

The image of human condition: Sidney's Arcadia and the Conflicts of Virtue

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‘The image of human condition’: Sidney’s *Arcadia* and the Conflicts of Virtue

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Abstract

I read Sidney's romance, the *New Arcadia*, in the light of a particular ethos known as Philippism after the followers of Philip Melanchthon, the Protestant theologian. In doing so, I use a critical paradigm previously only used to discuss Sidney's *Defence of Poesy*. Thus, building on the work of Robert E. Stillman, I narrow the gap that critics, such as Gavin Alexander, have often found between Sidney's theory and literary practice.

Like the Philippists, peculiarly open to the ideas of humanist scholarship, Sidney draws his philosophical precepts from an eclectic mix of sources. These various strands of philosophical, political and theological thought are accommodated within the *New Arcadia*, which conforms to the kind of literature praised by Melanchthon for its life-like heterogeneity and its examples of virtue. Sidney's characters have generally been thought to symbolize a passive form of Christian Stoicism. I contend that they, in fact, respond to their misfortunes in a way that demonstrates an active outlook. Employing the same philosophy, Sidney, both in his letter intervening in Queen Elizabeth's marriage negotiations and in his politically-interested fiction, arrogates to himself the role of court counsellor. As such, he is a model for his sister and Fulke Greville in their later roles as literary patron and courtier, respectively. The primary inheritor of Sidney's political and cultural legacy, Robert Devereux, despite being associated with court factionalism, also draws, I argue, on the optimistic and conciliatory philosophy signified by Sidney's *New Arcadia*.

Sidney's romance affirms its author's piety, in which human fallibility is recognized and tolerated. Amphialus represents Sidney's ethos most poignantly. An epic, martial figure, Amphialus also participates in the most dishonourable activities in the romance. Through the representation of this apparently irredeemable character, who, nevertheless, will be saved, Sidney displays his faith in God's Providence and his own salvation.

*di me tuentur, dis pietas mea
et musa cordi est.*
(Hor. *Carm.* I. xvii)

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Abbreviations and Procedures

Unless otherwise stated in the Bibliography, early modern printed texts are cited from facsimiles in the database *Early English Books Online*, <http://eebo.chadwyck.com>.

These texts are cited in old-spelling and original typography except where the typographical use of *vv* for *w* is silently standardized. The archaic typography used in Steuart A. Pears's *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet* (1845) has been modernized. References to the *Folger Digital Image Collection*, to the *Perseus Digital Library*, to *The Literary Encyclopedia*, to the *University of Basel Special Online Catalogue (Griechischer Geist aus Basler Pressen)* and to *Google Books* are to those online resources as they stood in July 2012. References to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and to the *Oxford English Dictionary* are to the online editions as they stood at the same date. Manuscript sources are cited using modern typographical conventions, silently standardizing the use of the long *s*, for example.

The dating of events has been standardized to modern rather than early modern practice, taking the New Year to begin on 1 January rather than 25 March (the Feast of the Annunciation).

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The text itself would not be what it is without the aid of the compendious work of the late Victor Skretkowicz, editor of the Oxford *New Arcadia*, whom I was privileged to meet in Dundee at the conference in his honour. I am also grateful to Joel Davis for directing me towards the sources of Neostoicism, and to Roger Kuin for sending me a copy of the paper he gave at the Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America (Chicago, 2008). Material from “‘She made her courtiers learned’: Sir Philip Sidney, the *Arcadia* and His Step-dame, Elizabeth’, in Naomi Miller and Karen Bamford, eds., *Maternity in Early Modern Romance* (forthcoming) appears in Chapter One; similarly, material from “‘If an excellent man should err’: Philip Sidney and Stoical Virtue’, *Sidney Journal* 26.2 (2008), pp. 33-48, appears in Chapter 3;

material from “‘The representing of so strange a power in love’: Philip Sidney’s Legacy of Anti-factionalism’, *Early Modern Literary Studies* Special Issue 16 (October 2007), <http://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/si-16/woodsidn.htm>, appears in Chapter Six; and material from ‘Cleverly playing the stoic’: the Earl of Essex, Sir Philip Sidney and Surviving Elizabeth’s Court’, in Lisa Hopkins and Annaliese Connolly, eds., *Essex: The Cultural Impact of an Elizabethan Courtier* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, forthcoming), appears in Chapter Seven.

Huge thanks are due to Kate for her unfailing confidence in my completing the task—‘thou wilt tread, / As with a pilgrim’s reverential thoughts, / The groves of Penshurst’ (Robert Southey). I am particularly grateful for the support of my family, especially my mother, whose love for Shakespeare we have all inherited. This thesis is dedicated to my grandparents, Barbara and Arthur, who always said, “Do your best”.

Introduction

This thesis seeks to interpret Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* as an articulation of a particular ethical outlook: that ethos which has been termed Philippist after the followers of Philip Melanchthon. Biographically speaking, it is well established that Sidney was familiar with the work of Melanchthon and the Philippists.¹ The ethical viewpoint that, I argue, the *Arcadia* articulates, is, naturally, identified with the romance's author, reflecting his political and religious philosophies, which are, understandably, often also discernible in his real-life public activities. However, unlike the method employed by Blair Worden in his book, *The Sound of Virtue*, I do not wish to draw direct parallels between the author's political activities (informed by his religious allegiances) and the events and characterizations of his fiction. Rather, I shall endeavour to show how Sidney's romance, as an example of a genre of literature that offers its authors a broad canvas on which to work, dramatizes the diverse and often contradictory implications of certain aspects of Elizabethan morality, puts that morality under stress, and fosters a moral viewpoint that is, in the end, moderate, inclusive and optimistic.

As such, the events and characters of the *Arcadia* do not represent, allegorically, their counterparts in Sidney's real-life world, but articulate a part of Sidney's contribution to what Louis Montrose has usefully termed the 'Elizabethan political imaginary': 'the collective repertoire of representational forms and figures—mythological, rhetorical, narrative, iconic—in which the beliefs and practices of Tudor political culture were pervasively articulated'.² Montrose's subject is Edmund

¹ Robert Stillman has shown that Sidney was extensively educated among a circle of continental Philippists; see Robert E. Stillman, *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism* (Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 6-28.

² Louis Montrose, 'Spenser and the Elizabethan Political Imaginary', *English Literary History* 69.4 (Winter 2002), p. 907. The archetypal allegorical reading of Sidney's *Arcadia* is Edwin Greenlaw, 'Sidney's *Arcadia* as an Example of Elizabethan Allegory', in *Anniversary Papers by Colleagues and Pupils of George Lyman Kittredge* (Boston, MA: Ginn, 1913), pp. 327-37. Also see Blair Worden's *The Sound of Virtue: Philip Sidney's Arcadia and Elizabethan Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press,

Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, which is, like the *Arcadia*, a manifestly literary articulation of the beliefs and practices of Tudor political culture. Of course, not all articulations of the Elizabethan political imaginary were of an overtly literary nature, and Montrose cites texts by authors such as John Knox and Sir Thomas Smith which might fit such a non-literary category.³

Following Montrose, Colin Burrow circumscribes the kinds of texts that have been, in general, 'the preserve of literary critics', distinguishing them from those 'that have traditionally been the preserve of historians'. For Burrow, literary texts 'are to an unusual degree overdetermined in their relationships to other texts and projects, and tend to use the licence of fiction to exploit interactions between the various spheres of the Tudor political imaginary'.⁴ The *Arcadia*, in Burrow's terms, being a literary rather than an historical text, is, as I hope to show, similarly overdetermined, and, as such, employs a high degree of fictional licence in its relationship to both its author's identity and the political culture to which he contributed. This is what characterizes the *Arcadia* as a work of fiction. Nevertheless, as a politically-interested fiction, an examination of its relationships to its author, his projects and the political world in which he operated can add to our understanding of Sidney, Elizabethan culture and the influence Sidney sought to have on that culture.

Sidney's *Arcadia* was originally begun, as Jean Robertson argues persuasively, 'soon after his return from his embassy to Germany in June 1577', and the first draft

1996). For an allegorical interpretation of Sidney's two *Arcadias* that is also sensitive to Sidney's use of pastoral and epic forms, see Kenneth Borris's *Allegory and Epic in English Renaissance Literature: Heroic Form in Sidney, Spenser, and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 109-41. For Stillman's assessment of the place of allegory in Sidney's poetics, see *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism*, pp.63-72.

³ John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (Geneva, 1558) and Sir Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum The maner of Gouvernement or policie of the Realme of England* (London, 1583); see Montrose, 'Spenser and the Elizabethan Political Imaginary', pp. 908, 911.

⁴ Colin Burrow, 'Reading Tudor Writing Politically: The Case of 2 *Henry IV*', *Yearbook of English Studies* (London) 38.1-2 (2008), p. 239.

was completed by 1581.⁵ This original work has come to be known as the *Old Arcadia*. Sidney's radical reworking of his romance 'might have begun', according to Victor Skretkowicz, 'as early as 1582 and continued into 1584'.⁶ This revised version, which remained incomplete at Sidney's death in 1586, is known as the *New Arcadia*. Sidney's closest friend, Fulke Greville, was one of the editors who supervised the publication of the *Arcadia* in 1590. This edition was based on Sidney's incomplete revision. Three years after the publication of what has come to be seen as Greville's edition, Sidney's sister, Mary Sidney Herbert, the Countess of Pembroke, supervised the publication of another *Arcadia*, combining the revised work with the third, fourth and fifth books of the *Old Arcadia*; this is often referred to as 'the composite *Arcadia*'. The *Old Arcadia*, used by Sidney Herbert for part of her 1593 edition, was originally circulated in manuscript and thought to be lost until Bertram Dobell's discovery of three copies in the years 1906-07.⁷ By virtue of the romance having been dedicated to Sidney's sister, the various editions of the *Arcadia* are all primarily titled *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*.

From its first appearances in contrasting print versions, the ethos of the *Arcadia* has been contested, and that contest has always involved a subordinate struggle over which version of the text has priority. In the very act of supervising its publication, Greville backed the revised version; likewise, the Countess of Pembroke blessed the text published in 1593. Modern critics, for their part, have sought to relate Sidney's revisions to several postulated changes in his outlook over the period of their composition, usually citing particular personal or political stimuli that might have occasioned such changes. The revised *Arcadia* is undoubtedly very different from its

⁵ See Jean Robertson, 'General Introduction', in Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The Old Arcadia)*, ed. Jean Robertson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. xv.

⁶ See Victor Skretkowicz, 'General Introduction', in Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The New Arcadia)*, ed. Victor Skretkowicz (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. xvii.

⁷ H. R. Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 299-355.

first draft. Katherine Duncan-Jones, in her biography of Sidney, describes it as having ‘a quite different imaginative climate’ from the *Old Arcadia*, such that, in the new text, ‘the problems and dilemmas faced by the characters are often insoluble; there is no “right” course of action’.⁸ In this thesis, I shall read Sidney’s *New Arcadia*, in particular, as an expression of its author’s evident Philippist piety, which, I contend, informs many of the differences between this last version of his romance and its earlier incarnation.

The basic plot of the *Arcadia* is recognizably similar in both versions: two princes, Pyrocles and Musidorus, of Macedon and Thessalia respectively, disguise themselves (the former as an Amazon warrior, the latter as a shepherd) to gain access to their beloved Arcadian princesses, Philoclea and Pamela, who have been secreted in a remote pastoral location; the princesses’ father, King Basilius, has sought to preserve his daughters’ safety after consulting the oracle at Delphi; both Basilius and his wife, Gynecia, fall in love with Pyrocles (disguised as an Amazon), which, understandably, complicates the prince’s courtship of Philoclea; the eventual resolution of this narrative, with the marriage of the two young couples, brings the *Old Arcadia* to a happy ending. This is in keeping with the *Old Arcadia*’s generic status, constructed as it is along the lines of a five-act Terentian stage comedy.⁹ The incomplete revision that is the *New Arcadia*, however, does not benefit from such a felicitous conclusion. Indeed, compared to the five books (or acts) of the original, the revised text ends mid-sentence, before the conclusion of the third book. Nevertheless, so substantial are Sidney’s additions to his romance that the revised version is still significantly longer than the original. In what amounts to a change in genre, away from the comedic and towards the epic (as will be discussed below in more detail), Sidney introduces considerably more

⁸ Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1991), p. 260.

⁹ For discussions of the Terentian structure of the *Old Arcadia* see Robert W. Parker, ‘Terentian Structure in Sidney’s Original *Arcadia*’, *English Literary Renaissance* 2 (1972), pp. 61-78 and Clark L. Chalifour, ‘Sir Philip Sidney’s *Old Arcadia* as Terentian Comedy’, *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 16.1 (Winter 1976), pp. 51-63.

involutions to the narrative, including a wholly new episode in which the princesses and Pyrocles (still disguised as an Amazon) are kidnapped by Basilius's sister-in-law, Cecropia, who wishes to remove Basilius from his throne in favour of her own son, Amphialus. What becomes, in effect, Amphialus's rebellion against his uncle's rule, institutes a significantly greater number of martial exploits, which, in keeping with the epic tone, multiply Sidney's allusions to the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*. In this context, the princes are able 'to seek exercises of their virtue' and pursue 'heroical effects', 'like Ulysses and Aeneas'.¹⁰ Most significantly for this thesis, the character of Amphialus is a similarly epic figure, but, as Edward Berry observes, he 'devotes all his heroic energies to corrupt ends'.¹¹ It is through the representation of the apparently irredeemable Amphialus that, I contend, Sidney most poignantly displays his religious ethos in the *New Arcadia*.

Other critics have read Sidney's revised text in the context of the turn towards religious writing he seems to have made at the same time as revising his romance, but none has recognized the peculiarly Philippist character of this change. For example, Donald Stump notes Sidney's 'interest in translating [Guillaume de Salluste] du Bartas' *La Semaine*, [Philippe Duplessis-] Mornay's *Trueness of the Christian Religion*, and the Psalms', but links this with a turn towards stoical passivity in the heroism of the *Arcadia* that does not reflect the particularity of Sidney's piety.¹² Similarly, Katherine Duncan-Jones describes Sidney's Arcadian princess, Pamela, as 'a mouthpiece for Du Plessis Mornay's account of the shared fundamentals of the Christian religion, spilling over from another of Sidney's current literary projects', without examining the

¹⁰ Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The New Arcadia)*, ed. Victor Skretkowitz (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 179. Further page references to the *New Arcadia* are to this edition and are contained within the text.

