophil* and *Stella* his position at court had been much weakened: 'after a prodigious start in national and international politics and diplomacy he had been marked as an ambitious and irresponsible radical Protestant.'¹⁸ The bold letter which Sidney wrote to Elizabeth in 1580 denouncing her entertaining of Alençon's courtship had led, Marotti concludes, to Sidney's political exile and his years of retreat at Wilton. One other reason for Sidney's change of fortune is suggested by his biographer James Osborn, who recounts how, in 1577, William of Orange offered him the hand in marriage of his daughter Marie of Nassau. 'If Philip Sidney became Lord Governor of Holland and Zeeland', Osborn speculates, 'he would emerge from the Dutch wars as a leader on whom the Lowlanders would ultimately bestow sovereignty. He would then become the Dudley candidate for Elizabeth's own throne'. It was Elizabeth's suspicion of a Dudley conspiracy which led, he suggests, to the sudden alteration in her attitude to, and treatment of, Sidney,

and to the end of his political good fortune.¹⁹ Other critics have seen in Astrophil and Stella a different version of Sidney's response to his loss of favour. In a reply to Marotti's article, Maureen Quilligan comments on the prevalent tone of masculine sexual domination in the sequence. Although she accepts that the frustration expressed at the end of the sequence (made all the more notable by contrast with the spiritual solution offered by Petrarch at the end of the Canzoniere) 'may repeat Sidney's public defeat in politics' she argues that 'by the same token, it is the author's control over Stella as a (silent) character in his plot which enacts his masculine, social mastery and redistribution of power'.²⁰ Quilligan sees Astrophil's rhetorical manipulation of Stella in much the same way that Joan Kelly interprets the championing of Neoplatonic love by Castiglione's character Bembo in Book IV of the Courtier, as an attempt to control 'discursively' political events which are actually beyond his control.²¹

However, this kind of topical allegorising, though thought-provoking, is more problematic than the older, more traditional biographical reading which took Stella to be the pseudonym for Penelope Devereux, for it is not clearly authorised by the text itself. But the plot of Astrophil and Stella can also be seen to dramatise a very different kind of relationship from the one suggested by either of the two autobiographical readings, a 'rhetorical' relationship rather like the one we discovered in A Defence of Poetry between the imitated text and its imitating reader, or that between Pugliano

and Sidney. For, in the love plot of Astrophil and Stella Astrophil exemplifies the imitative theory of the Defence: how the reader who is moved by the text he reads can use that emotional state rhetorically in such a way as to create his own credible, and moving, self-expression. What we see in Astrophil is a character who learns from his experience of being influenced by his beloved how to become influential himself. This particular reading of Astrophil and Stella is encouraged in the sequence itself: not only does Astrophil declare his interest in the creation of credible love poetry at the beginning of the sequence, immediately suggesting the close ties between Sidney's literary practice and his literary theory as exemplified by the Defence, but the sequence itself contains many images of Stella as a text, and as the source for Astrophil's eloquence. In sonnet 3 Astrophil rejects the imitative techniques of his peers, claiming that he is inspired by the beauty of his beloved: 'in Stella's face I read/What love and beauty be; then all my deed/But copying is, what in her nature writes'. In sonnet 15 Astrophil complains that those who try to resurrect 'Petrarch's long-deceased woes' 'bewray a want of inward touch', and he advises his fellows to look at Stella instead 'and then begin to endite'. In sonnet 67 Stella is the 'fair text' in the 'blushing notes' of whose 'margin' Astrophil detects the basis of his hopes. In sonnet 56 Astrophil yearns to 'read those letters fair of bliss,/Which in her face teach virtue'.

Finally, in the eighth song Astrophil celebrates 'Stella, in whose body is/Writ each character of bliss'.

There are two ways of interpreting Stella's literary influence in the sequence: either she inspires Astrophil in much the same way that the beauty of Phaedrus supposedly inspires the eloquence of Plato's Socrates, or she teaches him by her own example rhetorical techniques for the creation of seemingly inspired expression. As the description of Stella's beauty in sonnet 3 suggests, the former would seem to be the case; Astrophil's task is to imitate 'what in [Stella] nature writes'. Similarly, in sonnet 90, Astrophil attributes his success to the inspiration of Stella herself: 'nothing from my wit or will does flow,/Since all my words thy beauty does endite,/And love doth hold my hand, and makes me write'. Astrophil's Platonism is further reinforced in sonnet 25, in which Astrophil gives an account of the Platonic doctrine of beauty. Astrophil explains that Plato believes 'That virtue, if once met with our eyes,/Strange flames of love it in our souls would raise', and that the man held captive by his senses never 'will, nor can, behold those skies/Which inward sun to heroic mind displays'. In view of his experience of being in love with Stella, Astrophil concludes that 'Virtue's great beauty in that face I prove,/And find the effect, for I do burn in love'. In sonnets such as this one, Stella is the sun or 'star' which inspires his expression in much the same way that the 'sun' in Plato's allegory of the cave authors the images of the visible world, or the

analogous visible beauty of Phaedrus inspires Socrates's eloquence. In sonnet 1 Astrophil searches vainly in the compositions of his friends hoping that 'thence would flow/Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburnt brain'; and it is not until the end of the sonnet that he recognises that the source of his 'sunburn' is also the source of his poetic relief. But Stella also seems to influence Astrophil in the second, rhetorical sense. In Cicero's De Oratore the 'sun', and its tanning properties, are used to indicate the kind of effects at which he thinks the orator should aim. His character Antonius suggests that 'colours' or figures of rhetoric should be acquired, or should seem to have been acquired, in much the same way that the sun unobtrusively tans skin (II xiv 60). In the Renaissance Cicero's simile survives as an example of the kind of imitative techniques which produce apparently natural expression: in Arte of Rhetorique Thomas Wilson compares writers who unconsciously assimilate, rather than acquire by active study, techniques for speaking eloquently to those who 'walke muche in the sonne, and thinke not of it, [but] are yet for the most part sonne burnt'.²² When Astrophil claims to be 'sunburnt' by Stella, he indicates that he is inspired not only by Stella's divinely authored beauty, but by the effects of her physical charms, and these effects, I suggest, are akin to the ornaments of the rhetorical art itself. Indeed, we need to remember that Astrophil burns not with the intellectual ambition of Socrates but with the desire of unfulfilled sexual

passion, that is, with the desire for the 'image' of Stella (consider, for example, sonnet 5: although Astrophil recognises that his 'eyes are formed to serve/The inward light', and that 'what we call Cupid's dart,/An image is, which for ourselves we carve', he suddenly abandons his assumed iconoclasm: 'True; and yet true, that I must Stella love'). The desire he describes in the tenth song to 'devour' Stella with his 'greedy lickerous senses', thus, is both a sexual fantasy and a poetic one: Astrophil aspires to attain not only sexual fulfilment but the ecstatic poetic expression which will give him power over his reader - the type of expression, that is, which is derived, as we learnt in A Defence of Poetry, from swallowing one's models 'whole' (70).

Astrophil is inspired by Stella, thus, in much the same way that Antonius is affected by the philosophical treatises he reads for his pleasure at Misenum, prompted 'unconsciously' by them to recognise not philosophical 'truths', which, in turn, inform his eloquence, but rather a method of dissimulation which helps to create an effect of genuine, or seemingly truthful, expression. This is nowhere clearer than in sonnet 58. In this sonnet Astrophil wonders whether an orator gains 'sovereignty' over 'men's hearts' by carefully choosing his words 'Clothed with fine tropes, with strongest reasons lined' or by 'pronouncing grace, wherewith his mind/Prints his own lively form in rudest brain'. What Astrophil sets out to test in this sonnet, and actually confirms, is the validity of the claim made by Antonius

in De Oratore that the favour of an audience will be won more easily if they are 'so affected as to be swayed by something resembling a mental impulse or emotion, rather than by judgement or deliberation' (II xlii 178).²³

Astrophil's answer is offered in the form of an example. He explains that he wrote 'in piercing phrases late/The anatomy of all [his] woes' which he then gave to Stella to read. When she reads his 'sad words' back to him Astrophil is surprised to find that her 'sweet breath' breeds in him the 'most ravishing delight'; his 'speech's might' is overthrown by Stella's charming delivery.

Thus, Astrophil learns from Stella that it is by 'pronouncing grace', or rather, by delivering his words gracefully, that the orator is most persuasive, and in the sequence as a whole we see Astrophil's attempt to imitate this effect. Though it is Stella's gracefulness which 'persuades' Astrophil, that is, which makes him 'serve' her and think himself content in spite of the woefulness of his actual condition, Astrophil is not held entirely in subjection either by his mistress or by his emotions. Indeed, just as the reader envisioned in the Defence is first emotionally affected by the text he reads, and then uses that experience prudently to create his own persuasive fictions, so Astrophil is first affected by Stella's beauty, and then uses his experience of being in love pragmatically to help him create convincing love poetry. (In the next section of this chapter we will see how Sidney's character Pyrocles uses his emotions in a similarly prudent fashion.) The

obvious question which this raises is whether Sidney himself created Astrophil and Stella in a similar way: that is, whether he uses his own emotions - for example, his supposed love for Penelope Devereux - to inform his rhetorical expression. While such a practice may be suggested in sonnet 1 ('Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show'), it needs to be remembered that Astrophil is not merely Sidney's pseudonym but, as I have argued, a vividly imagined character through whom Sidney sets out to explore techniques for the creation of credible love poetry. Indeed, as Sidney suggests in the Defence, a poet does not need to be in love in order to write credibly, but he does need to be able to persuade himself that he is in love. Sidney suggests in A Defence of Poetry that this might be brought about by the act of reading love poetry itself - that is, by reading a love poem for its emotional content as well as, or instead of, for the organisation of its rhetorical strategies - as effectively as by actually experiencing the emotion of being in love itself. The feeling of being in love which informs Astrophil and Stella may reflect Sidney's actual experience of being in love with Penelope Devereux, or someone like her, but it may just as well be the product of Sidney's reading of Petrarch, and his imitators. In this case, the Stella with whom he claims to be in love in order to take on the character of Astrophil may owe as much to the Petrarchan love tradition as to any woman Sidney actually knew in 'real' life. If so, then the repeated representation of Stella

as a text might take on another significance: Stella is quite literally a textual entity - the being with which one persuades oneself that one is in love when one devours Petrarchan love poetry whole. What we see in Astrophil and Stella, I suggest, is a reconception of the techniques for creating love poetry dramatised in the form of a sequence of love poems which simultaneously redefines a poetic love convention: Sidney's fictional lovers are not helpless figures who struggle to give expression to their suffering but rhetoricians adept at assimilating and then, on this basis, creating, emotive expression.

(ii) Pyrocles

In emphasising the importance of a charming, or moving, delivery, and its attainment through the concealment of art, Astrophil can be seen to adopt what is often seen to be a rather feminine art, a notion reinforced by my suggestion that he learns these techniques from Stella herself. Such an art runs counter to the masculine rhetoric of the Renaissance, identified most recently by Lorna Hutson as a skill in the invention of probable arguments.²⁴ In this section, in which I consider Pyrocles's use of the Ciceronian art, I will consider the gendering of poetic discourse in the sixteenth century, and Sidney's attempt to defend his own poetics from the accusation of effeminacy. Rather like the courtier, who proves in Book IV of Castiglione's treatise that his seemingly effeminate skills endow him with considerable political influence, or the reader of A

Defence of Poetry, who learns from being affected by the text he reads how to create persuasive poetic expression, so the male protagonists of Sidney's fiction prove themselves to be most influential when seemingly most weak.

Our introduction to the protagonists of the old Arcadia begins in Book I with a description of their pedigree and a brief account of their education. Pyrocles, the son of Euarchus prince of Macedon, is sent to Thessalia so that he can be educated with his older cousin Musidorus while his own country is under attack by hostile neighbours (OA9).²⁵ The two young princes grow up in 'sweet emulation' of one another, 'accompanying the increase of their years with the increase of all good inward and outward qualities'; since they understand that 'the divine part of man was not enclosed in this body for nothing' they give themselves 'to those knowledges which might in the course of their life be ministers to well doing' (OA10). When they are shipwrecked on a sea voyage to Macedon many years later, they are given the opportunity to 'exercise their virtues and increase their experience' by engaging in the internal affairs of a number of states; in doing so they show their commitment to the humanist ideal of the active life, the importance of which to their early education is once again made clear in the position taken by Musidorus in the debate on love in Book I (OA12-26). However, these adventures do not lie within the scope of the story; 'how many ladies they defended from wrongs, and disinherited persons

restored to their rights', the narrator explains, 'is a work for a higher style than mine' (OA10). Having achieved success in their military and political adventures and proved themselves worthy of the title 'prince', Pyrocles and Musidorus encounter in Arcadia a very different kind of education.

Arcadia, like most of the countries through which Musidorus and Pyrocles journey, has its own internal political problems; in this case the country is not ruled by a cruel tyrant or held to ransom by giants but left ungoverned by its king Basilius. Having received an oracle from Delphi which appeared to prophesy his downfall, Basilius has relinquished his kingly responsibilities and moved himself and his family into a pastoral retreat. Musidorus and Pyrocles hear an account of the situation from their host Kerxenus, in whose house they first see a portrait of the Arcadian royal family. It is at this point that the princes' withdrawal from public life could be said to begin, at the moment when Pyrocles's eyes fall on a picture of Basilius's daughter Philoclea, whose beauty has been drawn with as great a skill as is possible (OA11). The combination of the picture and Kerxenus's story of her 'strange kind of captivity' awakens Pyrocles's compassion - a dangerous feeling for him to entertain since, as the narrator observes, 'when with pity once his heart was made tender, according to the aptness of the humour, it received straight a cruel impression of that wonderful passion [...] called love' (OA11). It is not immediately clear

whether Pyrocles has succumbed to the charms of Philoclea's represented beauty and the tragedy of the events of her life or whether he has been moved by the skill of the painter and the story-teller; what is manifest, however, is that his emotional response to the picture and story have left him vulnerable to the powerful effects of love. Pyrocles becomes a 'lover' who takes up his newly acquired position of servitude in Petrarchan fashion, like the 'spaniel' who 'gnaw[s] upon the chain that ties him, but [...] should sooner mar his teeth than procure liberty' (OA11). The old Arcadia thus begins with what appears to be Pyrocles's unexpected loss of self-mastery.

Pyrocles's falling in love works an immediate and visible change in him; he decides to renounce his identity and disguise himself as the Amazonian 'Cleophila'. The reasons for his choice of disguise are unclear: Pyrocles claims on the one hand that the disguise and the name change constitute a *ploy* designed to fulfil his desire for Philoclea and, on the other hand, that it is the outward *expression* of his love for Philoclea - 'as for my name, it shall be Cleophila, turning Philoclea to myself, as my mind is wholly turned and transformed into her' (OA17). There is not much evidence here to suggest that Pyrocles sees himself as the disempowered servant of his beloved. However, the contradictions implicit in Pyrocles's self-portrayal may lead the reader to assume that his clarity of mind has been affected by his impassioned state. Indeed, Pyrocles

not only defends his disguise in a confused way, but he employs similarly contradictory arguments in the defence of love itself, presenting himself as a lover inspired both by spiritual ambition and by sexual desire. In response to Musidorus's claim that heavenly love should not be accompanied by any unquiet emotions, Pyrocles retorts that 'even that heavenly love [...] is accompanied in some hearts with hopes, griefs, longings, and despairs' (OA20). Pyrocles makes a distinction between Musidorus's rather ascetic conception of heavenly love (which excludes the love of human beauty) and the Neoplatonic notion of love, which allows the lover to start his spiritual ascent with the recognition of the form of beauty in earthly bodies. Although Pyrocles recognises his lack of experience in the field of love, that is, his inability 'at the first leap to frame both [parts of heavenly love] in myself', he assures Musidorus that he is a 'diligent workman' who is preparing himself for heavenly love through his experience of a more earthly love: 'when I have a while practised in this sort, then shall you see me turn it to greater matters' (OA20). Like the Neoplatonic lover Pyrocles will use the physical 'form' of his beloved as a catalyst for the kind of spiritual ascent that is the defining feature of 'heavenly' love. At least this is what he implies. For Pyrocles then goes on to reveal that his real aim is not so much to transcend the earthly realm as to assert his manhood: 'neither doubt you', he warns Musidorus, that 'because I wear a woman's apparel, I will be the more

womanish; since, I assure you, for all my apparel, there is nothing I desire more than fully to prove myself a man in this enterprise' (OA21). Pyrocles's admission that he desires to 'prove [himself] a man' does not fit easily into the contemplative mission he has assigned himself; moreover, the sexual innuendo implicit in his words is at odds with his earlier depiction of himself as a Neoplatonic lover. Pyrocles's disingenuousness, or his ignorance, is revealed; one of the 'greater matters' to which he has referred turns out to be no other than the satisfaction of his sexual desire for Philoclea. The question that remains is whether Pyrocles is unconscious of these contradictions in his self-presentation or whether he is their ironic author; it is only by resolving this question that we can determine whether, as a lover, Pyrocles really has lost his intellectual vigour and independence.

The reader's perception of Pyrocles depends as much on Pyrocles's depiction by the narrator as on his own self-presentation. Indeed, the narrator can be said to play a crucial role in directing the reader's sympathy and judgement. It is through the narrator, for example, that we receive our first picture of the love-stricken Pyrocles as the restless 'spaniel' that 'gnaws' unwillingly at the fetters of love, and it is also through the narrator that we perceive how Pyrocles then appears to Musidorus:

his eyes sometimes even great with tears, the oft changing of his colour, with a kind of shaking unsteadiness over all his body, [so that Musidorus] might see in his countenance some great

determination mixed with fear, and might perceive in him store of thoughts rather stirred than digested, his words interrupted continually with sighs which served as a burden to each sentence, and the tenor of his speech (though of his wonted phrase) not knit together to one constant end but rather dissolved in itself, as the vehemency of the inward passion prevailed (OA14-15).

The accumulation of adjectives and nouns which connote instability ('oft changing', 'shaking unsteadiness', 'stirred' thoughts') gives an impression of Pyrocles's loss of emotional control while the juxtaposed picture of Pyrocles struggling to defend himself shows how far his emotional state has affected his ability to argue cogently. Such a depiction precedes the debate on love itself and so forms in advance the reader's expectations of Pyrocles's intellectual waywardness.

Through the narrator, then, we receive an early portrait of Pyrocles as a rather helpless and distracted lover. It is important to point out, however, that the narrator does not judge Pyrocles harshly or offer him to the reader as an example of the negative effects of love. If anything the narrator sets out to stir the reader's compassion and, hence, our tolerance of Pyrocles's unconventional practices. One of the narrator's motives for encouraging such a response is that he himself has been 'moved' by the plight of Pyrocles; the narrator indulges Pyrocles in his choice of disguise and name because, as he explains, 'I myself feel such compassion of his passion that I find even part of his fear lest his name should be uttered before fit time were for it' (OA25). The narrator's response to Pyrocles is similar to the sympathetic reaction of Musidorus, who is finally

moved by the sight of Pyrocles's tears to help him change into his disguise (despite the fact that he is grieved to 'see so worthy a mind thus infected' (OA25)). This kind of narratorial indulgence is nowhere more evident than in the scene in which Pyrocles (disguised as 'Cleophila') meets Philoclea for the first time. It is when 'Cleophila' eventually sees Philoclea in the flesh, the narrator tells us, that the 'clouds' of 'her' thoughts disappear and 'her brain [is] fixed withal that her sight seemed more forcible and clear than ever before or since she found it' (OA34). Pyrocles appears like a

well wrought image with show of life, but without
all exercise of life, so forcibly had love
transferred all her spirits into the present
contemplation of the lovely Philoclea (OA34).

Though the narrator's adoption of the language of spiritual enlightenment reinforces Pyrocles's self-presentation as a Neoplatonic lover, the picture of Philoclea which he has already given quietly contradicts this perception. For Philoclea appears before Pyrocles, the narrator tells us, in her 'nymphlike apparel, so near nakedness as one might well discern part of her perfections' and dressed 'in a light taffeta garment, so cut as the wrought smock came through it in many places (enough to have made a very restrained imagination have thought what was under it)' (OA34). The apparent clarity of Cleophila's mind is juxtaposed with the frank sensuality of the narrator; Cleophila may feel that 'she' is spiritually enlightened but the narrator broadly hints that there may be other explanations for 'her' fascination. The narrator's teasing reminder to his

'fair' female readers of Pyrocles's gender ('you remember that I use the she-title to Pyrocles, since so he would have it') implies that Pyrocles too is 'man enough' to appreciate the erotic appeal of Philoclea's appearance. And yet Pyrocles is not here exposed as a 'peeping Tom'; Pyrocles's supposedly spiritual perception of Philoclea is allowed to stand alongside the narrator's more explicitly voyeuristic gaze.

On the evidence of Pyrocles's apparently naive and contradictory explanation of the nature of his love and his reasons for adopting a disguise we might be forgiven for thinking that his intellectual and rhetorical faculties have indeed been weakened as a result of his falling in love and, following the example of the narrator, for treating such weaknesses with indulgence. However, this is not the only possible response we are presented with. In contrast to the narrator, Musidorus initially interprets Pyrocles's 'transformation' as a matter of concern, openly ascribing to him the weakness which the narrator only implies. Musidorus has already noted a change in Pyrocles since their sojourn in Arcadia, 'a relenting [...] and slacking of the main career [he] had so notably begun and almost performed' (OA12), and Pyrocles's disclosure of his love for Philoclea and his plan to dress as an Amazon only serve, as he sees it, to confirm the worst of his fears. Unlike the narrator Musidorus initially has no wish to indulge Pyrocles in such a dangerous passion. For Musidorus there is nothing worse than the prospect of his heroic

friend falling in love with a woman, and he makes this clear to Pyrocles in no uncertain terms: 'it utterly subverts the course of nature', he warns Pyrocles, 'in making reason give place to sense, and man to woman' (OA18). Pyrocles's indulgence of his love suggests to Musidorus that his friend has turned away from the ideals of masculine virtue, that he has succumbed to the seductive influence of the appetitive part of the soul and forsaken the active life which they were pursuing. At first Musidorus refuses to recognise the love-stricken Pyrocles, then he exhorts him not to lose himself to his new identity. 'Remember', he cautions Pyrocles, 'that, if we will be men, the reasonable part of our soul is to have absolute commandment' (OA17). Musidorus's reference to Hercules, the classical strong man who was transformed by his love for Iole literally into a 'distaff spinner', succinctly conveys the danger in which he feels Pyrocles has placed himself:

this effeminate love of a woman doth so womanize a man that, if you yield to it, it will not only make you a famous Amazon, but a launder, a distaff-spinner, or whatsoever other vile occupation their idle heads can imagine and their weak hands perform (OA18-9).

Like Hercules, Pyrocles has forsaken his 'manhood' not only by falling in love with a woman but by dressing up as a woman. For Musidorus, Pyrocles's disguise is both a sign of his moral vulnerability and a danger to his masculine (rational) identity: for, to play the part of a woman convincingly, Pyrocles must first 'soften' his heart (OA18). Musidorus is afraid that in his present

state Pyrocles could become as genuinely 'weak' as the object he imitates.