¹¹ Edward Berry, *The Making of Sir Philip Sidney* (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 1998), p. 178.

¹² Donald Stump, 'Sidney's Critique of Humanism in the *New Arcadia*', in Ton Hoenselaars and Arthur F. Kinney, eds., *Challenging Humanism: Essays in Honor of Dominic Baker-Smith* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2005), pp. 174-75.

Philippist inheritance of both authors.¹³ Duncan-Jones's reading emphasizes Pamela's 'morally productive' patience, which forms a significant part of her 'proto-Christian nature'.¹⁴ Blair Worden also observes the same character displaying a 'Stoic heroism' in her passive resistance to oppression. Worden associates this fortitude with the contemporary philosophy of Christian Stoicism, which had its most influential expression in the works of Justus Lipsius (a Flemish humanist scholar with links to Sidney), who also translated the works of the classical author, Tacitus.¹⁵ Nevertheless, as I shall show in this thesis, particularly in chapters Three, Six and Seven, Sidney's characters engage with the vicissitudes of the world in a manner that breaks free from the limits of the conventionally passive Christian Stoicism often associated with Sidney's late Elizabethan milieu. The stoical outlook that arose in this period among Elizabethan courtiers like Sidney was associated with a real-life difficulty in achieving the 'right course of action'. However, Sidney's fiction, rather than betokening moral confusion, corroborates its author's inclusive Christian philosophy, in which the vagaries of human agency are acknowledged and tolerated. Sidney draws his philosophical precepts from diverse, often arguably contradictory sources, but (in concord with the ecumenical spirit of his Philippist associates) he incorporates them without straining the limits of his (and their) peculiarly wide-ranging ethos. Moreover, just as Sidney's poetics evinces a commitment to public affairs, the public values implied by the machinations of his fictional world reveal a morally and politically committed, though, as I shall show, less idealized author.

As Jill Kraye notes, in the chapter on 'Moral Philosophy' in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, 'in the Renaissance moral philosophy was divided

¹³ Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet*, p. 263.

¹⁴ Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet*, pp. 263-66.

¹⁵ See Worden, *The Sound of Virtue*, pp. 256-57, 309, 364-65. Lipsius's *De Recta Pronunciatione Latinae Linguae Dialogus* (Leiden, 1586) was dedicated to Sidney. For Lipsius's combination of Christianity and classical Stoicism, see Justus Lipsius, *Two Bookes of Constancie*, trans. Sir John Stradling (London, 1594).

into three parts: ethics, oeconomics and politics', corresponding to their division between Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* and the pseudo-Aristotelian *Oeconomics*. As such, Renaissance authors tended to accept 'the principle that ethics dealt with the individual, oeconomics with the family and politics with the state'.¹⁶ In a post-Reformation Christian context, however, the Fall of Man complicated the response of Christian thinkers to classical concepts of morality, with many judging the views of ancient philosophers to be the 'vain and invalid' products of 'corrupt human reason'. In view of this, the division between classical and Christian systems became a more controversial and pressing issue than the tripartite division of classical moral philosophy itself. For Melanchthon, the putative source of Sidney's piety,

the fall was also the central issue in ethics. He believed, however, that although man's spiritual understanding of God's law was totally vitiated by original sin, his rational knowledge of the law of nature, which was part of divine law, remained intact. So man was still able to judge whether external actions were right or wrong.¹⁷

As such, in Melanchthon's view, Christians could use so-called 'pagan' philosophy to determine the 'rules governing external action and civil society'. Moreover, though he was at pains to distinguish between theology and ethics, thereby maintaining the sanctity of God's law, Melanchthon paved the way for the harmonization of Christian and classical ethical systems in the works of later authors.¹⁸ It is, therefore, a notable characteristic of Philippism that it incorporates religious piety, classical ethics, and also the behaviour of individuals as part of a wider civil society, which might ordinarily be termed 'politics'.

In examining Sidney's *Arcadia* through the lens of Philippism, I am building on the work of Robert E. Stillman, whose work on Sidney's *Defence of Poesy* seeks to

¹⁶ Jill Kraye, 'Moral Philosophy', in Charles B. Schmitt, Quentin Skinner, Eckhard Kessler and Jill Kraye, eds., *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 303-05.

¹⁷ Kraye, 'Moral Philosophy', pp. 321-23.

¹⁸ Kraye, 'Moral Philosophy', pp. 323-25. Kraye cites Joachim Camerarius, Hieronymus Wolf and Bartholomaeus Keckermann as examples of authors for whom Melanchthon's defence of classical ethics was significant (pp. 324-25). As we will see, Philippe Duplessis-Mornay may be added to this list.

correct previous critical approaches to the author's religion and politics, in particular those that have been 'Anglo-centric', 'presentist', or have paid too little attention to 'Sidney's consciousness of the public domain'. Stillman's approach sees the *Defence* as 'a cosmopolitan text informed by the values of a distinct, international body of Reformed humanists (the Philippists)'. Furthermore, in Stillman's analysis, the unearthing of this previously unknown historical context for Sidney's work 'recover[s] for the past some portion of the particularity that gives it meaning'; Sidney, '[a]lways conscious that the circulation of texts carries public consequence', defends poetry in an effort to show its power to promote Philippist virtues and so 'disable tyranny and foster confessional harmony'.¹⁹ Although the recovery of such contexts is necessary and useful, Stillman's approach to the *Defence* does not efface earlier readings and the portion of particularity they have each recovered. Indeed, knowledge of Sidney's Philippism may modify, rather than wholly correct, what remains an Anglo-centric view of Sidney's politics, for example, and Philippist values may be represented in distinctly different ways across the various literary projects of an author as versatile as Philip Sidney. I would contend that writing in the genre of romance not only necessitates a greater degree of freedom from the constraints of any informing set of values than does writing a defence of poetry, but also provides a broader canvas on which to paint the numerous, complex, often conflicting aspects of the parochial as well as cosmopolitan operations of any such philosophy.²⁰ As such, I wish to emphasize the particularity of Sidney's romance as an expression of his values rather than the particularity of his values *per se*. If one were to consider Sidney's works as examples of cultural analysis in the terms outlined by Raymond Williams in his book, *The Long Revolution*, *The Defence of Poesy* could be considered as an example of the 'ideal' category, 'in which

¹⁹ Stillman, *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism*, pp. 31-2.

²⁰ Roland Greene notes that 'the *New Arcadia* is vastly more nuanced and reflective than the *Old*. There are many more characters to represent gradations of morality and ethics... In short, the *New Arcadia* gives us a vastly more circumstantiated world' ('Resistance in Process', *Prose Studies: History, Theory, Criticism* 32.2 (2010), p. 103).

culture is a state or process of human perfection, in terms of certain absolute or universal values'. In such terms, the *Arcadia* would fall into the 'social' category, in which the 'analysis of culture...is the clarification of the meanings and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, a particular culture'.²¹ Here, it is the particularity (as opposed to the idealization) of both the culture and the analysis of that culture that the *Arcadia* represents that is significant.

My purpose in undertaking a Philippist reading of the *Arcadia* is, in part, to present Sidney's 'poetics of Renaissance cosmopolitanism' in practice rather than in theory. Stillman's major achievement, as well as recovering a significant part of the historical context for Sidney's *Defence* (and for, by implication, his other works), is in theorizing Sidney's 'exemplary poetics'.²² Sidney's *Defence of Poesy* has long been regarded as the classical English Renaissance statement of what Williams calls 'the idea of art as creation, in a kind of rivalry with God'.²³ Stillman's work adds considerable new sophistication and understanding to this conventional picture, emphasizing the subtlety of Sidney's piety and the significance of his belief in the pre-eminence of poetry as a form of discourse in the public domain. Stillman successfully wrests the *Defence* from the problematic context of English Calvinism preferred in earlier accounts of Sidney's Protestant commitment.²⁴ Sidney's education, under the supervision of his mentor, the French Huguenot diplomat, Hubert Languet, and other Melanchthonians among Languet's circle, exposed him to a peculiarly pragmatic form of Protestant piety.²⁵ As an apposite example of Philippist piety, Stillman cites the funeral oration

²¹ Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961; reprint, Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press, 2001), p. 57.

²² Williams, *The Long Revolution*, p. ix.

²³ Williams, *The Long Revolution*, pp. 22-3.

²⁴ See Stillman, 'Deadly Stinging Adders: Sidney's Piety, Philippism, and the *Defence of Poesy*', *Spenser Studies* 16 (2002), pp. 231-69. Stillman's essay, pp. 235-36 and 261, n. 14, refers specifically to two earlier accounts: Andrew D. Weiner, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Protestantism: A Study of Contexts* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978) and Alan Sinfield, 'Protestantism: Questions of Subjectivity and Control' in *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

²⁵ These beliefs may be referred to as either 'Melanchthonian' or 'Philippist'.

composed by Joannes Crato, another pupil of Melanchthon, following the death, in 1576, of the Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian II. The oration, as Stillman attests, celebrates a ruler who is ‘the very embodiment of Philippist virtue’; he is ‘the image of moderation...who learned what imperial power is by understanding what human weakness is’, and ‘who wished to manage political life by counsel rather than by force’.²⁶ As I will discuss in more detail below, especially in chapters One and Seven, the issues surrounding consiliary access to Sidney’s monarch, Elizabeth, are important to this thesis, which reads his literary texts as forms of politically-interested public discourse.

Stillman’s case, more specifically, rests on the correlation between a Sidneian poetics and a Melanchthonian piety that share a commitment to the ‘cooperative power of the [human] will’. Unlike the harsh limitation placed on human agency by Calvinist theology, Philippist belief allows the individual will greater freedom to ‘cooperate with God in securing salvation’.²⁷ This is reflected in the *Defence*’s category of the ‘right poet’, whose poetry has the power to move, to bridge the gap between ‘our erected wit’ and our post-lapsarian ‘infected will’. As Stillman notes, this movement is achieved, in part, through the poet’s ‘power to impart (contemplatively) real self-knowledge—the enjoyment of our own divine essence’. Ultimately, inspired to acts of virtue by the product of the poet’s wit, the ‘infected will’ may be restored to a ‘condition of goodness’.²⁸ This is, as Sidney writes, predicated on the condition that the readers of

²⁶ Stillman, ‘Deadly Stinging Adders’, pp. 247-48. Famously, Sidney was sent as an ambassador to the imperial court to communicate Elizabeth’s condolences to Maximilian’s son and heir, Rudolf II (see H. R. Woudhuysen, ‘Sidney, Sir Philip (1554-1586)’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, May 2005).

²⁷ Stillman, ‘Deadly Stinging Adders,’ pp. 257, 245.

²⁸ Stillman, ‘Deadly Stinging Adders,’ p. 255.

poetry 'learn aright why and how that maker made him'.²⁹ Despite this qualification, there remains the potential for human agency in the quest for liberation from sin.³⁰

Such ideas, evident in *The Defence of Poesy*, may also be used to read Sidney's other writings. When looking for evidence of Sidney's poetic manifesto in his own works, critics have often found a significant gap between Sidney's theory and practice.

Gavin Alexander, in a review of Stillman's book on the *Defence*, wonders

why Sidney's fictions fail so designedly to provide the clearly exemplary characters and situations that his theory requires. Stillman insists persuasively on Sidney's absolute commitment to his vocation as a poet. But if the *Defence* comes from so impassioned a world view, so heartfelt a set of religious and political beliefs, so absolute a conviction about poetry's ability to transform the world around it, why does Sidney write the *Arcadia* in the way he writes it, with some pretty effective heroes, it is true, but who fall prey to error and failure and distraction?³¹

This is the very issue I wish to address in this thesis: I will show how the heroic, yet often also flawed characters of Sidney's *Arcadia*, particularly the revised version, do indeed represent the same Philippist beliefs that informed the writing of *The Defence of Poesy*. Alexander notes that 'Stillman discusses the *Arcadia* relatively little, and *Astrophil and Stella* even less', which, he says, 'is a shame not only because the theory as represented by Stillman is bound to make one look afresh at the practice'.³² I wish to begin this process by 'looking afresh' at the *New Arcadia*.

Like Alexander, Alan Sinfield, citing the *Defence*, notes Sidney's apparent

insistence that characters in literature represent absolute moral qualities: nature has not produced 'so true a lover as Theagenes, so constant a friend as Pylades, so valiant a man as Orlando, so right a prince as Xenophon's Cyrus, so excellent a man every way as Virgil's Aeneas'. Thus he simplifies fictional characters into abstractions, refusing to admit the

²⁹ Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry or The Defence of Poesy*, ed. Geoffrey Shepherd (London and Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1965; reprint, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1973), pp. 101-02.

³⁰ Roger Kuin ('Querre-Muhau: Sir Philip Sidney and the New World', *Renaissance Quarterly* 51.2 [1998], p. 556) notes that, 'while Languet taught Sidney the Melanchthonian strain of Protestant humanism', '[m]ost of the French Huguenots, on the other hand, fighting for their lives and faith, were cast in a harder, Calvinist mold'.

³¹ Gavin Alexander, 'Review of Robert E. Stillman, *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism*', *Review of English Studies* 61 (2010), p. 135.

³² Alexander, 'Review', p. 135.

existence of mixed or developing characters and the controversies they provoke—such as I have mentioned in relation to Orlando and Aeneas; and such as we experience in Sidney’s *Arcadia* and *Astrophil and Stella*.³³

For Sinfield, Sidney is ‘obliged to follow through the implications of his theory’, despite its inherent contradictions, particularly as regards ‘his idealised view of the provenance of poetry, as deriving from the erected wit which transcends the fallen condition’. Effectively, Sidney must efface the messy reality of what Sinfield terms ‘pagan literature’ in order to justify his own ‘earnest protestantism’. In what Sinfield characterizes as Sidney’s Calvinist worldview, ‘Figures in a prelapsarian idea can hardly be partly good and partly bad’.³⁴ Nevertheless, as Stillman has shown, Sidney’s piety was a great deal less earnest (more specifically less Calvinist) than Sinfield allows. As such, the ‘mixed or developing characters and the controversies’ that Sinfield finds in the *Arcadia* and *Astrophil and Stella*, however discordant they may be with the *Defence*, are not incompatible with Sidney’s religious outlook, and the critic must look elsewhere for the motive behind Sidney’s idealizing poetics.³⁵

Indeed, the source of Sidney’s putative theological viewpoint, Philip Melancthon, sanctioned the reading of the very kind of romance that formed the basis of Sidney’s *Arcadia* (especially its revised version): *An Aethiopian History*, by the third-century Greek author, Heliodorus. On the title page of the Latin edition of Heliodorus’s romance, published in Basel in 1552, Melancthon praises its ‘diversity of counsels, occasions, events, and states of mind’.³⁶ This is the text where Sidney would have found ‘so true a lover as Theagenes’. However, in Melancthon’s view, *An*

³³ Alan Sinfield, ‘The Cultural Politics of the *Defence of Poetry*’, in Gary Fredric Waller and Michael D. Moore, eds., *Sir Philip Sidney and the Interpretation of Renaissance Culture: The Poet in His Time and in Ours: A Collection of Critical and Scholarly Essays* (Beckenham: Croom Helm, 1984), pp. 136-37; see Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, p. 100.

³⁴ Sinfield, ‘The Cultural Politics of the *Defence of Poetry*’, pp. 137-38.

³⁵ Sinfield himself suggests another cause for Sidney’s idealizations: a wish ‘to approximate his theory to neoclassicism’, following the work of Torquato Tasso; see Sinfield, ‘The Cultural Politics of the *Defence of Poetry*’, p. 137.

³⁶ Heliodorus, *Aethiopicae Historiae* (Basel: Johannes Oporinus, 1552), unsigned leaf, cited, and translated by the author, in Steve Mentz, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England: the Rise of Prose Fiction* (Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), p. 61.

Aethiopian History is a repository of diversity as well as the figures of idealized virtue highlighted by Sidney in his *Defence*, and by Sinfield. Arthur Heiserman, in his book, *The Novel Before the Novel*, describes *An Aethiopian History* as having a structure such that ‘The syntax of the action...has released information to the characters and to us in ways that may be said to imitate the involuted ways through which men discover and enact their destinies’.³⁷ This narrative characteristic, as William Craft has observed, also applies to Sidney’s *New Arcadia*: ‘the reader’s experience of contingency...imitates the contingency of human life’.³⁸ Craft draws on Iris Murdoch’s idea that ‘form in art is properly the simulation of the self-contained aimlessness of the universe’.³⁹ However, Craft, mindful of Sidney’s belief in God’s Providence, substitutes ‘contingency’ or ‘mystery’ for ‘aimlessness’.⁴⁰ In the context of early modern, Melanchthonian Protestantism, this mystery reflects human experience of the contingency of life, but also human impotence in the face of Divine Providence. The Philippist reader of Heliodoran romance would have recognized the characters’ continuing faith in the conventions of the genre to bring about a happy ending as analogous to the faith that true (in Philippist terms) Christians had in their ultimate salvation. Or, as Steve Mentz puts it, ‘rather like a romance-heroine, the Protestant believer triumphs by submitting to and cooperating with Divine will’.⁴¹

The form and syntax of *An Aethiopian History* which drew approbation from Melanchthon, also led Sidney to praise Heliodorus’s creation as ‘an absolute heroical poem’, alongside Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*.⁴² Sidney appears to have shared the Renaissance view that Heliodorus’s romance was founded on the principles of epic

³⁷ Arthur Heiserman, *The Novel Before the Novel: Essays and Discussions about the Beginnings of Prose Fiction in the West* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 194.

³⁸ William Craft, *Labyrinth of Desire: Invention and Culture in the Work of Sir Philip Sidney* (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1994), p. 115.

³⁹ Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good* (London: Ark, 1979), p. 86, cited in Craft, *Labyrinth of Desire*, p. 112.

⁴⁰ Craft, *Labyrinth of Desire*, p. 112.

⁴¹ Steve Mentz, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England*, pp. 62-3.

⁴² Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, p. 103.

derived from Virgil and Homer, beginning, as it does, *in medias res*. Both Jacques Amyot (the translator of *An Aethiopian History* into French) and Julius Caesar Scaliger, whose writings were noted influences on Sidney's *Defence*, praised the epic nature of Heliodorus's fiction.⁴³ Amyot, however, adds a note of criticism to his approval, bemoaning a certain lack of 'grandeur', 'richness' and 'memorable feats of arms' in the narrative.⁴⁴ Such comments appear, as Victor Skretkowicz suggests, to have influenced Sidney when he revised his *Arcadia*, the later version of which includes tilts and battles missing from its earlier incarnation. Indeed, the *New Arcadia* also begins *in medias res*, and eschews the five-act Terentian structure of the *Old Arcadia* in favour of a cyclical narrative similar to that adopted by Heliodorus; Sidney thus incorporates further features of what Skretkowicz terms 'the Heliodoran heroic'.⁴⁵

Given Philip Melanchthon's influence on Sidney's piety, their shared admiration for the scope and variety of Heliodorus's epic romance, and Sidney's revision of his own romance along Heliodoran lines, the *New Arcadia* is the obvious choice from Sidney's works to examine for evidence of his Philippist views. Although Sidney's sonnet sequence, *Astrophil and Stella*, has a degree of mixed characterization (between and within the personae of the lover and his beloved), and the author's adaptation of Petrarchan themes deepens the possibilities of the genre, the breadth of human experience it portrays is limited. William Craft notes that students 'who have moved in Renaissance courses from Sidney's sequence to Shakespeare's will recall the sense of having entered a much larger (and less carefully plotted) space'.⁴⁶ The same limitation

⁴³ See Victor Skretkowicz, 'Sidney and Amyot: Heliodorus in the Structure and Ethos of the *New Arcadia*', *The Review of English Studies* 27 (May 1976), pp. 170-74 and Carol F. Heffernan, 'Heliodorus's *Aethiopica* and Sidney's *Arcadia*: A Reconsideration', *English Language Notes* 42.1 (September 2004), pp. 12-20.

⁴⁴ These are Skretkowicz's paraphrases of Amyot's French ('Sidney and Amyot', p. 173): 'ce n'est qu'une fable à laquelle encore défaut... la grandeur, à cause que les contes, même quant à la personne de Theagenes, auquel il ne fait executer nuls memorables exploits d'armes, ne me semblent point assez riches, & ne mériteraient pas à l'avanture d'être lues...' (J. Amyot, *Le Proem du Translateur* (1547), sig. A3^{r-v}, cited in Skretkowicz, 'Sidney and Amyot', p. 173).

⁴⁵ Skretkowicz, 'Sidney and Amyot', p. 173.

⁴⁶ Craft, *Labyrinth of Desire*, p. 112.

may be ascribed to Sidney's pastoral entertainment for Elizabeth, *The Lady of May*, though it does, as Alexander notes, adopt the dialogic form so important to the eclogues (and other encounters) in the significantly broader arena of the *Arcadia*.⁴⁷ Craft, acknowledging Sidney's turn from a dramatic structure to that of epic, also sees the revised romance as a widening of the author's reach:

Sidney moved outward into a larger sphere—abandoning nothing but generously including much more—when he crossed over the comic circle of the *Old Arcadia* and fashioned the heroic plenitude and mystery of the *New*.⁴⁸

The *New Arcadia* is a significantly more heterogeneous text, and in the light of Sidney's argument for the efficacy of poetry in guiding public affairs, it would seem particularly important to examine his works for evidence of the kind of vision of public life, both moral and political, that their author wished to maintain or bring about. The *New Arcadia*'s large cast of characters, placed in a wide range of moral and political situations, provides myriad opportunities for the advancement of Sidney's principles. Arguably, such beliefs could be represented by numerous aspects of Sidney's fiction, including the exemplary (or otherwise) conduct of particular characters, the interaction of several agents tending towards certain morally or politically significant conclusions, or the generic characteristics of the artwork itself. All of these factors will be explored in this thesis. Also, where appropriate, reference will be made to Sidney's other texts, especially *The Defence of Poesy*, *Astrophil and Stella* and his 'Letter to Queen Elizabeth, Touching her Marriage with Monsieur'. Sidney's translations of the Psalms, like his revised romance, remained unfinished at his death. The Countess of Pembroke completed what Sidney had begun, and the Sidney Psalter, together with the countess's other works, including her translation of Robert Garnier's drama, *Marc Antoine*, and Philippe Duplessis-Mornay's *Discours de la mort et de la vie*, provide an important

⁴⁷ Gavin Alexander, *Writing After Sidney: The Literary Response to Sir Philip Sidney, 1586-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 1-35.

⁴⁸ Craft, *Labyrinth of Desire*, p. 112.

context for my discussion of Sidney's philosophy.⁴⁹ Sidney is thought to have started a translation of Duplessis-Mornay's *De la vérité de la religion Chrestienne*, which later appeared in a translation by Arthur Golding. The title of Golding's text suggests it was the work begun by Sidney, but its style suggests otherwise.⁵⁰ Sidney's friend, Fulke Greville, refers to Sidney's translation of Duplessis-Mornay's work, as well as the, now lost, translation of another religious work, Du Bartas's *La Semaine*, in a letter to Francis Walsingham in November 1586, after Sidney's death.⁵¹ This context of religious writings is also of obvious importance to my discussion, as are the works of Greville himself, whose biographical work, 'A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney', completed in the Jacobean era, provides especially valuable evidence when discussing Sidney's purpose in writing and revising the *Arcadia*.⁵²

Indeed, my thesis as a whole is built on an appreciation of both the ideas that Sidney inherited from his intellectual precursors and the literary-political legacy that he left for others to take up. The particular religio-political project he began, influenced by his own Philippist inheritance, was continued by his sister (in her own works and as Sidney's literary executor), by his friend, Greville (who drew on Sidney's works to frame his own position as a courtier under James I), and by Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex, whose political (and military) role was, in many senses, inherited directly from Sidney. While my readings of Sidney's *New Arcadia* certainly draw on the ideas and contemporary events that impinged upon Sidney's world, as an active courtier within the royal court or as an apparently retired courtier beyond its bounds, I also draw

⁴⁹ Mary Sidney Herbert's translations are entitled *Antonius* and *A Discourse of Life and Death*, respectively.

⁵⁰ Philippe Duplessis-Mornay, *A woorke concerning the trewnesse of the Christian religion, written in French...By Philip of Mornay Lord of Plessie Marlie. Begunne to be translated into English by Sir Philip Sidney Knight, and at his request finished by Arthur Golding* (London, 1587). Also see Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet*, pp. 251-52.

⁵¹ For the text of Greville's letter, see Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558-1640*, pp. 416-17.

⁵² Fulke Greville, 'A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney', in John Gouws ed., *The Prose Works of Fulke Greville* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 3-135.

on the evidence offered by those who continued, or continued to be influenced by, his work, in order to read back into the literary text itself. As such, the order of the chapters that follow reflects this methodology: beginning with the milieu of the ‘Elizabethan political imaginary’, to which Sidney contributed his own forms of representation; continuing by examining the Philippism he inherited and the influence it had on his revised *Arcadia*; and ending with the afterlife of his romance in both the political and literary arenas.

The first chapter introduces the relationship between Sidney and his queen, Elizabeth. During the period that he was writing and revising his romance Sidney was aware of the danger in daring to counsel Elizabeth on politically sensitive issues such as her proposed marriage to the Duke of Anjou. Nevertheless, by employing the considerable rhetorical and literary skills at his disposal, he could speak truth to power, both directly and indirectly, thus participating in the acknowledged reciprocal relationship between poet and monarch through which each ‘makes’ the other. By aligning the figure of the archetypal step-dame with that of the learned prince, Sidney could figure Elizabeth as a beneficent stepmother, who, in the guise of the *New Arcadia*’s Helen of Corinth, made her courtiers learned. This strategy inspired the Countess of Pembroke, Sidney’s sister, and his friend, Fulke Greville, in their subsequent respective roles as literary patron and courtier.

In Chapter Two, I introduce Sidney’s Philippism as the means by which I will read Sidney’s revised romance. Romance is discussed as a genre that is specifically sanctioned by the theologian and scholar who taught Hubert Languet, Philip Melancthon, thus uniting the virtues of Sidney’s Melancthonian piety with the generic characteristics of his text. I consider other modern critical approaches to Sidney’s religious commitment, as well as examining the particular presence that Melancthon’s theology had in Sidney’s culture. My reading shows the *New Arcadia* to

be a work of deep moral seriousness, displaying what the narrator of the revised text terms ‘the image of human condition’ (462). This is a reflection of the complex, Heliodoran nature of the text.

In Chapter Three of this thesis, I examine the *New Arcadia* in the light of Sidney’s Philippist philosophy, which he inherited from his mentor, Hubert Languet. Sidney, through the character of Amphialus, stages the defeat of ‘an excellent man’ who has erred (to paraphrase the author’s mentor).⁵³ Nevertheless, I contend, Amphialus’s fall is attended by sufficient signs of his corrigibility to suggest that Languet’s moderate, forgiving ethos holds sway. Languet rejected the judgements of those who would utterly condemn their contemporaries for their moral failings however unjustly such failings were brought about. Languet characterizes such harshness as arising from a strict adherence to stoical precepts. I suggest that by reading the *New Arcadia* through the lens of Languet’s anti-stoical ethos it is possible to unify other apparently distinct scholarly interpretations of Sidney’s philosophical inheritance. This chapter also introduces Sidney’s pragmatic adoption of a philosophically stoical position that informs my discussion of other aspects of the *New Arcadia*, particularly with respect to his female characters, as discussed further in chapters Six and Seven.

In the fourth chapter, I discuss the relationship between the character of Amphialus and Sidney himself. The diminution, in the *New Arcadia*, of the role played by Sidney’s erstwhile fictional persona, Philisides (the poet-shepherd of the *Old Arcadia*), and the appearance of Amphialus, who adopts, if rather corruptly, some of Philisides’s traits, herald a new vision of the author, open to the same judgements as Languet’s erring man. The fall of Amphialus is discussed as a profound symbol of Sidney’s reformed Christian piety.

⁵³ Languet expresses his view in a letter to Sidney dated 24th July, 1574; see James M. Osborn, *Young Philip Sidney: 1572-1577* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 228. I am paraphrasing Osborn’s translation of Languet’s Latin.

Chapter Five examines the martial adventures of the princes, Musidorus and Pyrocles, in the *New Arcadia*, together with other allusions to military campaigns in Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*. I engage with those critics, like David Norbrook and Richard C. McCoy, who detect a frustration and confusion in Sidney's fiction that they then associate with what is known of his biography.⁵⁴ I argue that, on the contrary, Sidney's poetic sensibility has a discernibly optimistic character, and that, as such, the *New Arcadia*, rather than being at odds with his real-life ambitions, is in fact a comprehensive representation of human experience.