To Sidney's contemporary readers Musidorus's position would have struck a familiar chord, for his arguments are reminiscent of the attacks of Protestant moralists such as Stephen Gosson and Philip Stubbes on the theatre. For example, Musidorus's anxiety that Pyrocles's moral integrity will not only be compromised, but substantially affected, by his adoption of a feminine disguise, echoes the fear of Stubbes in *The Anatomie of Abuses*, and Gosson in *Playes Confuted in Five Actions*, of the dangers of cross-dressing and cross-acting in the theatre: if a man plays the part of a woman, Gosson warns, he 'must learne to trippe it like a Lady in the finest fashion' (178).²⁶ But the position of Musidorus is given authority not only by sixteenth-century Protestant moralists but by seemingly mature male characters within the fiction. Indeed, Musidorus's criticism of Pyrocles's passion reappears in other scenes in the *Arcadia* and in the mouths of other characters, suggesting that he propounds values which are important to the text as a whole. Thus, we find that the associations made by Musidorus in the debate between rational masculinity and passionate femininity resurface in the poetic debates of the eclogues. For instance, in the song sung in the first eclogues by Geron, Philisides and Histor, the love-stricken and youthful Philisides is reprimanded by the elderly Geron for his 'wandering reasons' induced by his emasculating love for a woman: 'He water ploughs, and

soweth in the sand/ [...] /Who hath his hopes laid up in woman's hand./What man is he that hath his freedom sold?' (OA65); while in the eclogues appended to Book II the lamenting lover Plangus is told by Boulon to use his reason to put his woes in 'proportion' and not to give himself up to 'female lamentations' (OA132). Moreover, the 'fair ladies' of the text, the imagined female readers addressed by the narrator, provide an example, like their counterparts in other Elizabethan prose fictions, of the dangers of a credulous female reading: the compassionate response which is solicited from them by the narrator makes them eventually party to the sexually transgressive behaviour of the princes in Books III and IV.²⁷ The prevalence and appeal of these examples have proved irresistible to a number of critics who, perhaps in an attempt to avoid the fate of the gullible 'fair ladies', have chosen to understand the differences between Pyrocles and Musidorus in the terms offered by the older or 'wiser' male characters, with the just king Euarchus often being taken to be the moral centre of the story. For Mark Rose, Pyrocles's disguise symbolises his 'subjection to passionate love';²⁸ it is a 'criticism of his failings', not a celebration of his intellectual liberation.²⁹ Similarly, P. Albert Duhamel finds Musidorus's prose, like that of Sidney himself, straightforward and direct, and his arguments closely reasoned,³⁰ while Forrest G. Robinson finds Musidorus's 'clear, well organised' arguments 'the verbal image of keen rational vision' and Pyrocles's 'errant logic and

impassioned language' the 'emblem of his inner disorder'.³¹ For such critics who are sensitive to the importance of these dichotomies in the old Arcadia the scales of judgement are not tipped in Pyrocles's favour.

Pyrocles thus appears to many of his readers as a character hopelessly in love, a character whose whims are either to be pitied (as the narrator suggests) or abhorred (as Musidorus initially insists). However, this depiction of Pyrocles as a character lacking in self-knowledge cannot always be so plausibly maintained; the narrator's description of Pyrocles's 'sharpened wits' and Pyrocles's own description of his disguise as one of the 'secret helps' that will abet his desire suggest that he is much more in control of his destiny than might appear at first sight to be the case (OA17). Indeed, although Pyrocles's revelation of his real interests contradicts his interpretation of his transformation into Cleophila as a spiritual sublimation, it does not necessarily entail his spiritual descent into a sensual and irrational enslavement; unlike the Pyrochles in Book II of Spenser's The Faerie Queene who, true to the etymology of his name, is burned by the apparently unquenchable fire of his passion and reduced to desperation,³² Sidney's Pyrocles retains enough judgement to determine how best to fulfil his desire. The contradictions inherent in Pyrocles's arguments, interpreted by some critics as a sign of his intellectual weakness, are misleading: rather than revealing to the reader the confused state of Pyrocles's mind they, first, conceal from the reader the

extent to which he is manipulating his destiny (in much the same way that Antonius's mask of naivety in De Oratore disguises his masterful rhetorical control) and, secondly, by drawing attention to the discrepancy between his declared and his actual methods and aims, help to unmask his attempt to create credible fiction (in much the same way that the exposure of Antonius's real artfulness, juxtaposed with his mask of assumed ignorance, suggests a rhetorical strategy of persuasion). Moreover, the narrator, I suggest, is actually party to Pyrocles's manipulative rhetoric. When the narrator later describes Pyrocles's response to Musidorus's long tirade against 'love', he represents Pyrocles both as a victim of his affections and in control of his 'destiny': Pyrocles, the narrator notes, has 'no more attentively marked [Musidorus's] discourse than the child that hath leave to play marks the last part of his lesson, or the diligent pilot in a dangerous tempest doth attend to the unskilful words of the passenger' (OA19). How can Pyrocles be both an unruly novice and an expert? The one expression implies that Pyrocles has immaturely abandoned his responsibilities, the other, that he is much more in control of his fortunes than is immediately obvious. The narrator's apparent naivety is, I suggest, Sidney's own mask, which he uses to disorientate the reader. Sidney's consistent use of the feminine pronoun in reference to Pyrocles is not just born 'out of [his] compassion', as he suggests, it is also a means whereby he can be complicit in disguising the sexual nature of Pyrocles's

desire and invoke the reader's compassion. Sidney does not so much indulge a naive Pyrocles as help to fashion such a mask of naivety for him, leading the readers to pity his supposed helplessness.

Pyrocles's actions suggest that, rather than simply being the object of another's influence, he has used his new experience of being 'influenced' opportunistically, and thus, has turned a position of potential weakness into a position of strength, or influence. What Pyrocles has done, in fact, is to convert his helplessness into a persuasive strategy, with the intention of influencing his audience, that is, of moving them to compassion. In this respect Pyrocles can be seen, as he indeed claims, to be proving his 'manhood', for he proves that he is still actively engaged in pursuing and completing difficult quests, although his is a rather unconventional understanding of masculinity, one which runs contrary to the martial and rational values supported by the character Musidorus and the likes of the Protestant moralist Stephen Gosson. In a study of male fictions of the sixteenth century, Lorna Hutson notes that the objections of Stephen Gosson to the theatre are bound up with a 'moral opposition to Italian prose fiction', prompted, she explains, 'by a formal appreciation of their redefinition of heroic masculinity as skill in strategic re-employment', that is, in the invention and disposition of rhetorical resources, rather than as martial prowess.³³ It has long been recognised that humanism effected a shift in masculine values to meet the

demands of male employment in the Tudor state: the skills of hunting and hawking which were essential to the young nobleman in the medieval household were replaced by a knowledge of classical languages, and skills in reading and writing, skills which fashioned a gentleman capable of serving the new bureaucracy of the 'commonweal'.³⁴ Hutson has two important contributions to make to this debate: first, the considerable importance she attaches to the rhetorical skills of argumentation in defining the new masculinity (one of the main influences she cites on the Renaissance intellectual tradition is the section in Book V of the Institutio Oratoria in which Quintilian discusses the types of artificial proofs (arguments) designed to 'produce belief'); secondly, the place she gives to Elizabethan prose fictions in the dissemination of the new male values and skills.³⁵ For Hutson discovers in the fictions of such writers as George Pettie, John Lyly and George Gascoigne an interest in promoting skills for a male readership quite distinct from those advocated in the chivalric literature of their predecessors: the prose fiction writers of the 1560s and 1570s use print as a medium for displaying 'the cerebral equivalent of chivalric prowess, in virtuoso deployments of their skill in probable argument'.³⁶ Hutson argues that in Gascoigne's Master F.J. the narrative provides a context for the verse which is intended 'to enable the reader to judge each poem's decorum of fitness for particular contingency'; while, in John Lyly's Euphues, we find 'a compendium of the exemplary resources of probable

argument', as well as a demonstration of the way in which such resources can be misused or wasted. Although Sidney, in contrast to these writers, never intended his fictions for publication, and, thus, does not use his writings to advertise his skills to prospective employers, he still reveals, according to Hutson, a similar interest in displaying the skills of the new masculinity. In the old Arcadia 'Pyrocles and Musidorus are journeying as unknown knights toward Greece, not because they are questing for proof of their identity', as is the case with the heroes of chivalric romance, 'but because they wish, in good prudential fashion, to organise its codes of conduct into resources of whatever contingency should arise'.³⁷ Even though the revised Arcadia seems to subscribe more willingly to the ethos of chivalric romance, the success of its protagonists still depends on their inventive, rather than their martial, skills: 'the knight Palladius [Pyrocles] improves the success of the Helots' rebellion because he "by some experience, but specially by reading of histories, was acquainted with stratagems"'.³⁸

But does the old Arcadia actually reaffirm the masculine values of the earlier Elizabethan prose fictions, as Hutson argues? I suggest that the old Arcadia actually offers an alternative not only to the militaristic values of chivalric romance, or of the Protestant militants such as Stephen Gosson, but to the intellectual masculinism of the so-called 'prodigal writers' of the 1560s and 1570s. When juxtaposed with

the anti-heroes of the fictions of Gascoigne, Pettie and Lyly, Sidney's Pyrocles appears to be a rather inept debater. In Pettie's stories, for example, the narrator is an extremely competent disputant, able not only to muster convincing proofs for both sides of an argument, but to shift his position almost imperceptibly, with the result that he simultaneously champions and abuses his imagined female readership.³⁹ John Lyly's *Euphues* is similarly skilful in inductive argument, revealing his ability to invent a series of proofs to support whatever position he chooses to champion.⁴⁰ In the old *Arcadia*, however, it is Musidorus rather than Pyrocles who conforms to this ideal of the successful disputant; for, although Pyrocles reveals his capacity to invent the arguments necessary to support his case, his love-lorn state appears to have rendered him incapable of arranging them effectively. And yet, it is *Pyrocles* who wins the debate, and he does so by employing very different techniques from those used by the heroes of early Elizabethan prose fictions: he wins Musidorus's support by appealing to his pity rather than by persuading him of the rightness of his decision. Responding to Musidorus's 'well-reasoned' attack, Pyrocles simply asserts that he is a slave, and, 'gushing out abundance of tears and crossing his arms over his woeful heart' he sinks 'to the ground' (OA22). It is at this point when, moved to compassion, Musidorus changes his mind: Pyrocles's 'sudden trance went so to the heart of Musidorus that, falling down beside him, and kissing the weeping eyes of

his friend' he seeks to make amends for his 'over vehement' speech (OA22). In this respect, Pyrocles thus proves, as does Astrophil in sonnet 58, the validity of Cicero's preference for techniques of sympathetic incitement over those of deliberative skill (II xlii 178).

Whereas Lyly's *Euphues* and Pettie's narrator appear to replace the martial prowess typical of chivalric romance with 'skill in probable argument', that is, with skills drawn from Book V of Quintilian's *Institutio*, Sidney's Pyrocles offers instead, I suggest, a technique of emotional manipulation, namely, the technique of *enargeia*, which is drawn from Book VI of this rhetorical treatise. (Of course, in the fiction of the old *Arcadia* Pyrocles already experiences the emotion of love; he is first persuaded by Philoclea, not by himself. But he uses his emotions in much the same way as does the orator in *Institutio*, turning a state of emotional susceptibility into a state of rhetorical agency.) Pyrocles thus includes in his definition of masculinity a skill which imitates a state which was considered to be a female weakness: that is, susceptibility to rhetorical manipulation.⁴¹ The supposed susceptibility of the female mind to male rhetoric is clearly exploited in George Pettie's *A Petite Pallace of Pettie His Pleasure*: the credulous female readers depicted in his stories are encouraged to condone the narrator's misogynist morality. Like Pettie's narrator, the narrator of the old *Arcadia* also addresses gullible fictional female readers, and

brings them ultimately to condone the sexually transgressive behaviour of the two princes: at the end of Book III the still unmarried Pyrocles consummates his relationship with Philoclea, and in Book IV Musidorus attempts to rape Pamela. What is different in the old Arcadia is that Pyrocles seems initially to share with the imagined female readers of the text a similar susceptibility. And yet there is an important difference between Pyrocles's experience of emotion and that of the narrator's 'fair ladies', a difference which throws light on the role of these characters in the text. The gullible 'fair ladies' in the old Arcadia act as a foil not only to the narrator's rhetorical virtuosity, as is the case in Pettie's narratives, but to Pyrocles's own emotional vulnerability; in contrast to Pyrocles, who actively uses his suffering as a rhetorical strategy, they simply suffer. Sidney creates in the figure of Pyrocles not a man who experiences emotions in the way that a woman supposedly does, but a man who knows how to use his emotions prudently.

One of Sidney's aims in the old Arcadia and A Defence of Poetry, I suggest, is to produce a masculine poetics, a poetics which turns a supposedly feminine weakness into a masculine virtue, or source of strength. Although at the beginning of the Defence Sidney presents poetry as a female figure, referring to it as 'the first nurse' of knowledge, 'whose milk by little and little' allows us 'to feed afterwards of tougher knowledges' (18), it is important to recognise that this is a rhetorical

strategy; he is here reprimanding the anti-poets for their ungratefulness to, and lack of respect for, poetry. Indeed, the personification of poetry as a female figure is attributed by Sidney in the Defence to the anti-poets themselves. Sidney tells us that they call poetry 'the mother of lies', and 'the nurse of abuse', and complain that 'before poets did soften us, we were full of courage, given to martial exercises, the pillars of manlike liberty' (51). Sidney responds to their attacks by asserting that poetry is the 'companion' of military generals (56), and that it is an art 'not of effeminateness, but of notable stirring of man's courage' (61). When Sidney considers that poetry, as opposed to history or philosophy, is in danger of being abused, he concludes that 'it can do more harm than any other army of words'. Almost immediately, however, he adds that its emotive power also means that it is morally more effective than the other genres: 'truly, a needle cannot do much hurt, and as truly (with leave of ladies be it spoken) it cannot do much good: with a sword thou mayst kill thy father, and with a sword thou mayst defend thy prince and country' (55). The point here is that the poetic art is not the toy of ladies, but a weapon used by men in the battlefield of words. It is interesting that when Sidney describes the technique of *enargeia*, the act of vivid imagining which leads to sympathetic expression, the act which renders the orator as seemingly susceptible as the credulous 'fair ladies' in Elizabethan prose fiction, he calls it *energia*, 'forcibleness', thus

confusing it with *energeia* (the Greek root of our word energy), which means for Aristotle in The Art of Rhetoric the vividness produced by metaphors which denote action (Aristotle's illustrations are drawn notably from the battlefield).⁴²

Sidney's attempt to make a supposedly feminine aspect of the poetic art seem more masculine is not original with him, but derives, in large part, from the treatises of the Roman rhetoricians. Quintilian's sensitivity to attacks on the effeminateness of the rhetorical art is made clear in the Institutio Oratoria. For example, in Book IX, in which he discusses the orator's use of figures, he counters the claim made by some that unadorned speech is more 'manly' than ornamental speech; Quintilian responds to this by calling attention to the trained skill of athletes and soldiers, claiming that their art is little different from that of the orator: 'Why then should it be thought that polish is inevitably prejudicial to vigour', he concludes, 'when truth is that nothing can attain its full strength without the assistance of art' (IX iv 3-8). In his discussions of tropes in Book VIII Quintilian again reveals a sensitivity to the dangers of effeminate speech; he clearly sees his task as one of reforming the decadent Atticism typical of the rhetoric in his era, and insists repeatedly that the orator's stylistic techniques should be more like sinewy athletic muscle than cosmetics: it is not that the orator should refuse to use tropes to adorn his speech but that when he does use them they should

seem 'natural and unaffected', and not seem to be like the 'effeminate use of depilatories and cosmetics' (VIII Pr 18-20).⁴³ Quintilian's martial and athletic imagery, and his concern to reform the effeminate rhetoric of his contemporaries, are nowhere more obvious, however, than in his discussion of argumentation in Book V. The declamations 'which we used to employ as foils wherewith to practise for the duels of the forum', he complains, are no longer as powerful as they once were, and have become 'flaccid and nerveless', 'owing to the fact that they are composed solely with the design of giving pleasure'. Quintilian compares the orators who concentrate more on creating a 'delicate complexion of style', rather than on producing convincing proofs, with 'slave-dealers who castrate boys in order to increase the attractions of their beauty'; he wants the orator to imitate not the eunuchs Bagoas and Megabyzus, but the spearbearer Doryphorus, the man 'equally adapted for the fields of war or for the wrestling school (V xii 18-21). But while Quintilian praises argumentation as being the essence of manly oratory, and persists in depicting the forum as a place of battle, he is also forced to acknowledge the importance of style, the supposedly effeminate face of the oratorical art. Thus, at the end of his discussion of proofs in Book V Quintilian acknowledges that,

the more unattractive the natural appearance of anything, the more does it require to be seasoned by charm of style: moreover, an argument is often less suspect when thus disguised, and the charm with which it is expressed makes it all the more convincing to our audience (V xiv 35).

A similar point is made at the beginning of Book IX: 'although it may seem that proof is infinitesimally affected by the *figures* employed, none the less those same *figures* lend credibility to our arguments and steal their way secretly into the minds of the judges' (IX i 19). It is this form of eloquence which Sidney defends so forcefully in the Arcadia.

Eventually even Musidorus adopts the same rhetorical tactics as Pyrocles, in order to win him the love of the princess Pamela. Although Musidorus is moved by the sight of Pyrocles's tears to give in to his friend's wishes, and actually to participate in his disguising, he still remains, to some extent, rationally unconvinced, pitying his foolishness at the same time that he pities his suffering: thus, Musidorus agrees to hide himself in order to see the Arcadian royal family, as Pyrocles has requested, though he does so with 'extreme grief' at the sight of 'so worthy a mind thus infected' (OA25). However, the very fact that Musidorus is *moved* to pity Pyrocles seems to make him susceptible to the effects of Pamela's beauty in much the same way that the compassionate tale that Kerxenus tells to Pyrocles makes Pyrocles vulnerable to Philoclea's painted features. Within a short time Musidorus is bewailing, and celebrating, his state of enslavement as passionately as did Pyrocles in their prior debate. Like Pyrocles, however, he has also learnt from his experience of being emotionally influenced, in his case by Pyrocles, how to win favour by evoking pity rather than by proving his

case. In response to Dicus's request in the eclogues appended to Book II that he explain how Love 'gets so strange possession' of an individual and how he 'strengthens his invasion' (OA121), Musidorus offers him instead a description of the effects that Love has on the lover: 'carefulness' in his appearance, fastidiousness in his food, and the awakening of 'invention' (OA122). Musidorus is here speaking from experience: his 'love' for Pamela has driven him to invent the means to seduce her. Musidorus first borrows a shepherd's apparel in order to gain access to the pastoral retreat, and then, when the disguise proves to be an obstacle to his courting of Pamela, he discovers a way of communicating to her his true princely status. Musidorus chooses to disclose himself to Pamela with the help of a story ostensibly designed for Mopsa, with whom he pretends to be in love, but covertly directed at Pamela in whose presence it is told. Fortunately for Musidorus, Pamela is sharp-witted enough to perceive the double meaning of his tale. But Musidorus realises that he cannot rely on Pamela's intelligence alone if he is to win her love. Musidorus's claim in the second eclogues that he does not know whether it is 'by might or by persuasion' that the lover 'conquer[s]' the beloved is disingenuous, for in his attempt to 'gain possession' of Pamela in Book II he has revealed his awareness of the usefulness of emotional persuasion. If he is to persuade Pamela to fall in love with him, Musidorus must first move her to pity his plight so that he can make her susceptible to the

experience of love (just as Pyrocles fell in love with Philoclea after his compassion had been stirred):

but alas, what can saying make them believe whom seeing can persuade? Those pains must be felt before they are understood; no outward utterance can command a conceit (OA92).

Musidorus chooses to move Pamela with the help of music, the emotive efficacy of which he has learnt from Pyrocles himself. For Musidorus is finally fully converted to Pyrocles's side when he hears Pyrocles's song, 'Transformed in show, but more transformed in mind': 'Musidorus', the narrator tells us 'was yet more moved to pity by the manner of Cleophila's singing than with anything he had ever seen - so lively an action doth the mind, truly touched, bring forth' (OA26). Accordingly, Musidorus uses a similar technique in his attempt to move Pamela to compassion. Initially Pamela is divided in her response to Musidorus's description of his adventures; on the one hand, Musidorus's story works a powerful effect on her ('no music could with righter accords possess her senses than every passion he expressed had his mutual working in her' (OA93)), on the other hand, her natural wisdom recalls to her the importance of weighing carefully the words he uses, and impresses on her that it is wise to be 'hard of belief'. Realising that 'his speeches had given alarum to her imaginations' Musidorus prepares to keep her in these thoughts in order to bring 'her to a dull yielding-over her forces' (OA93); he takes up a harp and sings a song which skilfully reinforces the import of his tale ('my sheep are thoughts, which I both guide and serve' (OA94)). The song achieves its intended

effect: 'the music added to the tale, and both fitted to such motions in her as now began again to be awaked, did steal out of the fair eyes of Pamela some drops of tears' (OA94). Behind the 'enslaved' persona adopted by Musidorus there exists a rhetorician adept at moving his audience - Pamela - to compassion.

Musidorus understands how important it is to move Pamela to compassion if he is to gain access to her affections. Yet it is Pyrocles who, as we have noticed, best understands the importance of the emotions to the art of persuasion, and who is most like the 'reader' envisaged in the Defence, for he is enabled by his 'reading' of Philoclea's image to conceive of the character which he later creates for himself. Musidorus commands his disguise only to 'yield outward show', and once inside the pastoral retreat Musidorus expends his energy trying to communicate to Pamela his real 'self' beneath his adopted appearance: in contrast, Pyrocles not only insists that his disguise represents his new state of mind ('Transformed in show, but more transformed in mind' (OA26)) but that his transformation is unconsciously inspired by his contemplation of Philoclea: he explains that he takes 'a woman's hue' because 'what I see, think, know, is all but [Philoclea]' (OA26). Pyrocles makes clear that his disguise is the outward expression of his inwardly felt love; thus, when Musidorus compliments Pyrocles on the beauty of his new appearance he is sharply reminded by Pyrocles of its source: 'if I have any beauty, it is the beauty which the

imagination of [Philoclea] strikes into my fancies, which in part shines through my face into your eyes' (OA25). Like the Neoplatonic lover who derives his created 'beauty' from his contemplation of the beloved, so Pyrocles's appearance and character are supposedly influenced by his love for Philoclea. And yet Pyrocles's self-characterisation is obviously deceptive: Pyrocles is not a genuine Neoplatonic lover but a parody of the Neoplatonic lover. When the constructed nature of his disguise and the use to which it is to be put are taken into consideration it becomes increasingly clear that Pyrocles is imitating not the beauty of Philoclea herself but the skill of the artist who represented her beauty. Pyrocles's disguise is literally a disguise, not a 'transformation', and it is a prop which he intends to use to realise his imagined desire. Indeed, just before Pyrocles advertises the spiritually ambitious nature of his love for Philoclea he confesses that his beauty is the means that will bring him 'to some part of [his] desires'; 'otherwise', he declares, 'I am no more to set by it than the orator by his eloquence that persuades nobody' (OA25). Pyrocles has not 'softened his heart' as Musidorus feared, and thereby become an emasculated version of his former self. Rather, Pyrocles follows in the footsteps of Quintilian's orator and the reader depicted in the Defence's digression: his susceptibility to the emotional appeal of Philoclea's picture and story has given him an insight into the art of persuasion. As we know from the final stage in Musidorus's persuasion,

it is the 'manner' of Pyrocles's expression which is most persuasive: 'so lively an action does the mind, truly touched, bring forth'.