Chapter Six focuses on the episode in the *New Arcadia* in which the princesses are held captive by Cecropia. Sidney's female characters, who are often praised for their passive stoicism, are shown to represent an avowedly more active virtue than might be expected. Through a close examination of the subtle differences between the editorial visions of Sidney's literary executors and Sidney's own literary practice, I elucidate the peculiarly anti-factional ethos that his characters symbolize.⁵⁵ More specifically, I show how the author's employment of highly allusive heraldic symbols (or *imprese*) and a suggestively ambiguous language of seeing and being seen transforms seemingly aimless passages into loaded evocations of their author's inclusive philosophy. Here, Sidney is seen to escape the bounds of the conventional Christian Stoicism associated with particular factions of courtiers and royal counsellors towards the end of Elizabeth's reign. This distinction is made possible by Sidney's association with the group of international Philippists whom he met through his mentor, Languet. It is a characteristic he appears to have shared with his sister, whose editorial

⁵⁴ Richard C. McCoy, *The Rites of Knighthood: the Literature and Politics of Elizabethan Chivalry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), ch. 3; Richard C. McCoy, 'Sir Philip Sidney and Elizabethan Chivalry', in M. J. B. Allen, Dominic Baker-Smith, and Arthur F. Kinney, eds., *Sir Philip Sidney's Achievements* (New York: AMS Press, 1990), pp. 32-41; and David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984).

⁵⁵ I build here on the work of Joel B. Davis; see his 'Multiple Arcadias and the Literary Quarrel between Fulke Greville and the Countess of Pembroke', *Studies in Philology* 101.4 (Fall 2004), pp. 401-30 and *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia and the Invention of English Literature* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 23-78, 145-78.

practice and continuation of Sidney's political project inform my reading in this chapter.⁵⁶

My seventh and last chapter continues this discussion of court factionalism and counselling the monarch with reference to the *New Arcadia*, and illustrates how the examples of Sidney's female characters might have been relevant to the public sphere not only of Sidney's own political milieu, but also to that of the arguably more factional 1590s. In the wake of my reappraisal of Sidney's ethos as represented by his prose romance, I seek a reassessment of the values which might have been inherited by the chief legatee of the political and cultural position established by Sidney: Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex. In a further reading of the *New Arcadia*, I show how the earl, even in the most troubling episodes of his own career, might have adopted attitudes to court factions and political counsel that are analogous to those evinced by Sidney's heroines: a distinctly feminine discourse of pragmatic stoicism and principled anti-factionalism. This reading complicates the usual view of Essex and his immediate circle (which came to include Fulke Greville). Often associated with the pessimistic reading of Tacitus, whose works contain numerous examples of high political factionalism, Essex is synonymous with the polarization of politics in the 1590s.⁵⁷ My reading emphasizes the more optimistic and conciliatory aspects of Essex's career.

Given my particular focus on Sidney's *New Arcadia*, my arguments rest, to some degree, on the textual development of Sidney's text, and draw on elements from the two major textual theories that have dominated Sidney studies thus far. The theory put forward by Robertson and Ringler regards the original, 'old' *Arcadia* text as a completed work and the revised version as a distinct text to be read without the different arrangements of the eclogues in the editions published in 1590 and 1593, neither of

⁵⁶ Victor Skretkiewicz, 'Mary Sidney Herbert's *Antonius*, English Philhellenism and the Protestant Cause', *Women's Writing* 6.1 (March 1999), pp. 7-25.

⁵⁷ Paul E. J. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: the Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, 1585-1597* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999; reprint, 2005).

which has any apparent authorial sanction. In the introduction to her Oxford edition of the *Old Arcadia*, Robertson summarizes the relationships of Sidney's texts as follows:

Sidney had a copy of his *Old Arcadia* foul papers made for his sister (P), and another for himself (T); he made alterations, especially in the poems, in the latter fairly continuously. These are found in surviving *Old Arcadia* manuscripts, which all derive directly, or through lost intermediaries, from T. When Sidney started to turn Books I and II of the *Old Arcadia* into the *New Arcadia*, the work was done by retranscribing; but not all the poems were copied out in full from T, either in the *New Arcadia* foul papers, or in the scribal copy (G). And so 90 [the text published in 1590] was printed from G (prose and some poems) and from T⁵ (poems).⁵⁸

Robertson outlines a process of transcription and retranscription that produces distinct scribal texts, one of which, G, in the hands of Greville, was used for the preparation of the *New Arcadia*. Robertson's theory follows that of Ringler, who, in the commentary for the Oxford edition of Sidney's poems, says that

today I believe we should read the *New Arcadia* in a text based only upon the narrative part of 90 corrected by Cm [the Cambridge University manuscript of the *New Arcadia*], the *Old Arcadia* in a text based upon St [the St. John's College, Cambridge manuscript of the *Old Arcadia*] and corrected by other manuscripts, with the changes introduced in the last three books of 93 indicated in appended notes, and the Eclogues only in the order in which they appear in the *Old Arcadia*, for their arrangement in 90 and 93 destroys their artistic unity.⁵⁹

A second theory, espoused by Skretkowicz, but ironically contrary to his own practice in the Oxford *New Arcadia*, sees the 'new' *Arcadia* emerging from the revision of the 'old' text, and the text published in 1590 as representing 'the body', but not the whole, of that part of the original text which had been 'heavily revised'; the 'substantial unpublished remnant of the manuscript which had undergone only a minimum of revision' being added to provide the ending of the version published in 1593, supervised by Sidney's sister, the Countess of Pembroke.⁶⁰ As such, the 1590 text, with its chapter

⁵⁸ Jean Robertson, 'Textual Introduction' in Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The Old Arcadia)*, ed. Jean Robertson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. lxiii.

⁵⁹ William A. Ringler, Jr., 'Commentary' in *The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. William A. Ringler, Jr. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 379.

⁶⁰ Victor Skretkowicz, 'Building Sidney's Reputation: Texts and Editions of the *Arcadia*', in J. A. van Dorsten, Dominic Baker-Smith and Arthur F. Kinney, eds., *Sir Philip Sidney: 1586 and the Creation of a Legend* (Leiden: E. J. Brill / Leiden University Press, 1986), pp. 118-19.

divisions and summaries, may be regarded, in Gavin Alexander's terms, as 'Greville's achievement', and the 1593 text as that of the countess.⁶¹ For his Oxford edition of the *New Arcadia*, following Ringler's advice, Skretkiewicz removes Greville's divisions and summaries to the textual apparatus and the eclogues to an appendix. Similarly, Robertson's edition of the *Old Arcadia* adopts Ringler's recommendation to relegate the editorial revisions made in the last three books of the 1593 text to the notes. Robertson's practice excludes, as Alexander observes, 'highly important Sidneian revisions of *OA* III-V, as well as the careful and necessary editorial revisions of 1593' from the main body of the scholarly edition of the *Old Arcadia*;⁶² and, as a result of all this textual archaeology, the Oxford editions 'represent neither printed text of the revised *Arcadia* [1590 nor 1593] well'.⁶³

In the light of this complexity, any scholarly discussion of Sidney's romance must be prefaced by a careful delineation of the precise textual ground on which the argument will be conducted. My preference is for viewing the *Arcadia* much as Robertson and Ringler view it, but with some minor differences. For my purposes, which are not those of someone producing a scholarly edition, it is of little importance whether the *Old Arcadia* is considered as a completed work or not. It is sufficient to understand that Sidney revised his work and that his revisions culminated in the 'new' *Arcadia*, to which there are several witnesses, including Greville's scribal copy. Of greater significance is the make-up of the *New Arcadia*, which is affected by the editorial approach to the revision of the *Arcadia* one accepts. I concur with Ringler's prescription for reading the *New Arcadia* as an incomplete text, on the basis of there being no authorial sanction for adding further books to those already thoroughly revised. Moreover, whether one were to add the remaining books including those revisions made

⁶¹ Alexander, *Writing After Sidney*, p. xxv.

⁶² Alexander, *Writing After Sidney*, p. xxvii, n. 23.

⁶³ Alexander, *Writing After Sidney*, p. xxvii.

by the author or those made by the first editors, they would not represent a satisfactory conclusion to the narrative already established by the extensively revised section. Nevertheless, Ringler's suggestion that the eclogues should be included, and arranged 'in the order in which they appear in the *Old Arcadia*' on the basis of better 'artistic unity', need not be heeded. There is no definitive authorial guidance on this matter, and, without any editorial imperative to decide on their arrangement, I prefer Skretkowicz's solution in his Oxford edition, which removes the eclogues from the body of the text, to be considered only as necessary: either when discussing the *Old Arcadia* (where the arrangement of the eclogues reflects the author's intention at some point in the text's history at least) or in considering their relevance to the contrasting editorial preferences of Fulke Greville and the Countess of Pembroke. The texts that were printed under the auspices of both Greville and the countess do provide the critic with useful material for discovering the competing philosophies that these two contemporaries of Sidney wished to promote. Such evidence may impinge considerably on critical readings of the available texts however they are reconstructed for modern editorial purposes. For convenience, I shall use the Oxford editions, Skretkowicz's edition of the *New Arcadia* when referring to Sidney's revised text, and Robertson's edition of the *Old Arcadia*, paying attention to substantive variants where appropriate.

The *New Arcadia* is a complex work of fiction that testifies to the difference between the development of an idealizing poetics and the implementation of such literary values in an expansive literary genre. Under such distorting pressures, values rarely remain unchanged. This does not suggest a lessening of Sidney's 'commitment to his vocation as a poet', as Gavin Alexander implies. Rather, Sidney's Philippism, given a broad canvas, is realized to a fuller extent: his heroic, flawed characters, prone to error and failure, represent more wholly 'the image of human condition'. Moreover, the *New Arcadia* invites the reader to accept its author's ethos, in which a character as

apparently irredeemable as Amphialus may be saved and thus become an image of Philippist piety.

Chapter One: ‘She made her courtiers learned’: Sir Philip Sidney, the *Arcadia* and His Step-dame, Elizabeth

This first chapter introduces Sir Philip Sidney’s contribution to the Elizabethan political imaginary, paying particular attention to his relationship, as a would-be court counsellor, with Queen Elizabeth. I begin to elucidate the particular contribution made by Sidney’s *Arcadia* to the beliefs and practices of Tudor political culture. The *Old Arcadia*, Sidney’s first attempt to negotiate his relationship with Elizabeth in the form of an extended prose work, his ‘Letter to Queen Elizabeth, Touching her Marriage with Monsieur’ and *Astrophil and Stella* form the background to the discussion in this chapter. The characters of Amphialus and Helen of Corinth from the *New Arcadia*, the influence of Sidney’s Philippist education on his behaviour in his consiliary role, as well as the literary-political legacy he leaves to his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, and his friend, Fulke Greville, are all important to the thesis as a whole, and are introduced here.

Sidney famously employs the metaphor of childbirth when talking about the creation of his own work, the *Arcadia*, in the prefatory letter, trusting the care of his ‘child’ to his sister, Mary Sidney Herbert, the Countess of Pembroke. In her role as surrogate parent, Sidney Herbert is figured as a male patron/father. Elsewhere, in Sidney’s *Astrophil and Stella*, a female surrogate parent is seen as a violent enemy of artistic creation: ‘Invention, nature’s child, fled step-dame study’s blows’.⁶⁴ If one considers Sidney’s *Arcadia* as reflecting his relationship to his monarch, Elizabeth (herself often figured as stepmother to her subjects), these various images of benign and malign surrogate parenthood might be instructive. As Sidney observes in his *Defence of Poesy*, the offspring of an author’s pen is not always received/read by the right

⁶⁴ Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella*, 1. 10, in *Sir Philip Sidney, The Major Works, Including Astrophil and Stella*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989; revised, Oxford World’s Classics, 2002), p. 169. Further references (sonnet and line numbers) to *Astrophil and Stella* are to this edition and are contained within the text.

parent/reader: his 'arguments will by few be understood, and by fewer granted'.⁶⁵

Sidney appears to trust his sister as a surrogate parent for his work, but only when she is figured as male. Nevertheless, by substituting (*mutatis mutandis*) the queen for the countess in the role of right reader, it is possible to see the emergence, from beneath the layers of confused parental identity, of the author of the *Arcadia* who creatively retains a degree of gender ambiguity in the roles of author and right reader, of natural and surrogate parent, of subject and monarch, in order to counsel Elizabeth effectively.

The relationship between a courtier-poet and the monarch, in particular, has often been characterized as mutually generative: each 'makes' the other.⁶⁶ Indeed, Sidney famously theorized the power of poets to make monarchs in the *Defence*.⁶⁷ Moreover, given the prevalence of portrayals of Elizabeth as a stepmother in the second half of her reign, the relationship between Sidney and the queen can be seen as analogous to that of stepson and stepmother, especially when one acknowledges Sidney's own participation in this rhetorical practice. However, it is Sidney's particular use of the trope of surrogacy, allying the stepmother with his learning, so central to his status at court, that has the potential to rehabilitate the figure of the cruel step-dame and confirm Sidney's position as a sophisticated, if not official, counsellor to the monarch. Building on the work of, among others, Margaret P. Hannay, Katharine Eisaman Maus, Jacqueline Vanhoutte, Elizabeth A. Spiller, and Linda Shenk, I will offer a vision of Sidney the courtier, (pro)creatively fashioning and being fashioned by his monarch even in the most obscure recesses of his voluminous prose romance, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*.

While Sir Philip Sidney was writing the first version of his prose romance, the *Arcadia*, at Wilton, the home of his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, it is likely that she

⁶⁵ Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, p. 101.

⁶⁶ For a discussion of this mutuality, see Louis Adrian Montrose, 'The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text', in Patricia Parker and David Quint, eds., *Literary Theory / Renaissance Texts* (Baltimore, MD; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp. 303-40.