The extent to which Pyrocles is skilled in the manipulation of visual imagery and the emotions is evident in the scene in which he reveals his true identity to Philoclea, for it is in this scene that Pyrocles, with the help of the narrator, most successfully conceals the traces of his artfulness, and the self-interested nature of his love, presenting himself to Philoclea as a helpless lover who sues for her mercy. Until this point in the story, Cleophila (Pyrocles) has had little opportunity to discover to Philoclea 'her' true, male identity; it is only when Basilius decides to use Philoclea to represent to Cleophila his own love interests that the privacy necessary for Pyrocles's revelation is secured. Cleophila prepares Philoclea for the disclosure by describing herself as 'a living image and a present story of the best pattern love hath ever showed of his workmanship' (OA105). Such words immediately absolve Cleophila from any conscious trickery; what Philoclea sees is the 'living image' of love, not a man dressed up in woman's clothes. Although the sinister and sexually complicated implications of the scene are registered in Philoclea's transient discomfort when she finds herself alone with a man (OA106), they never intrude into the scene in such a way as to divert us from the narrative itself, which is, after all, an account of Pyrocles's

revelation and expression of love. Similarly, although the scene has the appearance of being carefully crafted, it is never really clear whether Pyrocles is actually implicated in its stage-management: the scene presents itself as nothing more than an unexpected occasion for the meeting of two lovers. Despite the fact that Cleophila engineers their private meeting by telling Basilius that she will not hear his suit to her from anyone but Philoclea, she seems to forget the imminence of Philoclea's approach and gives herself up to grief. As Philoclea approaches the arbour in which Cleophila is resting she discovers a 'fair lady whose face was so bent over the river that her flowing tears continually fell into the water' (OA102); the narrator's added comment that this lady looks 'much like' the 'costly images [which] are set for fountains' in gardens could suggest that the scene has been self-consciously set up by Pyrocles, and yet any sense of artificiality is soon dispelled by the apparently genuine surprise expressed at their meeting. The 'mutual astonishment' (OA104) of Cleophila and Philoclea when they discover that they are in the presence of one another suggests rather that Cleophila's pose is unconscious, and that the song which she has written in the banks of the river to express her woes is meant to ease her mind, not to create a moving picture to soften Philoclea's heart. The absence of any artfulness is further reinforced by Cleophila's explanation to Philoclea of her disguise in the terms she used in the earlier debate with Musidorus: 'behold here

before your eyes', Cleophila declares, 'Pyrocles, prince of Macedon, whom you only have brought to this fall of fortune and unused metamorphosis; whom you only have made neglect his country, forget his father, and lastly forsake himself!' (OA105). Such a declaration, with its emphasis first on Pyrocles's social status and then on his social irresponsibility, conveys to Philoclea the power of the love she has inspired in him and the strength of his devotion to her, reinforced by his ensuing admission: 'my suit is to serve you, and my end to do you honour' (OA105). At the same time, Pyrocles shifts the blame for his compromising behaviour from himself to Philoclea; Philoclea sees before her a 'living image' of the powerful transformative effects of her beauty.⁴⁴ Pyrocles's interpretation of his 'metamorphosis' is further supported by the comments of the narrator who draws an analogy between Philoclea and Pygmalion (with the intention of conveying her joy at seeing her secret wishes realised), and thus 'unwittingly' implies her responsibility for the original disguise. Not surprisingly, Pyrocles's revelation is a success, and the apparently all-powerful Philoclea is conquered: 'thou hast the victory', Philoclea declares to Pyrocles; 'use it now with virtue' (OA107). And yet the portrayal of the relationship in terms of an inversion of influence is misleading. As we know from our study of the debate, Philoclea is not really responsible for Pyrocles's 'transformation'. Pyrocles and the narrator have successfully concealed the fact that the real

'Pygmalions' of the scene include Musidorus (who while dressing Pyrocles in his disguise teasingly made such an identification: 'I were like enough while I dressed you to become a young Pygmalion' (OA25)), and Pyrocles himself, who has realised his desires with the aid of his successfully hidden rhetorical skills.

What Pyrocles shares with Astrophil is that, like him, he is both a lover seeking a sexual relationship with his beloved, and an orator seeking a method for creating credible, and thus persuasive, love poetry. In Astrophil and Stella and the first four books of the old Arcadia, we watch the protagonists, both in the act of courting their mistresses and practising a persuasive technique which enables them to appear to be inspired by the virtue of these women. Thus, these texts are simultaneously stories in the conventional sense, engaging us in the unravelling of their plots, and pedagogic treatises, teaching us in the ironic style of Cicero's De Oratore. For, in a similar fashion to Cicero's Antonius, Pyrocles and Astrophil display their eloquence, suggesting that it is naturally acquired, while simultaneously indicating a strategy for concealing the rhetorical method of its attainment. In the concluding section of this chapter I shall explore Sidney's use of the same Ciceronian strategy for the creation of credible political fictions, and for the unmasking of such fictions, an employment which recalls the political motivation, as well as the method, of Castiglione's Octavian and Bembo in The Book of the Courtier.

3b. Philip Sidney's 'fiery speeches' to the Queen

Though the skills acquired by Castiglione's courtier initially appear to be intended merely for the amusement of the prince, it becomes clear in the last book of the treatise that they also prepare the courtier for his role as royal adviser and educator, and so endow him with a degree of political influence. The extent of this influence depends, of course, on the kind of education he offers the prince; although it first appears as if it is his role merely to help the prince discover his natural virtue, the emphasis in the treatise on the skill of fiction-making, and the implicit ambiguity concerning the real source of the prince's virtue, suggest that the courtier also has the power to create the virtuous character which, through practice, is to become natural to the prince. Castiglione's vision is obviously relevant to the actual practices of courtiership in Elizabethan England. As Louis Montrose suggests, Elizabethan courtiers were employed by the Queen 'to create illusions of royal power', illusions which would help to establish 'the reality of [monarchical] power' while at the same time allowing them to advance their own sphere of influence at court.⁴⁵ One of the more successful courtier-poets of the Elizabethan court, and an example of this kind of courtiership, was Sir Henry Lee, the 'moving-spirit', as Frances Yates describes him, of the Accession Day Tilts.⁴⁶ His entertainment of the Queen at Woodstock in 1575, in which he adapted the

persona of the hermit-knight from Ramon Lull's Book of the Ordre of Chyvalry, was influential not only in shaping the cult of the Fairy Queen but in determining the nature of service of the Queen's knights.⁴⁷ (The Platonist Ramon Lull is an important figure in the courtierly tradition, for he succeeds in putting chivalry 'into a cosmological context',⁴⁸ and so successfully combines the preeminent position of the courtly beloved with the cosmological significance of the Neoplatonic beloved, a coalescence which is exploited by later courtiers (among them Castiglione) for the purpose of expressing devotion to a monarch.) Yet there is a more ambiguous side to Castiglione's courtier, a side which prevents us from seeing him as the mere servant or educator of his prince. The quirkiness of the treatise's style, the way in which it tends to undermine its established positions, can leave the reader with the impression of the tenuousness of power holding, and of the courtier's sensitivity to this fact. The Platonism of Castiglione's Bembo in Book IV need not be seen, as it so often is, as reaffirming the autocracy of Italian princes, which the courtier is committed to maintaining, but as a rhetorical mask which both conceals, and is the source of, his political influence. Sidney's adopted Platonism is similar, I suggest, to that of Castiglione's Bembo: he uses Platonic imagery in the tournament of 'The Four Foster Children of Desire' in 1581 seemingly to reinforce the powerful interests of Elizabeth when in fact he is reflecting the political desires of the

Protestant peers to influence Elizabeth; and in his masque, the posthumously titled 'The Lady of May', and in the letter he wrote to the Queen concerning her marriage negotiations with Alençon, the extent to which he aims at Protestant influence on the Queen through an ironic use of such imagery becomes clear.

The court entertainment, 'The Four Foster Children of Desire', performed in 1581 on the occasion of the visit of Elizabeth's prospective husband, the Duke of Alençon, is of particular interest to Sidney scholars not only because Sidney is known to have participated in its performance as one of the rebellious four foster children but because he is thought to have contributed to its composition.⁴⁹ On the 16th of April, 1581, a messenger dressed in red and white accosted the Queen as she was leaving church and read out a challenge (addressed to the 'Fortress of Beauty') on the behalf of Desire's four 'foster children': 'these foure [...] doe will you by me, even in the name of Justice, that you will no longer exclude vertuous Desire from perfect Beautie'.⁵⁰ The tilting took place on the 8th of May, after the second challenge had been read out and the walls of the Fortress assaulted with cannons full of sweet water and powder. The fighting continued for two days and was interspersed with speeches by the defenders of the Fortress of Beauty. One of the more interesting speeches is that of Sir Thomas Parrot and Anthony Cooke, delivered by an angelic messenger, which explains how the foster children have mistaken the Fortress for a natural rather than a divine

creation.⁵¹ Although Desire's children are convinced of the justness of their cause, in the light of the angel's revelation their attack is shown to be both blasphemous and futile. 'Know ye proud Knights', he reprimands them, that

there are that have hearts as big as mountaines, and as far above you in proewesse, as ye are above all in presumption, yet not so vaine (whiche ye terme valiant) to assault the sunne, and why, because it is impregnable, wee content to enjoy the light, ye to eclipse it, we to rest under the feete, ye to run over the head, we to yeeld to that which nothing can conquer, you to conquer that which maketh all men Captives.⁵²

The unnatural desire of the foster children to conquer rather than serve the Fortress of Beauty (unnatural because it is impossible) is contrasted with the proper love of her true subjects - 'for the majestie of that sunne which now pearcing our eyes hath fully subdued our hearts'.⁵³ When the children are eventually forced to recognise the futility of their exploits through defeat in the tilting they appropriately commend themselves to the Queen as her 'slaves', a gesture which tokens not only their defeat but their recognition, and acceptance, of the natural order of things. The allegorical meaning of this narrative, Jean Wilson suggests, would have been obvious to all, and especially to Alençon and his ambassadors who were also present at the display: 'Alençon is a foster child of Desire, and he will never attain the Fortress of Perfect Beauty [the Queen] to which he is laying siege, for it is impregnable'.⁵⁴ The tournament successfully expresses its political objective without obviously undermining Elizabeth's power.⁵⁵

Sidney's tournament reminds Alençon that Elizabeth is unattainable and it does so by recruiting the language of Neoplatonic love, the language which figures Elizabeth as being *above* sexual love. But this tournament was intended not only for Alençon but for Elizabeth herself, conveying to her a rather different message: that she has no *choice* in matters of human love. In this respect, the tournament communicates to Elizabeth a change in the domestic and foreign policy of her Protestant peers. As David Norbrook has observed, most of the pageants and masques of the early 1570s, at least until Kenilworth in 1575, had 'presented debates between marriage and virginity which suggested that the life of Diana, the virgin goddess, was not the best model for the Queen to follow'. (The Protestant faction had hoped that Elizabeth would choose a Protestant husband, for which role Sidney's uncle, Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, had been a keen contender.) What is different about the late 1570s is Elizabeth's courtship of a French Catholic, with the result that the 'political rhetoric of Leicester and his allies changed: virginity, the life of Diana, became much more attractive'.⁵⁶ Edmund Spenser's representation of Elizabeth as Eliza, the virgin queen of shepherds, in the 'Aprill Eclogue' of the Shepheardes Calender (1579) is among the more influential contributions to the myth. As Norbrook notes, Spenser transfers to Elizabeth the imagery which is usually associated with the Virgin Mary (Eliza is depicted as '"flowre of Virgins"', '"without spotte"', and without

'"mortal blemishe"'),⁵⁷ thus creating an alternative cult which had both political advantages and personal disadvantages for Elizabeth.

Sidney's own contribution to the creation of this myth is made in his masque 'The Lady of May', which was commissioned by Leicester and performed at Wanstead. The exact date of the masque is unclear: most critics suggest 1578 as the date of its performance, but it is also possible that it was performed in 1579. One of the arguments in favour of the latter date is that the masque was intended to assuage the Queen's anger over Leicester's marriage to Lettice Knollys in 1578, which he had kept secret from her until 1579.⁵⁸ Before looking at the closing speech of the masque, which supports this reading, it needs to be pointed out that 'The Lady of May' usually attracts critical attention for quite a different reason. At the beginning of the masque the Queen is asked by the Lady of May to choose between her two suitors, the shepherd Espilus and the forester Therion, and the rest of the performance focuses on their individual defences of their rights to the lady. What is interesting about the masque is that Sidney's preferred suitor is not the Queen's. The attractiveness of the forester Therion to Sidney seems to be clear not only from the nature of his active lifestyle (we must remember that at this time Sidney is seeking employment from Elizabeth) but from the concluding song, in which the victory is claimed by Silvanus, a woodland, not a pastoral, figure. Elizabeth, however, chose Espilus as

the better husband for the May lady, and the masque consequently ends with the happy shepherd singing the victory song of Silvanus. Sidney has clearly failed to influence the Queen's judgement, and for critics like Louis Montrose, who draw an analogy between Therion and Sidney, this must be seen as a personal failure for Sidney.⁵⁹ And yet, though Elizabeth may, in rejecting Espilus, also have rejected Sidney's own suit, putting down a seemingly rather audacious and ambitious courtier, there is a sense in which Sidney maintains the upper hand at the end of the masque, presenting Elizabeth in its last section with a fictional version of herself which, while appearing to augment her power, simultaneously defines the limits of her personal choice in matters of love. In this last section, 'Master Robert of Wanstead' (the Earl of Leicester) is depicted by a character called Rhombus as being 'an honest man' but one who, he confides, 'is foully commaculated with the papistical enormity': in short, he explains, 'the *bonus vir* is a huge *catholicam*'. As Rhombus continues, giving evidence against the Earl, the nature of his crime is clarified: Rhombus declares that he has found the Earl using 'Papistian beads' with which he daily 'saith "and Elizabeth", as many lines as there be beads on this string'. The Earl, as it becomes clear (though not to Rhombus), is guilty of saying, not his Ave Maria, but his Ave Elizabeth; his devotion is directed, not at the Virgin Mary, but at the Virgin Elizabeth.⁶⁰ If 'The Lady of May' is intended in part as an apology to Elizabeth on

the behalf of Leicester for his marriage to Lettice, then it makes its point quite sharply: Sidney's depiction of Leicester worshipping the Virgin Elizabeth not only reminds her that he is her true and loving subject, figuring Elizabeth as a superior beloved to the earthly Lettice, but suggests the inappropriateness of sexual, and hence, marital, relations between Leicester and Elizabeth: Elizabeth is reminded that she is above sexual love, and that her anger at Leicester for this marriage is consequently out of place.

The examples of 'The Four Foster Children of Desire' and 'The Lady of May' reveal, first, that Sidney is among the Protestant contributors to the creation of the cult of Elizabeth, and, secondly, that the creation of this cult is intended to promote the political interests of the Leicester faction as well as to augment Elizabeth's power. But Sidney does not only remind Elizabeth of the restrictions placed on her personal freedom through invocations of the imagery of Neoplatonic love; in the letter he wrote to Elizabeth in 1579, denouncing Alençon's courtship, Sidney sets out to remind Elizabeth of her dependence on the goodwill of her people, and, thus, of the rhetorical nature of her status as Neoplatonic beloved, and he does so in a comparably ambiguous style to that of Octavian in Book IV of the Courtier.

Commenting on the letter Sidney wrote to the Queen to dissuade her from marrying Alençon, Fulke Greville asks 'whether it were not an error, and a dangerous one, for

Sir Philip Sidney being neither Magistrate nor Counsellor, to oppose himself against his Sovereigns pleasure in things indifferent?'.⁶¹ Exactly why Sidney decided to risk Elizabeth's displeasure is unclear; most biographers assume that the anti-Alençon faction, which included Sidney's uncle, the Earl of Leicester, Francis Walsingham and Sir Christopher Hatton, wanted to make use of Sidney's excellent writing skills. Greville, of course, has his own explanation: Sidney, he argues, was prompted by his 'worth, truth, favour and sincerity of heart'.⁶² To support this characterisation of Sidney, Greville offers the Oxford quarrel, which happened in the same year, as another example of his forthright honesty. Reprimanded by the Queen for having challenged the Earl of Oxford on the tennis courts, and reminded by her of 'the respect inferiors ought to their superiors',⁶³ Sidney calls her attention to a law instituted by her father, Henry VIII, which gave 'the Gentry free, and safe appeal to his feet, against the oppression of the Grandees'.⁶⁴ Such a law, he supposedly reminds Elizabeth, was established in case 'the over-grown might be tempted, by still coveting more, to fall (as Angells did) by affecting equality with their Maker'. Greville chooses to conclude his treatment of Sidney's transgression with the observation that although tyrants will not tolerate dissent, 'with Princes there is a latitude for subjects to reserve native, and legall freedom, by paying humble tribute in manner, though not in matter, to them'.⁶⁵ It

is the natural and legal right of a gentleman, Greville insists, to disagree with their monarch.

Greville's distinction between 'manner' and 'matter' can indeed be appropriately applied to Sidney's letter to the Queen, which combines the expression of sincere devotion with a frank objection to her feared marriage plans. The letter begins with an attempt to mitigate the 'boldnes' of the undertaking by offering the Queen the 'true vowed sacrifice of unfeined love'. Sidney offers nothing more than this, he explains, since Elizabeth has so sound a judgement that she is 'able lively to discerne into the nature of the thing done' so that 'it wer folly to hope with laying on better colours to make it more acceptable'. Because Sidney cannot deceive the Queen, he offers 'simple and direct termes', words which come from the 'cleere well-spring of most loyall affection' and from the 'over flowing of [his] mind'.⁶⁶ Such expressions of devoted, honest love are merely a preamble, however, to the main point of the letter which Sidney shortly introduces: 'herein I will now but onely declare what be the reasons that make me thinke the mariage of Monsieur [Alençon] unprofitable for you'.⁶⁷ Sidney then launches into a description of the effects that marriage with a 'frenchman and a papist' will have on the realm and on Elizabeth's relationship with her subjects. The Protestant faction, the main body of the people of England (Elizabeth's 'chefe, if not sole, strenght'), have benefited most under her rule; it is consequently they who will feel most abandoned by the marriage.⁶⁸

'Their hartes', he warns her, 'will be galed, if not aliened'.⁶⁹ Just as in the Defence, where Sidney's apparent commitment to a particular line of thought is undermined or modified by a subsequent observation, so here, the effusive, devoted love with which he began the letter is revealed to be conditional. Elizabeth can only command the absolute devotion of her people, Sidney implies, if she devotes herself to their interests.

As Sidney again explains in a later part of the letter, Elizabeth has sent 'Love [...] by divers meanes [...] into the deapth of their soules', so that nothing can 'staine so true a forme' - *unless it be 'by bringing your selfe not in your owne likeness, but in new colours unto them'*.⁷⁰ Sidney's suggestion that the Queen is dependent on the love of her subjects hardly accords with her subsequent representation in 'The Four Foster Children of Desire' as the 'impregnable' sun which makes 'all men Captives'. Indeed, what is interesting about the letter is the way in which Sidney undermines conventional Neoplatonic imagery as if to drive home to Elizabeth the real nature of her relationship with her people. For example, although Sidney invokes the sun image as a symbol of strong government, in contrast to the instability which he envisages as the result of factional rule ('a devided companie of starres'), he simultaneously reminds Elizabeth of the need to minister to her people in order to maintain her power. For the second time in the letter Sidney refers to Elizabeth's 'speeche of the rising Sunne', a speech which, he points

out, was first used by Sulla, the leader who was awarded dictatorial power at a time when the Roman republic (the 'popular estate') was torn apart by the 'fickell breath of a many headed confusion'.⁷¹ Although Sulla stands here as a reminder to Elizabeth of the advantages of single rule against 'many headed confusion', the reference to republican Rome simultaneously recalls the importance of public opinion. For although, as Sidney argues, the people are content 'to sucke the love of their rightfull (hereditary) prince', 'vertu and justice are', in fact, 'the onely bondes of the peoples love: and as for that point, many Princes have lost their Crownes, whose owne children were manifest successours'.⁷² Sidney's warning is effective because he has already mentioned two popular uprisings: one of which, the Northern rebellion of 1569, took place during Elizabeth's reign, when recusants (among them her own cousin the Earl of Norfolk) attempted to place Mary, Queen of Scots on the throne, and the other during the reign of Henry III (1216-1272), when the eastern part of England was taken over by rebel barons led by the French Prince Louis. Although the French prince, Sidney pointedly observes, had 'no shew of title here, yet did half the Nobility & more sweare direct fealty and wassalage, & delivred the strongest holdes unto him'.⁷³ Elizabeth's strength lies, therefore, not in her claim to hereditary right but in her virtue, and that 'true inward strenght', as Sidney has already suggested early in the letter, is synonymous with her Protestant people.⁷⁴

At the beginning of the letter Sidney recognised the Queen's insightfulness ('it wer folly to hope with laying on better colours to make [his objections] more acceptable'), and he has accordingly promised to speak plainly to her. Yet Sidney's offer of advice turns out to be predicated on his recognition of Elizabeth's blind-spots: as he explains to her, while the English people are 'joyed with the experience of your inward vertues' and 'delighted in the sight of you [...] your owne eyes cannot see your self'.⁷⁵ What Sidney offers the Queen, however, is not a picture of her 'inward vertues' but an interpretation of the character and motives of Alençon, and a reminder of her already established relationship with her subjects. When representing Alençon, Sidney is careful to contrast him with Elizabeth; in doing so he not only underlines the unsuitability of the match but reminds Elizabeth of the restrictions imposed on her 'judgement' both by her people and by her own blind spot. Thus, Sidney contrasts Alençon's misguided ambition ('both by his owne fancie & by his youthful Governours imbracing all ambitious hopes, having Alexanders image in his head, but perchaunce, evill painted') with the Queen's 'excellent vertu' which has 'taught what [she] should hope & by no lesse wisdom what [she] may hope'.⁷⁶ In contrast to Alençon, Sidney implies, Elizabeth understands the limits upon her power. Sidney's interpretation of the situation implies the skill of his judgement. For him Alençon's painted knowledge fails to conceal the illegitimacy of his ambitions; Alençon

reveals his affinity to the bumbling imitators of the Defence who 'will be sure to be fine' and yet fail to be so because they do not understand the art of decorum (70). Sidney's unveiling of Alençon succeeds in suggesting the sagacity of both himself and Elizabeth's other subjects; for, as he makes clear in the same passage, the Queen's true lovers can see through the 'painted excuses' invented by 'fine witts' and recognise that Alençon is 'the sonne of that Jezebel of our age'.⁷⁷ Elizabeth may be the 'onely Sunne that dazeleth' the eyes of her subjects but they are still keen sighted enough to recognise where their interests and power lie.⁷⁸

In the first part of this chapter I explored how Astrophil and Pyrocles use the language of Neoplatonic love to conceal both the sexual nature of their desire and the rhetorical nature of their own love discourses. In the second part of this chapter, I considered how Sidney uses the Neoplatonic love discourse to gain influence over Elizabeth, in an attempt to make unwelcome counsel more palatable to her. At the same time, as the letter of 1579 suggests, Sidney is also eager to reveal to the Queen the rhetorical source of her own political influence, so as to remind her that she must take into consideration the expectations of her Protestant audience. Although Sidney depicts Elizabeth as the Neoplatonic beloved in his court entertainments, suggesting that her lovers are dazzled by her supposedly divine virtue, in the letter itself it becomes clear that

her status is not divinely authored, but is contingent on her words and actions. Sidney thus reminds the Queen of the importance not only of being but of *appearing* to be virtuous in the eyes of her people.