⁶⁷ Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, p. 101.

was pregnant with her first child, William Herbert, later third earl of Pembroke.⁶⁸ His sister's pregnancy might have informed his composition of the prefatory letter dedicating the romance to her, dwelling as it does on the subject of parenthood:

Here now have you (most dear, and most worthy to be most dear, lady) this idle work of mine, which I fear (like the spider's web) will be thought fitter to be swept away than worn to any other purpose. For my part, in very truth (as the cruel fathers among the Greeks were wont to do to the babes they would not foster) I could well find in my heart to cast out in some desert of forgetfulness this child which I am loath to father. But you desired me to do it, and your desire to my heart is an absolute commandment. Now it is done only for you, only to you; if you keep it to yourself, or to such friends who will weigh errors in the balance of goodwill, I hope, for the father's sake, it will be pardoned, perchance made much of, though in itself it have deformities. ... In sum, a young head not so well stayed as I would it were (and shall be when God will) having many many fancies begotten in it, if it had not been in some way delivered, would have grown a monster, and more sorry might I be that they came in than that they gat out. But his chief safety shall be the not walking abroad; and his chief protection the bearing the livery of your name which (if much much goodwill do not deceive me) is worthy to be a sanctuary for a greater offender.⁶⁹

This dedication is evidence of the close personal relationship between Sidney and his sister, and emphasizes their joint roles in the creation and future care of his literary issue. He alludes to the countess having 'desired' him to write the romance, and he envisages her keeping it to herself 'or to such friends who will weigh errors in the balance of goodwill'. Elsewhere in the same passage, Sidney attests to his sister's close supervision of the text's composition: 'being done in loose sheets of paper, most of it in your presence, the rest by sheets sent unto you as fast as they were done' (3). After Sidney's death, in 1586, from the wounds he received in battle at Zutphen in the Low Countries, Sidney Herbert became her brother's primary literary executor, supervising the publication of his works and completing the translation of the Psalms that he had begun. The Sidney Psalms also betray signs of close collaboration between brother and

⁶⁸ Osborn, *Young Philip Sidney: 1572-1577*, p. 504.

⁶⁹ Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The Old Arcadia)*, ed. Jean Robertson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 3. Further page references to the *Old Arcadia* are to this edition and are contained within the text. The prefatory letter was published in the first edition of the *Arcadia* (1590) and retained for subsequent editions.

sister, and though, as Margaret Hannay observes, Sidney Herbert ‘completed the *Psalmes* as a memorial to her brother’, ‘through him she found her voice’.⁷⁰

As well as in the Psalms themselves, Sidney Herbert showed her own poetic ability in the two poems added to one of the manuscripts (the Tixall manuscript) of the Psalms.⁷¹ In the poem addressed to Sidney, ‘To the Angel Spirit of the Most Excellent Sir Philip Sidney’, she echoes the dedication of the *Arcadia* (‘only for you, only to you’) in a reciprocal dedication of the Psalms to her brother: ‘To thee, pure sprite, to thee alone’s addressed / This coupled work, by double interest thine’.⁷² She, like Sidney, uses the language of child-rearing—‘raised by thy blest hand’—and imagines the coupling of their (hers and Sidney’s) Muses in language which is, as Gavin Alexander says, ‘hard not to read...as sexual’.⁷³ However, despite the exclusivity of this relationship, the other poem in the Tixall manuscript is addressed to someone other than the countess’s brother. The poem ‘Even Now That Care’ dedicates the Psalms to Elizabeth, and was probably appended to the copy intended for presentation to Elizabeth on the occasion of the queen’s planned visit to Wilton in 1599. It is a poem of both praise and admonition. Sidney Herbert compliments the queen on her learning, both implicitly, through the breadth of the poem’s scholarly allusions, and explicitly: ‘But knowing more thy grace, abler thy mind’.⁷⁴ There are also lines praising the flourishing of the arts in England during Elizabeth’s reign which make the queen’s co-creative role, with the artists themselves, explicit: ‘For in our work what bring we but thine own? /

⁷⁰ Margaret P. Hannay, *Philip’s Phoenix: Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 89. Also see, Alexander, *Writing After Sidney*, pp. 85-86, 92-94 and Richard James Wood, ‘Mary Sidney’, in *The Literary Encyclopedia*.

⁷¹ For the details of this manuscript, its circulation and reception, see the introduction to the *Selected Works of Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke*, eds. Margaret P. Hannay, Noel J. Kinnamon, and Michael G. Brennan (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), pp. 35-36. For the Sidney Psalms themselves, see *The Sidney Psalter: The Psalms of Sir Philip and Mary Sidney* (Oxford World’s Classics), eds. Hannibal Hamlin, Michael G. Brennan, Margaret P. Hannay, and Noel J. Kinnamon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁷² Sidney Herbert, ‘To the Angel Spirit of the Most Excellent Sir Philip Sidney’, ll. 1-2, in *Selected Works*, p. 167.

⁷³ Sidney Herbert, ‘To the Angel Spirit of the Most Excellent Sir Philip Sidney’, l. 3, p. 167; Alexander, *Writing After Sidney*, p. 123.

⁷⁴ Sidney Herbert, ‘Even Now That Care’, l. 12, in *Selected Works*, p. 159.

What English is, by many names is thine'.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, the countess does not forget her brother, even here. The admonitory aspects of this poem dwell on Elizabeth's failure, in Sidney Herbert's eyes, to heed the advice of Sidney and his political allies (chiefly the Earl of Leicester, the countess's and Sidney's uncle), who had, in earlier decades, wished the queen were more active in defence of the Protestant cause, in England and on the Continent.⁷⁶ By alluding to her brother's incomplete work, both literary and political, Sidney Herbert reminds Elizabeth of her past (and present) responsibilities: the queen is the one 'On whom in chief dependeth to dispose / What Europe acts in these most active times'.⁷⁷ Ironically, Sidney's death, fighting for the Protestant cause in Europe, came as a result of the queen's conceding the need for a more active policy in defence of their religion.

In their reciprocal dedications to their shared, co-created literary works, both Sidney and his sister employ appropriately procreative metaphors. There are, however, other significant aspects of their literary practices which they have in common. The Countess of Pembroke addresses Elizabeth directly as a reader of the Sidney Psalms, and, in doing so, seeks to counsel the queen on her political duties. Sir Philip Sidney also seeks to counsel Elizabeth, both in direct correspondence and in his literary works. As such, Sidney posits the queen as an alternative surrogate parent or right reader of his works. Moreover, Sidney can be seen, especially in the *Arcadia* and his famous 'Letter to Queen Elizabeth, Touching her Marriage with Monsieur', praising the queen's learning and her role in fostering a learned culture in England. Indeed, he acknowledges Elizabeth's part in fashioning (and being fashioned by) her subjects much

⁷⁵ Sidney Herbert, 'Even Now That Care', ll. 41-2, p. 160.

⁷⁶ Margaret P. Hannay sees most of the countess's literary projects, after Sidney's death, as continuations of the forward Protestant cause (*Philip's Phoenix*, p. 16). Gavin Alexander questions the logic of Hannay's religio-political readings, which, he contends, depend 'too much on supposition'. He, nevertheless, concedes that the 'strongest evidence of political intent' can be seen in 'Even Now That Care' (*Writing After Sidney*, pp. 105-07).

⁷⁷ Sidney Herbert, 'Even Now That Care', ll. 7-8, p. 159. Hannay notes the significance of the word 'active' in line 8, which was code (in the countess's circle) for 'busy in the Protestant cause' (*Philip's Phoenix*, p. 90).

as his sister does in her line, ‘What English is, by many names is thine’. Equating the step-dame queen with England and its culture is also pointedly authorized by Sidney’s inquiry, in the *Defence*, ‘why England (the mother of excellent minds) should be grown so hard a stepmother to poets’.⁷⁸ This is, however, not his final word in the *Defence* on the status of the poet in England; his belief, his wish, is to see ‘our poet the monarch’.⁷⁹ Clearly, given the intimacy of the familial bond between Sidney and his sister, and the political differences between their circle and Elizabeth, the countess and the queen would have made markedly different parents for Sidney’s literary offspring.

Nevertheless, through the use of the figurative language of procreation and parenthood, as well as the invocation of the image of the learned queen, all of which he shared with his sister, Sidney does place the queen in this intimate role. Indeed, it is by so doing that he is able to advise his monarch in (relative) safety. It is interesting to note in this context that H. R. Woudhuysen, in *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558-1640*, observes that the scribe of the Cambridge University manuscript of the *New Arcadia* (‘the unique copy’) ‘employed a fair amount of quite attractive gold decoration’ in its preparation. Indeed, Woudhuysen wonders, on the basis of its unusual ‘decoration and ornamentation’, whether ‘Sidney was planning to present this copy of the *New Arcadia* in its unfinished form to someone’. For Woudhuysen, ‘the Queen would be an obvious candidate for such a gift, but it may have been intended for his wife, his brother, or his sister’.⁸⁰

The surrogate parent in the prefatory letter to the *Arcadia* is, as I noted above, male. This is clearly just as problematic if Elizabeth were to fill that role as it is for Sidney’s sister. The use of such procreative metaphors in Renaissance literature appears to be indebted to, though usually an adaptation of, the Socratic analogy in

⁷⁸ Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, p. 131.

⁷⁹ Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, p. 113.

⁸⁰ Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558-1640*, pp. 349, 355. For details of the manuscript in question—Cambridge University Library: MS Kk. 1 5 (2)—see Skretkiewicz, ‘Textual Introduction’, in *The New Arcadia*, p. lv.

which the product of the mind is likened to the product of the womb. Importantly, Socrates was at pains not to blur the boundaries between the genders. Sidney's version of the analogy, in the prefatory letter to the *Arcadia*, does just that.⁸¹ Elsewhere, in the first sonnet of *Astrophil and Stella*, Sidney has Astrophil declare himself 'great with child' (l. 12), only for the analogy to dissolve with the muse's command to 'look in thy heart, and write' (l. 14). Here, Sidney would seem to be more conscious, as was Socrates, of the necessity to maintain the distinction between the genders. His conjuring of the birthgiving man is reincorporated within the normal discourse of the male author anxious to prescribe the limits of his rhetorical figures.⁸² Nevertheless, Sidney does allow himself an unusual degree of freedom with regard to his own authorial masculinity, and, more significantly, the gender of his figural parents, natural or surrogate. In particular, his willingness, temporarily at least, to suspend his own masculinity when addressing the queen may be seen in the context, described separately by Katherine Eggert and Jacqueline Vanhoutte, in which male courtiers assumed powers beyond their status. In her article, 'Elizabeth I as Stepmother', Vanhoutte demonstrates the significance of 'tropes of surrogacy', found in literary and non-literary texts produced under Elizabeth's reign, for advancing 'this process of political enfranchisement'.⁸³ In Eggert's analysis, in *Showing Like a Queen: Female Authority and Literary Experiment in Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton*, the occasion of queenship, 'the conjunction of femininity and authority', is 'a site for reconfiguring the

⁸¹ Katharine Eisaman Maus, 'A Womb of His Own: Male Renaissance Poets in the Female Body', in James Grantham Turner, ed., *Sexuality and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 186-88.

⁸² Maus places Sidney's jumbling of gender identities in a broader context of other Renaissance authors, for whom it is possible 'simultaneously to employ and disavow the childbirth metaphor', 'imagining themselves in terms of the female body but at the same time making clear—as Socrates had—that the figure was an analogy, that the processes of the mind and body could not be confused or conflated' (pp. 194-95). Maus cites Plato's *Theaetetus*, in which Socrates casts himself as a midwife aiding the birth of ideas from others ('A Womb of His Own', pp. 186-7).

⁸³ Jacqueline Vanhoutte, 'Elizabeth I as Stepmother', *English Literary Renaissance* 39.2 (Spring 2009), p. 315.

hierarchical monarch-subject relation itself'.⁸⁴ According to Vanhoutte, '[b]y playing gender against class hierarchies, Tudor male subjects were able to arrogate to themselves unprecedented powers'. In this milieu, a self-appointed male counsellor of the monarch, such as Sidney, would often attempt, through acts of counsel, 'to compensate for his monarch's feminine weakness'.⁸⁵ Sidney's own writings, both literary and non-literary (including his fateful 'Letter to Queen Elizabeth, Touching her Marriage with Monsieur'), were often written with his monarch as a directly or indirectly implied audience, and, as such, his uses of the trope of surrogacy may be seen in a similar light. However, in Sidney's case, if one posits Elizabeth as an audience and putative patron of his literary works, in effect occupying a similar fatherly role to that occupied by the Countess of Pembroke in relation to the *Arcadia*, Sidney would seem to be converting Elizabeth's 'feminine weakness', which initially enables him to arrogate to himself the power to counsel her, into the virtues necessary for male parenthood.

As has often been noted, Elizabeth portrayed herself as mother to her nation.⁸⁶ In 1559, responding to Sir Thomas Gargrave, the Speaker of the House of Commons, who articulated the nation's wish that she marry and 'bring forth Children', Elizabeth allowed for such possibilities, but, vowed, for the time being, to remain 'a virgin' and 'a good mother of my country'.⁸⁷ This expedient portrayal of herself as a good mother

⁸⁴ Katherine Eggert, *Showing Like a Queen: Female Authority and Literary Experiment in Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p. 13.

⁸⁵ Vanhoutte, 'Elizabeth I as Stepmother', p. 315. Vanhoutte draws on the influential work of A. N. McLaren; see McLaren's *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I: Queen and Commonwealth 1558-1585* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁸⁶ See Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 54-55 and Christine Coch, "'Mother of My Country": Elizabeth I and Tudor Constructions of Motherhood', in Kirby Farrell and Kathleen Swaim, eds., *The Mysteries of Elizabeth I: Selections from English Literary Renaissance* (Amherst, MA; Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), pp. 134-61.

⁸⁷ William Camden's précis of Gargrave's request (William Camden, *The History of the Most Renowned and Victorious Princess Elizabeth Late Queen of England*, ed. Wallace T. MacCaffrey [Chicago, London, 1970], p. 28, cited in Christine Coch, "'Mother of My Country": Elizabeth I and Tudor Constructions of Motherhood', p. 134); 'Queen Elizabeth's First Speech Before Parliament, February 10, 1559', in *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, eds. Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago, IL; London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 58. The editors draw on two of the several contemporary MSS: BL, MS Lansdowne 94, art. 14, fol. 29; copy; and Cambridge University Library, MS Gg.III.34, fols. 199-201.

was challenged, by those of Elizabeth's counsellors who wished to challenge her, through, among other means, allusions to the almost universally negative figure of the stepmother. With reference to William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and John Lyly's *Endymion*, Vanhoutte notes the existence of 'a common frame of reference in which the term "stepdame" bears agreed-upon negative connotations' in late Elizabethan literature.⁸⁸ Theseus in Shakespeare's play bemoans 'how slow / This old moon wanes! She lingers my desires / Like to a step-dame or a dowager / Long withering out a young man's revenue'.⁸⁹ In *Endymion*, the moon goddess, Cynthia, apparently sensitive to the same accusation, declares herself to be 'no stepmother'.⁹⁰ Both of these literary references allude to the real queen. As Louis Montrose observes, in *The Subject of Elizabeth*, the 'makers of later Elizabethan pageantry and poetry kept busy turning out panegyric identifications of Elizabeth with Diana, the virgin goddess of the hunt, or with Cynthia, the Artemisian moon goddess', and the plays' audiences would have made an immediate connection between such an allusion and their monarch.⁹¹ In Shakespeare's play, the waning moon suggests an aging Elizabeth, resembling a too-long-lived surrogate mother who frustrates her stepson's ambitions. This is an instance of the 'theme of *mundus senescit*', which Montrose associates with 'the disenchantment of the old Queen's subjects', who were wishing for a new moon to rise, for a royal successor.⁹² Lyly's Cynthia is understandably keen to reject any such suggestion.

Famously, as a courtier to Elizabeth, Philip Sidney had his own reasons to challenge the queen's policies, and was not averse to the use of cosmological metaphors

⁸⁸ Vanhoutte, 'Elizabeth I as Stepmother', p. 317.

⁸⁹ William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in *The Complete Works*, eds. Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986; Second Edition, 2005), I.i.3-6.

⁹⁰ John Lyly, *Endymion*, ed. David Bevington (The Revels Plays, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), V.iv.303.

⁹¹ Louis Adrian Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth: Authority, Gender, and Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 92-93.

⁹² Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth*, p. 241.

himself. In his 'Letter to Queen Elizabeth, Touching her Marriage with Monsieur', circulated in manuscript in 1579, or 1580 at the latest, Sidney saw the queen's proposed marriage to the Catholic Francis, Duke of Anjou, as a means for settling the succession that would, on the contrary, put England's continuing Protestant settlement in danger. For Sidney, the queen's attempt to divert her subjects' eyes from 'the rising sun' raised 'the dreadful expectation of a divided company of stars'.⁹³ This moment in the reign of Elizabeth was of great importance to Sidney and his circle, as suggested by the potentially seditious intervention that is his letter. Significantly, however, Sidney addressed Elizabeth in terms that emphasized her learning and wisdom, so escaping the worst punishment meted out to others who presumed to counsel the monarch on this subject. Indeed, Sidney's acknowledgment of Elizabeth's learning has even greater significance when coupled with his evocation, elsewhere, of the image of the 'wicked stepmother', so clearly associated with the perceived descent of the queen's star at this time. The queen's use of domestic imagery to define her political role, and the subsequent employment of similar figures by her subjects to interrogate her rule, provide a particularly poignant context for the various uses to which Sidney puts the image of surrogate parenthood himself. He is able, at least partially, to rehabilitate the figure of the step-dame in a more sophisticated consiliary rhetoric than that employed by some of his contemporaries.

When, in *Astrophil and Stella*, Sidney has his poet-speaker say, 'Invention, nature's child, fled step-dame study's blows' (1. 10), he is participating in the perpetuation of a stereotype familiar from contemporary domestic manuals. William Gouge, in his *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622), and Robert Cleaver, in *A Godlie Forme of Householde Governement* (1600), regard most stepmothers as exhibiting unkindness

⁹³ Sidney, 'A Letter Written by Sir Philip Sidney to Queen Elizabeth, Touching her Marriage with Monsieur', in *Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*, eds. Katherine Duncan-Jones and Jan Van Dorsten (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pp. 53-4.

towards their charges, the former going as far as to justify any disobedience this may provoke in the children.⁹⁴ As Vanhoutte recognizes, ‘transferred analogically to the political realm’, such attitudes would amount to the justification of rebellion. At the very least, the ‘possibility of contingency and transformation’ in the governance of the state was put in play.⁹⁵ Indeed, Elizabeth highlighted the political application of such domestic conflict herself when, in 1569, she advised the French ambassador that ‘she had taken great pains to be more than a good mother to the Queen of Scots’, but warned that ‘she who uses and plots against her mother, deserves nothing other than a wicked stepmother’.⁹⁶ In the case of Sidney’s sonnet, it is the ‘study’ of other poets’ work, other poems in the poetic tradition, that is personified as a ‘step-dame’ attempting to administer corporal punishment to the child (poetic ‘invention’), who is the natural offspring of ‘nature’. Although there is no direct political inference to be drawn from this analogy to compare with the waning moon alluded to by Shakespeare and Lyly, Sidney’s introduction of the image of the wicked stepmother into his sonnet sequence, the writing of which contributed to the cultural aspect of his bid for higher status in the world of Elizabeth’s court, deserves closer examination.⁹⁷ If one considers Sidney’s other uses of the image of parental surrogacy, often in more obviously politically-interested works like the *Arcadia*, as a context for his characterization of learning in *Astrophil and Stella*, the potential significance of the relationship between such cultural and political images becomes even more evident. Also, given the contemporary

⁹⁴ Robert Cleaver, *A Godlie Forme of Householde Governement: for the Ordering of Private Families, according to the direction of God’s Word* (London, 1600), p. 242; William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties* (London, 1622), p. 409.

⁹⁵ Vanhoutte, ‘Elizabeth I as Stepmother’, pp. 323, 325.

⁹⁶ *Correspondance diplomatique de Bertrand de Salignac de la Mothe- Fénelon*, vol. 2 in *Récueil des Dépeches, rapports, Instructions et Mémoires des Ambassadeurs de France* (Paris and London, 1840), p. 69, cited in Elaine Kruse, ‘The Virgin and the Widow: The Political Finesse of Elizabeth I and Catherine de’ Medici’, in Carole Levin and Robert Bucholz, eds., *Queens and Power in Medieval and Early Modern England* (Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), p. 129.

⁹⁷ Vanhoutte notes that, ‘[g]iven the associations of mothers with nature and stepmothers with culture, to frame the relationship between monarch and subject in terms of the relationship between stepmother and her surrogate child is also to intimate that this relationship is a social contract, not a natural given’ (‘Elizabeth I as Stepmother’, p. 325).

importance attached to the queen's image as a learned prince, which was employed to overcome familiar misogynist charges against female rulers and bolster the queen's authority, this notable overlap between images of surrogacy and learning has the potential to challenge the negative connotations of surrogacy and so validate Elizabeth's rule.

The most explicit example of parental surrogacy in Sidney's *Arcadia* occurs in the Second Eclogues of the *Old Arcadia*, the first version of the romance that Sidney began after returning from Germany in 1577, and which was completed by 1581.⁹⁸ In the relevant passage, an Arcadian named Histor relates one of four stories about the heroic adventures of the princes, Pyrocles and Musidorus, in Asia and Africa, which took place prior to their arrival in Arcadia, where they are now in the process of wooing the Arcadian princesses, Philoclea and Pamela, respectively. Ostensibly told to gain the esteem of the princesses for 'the worthy acts of those two worthies' (158), the tale in question raises several questions about 'queenship, surrogate motherhood, political tyranny, and dynastic disruption'.⁹⁹ In what appears to be a reworking of the classical story of Phaedra's seduction of her stepson, Hippolytus, Histor tells 'of a strange chance fell to [Pyrocles and Musidorus] in Egypt', where they rescued 'a young man, well apparelled and handsomely proportioned' from death at 'the hands of four murdering villains' (156). Phaedra is the wife of the king of Athens, Theseus, who is, in the usual telling of the story, accused of trying to seduce her stepson, Hippolytus, and once rejected turns Theseus against his son. Versions of the story occur in classical texts often translated in early modern England, including Arthur Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where Phaedra is maligned for the 'stepdames craft' that leads

⁹⁸ Robertson, 'General Introduction', in *The Old Arcadia*, p. xv.

⁹⁹ Vanhoutte, 'Elizabeth I as Stepmother', p. 327.

to Hippolytus's death.¹⁰⁰ In Histor's tale, the young man, Thermuthis, relates his own story to the princes, that 'he was a servant and of nearest credit to Amasis, son and heir to Sesostris, king of Egypt', and that Amasis and he were very alike in appearance.

Moreover, Amasis's young stepmother (the king's new wife),

had turned the ordinary course of stepmother's hate to so unbridled a love towards her husband's son Amasis that neither the name of a father in him, of a husband in her, nor of a mother and son between themselves, could keep her back from disorderly seeking that of Amasis which is a wickedness to accept. (156)

Amasis, 'already pledged to Artaxia, queen of Persia', rejected his stepmother's advances, which had the effect of altering 'all her affection to a most revengeful hatred'.

In this frame of mind, she seduced Thermuthis and persuaded him to attempt to kill the king in the guise of Amasis, such that, once the attempt had been averted, the king ordered the execution of his own son. This decision was coloured by the stepmother having accused 'Amasis to his father as having sought to defile his bed; which opinion being something gotten in, though not fully imprinted in Sesostris's head'. It was the stepmother who had employed the 'four murdering villains' to commit the murder, prevented by the princes, of the fleeing, royally-apparelled Thermuthis (156-57).

Amasis, 'brought by force out of his lodging', and 'newly being come out of his sleep, and with his amazedness rather condemning himself than otherwise', is brought before his father. Sesostris then, 'neither taking pains to examine the matter to the uttermost, nor so much as to hear what Amasis could say in a matter by many circumstances easy enough to have been refelled [disproved]', had his son put in an uncrewed ship on the Red Sea, 'to be left to the wind's discretion'. Predictably, the princes arrive in time to rescue Amasis too, and father and son, as well as lord and servant, are duly reconciled: Thermuthis being pardoned in reflection of 'the fault the king himself had done to run so hastily in the condemning his only son in a cause might both by Thermuthis's

¹⁰⁰ *The. xv. Bookes of P. Ouidius Naso, entytuled Metamorphosis, translated oute of Latin into English meeter, by Arthur Golding Gentleman, A worke very pleasaunt and delectable* (London, 1567), p. 194.

absence and many other ways have been proved contrary'. The stepmother, on learning all this, killed herself (157-58).

It is significant that Sesostrius is portrayed as 'neither taking pains to examine the matter to the uttermost', nor giving his son a fair hearing, and that this leads to 'the fault the king himself had done to run so hastily in the condemning his only son'. Moreover, but for the intervention of Pyrocles and Musidorus, the son would have died through the actions of the wife, who, as Vanhoutte observes, 'replaces the husband as the decision-maker' and substitutes a 'well appalled and handsomely proportioned', though eminently suggestible, look-alike for the true heir to the throne.¹⁰¹ Importantly for this discussion, which centres on the counselling of Elizabeth about her proposed marriage to Anjou, this episode has at its heart the issue of princely policy, pointedly related to a royal marriage. What is more, the overturning of the natural order here has a parallel in the main plot of Sidney's romance: Basilius, the ruler of Arcadia, relinquishes the governance of his kingdom and removes his family (including his daughters, Philoclea and Pamela) and inner court to a secret pastoral location to avoid the dire consequences of a prophecy from the oracle at Delphi. Inevitably, his ill-advised actions backfire, and both he and his wife become disastrously romantically involved with Pyrocles, who is disguised as an Amazon warrior, and threaten to topple the state. As Robert E. Stillman notes, '[t]he warning contained in these events for Basilius and his family is obvious'.¹⁰² Basilius's fault, as with that of Sesostrius, is one of substitution, of surrogacy. Basilius hands the reins of his government over to his friend, Philanax, whereas Sesostrius defers to the malign judgements of his wife; Basilius mistakes his daughter's suitor, Pyrocles,

¹⁰¹ Vanhoutte, 'Elizabeth I as Stepmother', p. 327. Vanhoutte notes that *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—'through Titania's inordinate attachment to her foster son', 'the intimations of Hippolytus' birth at the end of the play', or the words spoken by Theseus (a future husband to Phaedra) at the beginning—'evokes Phaedra repeatedly'. She suggests that Sidney and Shakespeare seem to have been 'struck' by 'the disastrous effect of the stepmother's "insatiable" passion on normal patterns of patriarchal inheritance and dynastic succession' in the Phaedra story (pp. 326-28).

¹⁰² Robert E. Stillman, *Sidney's Poetic Justice: The Old Arcadia, Its Eclogues, and Renaissance Pastoral Traditions* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1986), p. 128.

for a woman with whom he might replace his wife, while the Egyptian king confuses a superficially legitimate impostor for his real son, endangering the life of his heir and the welfare of his nation. Sesostris may also be said to mistake an unfaithful wife for a true one, subjecting his son to the blows of a cruel step-dame.

If one examines the elements in the chain of relationships in the Egyptian episode, the figure of the son stands out as having at least as much significance as the stepmother. Indeed, it is their relationship, that between queen and stepson, that is the basis of the story's narrative.¹⁰³ This relationship is also reminiscent of that suggested by Sidney's role in the entertainment (possibly also written by him), performed for Elizabeth in Whitsun week, 1581. Here, Sidney was one of 'four foster children of Desire', where, as Katherine Duncan-Jones notes, "'Desire" was as much political as amorous, figuring the eager dependency of courtiers on the Queen's favour'.¹⁰⁴ Elizabeth Mazzola takes this association, as well as Sidney's 'quasi-familial, quasi-legal connection to Elizabeth' through his father's position as Lord Deputy Governor of Ireland and his uncle, the Earl of Leicester's position as Elizabeth's favourite, to dub him Elizabeth's 'stepson'.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, given the typical Sidneian interlacing of the images from one episode with those from another, exemplified by the parallels between Basilius (significantly, the central figure of authority in the whole romance) and Sesostris, it would be instructive to examine the romance for other images of Elizabeth that may have a bearing on the association between author and monarch.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ The chain of substitutions in Sidney's adaptation of the Phaedra myth are, for Vanhoutte, a result of the 'initial substitution—of the natural mother by an unnatural stepmother', and, as such, she reads Sidney's text as one of several contemporary uses of the trope of surrogacy to challenge the queen ('Elizabeth I as Stepmother', p. 327).

¹⁰⁴ See Henry Goldwell, 'A brief declaration of the shows performed before the Queen's Majesty and the French Ambassadors' (1581), in *The Major Works*, pp.299-300. Also see Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet*, pp. 8-9.

¹⁰⁵ Elizabeth Mazzola, "'Natural" Boys and "Hard" Stepmothers: Sidney and Elizabeth', in Corinne S. Abate, ed., *Privacy, Domesticity, and Women in Early Modern England* (Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 138, 147.