Notes

1. Ringler suggests the date 1582 for Astrophil and Stella, adding that it was probably written shortly before or after the composition of A Defence of Poetry; see Sir Philip Sidney, The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney, ed. William A. Ringler Jr., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p.xlix. For the publishing history of Astrophil and Stella see Christopher R. Wilson, 'Astrophil and Stella: A Tangled Editorial Web', The Library, 6th series i (1979), pp.336-46.
2. Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Philip Sidney: Selected Poems, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986). All citations from Astrophil and Stella will be from this edition and will be indicated in the text by sonnet number, for example, sonnet 9.
3. Barish, pp.94-5.
4. Mona Wilson makes such an identification, arguing that to see Astrophil simply as a rhetorical construction is 'to credit Sidney with a dramatic art beyond the compass of his age', Mona Wilson, Sir Philip Sidney, (London: Duckworth, 1931), p.203.
5. See Roger Howell, Sir Philip Sidney: The Shepherd Knight, (London: Hutchinson of London, 1968), p.183.
6. For a list of the details in the sequence which make Astrophil a likely pseudonym for Sidney see Katherine Duncan-Jones, (1991), p.242. For a detailed examination of the main arguments in support of Penelope Devereux as Stella see Hoyt H. Hudson, 'Penelope Devereux as Sidney's Stella', The Huntington Library Bulletin, 7 (1935), pp.89-129. For a recent reading of the sequence which depends on this identification see Clark Hulse, 'Stella's Wit: Penelope Rich as Reader of Sidney's Sonnets' in Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discoveries of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe, eds Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers, (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp.272-286.
7. Maurice Evans ed., Elizabethan Sonnets, (London, Melbourne, Toronto: Dent; Totowa: Rowan and Littlefield, 1977), p.xiii.
8. Richard B. Young, 'English Petrarke: A Study of Sidney's Astrophel and Stella' in Three Studies in the Renaissance: Sidney, Jonson, Milton, Yale Studies in English (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), p.20.
9. Petrarch, Petrarch: Selected Sonnets, Odes and Letters, ed. Thomas Goddard Bergin (Arlington Heights, Illinois: A.H.M. Publishing, 1966), (trans. Thomas G. Bergin) p.20.
10. Young, p.7.

11. Petrarch, Selected Sonnets, (trans. Thomas G. Bergin) p.102; for a discussion of this sonnet see Young, p.6.
12. See p.88.
13. Jacob Burckhardt, The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy: An Essay, (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1965), p.179.
14. Though the identity of Petrarch's Laura is unknown 'there is no good reason to doubt her historical existence', Kenelm Foster, Petrarch: Poet and Humanist, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1984), p.4.
15. Quoted in Stephen Minta, Petrarch and Petrarchanism: The English and French Translations, (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1980), p.30.
16. Minta, pp.30-1.
17. Minta, p.36.
18. Arthur F. Marotti, '"Love is not Love': Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social Order', English Literary History 49 (1982), p.400.
19. Osborn, p.497.
20. Maureen Quilligan, 'Sidney and His Queen' pp. 171-196 in The Historical Renaissance: New Essays on Tudor and Stuart Literature and Culture, (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p.185.
21. For Joan Kelly's discussion of the courtier see pp.76-77. For a similar position to that of Quilligan see Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, 'The Politics of Astrophil and Stella', Studies in English Literature 1500-1600, 24 (1984), pp.53-68.
22. Thomas Wilson, p.30.
23. Katherine Duncan-Jones cites Cicero's influence on this sonnet, see Selected Poems, p.220, n. 58.
24. see Lorna Hutson, (1994), discussed later in this chapter.
25. Sir Philip Sidney, The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The Old Arcadia), ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). All quotations from the old Arcadia will be from this edition and will be given in parentheses in the text, e.g. (OA9).
26. Stephen Gosson, p.178. See also Philip Stubbes, The Anatomie of Abuses: 'Our apparell was given us as a signe distinctive to discern betwixt sex and sex, therefore one to weare the Apparel of another sex, is to participate

with the same, and to adulterate the veritie of his owne kinde', Fsv.

27. At the end of Book III the unmarried Pyrocles and Philoclea famously consummate their relationship. The narrator's aside to the fictional female readers after Pyrocles's erotic song points to their complicity: 'But do not think, fair ladies, his thoughts had such leisure as to run over so long a ditty' (OA211). In Book IV Musidorus attempts to rape the sleeping Pamela and is only prevented from doing so by the sudden appearance of the rustic clowns (OA265). For a discussion of the fictional female readers in the old Arcadia see chapter six, Caroline Lucus, Writing for Women: The Example of Woman as Reader in Elizabethan Romance, (Milton Keynes, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1989).

28. Mark Rose, 'Sidney's Womanish Man' in Review of English Studies, 15 (1964), p.356.

29. Mark Rose, (1964), p.354.

30. P. Albert Duhamel, p.147.

31. Forrest G. Robinson, The Shape of Things Known: Sidney's 'Apology' in Its Philosophical Tradition (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972), p.170.

32. Spenser, The Faerie Queene, II, vi.

33. Hutson, (1994), p.118.

34. Hutson, (1994), p.88. See also R.M. Fisher, 'Thomas Cromwell, Humanism and Educational Reform 1530-40', Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, 50 (1977), pp. 151-63, and Fritz Caspari, chapter one.

35. Hutson, (1994), p.72. See also Hutson's interpretation of Thomas Elyot's version of Boccaccio's tale of 'Titus and Gisippus': this tale, she suggests, 'could be read by sixteenth-century humanists as an allegory of the increased access to symbolic capital which would accrue to men who had acquired skills in the technology of artificial proof', (1994), p.77.

36. Hutson, (1994), p.99.

37. Hutson, (1993), pp.93-4.

38. Hutson, (1994), p.97.

39. In the story of 'Pygmalion's Friend', for example, Pettie's story focuses mainly on the cause for Pygmalion's idolatry (the betrayal of his beloved Penthea). Although Pettie dissociates himself initially from Pygmalion's misogynist attacks on women ('I am angry with myself to have uttered it') he ends the story with a moral for fickle women: 'You have heard, Gentlewomen,

what broad blasphemy the fickleness of Penthea caused unworthily to be blown forth against you all; wherefore to avoid the like, I am to admonish you that you prefer not new-fangle friends', George Pettie, A Petite Pallace of Pettie His Pleasure, Containing Many Pretie Histories by Him Set Forth in Comely Colours and Most Delightfully Discoursed, ed. I. Gollancz 2 vols (London: Chatto and Windus Publishers, 1908), pp.127, 131.

40. See, for example, Euphues's defence against the criticisms of the old Neapolitan: 'you bewray your own weakness in thinking that nature may any ways be altered by education, and as you have ensamples to confirm your pretence, so have I most evident and infallible arguments to serve for my purpose. It is natural for the vine to spread' etc. Euphues responds to the old man by 'inventing' counter proofs or examples. John Lyly, 'Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit', An Anthology of Elizabethan Prose Fiction, ed. Paul Salzman (Oxford, New York: Oxford University press, 1991), p.95.

41. Juan Luis Vives's apprehension of the vulnerability and potential errancy of the female mind, for example, led him in his treatise, The Education of the Christian Woman, to develop in his female readers a method of reading and writing that was nothing short of dull: 'when she shall be taught to read, let those books be taken in hand, that may teach good manners. And when she shall learn to write, let not her example be void verses, nor wanton trifling songs, but some sad sentences, prudent and chaste, taken out of the Holy Scripture, or the sayings of philosophers, which by often writing she may fasten in the letter of her memory'. Juan Luis Vives, Vives and The Renaissance Education of Women, ed. Foster Watson (London: 1912), p.55.

42. Aristotle, 'The Art of Rhetoric', Complete Works, 1411b24 ff.

43. In A.D. 89 Quintilian wrote an essay 'De causis corruptae eloquentiae', in which he attacked the 'declamatory style which had flourished throughout the first century', a style which struck him as 'entirely unnatural, corrupted and tasteless', George Kennedy, The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 494-5.

44. See Clare Kinney's discussion of Pyrocles's intentions in this passage as it appears in the new Arcadia, 'The Masks of Love: Desire and Metamorphosis in Sidney's New Arcadia', Criticism 33 (1991), p.478.

45. Louis Montrose, 'Celebration and Insinuation: Sir Philip Sidney and the Motives of Elizabethan Courtship', Renaissance Drama 8 (1977), p.22.

46. Frances Yates, Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century, (Penguin, 1975), p.94.

47. Yates, Astraea, p.104.

48. Yates, Astraea, p.107. See Ramon Lull: 'For to shewe that to the sygnefyauce of god the prynce almyghty whiche seygnoryeth above the seven planettes/ that make the cours celestyal/ and have power & seygnorye in governynge and ordeynynge the bodyes terrestre and erthely/ that in lyke wyse owen kynges prynces and grete lordes to have puyssaunce and seygnorye upon the knyghtes/ And the knyghtes by symlytude oughten to have power and dominacion over the myen peple' in Ramon Lull, The Book of the Ordre of Chyvalry, trans. William Caxton ed. Alfred T.P.Byles, (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), pp.1-2.

49. See Jean Wilson, Entertainments for Elizabeth I, (Woodbridge and Totowa: D.S. Brewer Rowman and Littlefield, 1980).

50. 'Four Foster' in Wilson, p.67.

51. See Norman Council: the tilters 'take this opportunity to add another hyperbolic chapter to the myth of the Virgin Queen, distinguishing between her identity as the goddess of merely natural beauty and her more proper and exalted identity as the goddess of heavenly beauty' in '"O Dea Certe": The Allegory of "The Fortress of Perfect Beauty"', Huntington Library Quarterly 39 (1976), p.330.

52. 'Four Foster', pp.75-6.

53. 'Four Foster', p.76.

54. 'Four Foster', p.62.

55. See Montrose, who suggests that at the time of the performance of 'The Four Foster Children of Desire' there was some indication that Elizabeth had already decided against marrying Alençon, and that her courtiers were using the masque to support her decision and so to 'repair personal ties' with her, p.24.

56. Norbrook, p.84.

57. Norbrook, p.84.

58. Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Philip Sidney, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p.334, note 5. See also Duncan-Jones, Courtier-Poet, pp.156-7.

59. See Louis Montrose: 'It was, surely, a conscious and pointed rejection of Sidney's pastoral paradigm for the just and temperate relationship that should obtain between freeborn English gentlemen and their sovereign; it was also a repudiation of the relationship which Sidney wanted to establish between himself and his queen', p.20.

60. 'May', (1989), p.13.
61. Greville, (1907), p.61.
62. Greville, (1907), p.61.
63. Greville, (1907), p.68.
64. Greville, (1907), p.69.
65. Greville, (1907), p.69.
66. Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Philip Sidney: The Defence of Poesie, Political Discourses, Correspondence, Translations, ed. Albert Feuillerat, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), p.51.
67. Feuillerat, p.51.
68. Feuillerat, p.52.
69. Feuillerat, p.52.
70. Feuillerat, p.59.
71. Feuillerat, p.58.
72. Feuillerat, p.58.
73. Feuillerat, p.53.
74. Feuillerat, p.52.
75. Feuillerat, p.57.
76. Feuillerat, p.56.
77. Feuillerat, p.52.
78. Feuillerat, p.56.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Revised 'Arcadia' and the Trial Scene:
Philip Sidney's Praise of Folly

The revision of the Arcadia was probably begun in 1582, shortly after the completion of the original version, and was left incomplete at Sidney's death in 1586. Exactly why the Arcadia was revised is unclear. The extensive nature of the revisions and the seemingly reformed character of the princes have suggested to several critics that Sidney was in some way dissatisfied with the ethics of the original text, abandoned it and began writing afresh, transforming what was a pastoral romance into "an absolute heroical poem".¹ Two editions of the new Arcadia were printed subsequent to Sidney's death, one in 1590, the other in 1593.² The 1590 edition, edited by his close friend Fulke Greville, breaks off at the point at which Sidney discontinued his revisions, halfway through Book III, while the 1593 edition, edited by the Countess of Pembroke and Hugh Sanford, contains Books I, II and III of the 1590 edition (with some variants), and Books IV and V of the old Arcadia (again with some variants). The Countess of Pembroke's edition also includes the second half of the old Arcadia's Book III, with some important changes: in the Countess's version, Musidorus's attempted rape of Pamela and the sexual consummation of the unmarried

Pyrocles and Philoclea are removed from the text. Partly because of the nature of the change, and partly because of Hugh Sanford's claim in the editorial preface to the text that the Countess of Pembroke was moved by the 'disfigured face' of the work 'to take in hand the wiping away those spots wherewith the beauties thereof were unworthily blemished' (NA59),³ some critics have assumed that the revisions of the last few books to the new Arcadia were made by a rather prudish and editorially bold Countess of Pembroke.⁴ However, in recent years the tide has turned; it is now generally accepted that the 'spots' described by Hugh Sanford in the preface refer not to the sexual transgressions of the princes in the old Arcadia but to the editorial shortcomings of the 1590 text, and that the revisions in the final books were made either by Sidney himself or with his authority.⁵ The Countess of Pembroke, it seems, printed the second edition so soon after the appearance of the 1590 edition because she was in possession of either a better manuscript or fuller instructions. Not only does John Florio suggest as much in the dedication to his translation of Montaigne,⁶ but in the preface to the 1593 edition itself Hugh Sanford explains that the reader will find the text of the concluded new Arcadia altered 'no further than the author's own writings or known determinations could direct' (NA59). (Moreover, Victor Skretkovicz finds authorisation in several of the revisions in Books I and II of the foul papers of the new Arcadia for the emendations in Books III and IV.⁷) The

textual history of the new Arcadia is important to unravel, for it is in the ascription of the most substantial revisions of Books III, IV and V as printed in the 1593 edition to Philip Sidney that we find justification for a reading of the new Arcadia which includes the important trial scene of Book V.

For those critics interested in the relationship between the original and revised Arcadias, Sidney's poetic treatise, A Defence of Poetry (which chronologically separates the two versions), is a critical clue to an elusive puzzle. The perceived emphasis in the Defence on the ennobling, educational role of poetry suggests to many critics either Sidney's change of heart in his attitude towards poetry - supporting an interpretation of the revised Arcadia as an attempt to reform a rather risqué story⁸ - or his continuing concern with the moral effects of poetry, reinforcing the alternative view that the old Arcadia is a failed attempt at the creation of images of virtue which is set right by the revision.⁹ In this chapter I will argue that the new Arcadia is indeed a continuation rather than a transformation of the themes explored in the old Arcadia. However, the basis for this claim lies in a very different interpretation of A Defence of Poetry, which I offered in chapter two: the emphasis placed in the Defence on the educational efficacy of the 'lofty image[s]' of poetry is misleading, I suggested, since the treatise explores the theme of poetic education in the broadest sense, concerning itself as much with

strategies of persuasion (through the creation of convincing personae), as with the instilling of virtue in the reader. The former theme, as we have seen, is integral to my interpretation both of the actions of Pyrocles and Musidorus in the old Arcadia, and of the poetic expression of Astrophil in Astrophil and Stella. It is also integral, I shall argue, to the interpretation of the actions of the princes in Books I and II of the new Arcadia: although the princes appear to be reformed versions of the old Arcadia figures (and are meant to be interpreted as such), it is in fact more accurate to say that they are better rhetoricians, that is, that they are more able to *persuade* us that they are virtuous. This change, however, does not mean that the princes of the new Arcadia are more duplicitous characters; rather it suggests that Sidney is primarily interested in the new Arcadia, as in the old, in the 'why and how' of the creation of 'lofty image[s]': that is, not in teaching us to be virtuous but in teaching us how to appear virtuous - a talent which is required, as we will discover in the trial scene of the new Arcadia, even by the genuinely virtuous.

The new Arcadia is not simply a longer and more sophisticated version of the old Arcadia. Indeed, it differs from the original text in one important respect. Sidney's old Arcadia serves a similar pedagogic purpose to A Defence of Poetry, demonstrating a method for the creation of credible fictions. In this respect, the old Arcadia is both a good story and a literary manual in

much the same way that Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier is both a treatise about the courtierly virtues and a text in which a rhetorical method for their apparent acquisition is indicated. Although Books I and II of the new Arcadia appear to conform, to some extent, to this plan, there are changes in the revised text which seem to suggest Sidney's unease with the art of rhetoric. In Book III Sidney appears to launch an iconoclastic attack on the kind of rhetorical posturing adopted by the princes in the earlier books, and to promote in the characters of Pamela and Philoclea a heroism of quiet resignation which replaces the rhetorical self-sufficiency of the male characters in the earlier books. Thus, in the new Arcadia it seems that Sidney does not simply disclose to us the rhetorical strategies used by the princes to create virtuous self-images, but to expose the vanity of the techniques themselves. And yet it is important to recognise that the portrayal of the princesses in Book III of the revised text is itself a credible image of virtue, and that it elicits from us an appropriately admiring response. As their example suggests Sidney is critical of the use to which rhetorical skills can be put, not critical of the skills themselves. Indeed, in the trial scene in Book V the same skills used by the princes in the early books to seduce the princesses are the only means available to them of proving their innocence. Rather like Erasmus in The Praise of Folly, who recognises that the foolish wisdom of the rhetoricians has a role to play in this

foolish world, Sidney will demonstrate to us in this final book that the emotions aroused by rhetorical means have a part to play not only in the creation of credible fictions but in the process of judgement-making itself.

In the first part of this chapter I shall offer a reading of the first two books of the 1593 Arcadia which emphasises the apparently reformed character of the two princes, followed by a reading which emphasises that what seems at first sight to be a genuine moral reformation is in fact the product of their increased skill in self-portrayal, and, finally, an examination of the alternative virtue represented by the princesses, and the role attributed to the emotions for the appreciation of this virtue, in Book III. In the second part of this chapter I shall consider the trial scene in the context, first, of the old Arcadia, and, secondly, of the new Arcadia, exploring Sidney's attempt in both versions to present the art of rhetoric as an instrument essential to the defence of 'virtue'.

4a. The revised 'Arcadia': Icon-making and Iconoclasm

i. Books I and II: 'lofty images' in a reformed text

One of the most noticeable changes in the new Arcadia, a change which contributes greatly to its ethical tone, is the increased respect for Neoplatonism in the text, an increased respect which encourages us to take seriously the possibility that the examples of the revised text are designed to move us to desire and practise virtue.¹⁰

Moreover, the apparent influence of Neoplatonism in the

text endows its virtuous characters with an interiority, an inner virtue, which was lacking in the earlier text. In the previous chapter we noted how in the old Arcadia Neoplatonic imagery was used by Pyrocles in his attempts to disguise the sexual nature of his desire for Philoclea. In the revised Arcadia, however, the Neoplatonic philosophising is no longer restricted to the self-conscious, defensive arguments of Pyrocles but exists in an allusive form in some of the more peripheral love stories, many of which are used to provide more virtuous portrayals of love and character than are found in the earlier text. One such story is that of the shepherds Strephon and Claius, characters whose presence was confined in the old Arcadia to the eclogues, and whose thematic importance in the new Arcadia is indicated by their early appearance in the story. For the new Arcadia begins not with a description of the education of its two protagonists, Musidorus and Pyrocles (as did the old Arcadia), but with the lamentations of Strephon and Claius for the loss of their beloved Urania. Strephon and Claius have travelled to the place of Urania's departure from Laconia to the island of Cithera, in order to revive their memory of her. For Strephon, the younger of the two shepherds, their return to this place reminds him painfully of what he has lost; for Claius, however, their return has a potentially conciliatory effect, prompting in him the recollection of Urania's virtues: 'truly no more but as this place served us to think of those things, so those things serve as places to call to

memory more excellent matters' (NA63). In his attempt to assuage Strephon's grief and reconcile him to his loss, Claius invests Urania with a mystical and Neoplatonic significance, arguing that Urania's beauty will be better appreciated by them when it is viewed indirectly: just as the sun's beauty is better appreciated when it is looked at askance, so, in the case of Urania, their 'conceits (not able to bear her sun-staining excellency) will better weigh it by her works upon some meaner subject employed' (NA63). Many critics have noticed this spiritual element in the conception of love that opens the new text. For Katherine Duncan-Jones Urania is 'not woman at all but Venus Urania, a type of Heavenly Beauty which inspires Heavenly love',¹¹ while Alastair Fowler finds it tempting to think of Strephon and Claius as figures who demonstrate a Neoplatonic love which 'raise[s] up our thoughts' by progressive stages'.¹² And yet Strephon and Claius are not, strictly speaking, Neoplatonic lovers; as Fowler notes, their desire for a 'woman of "sweetest favours", in whom nevertheless "the least thing that may be praised ... is her beauty" implies a not quite platonic yearning for the integrated love of the "whole man"',¹³ while their contentedness to recognise and remain within the limitations of their restricted vision suggests a lack of true Platonic ambition. Yet no matter how limiting their yearnings for the absent physical Urania are found to be, there is a sense in which Strephon and Claius provide both a positive image of love against which other characters may

be judged, and a rehabilitation of the improvised Neoplatonism of the old Arcadia, albeit in a modified form. 'Hath not the only love of [Urania]', Claius asks Strephon, 'made us, being silly ignorant shepherds, raise up our thoughts beyond the ordinary level of the world, so as great clerks do not disdain our conference? [...]. Hath not she thrown reason upon our desires and, as it were, given eyes unto Cupid?' (NA63-64). Strephon and Claius come close to achieving the kind of 'rational passion' which was impossible in the old Arcadia, that is, the love of an individual that is inspired as much by his or her intrinsic virtue as it is by his or her physical appearance.

Urania's admirers, Strephon and Claius, are not the only lovers who provide the positive example of love that was conspicuously lacking in the old Arcadia. For many critics, the prime example of virtuous love in the new Arcadia is the story of Argalus and Parthenia, not that of Strephon and Claius.¹⁴ It is clear from the beginning of their story, early in Book I, that Argalus and Parthenia are to be taken as figures of masculine and feminine virtue respectively; while Argalus is depicted as a Herculean hero, manifesting in his actions the knowledge he has cultivated at the Arcadian court, Parthenia is presented as the epitome of womanly virtue, possessing 'a wit which delighted more to judge itself than to shew itself', a 'rare' and 'precious' way of speaking, 'silence without sullenness' and 'modesty without affectation' (NA88).¹⁵ Betrothed by her mother to

the prince of the Helots, Demogorus, Parthenia is content to accept her lot until she meets Argalus, with whom she falls in love, 'and out of passion began to take authority of judgement' (NA89), openly rebelling against the commands of her mother. Parthenia's mother sends Argalus on a number of dangerous quests, 'as ever the evil stepmother Juno recommended to the famous Hercules' (NA89), with the hope that he might thus be removed as an obstacle to the more advantageous marriage. In the meantime Demagorus learns of the change in Parthenia's allegiance and revenges himself on her by rubbing a poisonous potion over her face, 'the effect whereof was such that never leper looked more ugly than she did' (NA90). On his return to Arcadia, having successfully completed the trials that were set him, Argalus reacts to the sight of the disfigured Parthenia first with shock and, then, with unconcern. As he attempts to explain to Parthenia, her physical beauty was but 'as a marshal to lodge the love of her in his mind, which now was so well placed as it needed no further help of any outward harbinger' (NA91). Like Strephon and Claius Argalus is attached less to the physical form of beauty than to the 'idea' of beauty, which Parthenia's virtues still represent to him. However, Parthenia refuses to be married to Argalus in such a state of physical ugliness and she disappears from Arcadia. When she eventually returns, her beauty having been miraculously restored by a physician at the court of Helen of Corinth, she presents herself to Argalus not as Parthenia, whom she

insists is dead, but as a friend whose resemblance to Parthenia makes her a possible substitute. Argalus's response is important, for it offers an insight into the serious point of this fairy-tale story, and an indication of the extent to which the idea of love has been revised in the new Arcadia. Argalus explains that he loves Parthenia not for any superficial manifestation of beauty but for her virtue, which is identifiable with an interior self: 'it was Parthenia's self I loved and love, which no likeness can make one, no commandment dissolve, no foulness defile, nor no death finish' (NA105). Like Strephon and Claius Argalus reverses the emphasis placed on physical beauty in the old Arcadia: he associates an individual's worth with an interior rather than an exterior identity, suggesting the influence on the new Arcadia revisions of both the Protestant belief in a God-given, intrinsic 'self',¹⁶ and the Neoplatonism of Pico della Mirandola, which largely divorces physical beauty from the beauty of the soul.¹⁷ Such an emphasis necessarily bestows on the characters of the text an interiority that was absent in the earlier text.

The description of Parthenia as a character who possesses an inner being that is impervious to any external change would seem to render redundant the rhetorical arts that were used so successfully in the old Arcadia by the two princes to persuade Philoclea and Pamela to fall in love. For an individual whose inner being is fixed can resist the rhetorical techniques which aim at creating an insecurity, followed by a change, in

his or her identity and allegiances. It is not surprising therefore that the story of Argalus and Parthenia should also offer a revised notion of the relationship between the lover and the beloved; Argalus and Parthenia show that this relationship need not be conceived as a power struggle, and that the culmination of love does not always depend on an act of persuasion. Argalus and Parthenia fall in love at first sight, and their relationship is an expression of harmonious reciprocity and mutual understanding. This is nowhere more evident than in the depiction of their marital bliss in Book III. A messenger sent by Basilius to recruit Argalus's services in his war against Amphialus intrudes upon their domestic scene to discover Argalus reading the stories of Hercules to Parthenia:

A happy couple: he joying in her, she joying in herself, but in herself, because she enjoyed him: both increasing their riches by giving to each other; each making one life double, because they made a double life one; where desire never wanted satisfaction, nor satisfaction ever bred satiety: he ruling, because she would obey, or rather because she would obey, she therein ruling (NA501).

Argalus and Parthenia have succeeded in achieving a unity based on a reciprocity that does not deny hierarchy. The claim that he rules and she obeys but 'because she would obey, she therein rul[es]', suggests that their relationship is based on subordination rather than subjugation, from which its harmony arises. Argalus and Parthenia are Protestant versions of Neoplatonic lovers; the paradoxical description of their endless fulfilment suggests the Platonic vision of the soul's banquet at the heavenly table described by Marsilio Ficino in his

Commentary on Plato's Symposium, a banquet where 'souls enjoy the same feasts eternally without satiety',¹⁸ while the emphasis on their harmonious coexistence recalls the Protestant ideal of married love.¹⁹ The picture of their marital happiness also suggests their superiority to Strephon and Claius, who must learn to content themselves with the absence of their beloved (whose face is 'too glorious for our weak eyes') (NA63). Argalus and Parthenia are the example of virtuous love in the new Arcadia. And yet they are also more than this. As Maurice Evans remarks, it is appropriate that Argalus is telling Parthenia about the exploits of Hercules 'whose heroic deeds, described in poetry, will move him to a like heroism' (NA25).²⁰ Argalus and Parthenia are also examples of the ideal reader depicted in the early pages of the Defence, the reader who is inspired to act virtuously by the 'lofty image' of poetry.

The stories of Argalus and Parthenia, and of Strephon, Claius and Urania preface the love adventures of Pyrocles and Musidorus, and therefore influence the way in which we initially perceive their love adventures. Moreover, there are changes to the way in which the princes are introduced as lovers which suggest that they come within the reforming sweep of the new text. For example, in the old Arcadia Pyrocles is moved by the beauty of Philoclea and the tragedy of her story to fall in love with her, and he dresses in a female disguise which he intends to use both to gain access to Philoclea in the retreat and to capture her affections and trust. By the time that

Pyrocles has actually donned the disguise the reader is fully informed of these intentions. In the new Arcadia, however, Pyrocles disappears while Kalander and his party are hunting and we hear no further news of him until Musidorus accidentally stumbles across him in an arbour already dressed in his Amazonian disguise. In this way we receive the full effect and significance of Pyrocles's metamorphosis; Pyrocles appears before us as a Diana-like figure dressed in a 'doublet of sky-colour satin, covered with plates of gold and, as it were, nailed with precious stones' (NA130). Not only does Pyrocles adopt the Neoplatonic colours of the sky and the sun (as he did in the earlier text), suggesting the heavenly nature of his thoughts, but the new name he chooses for himself, 'Zelmane', is indicative both of the zealous nature of his love and the honourable nature of his intentions; for Pyrocles has named himself after Zelmane, a character who resembles Parthenia both in her virtue and in her willingness to die for love.²¹ Moreover, the suddenness with which Pyrocles's transformation takes place suggests its spontaneity rather than its cunning contrivance; it allows us to take at face value Pyrocles's claim both in his debate with Musidorus and in the later scene in which he reveals his male identity to Philoclea, to have been transformed by love.²² Pyrocles no longer appears as a manipulative rhetorician; he is more akin to the artist who has sculpted the statues in Kalander's garden, the artist who is so inspired by the beauty he sees in his subject that in his recreation of that beauty it seems

not that his skill 'bestowed on the other new beauty, but that the beauty of her bestowed new skill' on him (NA74). In short, Pyrocles's falling in love in the new Arcadia seems to make him more virtuous, not simply more rhetorically proficient.

One of the important new details of the disguise is the insignia Pyrocles adopts. In the old Arcadia the device chosen by Pyrocles to adorn his disguise is 'an eagle covered with the feathers of a dove' set beneath 'another dove' so that 'it seemed the dove preyed upon the eagle, the eagle casting up such a look as though the state he was in liked him, though the pain grieved him' (OA24). The device represents the Petrarchan inversion of the traditional male/female hierarchy in the relationship between lover and beloved, an inversion which is criticised by Musidorus in the debate. In the new Arcadia, however, Pyrocles chooses 'a Hercules made in little form, but set with a distaff in his hand, as he once was by Omphale's commandment' (NA131). Pyrocles can thus be identified with the hero we have come to associate with Argalus. However, as several critics have noted, the reference to Omphale recalls not the legends of Hercules's superhuman adventures, but the less flattering stories of his effeminisation. For these critics Pyrocles's device thus reinforces the shamefulness of his transformation.²³ Yet both the epigram which accompanies the device, 'Never more valiant', and the emphasis Pyrocles places on the active nature of his undertaking (NA136) suggest that he still

sees his exploits in heroic terms, and that we are meant to associate him with Herculean virtue, highlighted by the fact that he heroically defends the royal retreat from Arcadian rebels while still dressed in his Amazonian disguise at the end of Book II.

Pyrocles's adoption of the Hercules insignia invites a comparison with the hero with whom Argalus is already associated, and therefore, indirectly, a comparison with Argalus himself. Pyrocles's closeness to Argalus is suggested in other parts of the revised text. For example, not only does Pyrocles first fall in love with a Parthenia-like figure, Zelmane, but the 'fair face' of Parthenia later becomes 'a lecture to [him] of Philoclea's imagined beauty' which itself recalls to him the virtue of Zelmane (NA141). (Like Argalus, Pyrocles appears to be in love with virtue itself, of which the physical beauty of Philoclea, and later of Parthenia, merely reminds him.) The Neoplatonic stance assumed by Pyrocles in the debate with Musidorus is thus reinforced in the love plot itself. We should not be surprised to find that the relationship between Pyrocles and Philoclea is described in the feasting terms that are later so important to the representation of Argalus's and Parthenia's 'Platonic' love. Not only is Philoclea's picture described as a 'table' (NA74), but when Pyrocles enters the retreat he is seated opposite Philoclea at a circular banqueting table which turns on its axis. 'What pleasure did it to me to make divers times the full

circle round about', Pyrocles tells Musidorus, recounting to him this first adventure,

since Philoclea, being also set, was carried still in equal distance from me, and that only my eyes did overtake her, which (when the table was stayed and we began to feed) drank much more eagerly of her beauty than my mouth did of any other liquor (NA148).

Pyrocles feasts endlessly on the sight of Philoclea in much the same way that Argalus feasts 'without satiety' upon the sight of Parthenia in Book III.

There is a third respect, however, in which both princes resemble Argalus. Argalus and Parthenia are not just images of virtuous love; they are also, Maurice Evans claims, examples of the reader depicted in the early part of the Defence, the reader who is moved by the 'lofty image' of the noble actions he encounters in literature to perform similarly noble acts in real life. In the account Musidorus gives of his and Pyrocles' princely education in Book II he suggests that their own virtues have been developed in such a way, through their reading of heroic histories. Even before the princes could speak, he explains, they were presented with 'excellent devices':

images of battles and fortifications being then delivered to their memory, which after, their stronger judgements might dispense; the delight of tales being converted to the knowledge of all the stories of worthy princes, both to move them to do nobly and teach them how to do nobly; the beauty of virtue still being set before their eyes, and that taught them with far more diligent care than grammatical rules (NA258).

The description Musidorus gives of their education recalls the account Sidney gives in A Defence of Poetry of how the 'lofty image' of poetic heroes 'inflameth the

mind with desire to be worthy' (47). Musidorus's representation of their education suggests that there is an emphasis in the revised text on the ethical efficacy of poetic images, an emphasis reinforced by the new role given to the author-narrator of the text. Whereas the ironic narrator of the old Arcadia draws the attention of the reader to the danger of rhetorical manipulation, the absence of such an intrusive voice in the new Arcadia suggests Sidney's greater confidence both in the potential of his images to inspire in the reader a desire to act virtuously, and in the reader to receive those images rightly. Although the emphasis in the old Arcadia is on the 'infected will' of the princes and the reader, in the new Arcadia it appears to lie instead on the 'erected wit' of characters and readers alike.²⁴ The new Arcadia thus appears to reflect Sidney's increased faith in human nature. Significantly, in the account Musidorus gives of his and Pyrocles's education he makes it clear that the reading of history did not create virtue in them but cultivated what was already latent within them: 'a habit of commanding was naturalized to them' as a result of their studies, Musidorus explains, but 'Nature' had already made them 'lords of truth, whereon all the other goods were builded' (NA259).

ii. The characters of Pyrocles and Musidorus reconsidered

At the beginning of this chapter I suggested that Books I and II of the new Arcadia are less a revision

than a continuation of the earlier text and its principal interest in the creation of credible images. The revisions in the text which I have so far described, however, suggest that the new text has indeed departed from the concerns of the old Arcadia by offering a revised notion of love as something which is inspired by the virtue intrinsic in a character rather than by his or her physical beauty. The reformed tone of the new Arcadia touches the princes Pyrocles and Musidorus, for not only do their pre-Arcadian actions earn them both the title of 'hero' but their adventures inside the Arcadian retreat seem to demonstrate their greater integrity. I would suggest, however, that although this new ethical emphasis in the revised Arcadia does rub off on the princes, so that they do indeed seem to be genuinely more virtuous, what we actually perceive is not so much their greater heroism (or, at least, not just this) but their increased ability to portray themselves as heroes. Indeed, in some respects the princes' actual behaviour in the Arcadian retreat seems to have changed very little. In the old Arcadia Pyrocles's name 'Cleophila' and the Amazonian disguise he adopts are both a sign of his transformed state *and* a ploy that will gain him access to Philoclea's affection; similarly, in the new Arcadia, Pyrocles chooses the name 'Zelmane' and the Amazonian disguise both for the honour of the virtuous Zelmane 'to whose memory [he is] so much bound' (NA142) and because it is 'the only hope of [his] advancement' in this new love affair (NA151). In short, the disguise which he

adopts in the new Arcadia is also 'a secret help' which enables him to pursue his self-interests. Pyrocles is no less an opportunist or strategist in the revised text than he was in the old Arcadia, nor is his love more spiritually ambitious: in the account Pyrocles gives to Musidorus of the banquet in Basilius's retreat he describes both how he feasts on the sight of Philoclea (in terms that recall the depiction of perfect, fulfilled love by Marsilio Ficino) and how his senses eventually gain the upperhand over his reasoning ability, so that he is forced to 'loose the reins unto them' and take full advantage of the voyeuristic opportunity that his female disguise has afforded him (NA149). A more serious indictment of Pyrocles is found in the Ladon scene of Book II, the scene in which he uses his disguise to gain access to the princesses' private bathing resort, 'a place upon pain of death as nobody durst presume to come thither' (NA285). Sexually aroused by the sight of the naked Philoclea, Pyrocles takes up his lute and begins to compose a song as if 'with a divine fury inspired'. 'So together went the utterance and the invention', the narrator remarks, 'that one *might* judge it was Philoclea's beauty which did speedily write it in her [i.e. Pyrocles's] eyes, or the sense thereof which did word by word indite it in her mind, whereto she (but as an organ) did only lend utterance' (*italics mine*) (NA287). The ironic voice of the author-narrator unexpectedly creeps into the narrative, undermining the Platonism of Pyrocles's supposed inspiration. Such

examples of Pyrocles's sexual motivation should be seen as a sign not of the incomplete nature of the new Arcadia revisions (the banquet scene is a new addition to the revised text) but of the continued ethical ambiguity of Pyrocles, and, at least by association, of Musidorus.

As the examples of his sexual passion suggest, Pyrocles has changed very little in the new Arcadia although, interestingly, few critics have drawn attention to this fact. The emphasis placed in the new Arcadia on the efficacy of poetic images and the seemingly more objective mode of narration contribute greatly to the new image of the princes, encouraging the reader to take at face value the ethical pretensions of the text. And yet as the Ladon scene demonstrates, the ironic narration of the old Arcadia still survives in the new text, although the occasions of its occurrence are less frequent. More important, however, is the shift in narratorial responsibility occasioned by the introduction of a more unobtrusive author-narrator: many of the author-narrator's speeches of the old Arcadia, rather than disappearing from the new text, have simply been taken over by the princes.²⁵ The effect of this change is to give the princes more control over the presentation of their own characters. For example, in the scene in which Pyrocles first meets Philoclea in the old Arcadia, the narrator represents Pyrocles at one moment as a spiritually ravished Neoplatonic lover and at another as a sneaking voyeur; the reader receives the impression that the narrator is actually more far-sighted and

realistic than Pyrocles, who, it appears, has naively idealised a sensual passion. In the new Arcadia, however, it is Pyrocles who describes both the semi-naked appearance of Philoclea and the more spiritual response the sight supposedly provokes in him. Not only has Pyrocles taken control of his characterisation in this scene, but the absence of the ironic voice of the narrator makes it easy for a careless reader to overlook the discrepancies in his self-presentation. This example raises the important question of the nature of narratorial influence in the revised text. In the old Arcadia, the ironic asides of the narrator draw the attention of the reader to the dangers of a reading which is susceptible to the rhetorical intentions of a text; the seemingly more objective tone of the new Arcadia, however, can make us forget this important point, inspiring an unwarranted confidence in the narratorial integrity of both the author-narrator and the princes, who themselves participate in the narration of their past actions. (In the old Arcadia, in contrast, it is Histor who recounts their past adventures (OA139).) Indeed, the unobtrusiveness of narratorial influence in the new Arcadia encourages us to see the princes' relation of their own adventures as a part of the straightforward narration of the plot. Thus, when reading the revised text it is necessary that we remind ourselves of what was obvious in the old Arcadia: that the princes relate their adventures to the princesses not to inspire them to act virtuously (as Argalus's story-telling is claimed by

Maurice Evans to do) but to persuade Pamela and Philoclea to fall in love.²⁶

Nor is the princes' concern with their self-presentation a feature solely of the love situation; indeed, in the account Musidorus gives in Book II of his and Pyrocles's education he indicates that the 'lofty image[s]' of history have inspired in them a desire both to emulate the historical actions they have read about and to become 'lofty image[s]' themselves, something which they set out to achieve both in their pursuit of adventures and in their relation of those adventures. Although Pyrocles and Musidorus begin their continental tour with the intention of putting into practice the precepts they have learnt in the classroom, and of fulfilling the political ideals of the humanists, their public actions soon give way to their private concern to develop their reputation: 'not content with those public actions of princely and, as it were, governing virtue' Pyrocles and Musidorus begin to look for trials which will make them 'more famous because more perilous' (NA273). The degree to which the princes compromise humanist values is nowhere more evident than in Pyrocles's rescue of Zelmane's tyrannical father Plexirtus; although Pyrocles tells Philoclea that he undertakes the dangerous and unethical quest because his 'word was passed', he also adds that 'the hardness of the enterprise' attracted him, 'knowing well that the journey of high honour lies not in plain ways' (NA369). And he concludes his tale of the fight (an adventure 'which

hundreds durst not attempt') with the observation that the onlookers were so full of admiration for his feats that 'there was order given to have the fight, both by sculpture and picture, celebrated in most parts of Asia' (NA369). As this example demonstrates, the princes are concerned as much with the development of their heroic fame as they are with the fulfilment of their public duty, and they are actively engaged in creating the opportunities for such display. Although Musidorus tells Pamela that they decided to continue their travels rather than return to Macedon in order to 'employ [their] gifts' 'to the good of mankind', he immediately adds that they also went 'privately to seek exercises of their virtue, thinking it not so worthy to be brought to heroical effects by fortune or necessity, like Ulysses and Aeneas, as by one's own choice and working' (NA275). In their attempt to create situations in which they can exercise their virtue and establish their reputation, Pyrocles and Musidorus resemble Machiavelli's ideal prince, a figure who not only understands the importance for the success of future government of acquiring good reputation but who possesses as well the creative skill which will ensure its attainment.²⁷

Many of the stories concerning the princes' pre-Arcadian adventures are new additions to the revised text. One such story is Musidorus's rescue of Argalus and Clitophon. For this adventure Musidorus 'invent[s]' a plan in which the Arcadian nobility disguise themselves as poor men in order to gain access to the city of the

republican Helots. The inspiration for this deceitful ruse, the narrator comments, is history, the reading of which has provided Musidorus with examples of such 'stratagems' (NA95). A similar adventure, in which Pyrocles undertakes to save Musidorus from the revenge of the tyrannical king of Phrygia, is related in Book II. Realising that he cannot muster sufficient forces to invade Phrygia, Pyrocles disguises himself in the clothes of a poor man and poses as the executioner's servant (NA268). In this disguise Pyrocles gains access to the scaffold on which Musidorus is meant to lose his life and, inspired by 'just rage' and 'desperate virtue', performs such deeds that he wins both the liberty of Musidorus and the admiration of his beholders, who believe his feats are 'beyond mortal power' (NA269). As the inventiveness of the princes in these adventures suggests, and as the comments of the narrator on the benefits derived by Musidorus from the reading of history imply, the actions of Musidorus and Pyrocles are informed by a Machiavellian reading of history and not just, as Musidorus insists in his account of their education, by the inspirational effect of heroic images. What these examples also make clear is the fact that the princes use 'disguise' as a military strategy as well as a rhetorical resource in the love plot, thus revealing that the distinction between military adventures and the pursuit of love is more blurred than Musidorus allows in the debate in Book I. The additional stories in the new Arcadia make it clear that the princes do not in fact

digress from the ideals of their education; they actually continue to practice in the love-plot the essentially military skills they have learnt from history books and from military experience.

The importance of dress to the establishment of reputation is exploited by the princes in the new Arcadia as much as it was by the princes in the old Arcadia. For example, when we first meet Pyrocles in the new Arcadia, he is already dressed in the sky-blue and gold colours of his later disguise, waving a sword above his head and sitting astride a fallen mast in the sea; the fishermen who behold this spectacle respond with superstitious 'amazement', and are thrown into inaction. Musidorus's reply that Pyrocles is 'but a man although of most divine excellencies' (NA67), while critical of the naive response of the fishermen, reinforces the heroic status of Pyrocles; at the same time it suggests to the reader the representative nature of his dress: Pyrocles is as 'good' as he looks. It is only in a later episode in Book V that it is suggested that the clothes worn by the princes are chosen carefully by them, and are calculated to capture the sympathy or admiration of their audience (NA808-9).²⁸ This sensitivity to audience expectation is characteristic also of their story-telling which, like the clothes they assume, is part of the play-acting or rhetorical posturing so important to their romantic success. The scene in which Musidorus uses his lyre to reinforce the import of his tale and solicit Pamela's compassion has been related in an earlier discussion of

the old Arcadia; another example of such sensitivity, and one specific to the revised text, is the tale Pyrocles tells Philoclea of his first love, Zelmane. In this story Pyrocles reveals his kinship to the slippery and articulate Pamphialus, whose success in the art of seduction depends on his ability to stir the 'passions' of his mistresses, 'making [them] now jealous, now envious, now proud' of their lover (NA336). 'Pardon me, only dear lady', Pyrocles tells Philoclea at the beginning of his tale, 'that I use many words, for [Zelmane's] affection to me deserves of me an affectionate speech' (NA360). Pyrocles's claim that Philoclea is his 'only dear lady' seems destined to dispel any jealousy that may arise, while in his conclusion to the tale he carefully avoids admitting that he has already loved: 'I must confess for true that if my stars had not wholly reserved me for you, there else perhaps I might have loved' (NA367).²⁹ And yet at the same time Pyrocles poignantly reminds Philoclea of the fact that he has been loved before, and in doing so he indicates to her his worthiness; the story of Zelmane is, among other things, further evidence of the dazzling effect Pyrocles has on his beholders.³⁰

In one respect the suggested comparison between Pyrocles and the rhetorically proficient Pamphialus made above is unfair, for it is from this false Petrarchan orator that Pyrocles rescues Dido. And yet, in another respect, the comparison is helpful, for of all the stories Pyrocles tells, the tale of Dido and Pamphialus

is perhaps the most complex: it puts in question not only his motivation for telling stories but the sincerity of the roles he plays. Pyrocles introduces the story as a digression which 'though in itself of small importance' he decides to include because 'thereof [he] was brought to as great a cumber and danger as lightly any might escape' (NA334). The story is of small account because, unlike the other stories he tells, it does not involve intrigues of a political nature, and it takes place while he is en route to a more important adventure, a duel with Anaxius. Alerted by the sound of cries, Pyrocles ventures into a copse where he discovers a man being whipped by nine women. Moved to compassion by the sight of this man's plight, Pyrocles rushes to his rescue, driving away all the women except one, 'who was so fleshed in malice that neither during nor after the fight she gave any truce to her cruelty, but still used the little instrument of her great spite, to the well-witnessed pain of the impatient patient' (NA335). The 'impatient patient' turns out to be Pamphialus, a false Petrarchan lover who seems to deserve the beating he gets, while the woman 'fleshed with malice', is revealed to be the dishonoured Dido. Having settled the dispute, Pyrocles then goes on his way with the intention of fulfilling his promise to fight with Anaxius. This important fight, however, is once again disturbed by Dido and Pamphialus. For the released Pamphialus, having captured the vulnerable Dido and tied her up, drives her in front of him, beating her 'with most unmanlike

cruelty' (NA340). At the sight of Dido's suffering, Pyrocles's compassion is once again stirred, and he begs Anaxius to defer the fight. Anaxius's uncourteous reply forces Pyrocles to take his leave regardless of the attack on his valour which inevitably follows. Pyrocles is forced to choose between protecting either the honour of Dido or his own valorous reputation. The choice is not an easy one: Pyrocles admits that as he rushed to rescue Dido he was 'ashamed to see a number of country folks who happened to pass thereby, who halloed and hooted after me as at the arrantest coward that ever showed his shoulders to his enemy' (NA340). What this episode importantly seems to reveal to Philoclea, however, is not Pyrocles's cowardice but his willingness to dedicate himself to the service of a lady; Pyrocles follows the example set by Chrétien de Troyes's Lancelot, the model of chivalric excellence who willingly played the 'coward's part' at the command of Guinevere.³¹