¹⁰⁶ Robert E. Stillman's book on Sidney's *Old Arcadia* and its eclogues, *Sidney's Poetic Justice*, illustrates the complexity of the author's method of relating one episode to another for poetic and philosophical ends.

Sidney's revisions of his first version of the *Arcadia*, which he possibly began, as Skretkowicz contends, in 1582 and proceeded into 1584, were made in the period following the height of the debate around the queen's proposed marriage to Anjou.¹⁰⁷ For Sidney, the aftermath of this debate involved withdrawal from court and temporary residence with his sister in her home at Wilton. It is unclear whether this was an expedient act on his part or a move dictated by Elizabeth.¹⁰⁸ Whichever was the case, Sidney's revisions, which formed what is now known as the *New Arcadia*, introduced a number of new characters to the story of Basilius's court, one of which is a favourable portrait of Elizabeth. In what has been characterized as a turn towards 'violence and imprisonment rather than delight', reflecting 'Sidney's frustration at enforced inactivity', the revised *Arcadia* contains long episodes of captivity, siege and battle.¹⁰⁹ In the midst of this disorder, another wicked mother, Cecropia, attempts—through rebellion, enforced marriage of her natural son, Amphialus, to one or other of Basilius's daughters, imprisonment and torture—to achieve the throne of Arcadia. Allegorical readings of the figure of Cecropia as Elizabeth do not abound. No doubt because of Cecropia's irredeemable wickedness, even a severely frustrated Sidney would have stopped short of representing his queen in this light. Rather, Cecropia has been likened to Mary, Queen of Scots, a figure of hate in Elizabeth's court until her execution on the queen's orders in 1587.¹¹⁰ Interestingly, Cecropia's son, Amphialus, is described as 'an excellent son of an evil mother' (317). Moreover, his excellence is perceived by only one of Sidney's characters, another addition to the revised romance: Helen, queen of Corinth, of whom Blair Worden says, 'the resemblances of whose person and rule to those of Queen Elizabeth are unmistakable'.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Skretkowicz, 'General Introduction', in *The New Arcadia*, p. xvii.

¹⁰⁸ Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet*, pp. 163-67.

¹⁰⁹ Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, p. 106.

¹¹⁰ Worden, *The Sound of Virtue*, pp. 173-76.

¹¹¹ Worden, *The Sound of Virtue*, p. 16.

Significantly, Helen of Corinth's 'government' is described as 'such as hath been no less beautiful to men's judgements than her beauty to the eyesight'; 'she made her people (by peace) warlike, her courtiers (by sports) learned, her ladies (by love) chaste; for, by continual martial exercises without blood, she made them perfect in that bloody art' (253). This passage concludes with a reference to Helen as Diana that leaves the reader in no doubt as to the intended analogy: 'it seemed that court to have been the marriage place of love and virtue, and that herself was a Diana apparelled in the garments of Venus' (254). Helen bears an unrequited love for Amphialus, and when he is apparently fatally wounded in his mother's rebellion, it seems that Helen, with the help of her 'excellent surgeon', will bring him back, as it were, from the dead (445).¹¹² As the only curator of Amphialus's excellence, Helen would seem to be set to use her capacity for making 'her people' ('her courtiers' and 'her ladies') to fashion him anew. Helen is, in effect, a surrogate mother to Amphialus. This ability for the queen to fashion her people is key to understanding Sidney's analogous relationship with Elizabeth, portrayed here as the queen who makes 'her courtiers learned'. Sidney uses his own education to acknowledge the queen's learning and participates in an exercise of mutual fashioning between courtier-poet and monarch.

As Linda Shenk notes in her book, *Learned Queen: The Image of Elizabeth I in Politics and Poetry*, Elizabeth came to the throne at a time when 'women were considered to be intellectually deficient, morally frail, and tyrannically whimsical'.¹¹³ John Knox's *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* was one of several publications to promulgate the idea that female monarchs were necessarily tyrannous by virtue of their sex alone.¹¹⁴ This view is clearly at play in the

¹¹² Helen's surgeon's extraordinary skill is first demonstrated in his transformation of Parthenia's appearance (*New Arcadia*, p. 45).

¹¹³ Linda Shenk, *Learned Queen: The Image of Elizabeth I in Politics and Poetry* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 5.

¹¹⁴ As well as Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, see Christopher Goodman, *How Superior Powers Ought to Be Obeyed* (Geneva, 1558), pp. 52-3.

equation of unstable monarchy with the disorderly management of domestic affairs by stepmothers. According to Shenk, early in her reign, authors such as Roger Ascham and John Aylmer sought ‘to disassociate [the] queen from these stereotypes’, and defend her sovereignty, in part, ‘by highlighting her learning’.¹¹⁵ Aylmer went as far as to assume the voice of God and ask,

can not I make a woman to be a good ruler ouer you, and a mete minister for me? ...is that rare learning, that singulare modestie, that heauenly clemencie, that christiane constancie, that loue of religion, that excellent wysdom with many more of my graces, nothig in your sight?¹¹⁶

Nevertheless, such ideas persisted, and were again in evidence when some of Elizabeth’s subjects, including Sidney in his ‘Letter to Queen Elizabeth’, sought to dissuade her from marrying Francis, Duke of Anjou. As part of his denigration of female rule in *The First Blast* of 1558, John Knox portrayed women as displaying a ‘couetousnes...like the goulf of hell, that is, insaciabie’.¹¹⁷ The title of John Stubbs’s tirade against the proposed marriage to Anjou, *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf Whereinto England is Like to be Swallowed*, published in 1579, employs the same misogynist rhetoric. Moreover, Stubbs participates in the same discourse of disorderly surrogate parenthood seen in other works seeking to challenge Elizabeth’s rule. Stubbs raises the prospect of England’s queen—‘a naturall mother’ to her nation—being supplanted by ‘some cruel and proud gouernour’.¹¹⁸ Although he does not equate Elizabeth, or her substitute, with a cruel stepmother directly, his characterization of those who support her marriage to Anjou as ‘unkind mothers’ makes the implication plain:

These men haue lyke vnkind mothers, put (as it were) theyr owne child, the church of England to be noursed of a french enemy and friend to Rome, and now very kindly they take in both armes the church of fraunce, and

¹¹⁵ Shenk, *Learned Queen*, p. 5-6.

¹¹⁶ John Aylmer, *An harborowe for faithfull and trewe subiectes agaynst the late blowne blaste, concerninge the gouernment of wemen* (London, 1559), sig. I2^r.

¹¹⁷ Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, p. 25.

¹¹⁸ John Stubbs, *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf Whereinto England is Like to be Swallowed* (London, 1579), sig. C7^v.

giue it a priuy deadly nipp, vnder colour of offering it their teates, wherein
is nought but wind if not poyson.¹¹⁹

This simile of surrogate parenthood, the English child with the French mother and the French child in the arms of the English mother, is explicitly directed at Elizabeth's male counsellors, but Stubbs's implied target, as elsewhere in the piece, is Elizabeth: she must continue to give suck to the child to whom she is the natural mother: England.¹²⁰

Needless to say, Elizabeth showed scant mercy in response. Stubbs's right hand was struck off as punishment, and the royal proclamation denouncing his pamphlet described the queen as having been 'grievously offended' that the author neglected to credit her with the necessary 'motherly or princely care'.¹²¹ This dissension (and his misogyny) notwithstanding, Stubbs also transgressed in another manner that was highlighted in the same proclamation. He misjudged Elizabeth's readiness to be counselled by an ordinary private citizen. In *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf*, Stubbs justifies his intervention by invoking 'necessitie' and his own status as 'a true Englishman' and 'a sworne liegeman to hir Maiestie':

I should haue bene afrayd to haue spoken thus much, had not the streight
of this necessitie driuen me and my words ben the words not of a busie
body, speaking at all aduentures: but of a true Englishman, a sworne
liegeman to hir Maiestie, gathering these necessary consequences by theyr
reasonable causes.¹²²

He appears to have been confident in his receiving a fair hearing, but the proclamation makes it clear why his intervention could not be sanctioned. From the royal perspective, Stubbs's pamphlet was 'offering to every most meanest person of judgment by these kind of popular libels authority to argue and determine in every blind corner at their several wills of the affairs of public estate'.¹²³ As Natalie Mears speculates, 'his

¹¹⁹ Stubbs, *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf*, sig. B2^v.

¹²⁰ Vanhoutte, 'Elizabeth I as Stepmother', pp. 332-34.

¹²¹ Proclamation 642, 'Denouncing Stubbs's Book, *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf*', in *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ed. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), p. 449.

¹²² Stubbs, *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf*, sig. F3^v.

¹²³ Proclamation 642, 'Denouncing Stubbs's Book, *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf*', p. 449.

mistake' might have been 'due to Elizabeth's often, but perhaps rhetorical, courting of "popularity"', but there appears to have been no possibility of Stubbs mitigating the consequences of such an error.¹²⁴ However, one significant aspect of this infamous case is that Philip Sidney escaped the same punishment for what, on the surface, appears to have been a similar offence: counselling the monarch on her proposed marriage from without the usual bounds of court counsel. As Blair Worden notes, 'Sidney was a junior politician in his mid-twenties', for whom the queen 'had a certain fondness', but also a degree of mistrust.¹²⁵ Fulke Greville remarked, in his 'A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney' (completed under the reign of James I), that a 'judicious reader' might 'ask whether it were not an error—and a dangerous one—for Sir Philip, being neither magistrate nor counsellor, to oppose himself against his sovereign's pleasure'.¹²⁶ It is possible that Sidney avoided a worse fate than the exile from court that befell him in part because his intervention, like his other works that (directly or indirectly) addressed Elizabeth, acknowledged what Aylmer termed her 'rare learning' and 'excellent wisdom'. And it is in this context that the ambiguous status of the image of the cruel stepmother in Sidney's writing may be more clearly understood: 'step-dame study's blows' achieved their desired effect.

As was suggested above, it is possible to view Sidney's mode of consiliary address, his reconfiguration of the 'hierarchical monarch-subject relation', as analogous to the poet-patron relationship, between himself and his sister, figured in the prefatory letter to the *Arcadia*. As such, Elizabeth would be a female stepfather to Sidney's literary offspring. Moreover, she would, like his sister, have the necessary virtues to care for his child (or children), including those virtues attributed to Elizabeth by her apologists, such as Ascham and Aylmer, that were generally considered the preserve of

¹²⁴ Natalie Mears, 'Counsel, Public Debate, and Queenship: John Stubbs's *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf*, 1579', *The Historical Journal* 44.3 (September 2001), p. 650.

¹²⁵ Worden, *The Sound of Virtue*, p. 41. For a useful account of 'Sidney's Loyalties' and the background to the ambivalent relationship between him and his queen, see Worden's chapter of that title (pp. 41-57).

¹²⁶ Greville, 'A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney', p. 37.

men: the virtues of humanist learning. Sidney confers the status of (male) patron on his sister, which, contrary to his protestations of triviality in the prefatory letter ('this idle work of mine'), reveals Sidney's true belief in the learned status of the *Arcadia*. It follows, therefore, that his concomitant attribution of learned (male) status to Elizabeth, surrogate parent to his child, displays his assurance of the standing of the *Arcadia* as a consiliary text, and that of himself as a counsellor. This advancement would seem to follow the trajectory marked out for poets and poetry in the *Defence*, where Sidney wonders 'why England (the mother of excellent minds) should be grown so hard a stepmother to poets', but believes that 'of all sciences...is our poet the monarch'.¹²⁷ The indirect method by which such convictions are discerned would seem to reflect the necessary mode of literary practice during Elizabeth's reign. As Maureen Quilligan puts it, with regard to Sidney's attempts to counsel Elizabeth, 'poetry itself—the apologetic, defensive practice of it—may be yet another strategy against the queen, its best protection being its indirection'.¹²⁸

In the case of his 'Letter to Queen Elizabeth', Sidney appears to have again used the fruits of his own education to obviate any danger he might have been exposed to.¹²⁹ Greville, in answering his own question as to whether Sidney's letter was an error, argues

that [Sidney's] worth, truth, favour and sincerity of heart—together with his real manner of proceeding in it—were his privileges, because this gentleman's course in this great business was not by murmur among equals or inferiors to detract from princes, or by mutinous kind of bemoaning error to stir up ill affections in their minds whose best thoughts could do him no good, but by due address of his humble reasons to the Queen herself, to whom the appeal was proper.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, pp. 131, 113.

¹²⁸ Maureen Quilligan, 'Sidney and His Queen', in Heather Dubrow and Richard Strier, eds., *The Historical Renaissance: New Essays on Tudor and Stuart Literature and Culture* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 180.

¹²⁹ Maureen Quilligan asserts that, purely in terms of gender, the queen had 'no traditional rights' to choose whom she should marry, and that Sidney 'had many rights...as a sexual male' ('Sidney and His Queen', p. 179).

¹³⁰ Greville, 'A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney', p. 37.

Greville's justification sets Sidney's 'appeal' above that which might have been made by the 'most meanest person of judgment' (of the royal proclamation against Stubbs), it being from a 'gentleman', and praises it for properly addressing the queen herself, rather than being published 'among equals or inferiors'. Moreover, as Natalie Mears argues, Sidney's letter, unlike Stubbs's pamphlet, was 'rooted in the traditions of noble counsel (both humanist-classical...and feudal-baronial)' and demonstrated an understanding that 'counsel was advisory', not 'a necessary element of queenship' as Stubbs implied in *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf*.¹³¹ In the first words of the letter, Sidney acknowledges Elizabeth's ability to judge 'the nature of the thing done', such that '[i]t were folly to hope with laying on better colours to make it more acceptable'.¹³² Greville's account echoes Sidney's in its admiration for Elizabeth's 'spirit of anointed greatness, as created to reign equally over frail and strong—more desirous to find ways to fashion her people than colours or causes to punish them'.¹³³ Besides Greville's belated contribution to Elizabethan panegyric, of particular interest here is the notion that Elizabeth would wish 'to fashion her people'. As well as acknowledging the queen's learning and judgement in the hope of a fair hearing, Sidney would, no doubt, have wished to be judged as a well-fashioned subject of the queen, displaying, in his letter, the proper courtly virtues himself. One might say he wished to be thought as 'excellent' as Helen thought Amphialus.