The Dido and Pamphialus story is unusual because it is the only story Pyrocles tells in which he seems to be willing to compromise his reputation. And yet the ultimate effect of his action is not to diminish his standing in others' eyes; as D.M. Anderson notes, the fact that Pyrocles risks being called 'a coward for the sake of a maiden (if she can be so named) whose disposition is not notably virtuous' shows him to be 'unremittingly noble and generous',³² while his rejection of the misogynist Anaxius establishes him as a hero in the alternative mould of the chivalric knight. What is

interesting about this story, however, is its moral complexity. Pyrocles sets out to save the honour of a woman who cannot 'deny but she was driven [...] to receive more than decent favours' (NA342) from her lover, and the justness of whose revenge is never fully established; Dido avenges herself on Pamphialus not only because of his unfaithfulness but because he has dismissed her beauty (NA338). In his defence of Dido Pyrocles thus risks being compared to Phalantus, whose half-hearted chivalric indulgence of Artesia's vanity was mocked in Book I (NA161-8). Moreover, Pyrocles's motivation for the rescue of Dido is unclear. Pyrocles first rescues Pamphialus because he is moved to compassion by the sight of his suffering; Pyrocles's allegiance soon changes, however, when he hears Dido's side of the story, a change reinforced when he later sees her being beaten by Pamphialus. And yet Pyrocles finally admits that he is glad to have 'done so good a deed for a gentlewoman not unhandsome', suggesting a possible sexual motive for this adventure (NA341).³³ Pyrocles's motivation in telling the story to Philoclea is similarly unclear. Although he claims that he tells Philoclea the story because it forms part of his biographical narrative, he simultaneously establishes himself as a 'lady's man', reinforcing the version he gave of himself in the debate with Musidorus as a defender of women. Yet what we will discover in Book III of the new Arcadia is the partiality of Pyrocles's respect for women. Believing that Philoclea and Pamela are dead, and

criticised by a gentlewoman (Philoclea in disguise) for his effeminate lamentations, Pyrocles responds with an attack on women that recalls the misogyny both of Musidorus in the debate in Book I and of Anaxius in Book III;³⁴ for Pyrocles concludes that without the princesses there is nothing 'left in that sex, but babbling and busyness', and when the disguised Philoclea offers further to console him he attempts to strike her (NA567). Pyrocles, I suggest, is not a defender of women by 'nature' or by conviction; it is a position which he recognises is part of the role of 'lover', and which he takes up along with this role. The success of his 'acting' is perhaps nowhere better revealed than in his telling of the Dido and Pamphialus story; Pyrocles's ability to move his audience to share his compassion first for Pamphialus and then for the ambiguous Dido, and his ability to present as further evidence of his own heroism his involvement in a morally ambiguous and even petty squabble, proves above all else his virtuosity as a story-teller.

iii) Iconoclasm, iconography: idealism versus scepticism in Book III

The incident in Book III in which Pyrocles fails to recognise the disguised Philoclea and launches into a misogynist tirade is important not only because it shows the tenuousness of Pyrocles's earlier claim to be a defender of women but because it shows his unwillingness to accept what many critics see as the central, feminine virtue of this book, the virtue of patience.³⁵ For Pyrocles rejects the attempt of the disguised Philoclea

to assuage his grief, denouncing her words as 'woman's philosophy, childish folly' (NA567), when Philoclea is in fact offering him a conventional form of Christian consolation. Like the figure 'Philosophy' who consoles the imprisoned Boethius by reminding him of the transience of the physical world,³⁶ Philoclea attempts to abate the grief of Pyrocles by reminding him of the inevitability of decay (NA566). In one respect Pyrocles is right to refer to this doctrine of resignation as 'women's philosophy'; patience is a virtue traditionally possessed by women and exercised in Book III of the new Arcadia only by the heroines Pamela and Philoclea. (It is not until the trial scene in Book V when, faced with death, Pyrocles and Musidorus learn to resign themselves to their fate and to refer to a divine organising power (NA803-5).) In contrast to the male characters of this book, who engage in increasingly futile and dangerous displays of private valour in the name of chivalry, Pamela and Philoclea stand out as figures who retain a degree of dignity, and it is Pamela's quiet resistance in the face of adversity which calls for particular attention. Indeed, Sidney's description of her suffering is particularly notable: 'if ever virtue took a body to show his else-unconceivable beauty, it was in Pamela', for though she is initially stirred to resist Cecropia's 'divers torment', she finally resigns herself to suffer instead 'with so heavenly a quietness and so graceful a calmness [...] that while they vexed her fair body, it seemed that she rather directed than obeyed the vexation'

(553). Pamela demonstrates here the 'new heroism' of the sixteenth century, the heroism in which 'the highest form of action is the apparent inaction of enduring, with patience and composure, any physical or spiritual torment that may be imposed': Pamela's kindred characters are the Protestant martyrs whose stories are told so movingly by John Foxe in Acts and Monuments.³⁷

An analogy between Pamela and Christian martyrs is further encouraged by her apparent allegiance to monism. In the famous debate with Cecropia, a debate referred to by Mark Rose as 'the philosophical core' of the new Arcadia,³⁸ Pamela offers a Platonic understanding of earthly mutability which anticipates Philoclea's later consolatory remarks to Pyrocles and which comes remarkably close to Christian doctrine. In an attempt to persuade Pamela to become the mistress of Amphialus, Cecropia attacks her moral scruples, arguing that the ruling principle of the universe is chance, not a divine Godhead, and that social customs, like superstitions, are invented to keep ambitious individuals in their place (NA487-8). Pamela scornfully responds with an attack on Cecropia's atheism, asserting the existence of a divine organising principle: 'if nothing but chance had glued those pieces of this All', she reasons, 'the heavy parts would have gone infinitely downward, the light infinitely upward' (NA489). For Pamela, the fact that the world is governed by 'a superior power and wisdom' is proved by the visible 'unity' which derives from the 'contrarieties' of the universe (NA489). It is at this

point in the new Arcadia that a character comes close to enunciating the kind of theology embraced by Sidney and his Christian audience;³⁹ not surprisingly later audiences have found this an attractive and significant moment in the revised text. Book III is the most extensively revised book in the new Arcadia and the philosophical element which it introduces suggests that the distinctiveness of the revised text lies in its implicit critique of the scepticism so predominant in Sidney's earlier works and of the rhetorical cunning of the princes in particular.

It is important to recognise that the princes play a much diminished role in the captivity episode. The fact that Basilius lays siege to Amphialus's castle means that Musidorus is prevented from initiating the kind of clever strategies which were so successful on earlier occasions, while Pyrocles, imprisoned both in the castle and in his female disguise, is forced to sit tight until help arrives. The fact that the princes are shown to be powerless in this book suggests a critical glance at their claim to self-sufficiency and their rhetorical resourcefulness; at the same time, their reduced role means that the attack on their use of rhetoric in this book is never levelled directly at them. A more central male figure in Book III is Amphialus, and it is through this morally ambiguous character that the rhetorical manoeuvres of the princes are implicitly criticized. The connection between Pyrocles and Amphialus is particularly strong and is established early in Book II: Amphialus,

like Pyrocles, is in love with Philoclea, and he shares with him a willingness to indulge this desire by adopting the role of a peeping Tom (NA292); moreover, Amphialus's identity as a lover, like that of Pyrocles, is explored through Petrarchan conceits, and the obedient and fawning spaniel becomes a fitting emblem for his emotional state too.⁴⁰ The terms in which Amphialus offers his love to the captured Philoclea recall those used by Pyrocles in an earlier book; like Pyrocles, Amphialus refuses to accept responsibility for his actions, claiming that it is Philoclea herself who has effectively captured him: 'it is you yourself that imprison yourself: it is your beauty which makes these castle-walls embrace you: it is your own eyes which reflect upon themselves this injury' (NA451). What is different in Book III, however, is that the paradox of his position is rather ruthlessly revealed by the fact of Philoclea's real imprisonment ('You entitle yourself my slave', she rebukes him; 'but I am sure I am yours' (NA449)). Moreover, despite being 'a prisoner to his prisoner' (NA451), Amphialus, like Pyrocles, is revealed to be a masterful rhetorician. For example, once he recognises the need to wage war on Basilius if he is to keep Philoclea in the castle, Amphialus decides to rally his forces around him and discover among the Arcadians possible supporters; understanding 'how violently rumours do blow the sails of popular judgements, and how few there can be that discern between truth and truth-likeness, between shows and substance' Amphialus sends to the Arcadian nobility 'a

justification of this his action' which might 'hide indeed the foulness of his treason' (NA452), while at the same time 'sow[ing] abroad' many 'discourses' 'painted with rhetorical colours' with the hope that this would 'breed' among his potential enemies 'a coolness to deal violently with him, and a false-minded neutrality to expect the issue' (NA454). A slave to his beloved Philoclea Amphialus may be, but he is also a capable Machiavellian strategist.

It is not only the Petrarchan role that is questioned in this text through its adoption by Amphialus; the role of chivalric knight is also undermined by his assuming it. This may be seen, for example, by his behaviour in the episode in which he fights with Phalantus. Bored by the tiresome nature of the siege, Phalantus takes it upon himself to offer a challenge of single combat to Amphialus. Phalantus's motive for doing so is not a desire to resolve the dispute between Amphialus and Basilius but a wish 'to keep his valour in knowledge' so that 'his old mistress Artesia might see whom she had so lightly forsaken' (NA494). In the challenge he addresses to Amphialus Phalantus reveals that it is 'the liking of matters martial' rather than 'any mislike' for Amphialus that brings him to the battlefield, and his motivation is further emphasised by his choosing as the place for their meeting an island close to the castle so 'that the ladies may have the pleasure of seeing the combat' (NA495). Amphialus's reception of the challenge is telling - he reads it with 'a cheerful countenance', thinks 'a little

with himself' and then pens a reply: 'prepare [...] your arms to fight, but not your heart to malice, since true valour needs no other whetstone than desire of honour' (NA495). Amphialus agrees to the battle as if it were a light-hearted tournament designed to display his own martial qualities for the entertainment of Philoclea: rather like Pyrocles in Book II, Amphialus uses such moments of martial combat as part of his love rhetoric. The difference between this theatrical combat, however, and the stories related by Pyrocles is that here the tone of the narration is implicitly critical; for it is Amphialus's pursuit of a chivalric ideal that leads to the destruction of the marital ideal of the new Arcadia as represented by Argalus and Parthenia.

It seems that in Book III of the new Arcadia Sidney launches an attack on the kinds of actions performed by the princes in the earlier books, replacing the examples of their rhetorical virtuosity with a more recognisably Christian or Stoic kind of virtue, one in which the material world is rejected for a spiritual or transcendent plane of being. But are we meant, in our reading of the new Arcadia, to imitate the stoicism of Pamela and Philoclea, to see, as Philoclea urges Pyrocles, 'the folly of [our] passion' (NA566)? In the same Book in which the heroines are depicted as glorious martyrs, we, the readers, are encouraged to respond sympathetically, or emotionally, to their plight, and thus to distinguish ourselves from the cruel Cecropia who, in her response to Pamela's impassioned discussion

of the ruling principle of the universe, is 'like a bat which, though it have eyes to discern that there is a sun, yet hath so evil eyes that it cannot delight in the sun' (NA492). Indeed, more than in any other book Sidney here verbally paints 'pictures' of his heroes, the vividness of which is clearly intended to invoke in us a sympathetic response. In one instance we see Pamela reaching up her 'naked hands' to heaven in a supplicatory gesture, 'as if the right had been the picture of Zeal, and the left of Humbleness'; even the 'hardhearted' Cecropia is not unmoved at this sight, although she is unable to love the virtue she sees in Pamela (NA464-5). In another instance, Sidney presents the death wound of Parthenia as a virtuoso piece of theatre ('a neck indeed of alabaster, displaying the wound, which with most dainty blood laboured to drown his own beauties'): the emotive vividness of this description is reinforced by the account Sidney also gives us of the reaction of the onlookers, and, especially, of the reaction of Amphialus, who is 'astonished with grief, compassion and shame' when he realises that the knight he has killed is Parthenia herself (NA528). In the context of this episode Amphialus's grief has a salutary effect, helping him to see the vanity and selfishness of his chivalric, passion-driven exploits; moreover, his ability to feel for Parthenia becomes an indication of the nobility of his heart, so that, while we may never feel sympathy for the motives and actions of his mother Cecropia, we will ever afterwards feel some goodwill towards Amphialus himself.

In the new Arcadia Sidney appears to encourage, rather than discourage, the reader's rhetorical vulnerability, and not, then, (as the example of the stoic princesses might suggest), simply to reject the emotive aspects of the rhetorical art. In our reading of the new Arcadia, I suggest, we are never really able to transcend the fictional world of particular stories; we are forced to engage with this rhetorically constructed world, forced to be moved by the stories that are related, no matter how dubious or questionable the motives of its characters may sometimes seem. And this, I suggest, is how we are meant to respond to the Arcadian world. As we will learn from our reading of the trial scene, there are times when the 'folly of passion' is a very wise response, and the seemingly duplicitous art of rhetoric essential to the true representation of 'virtue'.

4b. Rhetoric Recovered: Emotion and The Art of Judgement

i. The old Arcadia: Books III, IV and V

The old Arcadia is notorious for the errant behaviour of the princes in its later books. What began for Pyrocles and Musidorus as a harmless pursuit of love in Books I and II becomes, by the end of Book III, an adventure that is transgressive and shocking for many readers. Although Pyrocles invents the cave plot partly to ensure that Basilius unwittingly commits 'adultery' with his wife (and not, as Basilius hopes, with his beloved Cleophila), he also uses it to give himself the opportunity to be alone with Philoclea in her bedroom, where they consummate their relationship (OA211).

Shortly after this event we learn that Musidorus, having promised the self-exiled Pamela that he will protect her honour, is tempted to rape her while she is asleep in his arms (OA265). Both Musidorus, Pyrocles and the narrator have betrayed the expectations of their readers, as we are acutely reminded through the example of the fictional female readers to whom the narrator addresses himself; the 'fair ladies' have been encouraged by the narrator to give support to a character whose real intention, it turns out, was to bed his mistress, and to another whose pledge of honour cannot be respected. Both the actual reader and the 'fair ladies' are forced to regard the princes in a new light, however, as a result not only of their actions but of the way in which they portray their conduct in the subsequent trial scene. Pyrocles insists to Philanax that Philoclea's virtue 'hath been a sufficient resistance' to his sexual advances (OA261), converting what was a love scene of mutual consent into an attempted rape, while Musidorus, apologising to Pamela for his failure to defeat the rabble who have accosted them (and interrupted his intended rape), invokes 'that universal and only wisdom' as a witness to the honourable nature of his intentions: 'my desire, though in extremest vehemency, yet did not so overgo my remembrance but that, as far as man's wit might be extended, I sought to prevent all things that might fall to your hurt' (OA269). Pamela's reply that she cannot 'want comfort' while she has 'the true and living comfort of [her] unblemished virtue' and the protection of Musidorus strongly

reinforces our awareness of his lack of integrity (OA270). The way in which the princes misrepresent their actions, whether out of a desire to protect themselves or the princesses, adds force to Philanax's attack on the underhand means they have used to gain their ends.⁴¹ Although the princes are on trial for their 'adultery' it is our perception of the means they have used that will ultimately affect our judgement. We are to judge not only their moral character but their use of rhetoric to create the credible images of themselves in the earlier books.

The reference to 'everlasting justice' which opens Book IV heralds the harsher moral tone of the last two books (OA230), a tone reinforced by the sudden disappearance of the compassionate 'fair ladies' from the text. The new lack of tolerance for the emotions is marked in the trial scene by the fact that Euarchus refuses to countenance the excuse Musidorus offers for their behaviour that they were prompted to act as they did by 'love' (OA351-2). However, despite the disappearance of the 'fair ladies' and the introduction of a character exemplary of rational fair-mindedness, the text still invites an emotionally complex response, the absence of the 'fair ladies' demonstrating only the ubiquity of this kind of reaction. When Philanax, for example, thinks about how Pyrocles saved Basilius from the rebels he experiences a 'kind of relenting mind towards him', but when he remembers the death of Basilius (for which he believes Pyrocles is partly responsible)

his 'compassion' turns into 'a hateful passion', leaving him in a strange 'medley betwixt revenge and pity' (OA261-2). Since Philanax acts as the prosecutor of the princes the potential for injustice is clear. Indeed, Philanax's desire for revenge means that he is particularly ill-equipped to judge the situation. In an attempt to convince Euarchus of the guilt of the princes he calls to his attention Basilius's corpse which is laid out before him - as if the grotesqueness of the sight were evidence enough to convict Pyrocles and Musidorus of murder and subterfuge (OA334) - while he actively suppresses important character evidence (the letters written by the princesses) for fear that Pamela and Philoclea would be incriminated and the case against the princes weakened. From our position as readers external to the narrative action we can perceive Philanax's manipulation of the available evidence; however, this does not mean that we are more able than Euarchus fairly to judge the princes or Gynecia. While we may be acutely aware of the flaws in Philanax's arguments we are simultaneously susceptible to the rhetorical appeals and the representational bias of the princes and the narrator. Thus, for example, although Pyrocles and Philoclea are criminals according to the strict Arcadian laws, the narrator makes it clear with the repetition of adjectives which denote virtue that they are 'innocent' in a more general sense (OA251), with the result that he draws our attention to the 'injustice' of the Arcadian laws themselves. The fact that neither Pyrocles nor

Philoclea repent of their actions also affects the way in which we judge them; their belief and confidence in their innocence again encourages us to be more critical of the Arcadian laws than of their own actions. When Pyrocles realises that he and Philoclea have been discovered he immediately calls to mind the 'cruelty of the Arcadian laws which, without exception, did condemn all to death who were found in act of marriage without solemnity of marriage' (OA251). 'He saw the weak judgement of man would condemn that as death-deserving vice in her which had in truth never broken the bands of a true living virtue', and he considers how unfortunate it is for a young woman of 'so unripe years, so faultless a beauty, the mansion of so pure goodness' to 'have her youth so untimely cut off, her natural perfections unnaturally consumed, her virtue rewarded with shame' (OA252). As such arguments suggest, the 'trial' has, in effect, already started. Because the narrator and the princes are such persuasive and partial speakers it is important for us to bear in mind that they are as manipulative as Philanax; no matter how much pity we feel for her plight Philoclea is not, strictly speaking, 'innocent' any longer. When reading the last two books of the old Arcadia we thus need to determine whether we should listen sympathetically to the appeals of the princes, or whether, in doing so, we are in danger of conniving at the perversion of justice.

Euarchus's entrance in Book V promises to present a turning point in the narration of these confused events.

For it is from Euarchus that we hope to receive a satisfactory resolution to this complex series of events, and an example of how these characters should be 'heard'. Famous throughout Greece for his just rulership and his 'equity' (OA307, 312), Euarchus resembles the ideal ruler outlined by Plato in the Republic, and later by Erasmus in The Education of a Christian Prince, the ruler who is supposedly able to make a righteous judgement based on a knowledge of intelligible truth. Just as the ideal ruler in this tradition is unmoved by the 'low concerns and sordid emotions of the common people', so Euarchus, the narrator tells us, is never 'beguiled with the painted gloss of pleasure nor dazzled with the false light of ambition' (OA309), and just as the ideal ruler acts in accordance with the dictates of reason rather than the senses, so Euarchus refuses to be swayed by his own emotions.⁴² Euarchus's cool-headedness and rationality is reflected both in his own speech, and in his response to the speeches of his interlocutors: thus, his words are characterised by an absence of rhetorical ornament and a frequent use of 'logical connectives', suggesting to Lorna Challis his 'intention to establish truth by logical exposition rather than to persuade his hearers to a pre-conceived point of view',⁴³ while in his response to the trial proceedings, he proves himself to be singularly resistant to the emotional appeals (and rhetorical proficiency) of the princes, Philanax and the crowd at the trial scene. When Philanax tries to persuade Euarchus to act as a judge at the trial, he describes the

state of affairs in Arcadia with a vividness designed to move Euarchus ('imagine, vouchsafe to imagine, most wise and good king, that here is before your eyes the pitiful spectacle of a most dolorously ending tragedy' (OA311)); Euarchus, however, refuses to respond to this appeal, and chooses, instead, to weigh carefully the arguments offered him (OA312). When Euarchus finally agrees to act as a judge he does so, the narrator tells us, 'with that well appeased gesture unpassionate nature bestoweth upon mankind' (OA313).

Such emotional control both characterises Euarchus's bearing throughout the trial and influences the judgements he makes. When weighing up the evidence against Philoclea he disregards the 'prisoner's passionate prayer' and refuses to give 'over-plausible ears to a many-headed motion'; as a result he is able to perceive that Philoclea is not entirely innocent and with quiet determination sentences her to a life of enforced chastity (OA329). When Gynecia is brought into court her 'passionate confession' so deeply affects the crowd that they are unable to judge 'whether they should be more sorry for her fault or her misery, for the loss of her estate or loss of her virtue'; Euarchus, in contrast, refuses to be influenced by 'those tragical phrases of hers' (which he considers are apt only 'to stir a vulgar pity'), and attends only to the 'manifest proof of so horrible a trespass' to which she has confessed (OA331). During the impassioned speeches of Pyrocles and Musidorus Euarchus remains similarly unmoved. In contrast to the

noblemen Sympathus and Kerxenus, both of whom publicly display their compassion, Euarchus's face reveals 'no motions either at the one's or other's speech'; he lets pass 'the flowers of rhetoric', the narrator explains, and pays attention only to 'whither their reasons tended' (OA348). Because the two princes cannot fully deny the charges against them, Euarchus finds them guilty and they are sentenced accordingly. Even when it is revealed to him that the two men he has condemned to death are his son and nephew, Euarchus refuses to be moved to compassion, preferring both to remain within the letter of the law which, he believes, guarantees justice, and to demonstrate the genuine impartiality of his judgement: 'If rightly I have judged, then rightly have I judged mine own children, unless the name of a child should have force to change the never-changing justice' (OA356). For the crowd, who have 'examin[ed] the matter by their own passions', Euarchus appears to be an 'obstinate-hearted man', one whose rule 'must needs be insupportable', but for the narrator, who understands the sorrow felt by the unflinching Euarchus, he appears more akin to Cato, the Renaissance model of 'stoical determination' (OA358).⁴⁴

In the light of his demonstrated impartiality it would seem that Euarchus fully deserves the praise he receives early in Book V for his 'equity'. And yet few critics of the old Arcadia have been forthcoming with this praise.⁴⁵ Among many critics there is a feeling that the punishments delivered in some of the cases are disproportionate to the crime committed, while in other

cases, for example that of Gynecia, who wildly exaggerates her culpability, there is an awareness that the sentencing itself is wrong. Moreover, it becomes increasingly apparent to the reader of the trial scene that Euarchus's judgement is impaired by the unavailability to him of many important details: unlike the actual reader of the old Arcadia, Euarchus does not have the incidents of the plot to hand, nor does he have access to the letters contributed by the princesses to the defence of Musidorus and Pyrocles. With the exception of Elizabeth Dipple,⁴⁶ however, there are also few critics who feel confident enough to condemn Euarchus's judgements outright; most critics of the old Arcadia appear to agree that while the justice administered by Euarchus is not, strictly speaking, 'just', it does contain at least an element of justice. (The princes are not strictly innocent of the crimes of which they are accused.) For Andrew Weiner, who reads the old Arcadia in the light of Sidney's Protestant faith, Euarchus is right to find the princes guilty; the fact that he does so despite the fallibility of his own reasoning powers suggests to him Sidney's endorsement of the Calvinist belief in the corruption of human nature and the 'strange and secret workings of [divine] justice'.⁴⁷ In an attempt to support his providential theory, Weiner calls attention to a poem in the second eclogues, the 'skirmish betwixt Reason and Passion', in which the struggle between the two groups of shepherds, representing Passion and Reason, is only reconciled when

each side finally recognises their dependence on a superior guiding force: 'then let us both to heav'nly rules give place,/Which passions kill, and Reason do deface' (OA120). Likewise Margaret Dana, in her essay on the 'providential plot' of the old Arcadia, recognises the weakness of human reason; 'even the wisdom of Euarchus', she notes, 'proves unable to untie the knot. Only divine providence can bring release'.⁴⁸ More recently Catherine Lucas has argued that 'the claims of reason and passion cannot be reconciled without recourse to a "'higher" sort of love', a love that is 'divinely virtuous'.⁴⁹ For these critics, Sidney has little confidence in the integrity of human judgement. For him, they suggest, a satisfactory resolution can only come through the transcendence rather than the reconciliation of the opposites so earnestly debated by Pyrocles and Musidorus in Book I, and by the shepherds in the eclogues. In the last book of the old Arcadia Sidney appears thus to affirm his commitment to the Protestant belief in an 'everlasting justice', the workings of which remain hidden from human reason in its weakened, postlapsarian condition.

It is possible to understand otherwise the way in which Euarchus is both 'just' and 'unjust', however, if we read his judgements in the light of the meaning attributed to the word 'equity' by J.H. Baker in his introduction to the law reports of John Spelman. For the purposes of Renaissance law, the term 'equity' had two acknowledged meanings: it could mean either 'reason',

that is 'the collected wisdom of generations', or 'private reasoning', that is, a 'kind of equity' which 'gave the judges the same kind of freedom in legislation as they enjoyed when declaring the common law'. In the sense that Euarchus strictly obeys the customs of Arcadia, he can be said to be just according to the first meaning of 'equity'. However, as Baker notes, there is a different 'classical English notion of equity', according to which 'equity' is the equivalent of 'conscience'. This kind of equity, Baker explains, was exercised in the Court of Chancery in an attempt to compensate for the narrow concerns of the common-law; it 'involved the relaxation of human but unwritten rules to meet the exigencies of justice in particular cases'.⁵⁰ In an essay on 'equity' in Shakespeare's Measure for Measure, John Dickinson points out that the roots of this concept lie less in traditional Christian mercy (which is distributed to all men and women, regardless of the crime committed) than in Aristotle's notion of '*epikeia*', described in Book V of the Nicomachean Ethics as 'a correction of the law where it is defective owing to its universality');⁵¹ he also points out that the Renaissance notion of 'equity' was greatly influenced by Seneca's concept of *clementia*, which Seneca defines in the Moral Essays as 'a rational restraint of the kind which has regard for the cause of an action', and which he distinguishes from *miseriordia*, 'a mental defect common to old women'.⁵² (As Dickinson notes, the distinction between *clementia* and *miseriordia* reappears in Sir Thomas Elyot's The Book

of the Governor, when he compares mercy, "'a temperaunce of the mynde of hym that hath power to be avenged ... [which] is always ioynd with reason", with what he calls "vaine pity", based on emotion, not reason').⁵³)

What is significant about the third concept of 'equity' is that it is based on a different kind of reasoning process from the one employed by Euarchus, a process which requires a more detailed consideration of the circumstances of a particular case. Indeed, Euarchus openly refuses to judge in accordance with a 'free discourse of reason and skill of philosophy', fearing that this method leaves 'to every man a scope of his own interpretation', and he bases his judgement instead on the harsh Arcadian laws, which 'fold us within assured bounds' and prevent us from 'infinitely rang[ing]' (OA350). He chooses to ignore both extenuating evidence, such as character appraisals or the narration of past public service, and the appeals to pity made by the defence; he attends only to the facts that are proven by confession. Euarchus thus performs his role rather in the fashion of the English common-law judges who, Baker explains, 'sought refuge from the evils of mankind and the agonies of indecision by umpiring the ancient game strictly according to the rules, and by refusing to meddle with questions of fact'.⁵⁴ In this respect Euarchus is out of tune with developments in the English legal system; as Baker remarks, sixteenth-century procedural cases show that litigants no longer merely wanted 'their disputes settled: they wanted them settled

with reasons, and they wanted the judges to elaborate the law'.⁵⁵

Euarchus, however, is reminiscent not only of the cautious common-law judges. The justice which he administers is reminiscent of a different tradition of legal practice, one which is equally resistant to a sensitive 'reinterpretation' of the law in particular cases: Euarchus's recognition of the potential for 'human error' in the making of judgements is used by Weiner to support his claim that Sidney promotes in the old Arcadia the Calvinist doctrine of human dependence on divine justice; but it is Euarchus's decision to follow closely the harsh Arcadian laws, laws which pronounce the death sentence on 'adulterers', that really establishes him as a type of Protestant judge insistent on following the letter of Old Testament law. In a study of the tradition of seventeenth-century casuistry Camille Wells Slight observes that the medieval skills of moral deliberation found little acceptance among English Protestants after the Reformation; they were associated both with the Roman Catholic confessional and with the Jesuits, 'who continued to be feared in England as actively subversive national enemies'.⁵⁶ For many Protestants, she notes, there was no need to indulge in complicated moral reasoning since the '"wayes of Truth"' were already clearly offered in Scripture.⁵⁷ Indeed, in the sixteenth century there were vocal demands by many Protestants for the enforcement of Old Testament law in the English state. Among such petitioners was Henry Finch, later a

sergeant-at-law under James I, who urges in his undated legal treatise Nomotexnia, first dedicated to Philip Sidney, that the English common law be reformed in accordance with Mosaic law.⁵⁸ Even though the general application of the harsh Mosaic law and its punishments was not seen as practicable by most Protestants in the Elizabethan period, it could still be appealed to in moments of national crisis. In the Parliamentary session of 1572, for example, the bishops attempted to motivate a reluctant Elizabeth to execute Mary Queen of Scots for her involvement in the Ridolfi plot by appealing to Old Testament law; in their speeches to Elizabeth not only do they draw attention to a list of sins committed by the Scottish queen which are punishable with death under Mosaic law (idolatry, adultery, and blasphemy) but they remind Elizabeth of her duty to apply this law as a 'minister of God': 'every good prince ought by God's comaundement to punishe even by death all such as doe seeke to seduce the people of God from his true worshippe unto supersticion and idoletre, for that offence God hath alwais most greevously punished as committed against the first table. Deuteronomy 13'.⁵⁹ But the bishops appeal to Mosaic law not only to remind Elizabeth of her duty but to assure her that it is legitimate to execute a crowned queen: 'wherefore whether the late Queene of Scottes be queene or subiecte, be stranger or cittizen, be kinne or not kinne', the bishops insist, 'by Gode's word for soe great offences she should have the iuste deserved punishment and that in the highest degree'.⁶⁰ These

arguments are reinforced by the Parliamentary laymen in the subsequent speech, who claim that Mary has relinquished her right to be judged as a royal person since she is resident in a 'host' country, and that the safety of the realm is to be put 'before the affection of kindred'.⁶¹

Sidney is clearly interested in the problem of Mary, Queen of Scots. In the trial scene in the old Arcadia, the position taken by Pyrocles and Musidorus resembles that taken by Mary Queen of Scots in her own defence, while the position taken by Euarchus recalls that of the bishops and the lay men in the 1572 Parliamentary session.⁶² Although Pyrocles and Musidorus attempt to defend their right to legal exclusion on the grounds that they possess the 'sacred name' of princes, Euarchus makes it clear that by venturing into Arcadia they have entered into 'Arcadian orders' and that by putting themselves into 'domestical services' they have relinquished their right to their original status (OA349): 'these young men cannot in justice avoid judgement, but like private men must have their doings either cleared, excused or condemned' (OA350). Moreover, Euarchus also shares with his Protestant counterparts a determination to put the concerns of the state above the interests of individuals and the consideration of the law above the ties of kinship (OA352). Like the bishops who refuse to take into consideration the social and familial status of Mary Stuart in accordance with the dictates of Mosaic law, so Euarchus refuses to be affected by the social and

familial status of Pyrocles and Musidorus in accordance with the harsh Arcadian laws and his own notion of justice.

One prominent Protestant who was interested in the problem of Mary Stuart, and who was influential on Sidney, is George Buchanan. In De Jure Regni apud Scotos of 1578, Buchanan attempts to legitimate the deposition of Mary, Queen of Scots by proving that monarchs are subject to the laws of the realm, and that this accords with the law of nature. Though, at the beginning of De Jure, Buchanan cites the example of Roman law to support his argument for the subjection of monarchs to the law ('what I admire is not so much their different system of political administration as their fairness in holding all men equal in the eyes of the law'),⁶³ he simultaneously argues that Roman law represents the principles of a universal Justice: God has 'created in [people] an inner light by which he should distinguish between good and evil. Some call this faculty Nature, others call it the Law of Nature'.⁶⁴ Though Buchanan does not champion Mosaic law explicitly, he perceives the secular law of the Romans to be inspired by the same principles which underpin Judeo-Christian moral laws. Buchanan's source for this conception of natural law is John Calvin himself (though his response to the problem of tyranny is his own).⁶⁵ In The Institutes of the Christian Religion, Calvin draws a distinction between spiritual and temporal laws ('there are in man, so to speak, two worlds, over which different kings and different laws have

authority')),⁶⁶ with the result that he rejects the ceremonial and judicial aspects of Mosaic law; however, he insists that the laws of the secular realm 'must be in conformity to that perpetual rule of love, so that they indeed vary in form but have the same purpose' - in other words, that they should conform to the moral law of the old Testament, which is 'engraved upon men's hearts'.⁶⁷ Though some Protestants wanted to see the reinstatement of the Mosaic law in full, including the death penalty for adultery, most Protestants were willing to accept the practice of the Mosaic moral law: in the 39 articles appended to the conservative English Book of Common Prayer it is explained that while contemporary Christians are exempt from the observation of Mosaic ceremonial and judicial law, they are expected to follow the moral law of the old Testament ('the true eternal rule of righteousness, prescribed for all men of all nations and times').⁶⁸ Thus, while Euarchus may seem to be a bad judge in the light of the common law, in the light of the Protestant respect for the moral branch of the Mosaic law, his alleged commitment to 'the laws of nature and nations' ('all mankind being as it were coinhabiters or world citizens together' (OA350)), suggests that he is indeed a paragon of judges in Protestant terms.

But to what extent does the Protestant Sidney side with Euarchus? While Buchanan may argue for the righteousness of populist revolution against a tyrannical prince, Sidney's promotion of the 'laws of nature and nations' in the trial scene is more ambiguous, and has

left critics divided in their response. While William Dinsmore Briggs and H.R. Woudhuysen argue that Sidney stands in the trial scene of the old Arcadia on 'the same sort of ground [as] Buchanan does in De Jure Regni apud Scotos' (and, indeed, argue convincingly that this is the kind of interest we should expect from a member of the Leicester faction), David Norbrook argues, in contrast, for Sidney's interest in promoting the practice of equity among the aristocracy.⁶⁹ The complications of the trial scene suggest to me that Sidney is not simply promoting a harsh Protestant judgement but that he is encouraging us to question the art of judging itself. Indeed, the arbitrariness of the Arcadian laws is never fully overcome: while Euarchus appeals to 'the laws of nature and nations' to justify the trial proceedings against Pyrocles and Musidorus, the two princes are to be judged according to the 'the laws of Greece and municipal statutes of this dukedom' (OA350), laws whose cruelty Pyrocles has already noted, so that it is never really clear whether Euarchus is an instrument of divine justice or whether he is simply an unquestioning upholder of a particularly harsh set of social customs. Furthermore, Sidney himself seems to support a more sceptical conception of the function of the law: in the Defence he shows little respect for law because it 'seeketh to make men good rather *formidine poenae* than *virtutis amore*; or, to say righter, doth not endeavour to make men good, but that their evil hurt not others; having no care, so he be a good citizen, how bad a man he be (31)'; and in the old

Arcadia Musidorus seems to represent Sidney's view when he reminds Euarchus that

laws are not made like lime twigs or nets to catch everything that toucheth them, but rather like sea marks to avoid the shipwrack of ignorant passengers, since that our doing in the extremest interpretation is but a human error (OA348).

Euarchus chooses to ignore Musidorus's advice, and to administer a more impartial justice, but in so doing he is not proven to be a better judge. Indeed, although Euarchus's impartiality in the trial scene and his rigorous application of Arcadian law are made to seem admirable, they do not prevent him either from making judgemental mistakes or from passing judgements that do not make emotional sense. Not only does he sentence to death an individual (Gynecia) who is actually innocent of the crime of which she is accused, but he endorses the brutality of the Arcadian punishments (Gynecia is to be buried alive, Pyrocles is to be thrown from a tower, while Musidorus, less inventively perhaps, is to lose his head). Thus, although Euarchus attempts to limit the possibility of 'human error' he inadvertently contributes to his own blindness by refusing to engage in a more detailed consideration of the case. By suggesting that Euarchus's refusal to engage in 'a free discourse of reason' actually leads to 'human error', Sidney is not encouraging the reader, I believe, to hope for the resolution of complex problems through 'divine' intervention (in fact a *deus ex machina* is necessary in the old Arcadia, I suggest, because the human solution is so unsatisfying), but rather to do exactly what Euarchus

fails to do: that is, to engage in a 'free discourse of reason'. Indeed, this is a process in which the reader of Book V, who has access to more information than Euarchus and who, therefore, is possibly more sympathetic to the defendants, is already engaged.

The judge who practises 'equity' in its sense of 'conscience' bases his decisions on a rational consideration of the details before him, and not on an emotional whim, as Elyot was concerned to convey. Yet even Elyot, sensitive though he is to the misleading nature of emotional judgments, does not exclude the emotions entirely from the court room. In a chapter dedicated to a description of the benefits to be derived from a study of the law, Elyot draws attention to the interdependence of rhetoric and legal skills: 'it is to be remembered that in the learning of the laws of this realm, there is at this day an exercise wherein is a manner, a shadow, or figure of the ancient rhetoric'.⁷⁰ Elyot notes, however, that while lawyers make use of some parts of classical rhetoric, namely invention, disposition and memory, they have lost the use of the two other parts of the art: elocution and pronunciation. Because of the barbarousness of the language, Elyot explains, 'the stirring of the affections of the mind in this realm was never used' so that the lawyer is a rather imperfect orator.⁷¹ Although Elyot did not believe that it was impossible or inappropriate to introduce these parts of rhetoric into the practice of English law (indeed his introduction of many ink-horn terms into his

own writing suggests that he was engaged in an attempt to develop the English language and so expand its expressive capacity), it was not until 1560, when Thomas Wilson included in Arte of Rhetorique a discussion of the skills of elocution and pronunciation, that a real attempt was made to correct this deficiency.⁷²

Sidney's model for argumentation, like that of Elyot and Wilson, was Roman rhetoric, and it is Quintilian's Institutio Oratoria in particular, with its focus in Book VI on the skills of elocution and pronunciation, which appealed to him. But Quintilian provides in the Institutio Oratoria not just practical advice concerning the delivery of legal arguments; he also offers a justification of the use of emotion in the defence or prosecution of a case. While in Book V of the Institutio Oratoria Quintilian outlines the number and types of proof available to an orator to defend or prosecute a court case, in Book VI he later argues that there is a need to exploit the emotions of an audience if a case is to be won. There are two types of peroration, he argues: in the one the orator simply summarises the arguments which he has already put forward, while in the other he appeals instead to the emotions of his audience. Quintilian notes that in the Athenian court the orator was expressly forbidden to rouse pity or anger in his audience, since the Athenians, influenced by their philosophical tradition, 'regard susceptibility to emotion as a vice, and think it is immoral that the judge should be distracted from the truth by an appeal to his

emotions' (VI i 7). For Quintilian, however, appeals to the emotions are necessary to ensure both the orator's success and, importantly, the proper course of justice in a world in which 'truth' is sometimes difficult to discern: 'appeals to emotion are necessary', Quintilian concludes, 'if there are no other means for securing the victory of truth, justice and the public interest' (VI i 7). Quintilian's pragmatism is echoed in The Praise of Folly, where Erasmus obliquely suggests that the art of rhetoric is the best intellectual tool, and compassion the best response, in a world in which the truth is veiled from human sight. What Sidney defends in Book V of the old Arcadia is not the Roman law (as does Buchanan in the De Jure) but the Roman art of rhetoric; like Erasmus's Folly, or Quintilian himself, Sidney attacks the Stoics who 'segregate all passions from the wise man': as Folly herself pragmatically argues, 'these emotions act as guides to those hastening towards the haven of wisdom, but also wherever virtue is put into practice they are always present to act like spurs and goads as incentives to good deeds' (106).

Sidney's interest in classical oratory, and in the role played by emotion in the formation of 'character', is apparent both in the Defence of Poetry, and in the trial speeches of the old Arcadia; while Philanax follows the advice given by Quintilian on the use of 'pathos' ('the more violent emotions') to affect the audience's perception of the moral character of the princes, Pyrocles and Musidorus follow Quintilian's advice on the

use of 'ethos' (the emotions which are 'calm and gentle') to convince the audience of their 'good' character.⁷³ However, Sidney's interest in the kind of rhetoric outlined by Quintilian extends beyond a concern with the creation of character; Sidney recognises the importance of rhetorical skill to ensure the practice of genuine justice. Euarchus's concern to play by the book means that he is particularly resistant both to the carefully worded appeals of Philanax and Gynecia, and the princes, and to their 'appearance' at the trial scene; yet rather than improving his judgement, his refusal to respond to their appeals often leads him astray - as is clear in the case of Gynecia. For Euarchus interprets Gynecia's confession to have 'traitorously empoisoned' Basilius (OA331) as evidence of her guilt when, as the narrator points out, her psychological condition is so unstable that her confession cannot be trusted: although Gynecia has never 'spotted her soul with any wilful vice but her inordinate love of Cleophila', believing that she is eternally damned she decides 'purposely to overthrow herself, and confirm by a wrong confession that abominable shame which, with her wisdom joined to truth, perhaps she might have refelled' (OA332). In contrast to Euarchus's dispassionate condemnation of the character of Gynecia, which is based on his hatred of evil 'in what colours soever he found it' (OA331), is the more sympathetic response of her initially hard-hearted jailors, who are impressed enough by the resolution with which she accepts her death sentence to suspect that she

'might [once] have been notably well-deserving' (OA332). In this instance the paradox of Euarchus's impartial justice is clear: if he had been more susceptible to the pitiful spectacle before him justice might have been more completely administered.

In recognising that an individual's character and actions are also arguments which should be included in the process of judging Sidney is not flying in the face of a more hard line Protestantism; indeed, Sidney can be seen to derive his conception of legal defence from another Protestant tradition represented in John Foxe's Acts and Monuments. For a full appreciation of the relevance of this text to Sidney's characters we will need, however, to return our attention to the revised Arcadia, the text in which the princes are more clearly innocent of the crimes of which they are accused.

ii. The new Arcadia: Books IV and V

When Sidney revised the new Arcadia he was not simply trying to reform a risqué story in accordance with the tastes or expectations of his audience; rather, he was both exploring techniques for the creation of credible images of virtue and setting out to demonstrate the importance of emotive rhetoric to the representation, and the appreciation, of virtuous character. Although Sidney appears to cast a critical eye in Book III at the seemingly vain posturing of the male protagonists, who have used their rhetorical skills to create heroic versions of themselves, in Book III he also teaches us about the importance of emotive rhetoric to the self-

portrayal of a genuinely virtuous character: our compassionate response to the separate plights of Pamela, Philoclea and Parthenia is distinct from 'the hard-hearted' response of Cecropia, who is unable to love virtue in any form. In Book V the princes once again employ their rhetorical skills, only this time in the service not of their sexual quests but the defence of their own, and the princesses', innocence. Book III, with its portrayal of the princesses' heroic suffering, provides an important prelude to the trial, preparing us to respond positively to the princes' willingness to face death; our compassionate response to the princes in this book is in marked contrast to the rational restraint shown by Euarchus. The important difference, in the revised text, between Euarchus and ourselves is that our emotional response recognises the innocence of the princes whereas Euarchus's seemingly more wise or rational judgement does not.

An important source for Sidney's use of rhetoric in the trial scene is, I suggest, John Foxe. In Acts and Monuments, John Foxe sets out to describe how the Protestant Church has returned to the precepts of the original Christian Church, and one of the ways in which he does this is by drawing an analogy between the suffering of the early Christian martyrs at the hands of the Romans and the suffering of the Protestant martyrs at the hands of the Roman Catholics. In the later volumes of Acts Foxe deals specifically with the suffering of the Protestant men and women during the reign of Mary Tudor.

Although Foxe gives detailed accounts of the gruesome nature of their sufferings, he devotes most of his attention to the examinations, in which the Protestant faithful are questioned by, and shown to outface, their persecutors. In the case of Richard Woodman, for example, the examination establishes his thorough knowledge of the Bible, which enables him, though an 'ignorant' man, to dispute with and correct the learned divines who interrogate him. On the question of the sacraments Woodman is able to prove with reference to the Bible that they number only two ('one the sacrament of baptism, and the other the supper of the Lord'),⁷⁴ while his examiner, the Bishop of Chichester, fumbles to prove that they number seven. The bishop argues, for example, that marriage is a sacrament since a man and his wife are the visible sign of this mystery in the same way that hose hanging outside the shop of a hosier is a sign of what is sold within; Woodman exclaims at his 'sophistry': 'I talked of the scriptures that be written, and it is God's word, to prove my matter true by; and you will prove your matter true by a pair of hose'.⁷⁵ As the example of Woodman suggests, the Protestant faithful establish their 'innocence' with the authority of the Bible. But this is not the only way in which their truthfulness is defended. Indeed, the account Foxe gives of their character, and their suffering, itself becomes an equally powerful argument of their truthfulness. A good example of the efficacy of this type of argument is provided by the story of Cutbert Symson. At the

beginning of this story Foxe cites the testimony of Bishop Bonner, noting that after he had 'commended [Symson's] person' he expresses astonishment at the patience of his victim:

'concerning his patience, I say unto you, that if he were not a heretic, he is a man of the greatest patience that ever came before me: for I tell you, he hath been thrice racked upon one day in the Tower. Also in my house he hath felt some sorrow, and yet I never saw his patience broken'.⁷⁶

Symson's behaviour becomes, in the eyes of Foxe's readers, testimony of his faithfulness, and even of the truthfulness of the faith he follows. The sympathy Foxe elicits from his readers plays an important part in his retrial of the men and women condemned by the Marian persecutors as heretics: our sympathetic response marks 'our' approval of their actions and beliefs, and incites in us a desire to prove 'our' own faithfulness.

At first sight there may appear to be little resemblance between Foxe's martyrs and Sidney's characters Pyrocles and Musidorus, especially in the form in which they appear in the old Arcadia. Not only are the latter guilty of sexual transgression in the unrevised text but they are pagans, not Christians. Even so, they are clearly meant to be recognised as martyrs. In the prison scene in Book V Pyrocles and Musidorus dispute the existence and nature of an afterlife, and they come impressively close to recognising the Christian truth that 'Our life is but a step in dusty way' (OA323;NA805). Moreover, the willingness of the two princes to suffer death, especially if this sacrifice can help preserve the lives of those whom they love, lends

them a nobility similar to that displayed by the Christian martyrs depicted in Foxe's Acts. For A.C. Hamilton the nobleness of Pyrocles and Musidorus in the last book of the Arcadia is indisputable, and he surmises that it prompted Sidney's decision to revise the Arcadia as a whole: 'even Sidney must have been surprised at how the characters developed in prison and during the trial scene', he declares, 'until, when they appear as themselves with their outer appearance signifying their inner worth, they strike beholders with "the more violence of magnanimity"'.⁷⁷ However, it seems that in the old Arcadia Sidney was already intent on reforming our perception of the princes and the art of rhetoric itself: when Musidorus discards his disguise he adopts a purple robe much like the 'apostle's mantle', robes which serve an equally theatrical function (OA326;NA808). Sidney's reason for revising the Arcadia is not that he wanted the earlier actions of the narrative to fit the nobleness of their later actions, but because he wanted to demonstrate more persuasively the importance of rhetoric in the making of just judgements. Our response at the end of the old Arcadia is complicated not only by the fact of the princes' genuine sexual transgressions, making them strictly more guilty than innocent, but by the presence in the first three books of the fictional female readers, whose sole purpose seems to be to teach us about the dangers of compassionate reading. In the new Arcadia Sidney not only removes these characters from the text but demonstrates to us in Book III the virtue of

a compassionate response, so that we can recognise that the art of rhetoric is essential to the defence of innocence. And, most importantly of all, he alters the plot in such a way that the princes are *not* guilty of the crimes for which they are sentenced, thereby removing the ambivalence we feel regarding Euarchus's judgement in the old Arcadia and allowing us to see his sentences as wholly undeserved.

In one of Sidney's sources for the trial scene in the Arcadia, Heliodorus's An Ethiopian Romance, the protagonists, Theagones and Chariclea, prove their chastity by 'trial by fire', walking on burning coals as if they were walking on a cool marble floor.⁷⁸ And when they are then condemned to be sacrificed to the Ethiopian gods on account of their chastity, Chariclea reveals herself to be the long-lost daughter of the presiding king and queen with 'written affidavits and the oral testimony of witness' (a blue ribbon given her as a child with her story inscribed on it, and the confession of the judge Sismithres, who played a hand in her exposure).⁷⁹ In the Arcadia the princes can prove their innocence in no such manner; though Pyrocles offers to fight Philanax in single combat to prove his innocence Euarchus sensibly remarks that 'it were very barbarous and preposterous that force should be made judge over reason' (NA829). Instead, Philanax and the princes employ the arts of the Roman lawyer to prove their separate cases, and it is only when Euarchus passes judgement in accordance with the facts proven by confession, without taking into

consideration the causes of the princes' actions or their characters, that Sidney rouses Basilius from his slumber and supplies the just ending which Euarchus could not.

Notes

1. A.C. Hamilton puts forward the argument that the 'writing of the Defence of Poetry suggested [to Sidney] ways in which the old Arcadia could be recast as "an absolute heroical poem". Sir Philip Sidney: A Study of his Life and Works, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p.125. On the heroism of the princes in the new Arcadia see also Virgil B. Hetzel, 'The Arcadian Hero', Philological Quarterly 41 (1962) pp.173-80, Alan D. Isler, 'The Allegory of the Hero and Sidney's Two Arcadias', Studies in Philology 65 (1968) pp. 171-91, and Myron Turner, 'The Heroic Ideal in Sidney's Revised Arcadia' Studies in English Literature 1500-1900 10 (1970) pp. 63-82.

2. For an account of the publishing history of the Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia see Victor Skretkovicz ed., The Countess of Pembroke's 'Arcadia' (The New Arcadia), (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp.lv-lxiii.

3. Sir Philip Sidney, The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, ed. Maurice Evans (Penguin Books, 1977). All quotations from the new Arcadia are from this edition and will be given in the text in parentheses e.g. (NA59).

4. See Bertrand Dobell, 'New Light Upon Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia', Quarterly Review, ccxi (1909) pp.99-100; Reinard Willem Zandvoort, Sidney's Arcadia: A Comparison Between Two Versions, (Amsterdam: N.V. Swets and Zutlinger, 1929), pp.28-40.

5. See William Leigh Godshalk, 'Sidney's Revision of the Arcadia, Books III-V', Philological Quarterly 43 (1964) pp.171-184, Margaret P. Hannay, Philip's Phoenix: Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), Mark Rose, Heroic Love: Studies in Sidney and Spenser, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968), Kenneth Thorpe Rowe, 'Elizabethan Morality and the Folio Revisions of Sidney's Arcadia', Modern Philology 37 (1939) pp.151-172, and 'The Countess of Pembroke's Editorship of the Arcadia', Publications of the Modern Language Association, 54, 1 (1939) pp.122-138.

6. See Godshalk: Florio claims that the 1593 Arcadia is a 'perfect-imperfect' edition on the grounds that Sidney 'lived not to mend or end-it'. But he goes on to say that '"though it were much easier to mend out of an original and well corrected copie, then to make-up so much out of a corrupt, yet we see more marring than was well, then mending what was amisse"'. See Godshalk, p.176, from John Florio trans, The Essays of Michael Montaigne, (London, 1921). As Godshalk points out, 'Florio indicates that the 1590 edition was based on a "corrupt copy", while the 1593 edition was edited from a "well corrected" copy', p.176. It is perhaps worth noting that Florio was involved in the publishing of the 1590 edition.

7. Skretkowicz, pp.lxxiv-lxxvi.

8. See A.C. Hamilton and Kenneth Myrick.

9. See for example Rose ('even before he decided to transform his relatively slight romance into an epic, Sidney seems to have conceived his purpose as didactic, for the old Arcadia is suffused with a moral earnestness notably absent from its sources'), (1968), p.37, and Rowe ('the original version [...] failed by inadequacy of characterisation to fulfil Sidney's method of teaching virtue by presenting models for conduct'), (1939), p.171.

Many critics have seen the new Arcadia as a continuation of the old Arcadia. For example, in an exhaustive comparison of the two texts Zandvoort points out that almost all of the events of the first text reappear 'in one way or another' in the revised text, and suggests that the new Arcadia indicates not Sidney's rejection of the earlier text but his 'sustained preoccupation' with it. Dorothy Connell, basing her argument on the fact that Sidney never attempted to recall the original manuscript, claims that Sidney revised the Arcadia 'not because he disapproved of his former work [...] but because he had more to say on his original themes'. More recently Michael McCanles has noted that not only does the revised oracle of the new Arcadia allow for the ending of the old Arcadia but in the new text there are indications that Sidney kept unswervingly to the old plan 'right up to the point where he left off composition'. See Dorothy Connell, Sir Philip Sidney: The Maker's Mind, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1977), p.116; Michael McCanles, The Text of Sidney's Arcadian World, (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 1989), p.6; Zandvoort, p.71.

10. Maurice Evans argues that the 'aim' of the new Arcadia 'is to awake the love of virtue by an infinity of "speaking pictures"'. See his introduction to The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, p.24.

11. Katherine Duncan-Jones, 'Sidney's Urania', The Review of English Studies, 17 (1966) p.127.

12. Alastair Fowler, Conceitful Thought: The Interpretation of English Renaissance Poems (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1975), p.44.

13. Fowler, p.56.

14. See A.C. Hamilton: 'Argalus and Parthenia supply the pattern of constant affection which measures all love. Their marriage is the ideal state which all should see', (1977), p.157. See also Hamilton's discussion of these characters, pp.53-59, in 'Sidney's Arcadia as Prose Fiction: Its Relation to its Sources', English Literary Renaissance, 2 (1972) pp.29-60. For a more recent discussion of Argalus and Parthenia as the ideal couple

see Mary Ellen Lamb, Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle, (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).

15. Parthenia conforms to the ideal of modest and silent womanhood offered by Juan Luis Vives in 'The Instruction of a Christian Woman' in Vives and The Renaissance Education of Women, ed. Foster Watson (London: 1912).

16. See p.197, n.10.

17. See p.106.

18. Ficino, p.80.

19. Sidney's use of antimetabole in the Argalus and Parthenia passage suggests the possible influence of I Corinthians xi: 'for the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. For the man was not created for the womans sake: but the woman for the mans sake. Therefore ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the Angels. Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the lord. For as the woman is of the man, so is the woman: but all things are of God.' Geneva Bible 1582. For a discussion of the Protestant ideal of the dutiful wife and the loving husband see William and Mallevile Hale, 'The Puritan Art of Love', Huntington Library Quarterly, 5 (1942) pp.235-72.

20. Maurice Evans, introduction to The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, p.25.

21. For a discussion of female heroism in the new Arcadia as 'an ability to die well' see Mary Ellen Lamb, p.107.

22. See p.277, n.44.

23. Mark Rose, (1964), p.356.

24. See John F. Danby: 'it is of the seriousness of Sidney's "erected wit" we are most aware in reading the [new] Arcadia' in Poets on Fortune's Hill: Studies in Sidney, Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, (London: Faber and Faber, 1952), p.48.

25. For an interesting development of this argument see Clare Kinney: 'although the narrator who was so conscious of a female audience has vanished from the New Arcadia, Sidney's text nevertheless opens itself to a host of other voices; a large part of the narrative is now mediated by alternative tale-tellers and historians', p.465. Kinney goes on to argue that this 'polyglossia ultimately accommodates a subversive reinterpretation of the privileged male gaze'.

26. See David Norbrook: 'the heroic deeds of Pyrocles and Musidorus are recounted in extensive flashbacks; the princes are in fact telling the princesses of their heroic deeds in order to make their wooing more

effective. The rhetorical end of these narratives may be didactic as far as the reader is concerned but it is meant to be erotic to the princesses'. Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance, (London, Boston, Melbourne, Henley: Routledge, 1984). p.105. Sidney's narratives are didactic, I suggest, in their attempt to instruct the reader in the art of rhetoric.

27. 'I believe a prince will be fortunate if he adjusts his behavior to the temper of his times, and on the other hand will be unfortunate when his behavior is not well attuned to the times', see Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince, ed. and trans. Robert M. Adams (New York, London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1977), p.71.

28. The narrator gives an extensive description of the princes' garments at the trial scene. Interestingly, while Pyrocles is dressed in white, the colour of innocence, Musidorus has draped around him an 'apostle's mantle, made of purple satin', suggesting that he consciously plays the role of a potential martyr, p.808.

29. Musidorus tells us in Book I that Pyrocles 'had once loved', p.130. When Pyrocles tells Philoclea about this former attachment he explains that his love for Zelmane would have begun 'after death', suggesting to Philoclea the spiritual nature of his desires, p.367.

30. See also the story of Andromeda: although Pyrocles relates the tale of Andromeda's 'lust' for him and Musidorus so that Philoclea 'may see the nobleness of [his] desire to [her]' he concludes the tale with a description of her suicide and with a reassessment of her sexual passion; once Andromeda, like Zelmane and Parthenia, has died 'passionately' her lust is transfigured into a 'love' which finally awakes 'pity' in the two princes, p.357. Andromeda further proves Pyrocles's erotic appeal.

31. See Chrétien de Troyes, Arthurian Romances, trans. W. W. Comfort (London, Melbourne: Dent, 1984), p.342.

32. D.M. Anderson, 'The Dido Incident in Sidney's Arcadia', Notes and Queries, 3 (1956), p.419.

33. This is not the only instance when sexual attraction appears to be a motivating force. In the debate with Musidorus in Book I Pyrocles facetiously defends his pursuit of a supposedly spiritual love in an attractive young woman with the comment, 'I willingly confess, that it likes me much better when I find virtue in a fair lodging than when I am bound to seek it in an ill-favoured creature', p.135.

34. Anaxius's misogyny is integral to his portrayal as a parody of the epic hero: 'dear friend Amphialus, though I am none of those that love to speak of themselves, I never came yet in company of ladies but that they fell in love with me. And I that in my heart scorn them as a

peevish paltry sex, would not do you the wrong, since, as I hear, you do debase yourself so much as to affect them', p.522.

35. John F. Danby argues that the princesses reach moral perfection as a result of the trials set them in Book III. The male heroes, he argues, have to learn how to temper their masculine virtue of magnanimity with the feminine virtue of patience, exemplified by Pamela and Philoclea, chapter two. Mary Ellen Lamb also discusses the superiority of the princesses' 'heroic resignation' to the princes' 'active heroism', chapter two. See also Myron Turner who argues that Sidney seeks in the new Arcadia to reconcile 'the pride and self-sufficiency of the hero with Christian humility and dependence on God', p.63.

36. Mary Ellen Lamb identifies Philoclea with the figure of Philosophy in Boethius's The Consolation of Philosophy, p.105.

37. Knott, p.35.

38. Rose, (1968), p.60.

39. An obvious source for Pamela's arguments is Philippe de Mornay's A Woorke Concerning the Trewenesse of the Christian Religion which Sidney began to translate in 1584, the main theme of which is the visible presence of the Godhead in the natural world, Feuillerat, pp.263-367. Constance Miriam Syford, however, thinks that Mornay's treatise is an unlikely source and suggests instead Plutarch's Moralia, while Ronald B. Levinson offers Cicero's De natura deorum. See Ronald B. Levinson, '"The Godlesse Minde" in Sidney's Arcadia', Modern Philology 29 (1931) pp.21-26, and Constance Miriam Syford, 'The Direct Source of the Pamela-Cecropia Episode in the Arcadia', Publications of the Modern Language Association, 49 (1934) pp.472-489.

40. Pyrocles compares himself to a spaniel who cannot break the chains that tie him. p.141, while Amphialus uses his spaniel to steal a love token from Philoclea while she is bathing in the river Ladon, pp.291-2.

41. 'Why alone, if he be a prince? How so richly jewelled, if he be not a prince? Why then a woman, if now a man? Why now Timorpyrus, if then Cleophila? Was all this play for nothing? Or if it had an end, what end but the end of my dear master? Shall we doubt so many secret conferences with Gynecia, such feigned favour to the over-soon beguiled Basilius, a cave made a lodging, and the lodging made a temple of his religion, lastly such changes and traverses as a quiet poet could scarce fill a poem withal, were directed to any less scope than to this monstrous murder? O snaky ambition which can wind thyself in so many figures to slide thither thou desirest to come!', pp.336-7.

42. Erasmus, Education, p.221.
43. Lorna Challis, 'The Use of Oratory in Sidney's Arcadia, Studies in Philology, 62 (1965), p.566.
44. Katherine Duncan-Jones, Old Arcadia, note 358, p.385.
45. Challis is a notable exception.
46. see Elizabeth Dipple, '"Unjust Justice" in the Old Arcadia', Studies in English Literature 1500-1900, 10 (1970) pp.83-101.
47. Andrew D. Weiner, Sir Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Protestantism: A Study of Contexts, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978) p.181.
48. Margaret Dana. 'The Providential Plot in the Old Arcadia', Sir Philip Sidney: An Anthology of Modern Criticism, ed. Dennis Kay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p.95.
49. Lucas, p.131.
50. J.H. Baker, introduction to The Reports of John Spelman, vol 1 (London: Seldon Society, 1978) p.37.
I would like to acknowledge my debt to Dr Lorna Hutson for drawing to my attention the relevance of J.H. Baker's discussion of 'equity' to Sidney's old Arcadia.
51. Aristotle, The Works of Aristotle, ed. W.D. Ross ((Oxford, 1925) IX, 1137b in John W. Dickenson, 'Renaissance Equity and Measure for Measure', Shakespeare Quarterly, 13 (1962) p.287.
52. Seneca, Moral Essays, trans. W. Basore (London, 1928) I, 434, 438, Dickenson, p.288.
53. Sir Thomas Elyot, The Boke named the Governour Devised by Sir Thomas Elyot, Knight, eds Henry Herbert, Stephen Croft (London, 1883) II, 80, 81, Dickenson, p.289
54. Baker, (1978), p.43.
55. J.H. Baker, The Legal Profession and the Common Law: Historical Essays (London, Roncerverte: The Hanbledon Press, 1986), p.476.
56. Camille Wells Slight, The Casuistical Tradition in Shakespeare, Donne, Herbert, and Milton, (Princeton: Princeton University press, 1981), p.6.
57. Slight, p.7.
58. 'The Art of Law and the Art of God: Sir Henry Finch 1558-1625' in Donald Pennington and Keith Thomas eds, Puritans and Revolutionaries: Essays in Seventeenth-Century History Presented to Christopher Hill, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp.94-117.

59. Hartley, T.E., Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I, vol I (Leicester: Leicester University press, 1981), p. 276. For a discussion of the bishop's arguments see Margaret Aston's useful chapter 'The Penalty of the Law: Idolatry and Adultery' in England's Iconoclasts: Laws against Images, vol I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); see also J.E. Neale, Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments 1559-1581, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1953).

60. Hartley, p.276.

61. Hartley, p.286-7.

62. Both Woudhuysen and Briggs see a connection between the trial of Mary Queen of Scots and the trial scene in the old Arcadia, see Woudhuysen, p.292, and William Dinsmore Briggs, 'Political Ideas in Sidney's Arcadia', Studies in Philology 28 (1931), pp.137-161, p.160.

63. George Buchanan, The Art and Science of Government Among the Scots, Being George Buchanan's De Jure Regni Apud Scotos, trans. Duncan H. MacNeill (Edinburgh: William MacLellan, 1964), p.30.

64. Buchanan, p.23.

65. While Calvin argues that subjects should accept bad kings as the will of God - as a punishment for their sins - Buchanan insists instead that subjects have divine authorisation to overthrow tyrants. See John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (1536 edition), (London: Collins, 1975), pp.221-226, and Buchanan, De Jure.

66. Calvin, p.184.

67. Calvin, p.216.

68. Calvin, p.215.

69. See Briggs, pp.137-161, and Woudhuysen, p.292; see also Norbrook: 'in England equity was associated by political theorists with aristocratic societies which were governed by distributive rather than commutative justice: in democracies the narrow letter of the law prevailed and all citizens were treated alike irrespective of circumstances, while in an aristocracy or monarchy there was more latitude for equity'. Norbrook goes on to argue that Sidney 'clearly expects his readers to feel the injustice of treating noble and magnanimous princes in the same way as anyone else', Poetry and Politics, p.101.

70. Elyot, p.53.

71. Elyot, p.54.

72. An article by R.J. Schoeck drew my attention to the connection between Elyot and Wilson; like Elyot, Schoeck argues, Wilson wished 'to make traditional rhetoric available and applicable to the needs of his own times', a desire which is evident in his attempt to link rhetoric with both the practice of law and preaching. See R.J. Schoeck, 'Rhetoric and Law in Sixteenth-Century England', Studies in Philology, 50 (1953), p.120.

73. See Book VI of the Institutio Oratoria for a discussion of *ethos* and *pathos*: 'the *ethos* which I have in mind and which I desiderate in an orator is commended to our approval by goodness more than any aught else and is not merely calm and mild, but in most cases ingratiating and courteous and such as to execute pleasure and affection in our hearers, while the chief merit in its expression lies in making it seem that all that we say derives directly from the nature of the facts and persons concerned and in the revelation of the character of the orator in such a way that all may recognise it'. Quintilian also comments that *ethos* is the type of emotion 'when we ask pardon for the errors of the young, or apologise for a youthful amour' (VI ii 13-14). While the point of *pathos* is to stir emotions of hate, fear and pity; the aim is 'not merely to show the bitter and grievous nature of ills that actually are so, but also to make ills which are usually regarded as tolerable to seem unendurable'. *Pathos* forces the judge 'to the conclusion toward which the facts lead him' and 'awakens emotions which do not naturally arise from the case or are stronger than the case would suggest' (VI ii 21). In the old Arcadia the princes attempt to defend themselves by calling attention to details of character whereas Philanax instead concentrates on the facts available, presenting them in as bad a light as he can.

74. Foxe, 8, p.345.

75. Foxe, 8, p.348.

76. Foxe, 8, p.456.

77. Hamilton, (1972), p.46.

78. Heliodorus, An Ethiopian Romance, trans. Moses Hada, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1957), p.251.

79. Heliodorus, p.253.

Conclusion

In my study of Philip Sidney's writings I have argued that the contradictions which riddle his texts, far from being the unconscious mark of an age, or authorial intention, in transition, constitute a self-conscious strategy on the part of Sidney which is designed to conceal from the sight of the reader his artfulness, making us believe that his expression is the product of divine inspiration, natural (that is, inborn and uncultivated) talent, or a genuine sympathy with the position from which he speaks. In chapters two and three I examined Sidney's interest in the creation of credible personae with the aid of techniques including *enargeia*, or vivid imagining, a technique which enables a poet or orator to express convincingly emotions which he may not have actually experienced, except in so far as he has induced them in himself for the furthering of his rhetorical purpose. Sidney appears to draw inspiration for this technique of naturalising the artificial, I suggested, from Ciceronian rhetoric as mediated through Castiglione. I also considered why these rhetorical techniques might be of interest to a committed Protestant: the interest which Sidney expresses in A Defence of Poetry in creating credible and forceful fictions coincides, I argued, with a wider Protestant interest in creating truthlike and emotive histories.

Sidney's interest in Ciceronian rhetoric, however, is mediated not only through the influence of Castiglione

but also through the influence of Erasmus. In chapter four I argued that, in Book V of both the old and new Arcadia, Sidney defends the rhetorical arts used by the princes Pyrocles and Musidorus for their own self-interests on the grounds that they are essential for the proper administration of human justice. The revisions to the new Arcadia, which render the princes entirely innocent of the crimes of which they are accused at the trial, allow this point to be made all the more forcefully: Euarchus's refusal to respond to the emotive self-defence of the princes, and his determination to take into consideration only the facts proven by confession, ultimately leads him to condemn to death three innocent characters. In the trial scene, I suggested, Sidney's demonstration of the importance of emotive rhetoric in legal oratory is reminiscent of the position taken by Quintilian in Institutio Oratoria that, contrary to the beliefs of the Athenians, 'appeals to the emotions are necessary if there are no other means for securing the victory of truth, justice, and the public interest' (VI i 7), and reminiscent, too, of the recognition by Erasmus's Folly that seemingly foolish pragmatic wisdom is more useful to humans in their fallen state than is the dispassionate reasoning of the Stoics. In chapter four I also considered why emotive rhetoric might be of interest to a Protestant writer, and cited the example of John Foxe, who uses similar techniques in his Acts and Monuments to persuade readers of the

innocence of the men and women condemned as heretics in the Marian persecutions.

In Sidney's writing, then, the art of rhetoric has two roles: it helps to create credible fictions, thereby enabling an individual to gain the power and influence he needs to secure his self-interests, and it helps to defend the 'truth'. Stated thus baldly, it would seem that, rather than resolving the contradictions in Sidney's works, we have actually uncovered an even greater and more fundamental contradiction: Sidney is interested both in naturalising fictions and in uncovering the truth.

However, Sidney's attitude need not be seen to be self-contradictory. Cicero's Crassus, in his defence of the art of rhetoric, argued that even philosophers need a knowledge of this art if they are to convey to the world their true knowledge of its principles, a point recognised and supported by humanists such as Erasmus. Sidney also shares this view. Sidney's abrupt dismissal of the Platonic notion of divine possession in A Defence of Poetry suggests that he refuses to acknowledge a causal link between being genuinely virtuous and seeming to be virtuous: even those who are virtuous, or who know what it is to be virtuous, need skill in the art of rhetoric if they are to convey this fact. Sidney's awareness of the difficulties both of representing and of perceiving virtue, is, as I have already mentioned, a theme which he explores in the new Arcadia in the characters of Pyrocles and Musidorus, Pamela and

Philoclea, and is both inspired by his reading of educationalists who belong to the sceptical rhetorical tradition, and the product of his Protestant sympathies. After all, Protestant actions, though claiming to be based on an understanding of biblical truths, were themselves often subject to misinterpretation, and in need, thus, of reinterpretation. Not only did John Foxe attempt in Acts and Monuments to reinterpret the actions and words of the Protestants sentenced to death in the reign of Mary Tudor as heretics, but he felt the need to defend the truthfulness of his own work from the attacks of his Catholic detractors. Sidney's own actions were also subject to misinterpretation, both during his own lifetime and posthumously. Sidney's zealous support for the Protestant Cause seems to have been interpreted by Elizabeth as evidence of his political ambition, and to have led to the curtailment of a promising career, while Sidney's death, which led to his representation as a Protestant martyr by his friends and supporters, was vulnerable to reinterpretation in the seventeenth century by gossipy biographers such as John Aubrey, who drew attention instead to Sidney's supposed sexual voraciousness. At the same time, as the example of the heroes of the revised Arcadia and Sidney's own heroic image suggest, Protestant writers were interested in the contribution rhetorical skill could make to the creation of a reputation for virtue for individuals, whether real or imaginary, whose actions may be genuinely morally ambiguous. Philip Sidney, for example, was no doubt a

more complex figure than his posthumous representation suggests, and the conflicting account we receive of his character indicates that the image we receive of Sidney from his Protestant biographers is as 'fictional' as the characters in his literary works. But before we berate these writers for using the rhetorical art perversely, we need to remember that, in their eyes, such fabrication was perhaps justified by their general purpose, which was to ensure the institution of a doctrine which claimed to be the true faith.

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