In his letter to Elizabeth, Sidney writes that he 'will in simple and direct terms (as hoping they shall only come to your merciful eyes) set down the overflowing of my mind in this most important matter: importing, as I think, the continuance of your safety, and as I know, the joys of my life'.¹³⁴ He is entrusting the product of his studies to Elizabeth much as he delivers the 'many many fancies' of his fiction, which would

¹³¹ Mears, 'Counsel, Public Debate, and Queenship', pp. 646-47. See Stubbs, *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf* (London, 1579), sigs. F4, A5^v-A6, E1^v.

¹³² Sidney, 'Letter to Queen Elizabeth, Touching her Marriage with Monsieur', p. 46.

¹³³ Greville, 'A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney', p. 37.

¹³⁴ Sidney, 'Letter to Queen Elizabeth, Touching her Marriage with Monsieur', p. 46.

otherwise ‘have grown a monster’, to his sister’s care. Implicit in this configuration of the monarch-subject relation, besides their joint ‘safety’, is the mutual fashioning of one by the other in the proper, learned virtues of prince and courtier, respectively. It is in this context that Sidney’s ‘step-dame study’ and ‘invention, nature’s child’, the latter in flight from the former’s blows, realize their political consequence.¹³⁵ In his book, *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism*, Robert E. Stillman notes that Sidney’s letter

retained its popularity among his writings...long after the polemical occasion for which it was designed...in no small part because of the startling contrast between its mode and matter of argumentation and Stubbs’s inept, impractical and out-of-court fulminations.¹³⁶

For Stillman, Sidney ‘provided his English contemporaries...with a means of speaking truth to power’ founded on a ‘newly fashionable’ political language he shared with, and acquired from, an international, learned circle of his co-religionists that included his French mentor, Hubert Languet. It is, in Stillman’s assessment, Sidney’s peculiar education that enabled him to ‘command respect at court’ and that explains why he ‘escaped Stubbs’s fate’.¹³⁷ In addition to employing a new, sophisticated political rhetoric in his letter, Sidney, in *Astrophil and Stella* and the *Arcadia*, claims for himself the right to counsel the monarch by invoking the usually negative figure of the step-dame. By imbuing his surrogate parent with the (conventionally male) virtues he values in himself as a poet/maker, he enters into what he hopes will prove a jointly beneficial bond with the mother of his nation.

Fulke Greville, in his ‘A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney’, interrogates the relationship between authors, particularly courtiers like himself and Sidney, and their monarchs. Greville’s Jacobean text, ostensibly a justification of the life of a prominent

¹³⁵ Elizabeth Mazzola reads *Astrophil and Stella* in the context of Sidney’s relationship with Elizabeth, suggesting ‘that Stella’s mother and Stella herself are two aspects of Sidney’s Queen, one nurturing force who threatens the poet with disfavor, the other a generally unresponsive reader with her own powers to hate, or to write’ (‘“Natural” Boys and “Hard” Stepmothers’, p. 133).

¹³⁶ Stillman, *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism*, p. 25.

¹³⁷ Stillman, *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism*, pp. 25-26.

Elizabethan, has significance for reading relationships from both reigns. Indeed, as Elizabeth A. Spiller argues, Greville challenges King James's conception of himself as a 'monarch-poet', 'maker' and a 'nourish father' to the Church and nation by privileging Sidney's version of the poet-monarch, in the *Defence*, over that presented by the king, primarily in the *Basilikon Doron*.¹³⁸ As such, Greville valorizes the mutually fashioning relationship between Elizabeth and her subjects, especially the poets.¹³⁹ The ways, according to Spiller, in which James becomes a 'maker', in effect, as a sacred king, 'an analogue to the divine Maker',¹⁴⁰ are as follows:

he exercises authority and benevolence over his subjects for the increase of land and its people. As a royal father, he produces offspring who in turn ensure the succession not just of his family and line, but of all England. As a patron, he confers titles and honors creating new gentlemen of his court favorites. Finally, James becomes a "makar" when he authors his son [Henry] by writing the *Basilikon Doron*.¹⁴¹

For Greville, James's conception of the poet-monarch pales beside the 'more natural and productive form of art' embodied by Sidney's life.¹⁴² Greville's emphasis is on the poet, the life of his friend as the ideal template, rather than on the poetry: 'the life itself of true worth did (by way of example) far exceed the picture of it in any moral precepts'.¹⁴³ Greville contrasts Sidney's 'intent [in the *Arcadia*]...to turn the barren philosophy precepts into pregnant images of life' with his (Sidney's) death-bed

¹³⁸ Elizabeth A. Spiller, 'The counsel of Fulke Greville: Transforming the Jacobean "Nourish Father" through Sidney's "Nursing Father"', *Studies in Philology* 97.4 (Autumn 2000), pp. 435-36; King James I, *Basilikon doron. Or His Maiesties instructions to his dearest sonne, Henrie the prince* (Edinburgh, 1599; Second Edition, London, 1603). In the *Basilikon Doron*, James tells his son to be 'a louing nourish-father to the Church' (p. 43) and act as '*communis parens*' to his people (p. 67); this advice follows that given in Isaiah 49.23 (from the 'King James' Bible of 1611): 'And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers' (*The Bible, Authorized King James Version* [Oxford World's Classics], eds. Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997; reprint, 1998], p. 812).

¹³⁹ As Spiller points out, 'Greville's analysis relies upon dominant Elizabethan aesthetic theories of the relationship between poets and the state', in which 'poets...depicted a reciprocal relationship in which Elizabeth [a poet in her own right, often figured as a poet by other poets, and through 'her living example'] "made" their poetry, even as they could help "make" her through the images they created' ('The counsel of Fulke Greville', pp. 436-37). For a helpful overview of Elizabeth as an author within the Elizabethan writing culture, see Ilona Bell, *Elizabeth I: The Voice of a Monarch* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

¹⁴⁰ Stillman, *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism*, p. ix.

¹⁴¹ Spiller, 'The counsel of Fulke Greville', p. 436.

¹⁴² Spiller, 'The counsel of Fulke Greville', p. 437.

¹⁴³ Greville, 'A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney', p. 3.

realization (in Greville's interpretation) that his works were mere imperfect 'shadows' deserving of 'no other legacy but the fire'.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the point still stands: Sidney is a model to his queen, as she is to him. Adapting Sidney's employment, in the *Defence*, of 'procreative language', which defines 'the means by which the poet can create his readers' (including royal ones), Greville portrays his friend as a 'king-maker'.¹⁴⁵ This characterization is authorized by Sidney's famous statement, in the *Defence*, that the poet 'worketh not only to make a Cyrus...but to bestow a Cyrus upon the world to make many Cyruses' (Cyrus being the putative founder of the Persian monarchy and the subject of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, believed to have been written 'to teach a king his duties').¹⁴⁶ Greville makes it clear that Elizabeth (unlike James) recognizes her responsibility for 'fashioning' her subjects: she is 'more desirous to find ways to fashion her people than colours or causes to punish them'.¹⁴⁷ This is, in 'A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney', one of the main lessons that Greville draws from Sidney's attempt to counsel his monarch through the 'Letter'.¹⁴⁸

The Elizabethan Sidney, especially in the theories of *The Defence of Poesy*, but also in his literary practice in *Astrophil and Stella* and the *Arcadia*, conceived of a more ambitious role for his poetry and prose than his friend, Fulke Greville, could envisage under the reign of James I. He believed, by employing the rhetorical and literary devices of his advanced learning, he could speak truth to power, both directly and indirectly. He recognized the danger in presuming to counsel the monarch on sensitive issues such as her proposed marriage, but also understood the reciprocal relationship between poet and monarch, in which each 'makes' the other. This allowed him, through his own peculiar alliance of the figure of the archetypal step-dame with that of the

¹⁴⁴ Greville, 'A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney', pp. 10-11. Sidney's request to destroy his works is a gesture with a classical precedent: Virgil also asked for the *Aeneid* to be destroyed (see John Buxton, *Elizabethan Taste* [London: Macmillan, 1963; reprint, 1966], p. 246).

¹⁴⁵ Spiller, 'The counsel of Fulke Greville', p. 445.

¹⁴⁶ Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, p. 101; Shepherd, 'Notes', in *The Defence of Poesy*, pp. 157-58.

¹⁴⁷ Greville, 'A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney', p. 37.

¹⁴⁸ Spiller, 'The counsel of Fulke Greville', p. 449.

learned prince, to indirectly advise Elizabeth. Elizabeth, as the metaphorical mother to the nation, was often associated, by her critics, with cruel parental surrogacy. However, she was figured by Sidney as a more beneficent stepmother, who, in the guise of Helen of Corinth or step-dame study, made her courtiers learned. This is a sophisticated literary strategy, taking existing discursive practices and adapting them to new textual and political contexts. This is the example that inspired Sidney's sister, the Countess of Pembroke, in her continuing roles as patron and unofficial counsellor to Elizabeth, and helped Fulke Greville formulate his role under a new monarch. Regardless of who was actually on the throne, Sidney would have believed that the poet was the monarch.

The significance of Sidney's legacy, particularly related to the efforts of his sister and friend as his literary executors, and, in return, the importance of their works for reading Sidney's texts, will be discussed below, especially in chapters Six and Seven. In the chapters that immediately follow this one (chapters Two, Three, Four and Five), I shall establish the Philippist context for the *New Arcadia* and discuss the importance of this framework for seeing the author anew in his own text. In this regard, the parallel relationships discussed above, Sidney with Elizabeth, and Amphialus with Helen, are fundamental.

Chapter Two: 'Philip has the word and the substance': a Philippist Reading of Sidney's *New Arcadia*

In this chapter, I introduce the critical paradigm of Sidney's Philippism as a means by which to read Sidney's *New Arcadia*. I examine the alternative modern critical approaches to Sidney's piety and the significance of his religious outlook for reading his literary works. As well as highlighting the status of Melancthon's theology in Sidney's society, I demonstrate the peculiar suitability of the romance form for articulating a Philippist ethos. Moreover, I show how the *Arcadia*, especially its revised version, which has been conventionally seen as a less than serious literary project, centred on the amorous encounters of its characters, can express a profound moral earnestness, indeed, can communicate a sincere and devout Christian message.

Sir Philip Sidney's religious convictions have attracted some scholarly attention, but less than one might expect given his popular status as a distinctly Protestant hero. Robert E. Stillman, in a 2002 article, agreeing with Andrew D. Weiner's assessment made over a decade earlier, declared that 'Sidney's personal piety has seemed to his critics about as attractive as a snake-bite'.¹⁴⁹ Stillman has himself sought to address this scholarly shortcoming and, at the same time, offer a corrective to what he sees as a critically under-examined assumption that Sidney was a Calvinist. Ironically, Stillman identifies Weiner as a chief culprit, along with Alan Sinfield, in the propagation of this assumption. Sinfield's thesis posits a 'disjunction between' what he calls 'humane letters and protestantism', and finds an inherent contradiction between Sidney's supposed Calvinism and his works of literature and literary theory.¹⁵⁰ As Stillman observes, in *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism*, Sidney has

suffered inside a critical context within which Reformed theology has been mistakenly identified as dogma proceeding from the writings of a single

¹⁴⁹ Stillman, 'Deadly Stinging Adders', p. 235.

¹⁵⁰ Alan Sinfield, 'Sidney's *Defence* and the Collective-Farm Chairman' in *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 187.

person, John Calvin. In particular, while the anthropology of Sidney's poetics is arguably specific to Reformed Christianity, the assumption that its pious principles are thereby determined by Calvin's theology fundamentally mistakes the diversity of a Reformed tradition that discovered models for its religious thought among a vast range of sources.¹⁵¹

Andrew D. Weiner is particularly guilty of this misapprehension, as Stillman sees it. In his book, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Protestantism: A Study of Contexts* (the title of which might have inspired the title of Stillman's corrective work), Weiner determines Sidney's piety to be 'Calvinist' in nature, based, in part, on the actions of John Dudley, the Duke of Northumberland (Sidney's maternal grandfather), who 'brought England to its closest point of contact with Geneva' during the reign of Edward VI, which ended in the year (1553) preceding that of Sidney's birth.¹⁵² Such evidence would seem to be at least as admissible as the fact that Sidney was named after his godfather, Philip II of Spain, whose religious observance most certainly did not proceed from the writings of John Calvin. Weiner does acknowledge that terms like 'Calvinist' and 'Puritan' (a term that later indicated doctrinaire reformed Protestantism) are problematic when discussing the piety of individuals living at different times during the sixteenth century, when reformed Protestantism was continually developing. Nevertheless, he settles on the *Second Helvetic Confession* (1566), which was adopted by the Swiss reformed churches, as one of the bases for his 'discussion of the religious ideas that shaped the way Sidney saw his world'.¹⁵³

Alan Sinfield, in *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading*, asserts that Sidney 'belonged to the puritan party'.¹⁵⁴ He uses 'puritan' 'to mean those committed to the zealous maintenance and furtherance of the Elizabethan protestant settlement', which, in Sinfield's view, did not 'involve a distinctive doctrinal

¹⁵¹ Stillman, *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism*, p. xi.

¹⁵² Weiner, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Protestantism*, p. 8.

¹⁵³ Weiner, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Protestantism*, p. 8.

¹⁵⁴ Geoffrey Shepherd characterizes Sidney as 'a first-generation Puritan' ('Introduction', in *The Defence of Poesy*, p. 26).

perspective', as the 'reformed English church, centrally and generally, was [also] Calvinist'.¹⁵⁵ This hegemony, for Sinfield, inculcated Elizabethan congregations in a doctrine that allowed no role for humanity in their own salvation; they 'must trust only in God's mercy'.¹⁵⁶ It was, in Sinfield's account, constructed in fixed opposition to the less pessimistic philosophies of 'neoplatonic humanism and Catholicism', which 'encouraged belief in a *continuity* between human and divine experience'.¹⁵⁷ The lack of doctrinal distinction between the 'puritan party' and the English church did not preclude resistance, however, and Sinfield recognizes that 'Reformation orthodoxy was contested'.¹⁵⁸ Indeed, any such monolithic conception of Elizabethan reformed religion would be contrary to the evidence offered by scholars such as Timothy Rosendale, who highlight the 'radical individualism implicit in Protestantism'.¹⁵⁹ Rosendale observes, of the Tudor state, that

while the Protestant political order may have been highly congenial to the interests of the Crown, it was not a free-standing ideology. The discourses of post-papal sociopolitical order were dependent upon an even larger and more fundamental, and far more unruly, discourse: that of the Protestant individual.¹⁶⁰

Nevertheless, Sinfield maintains that religious orthodoxy 'was an overwhelmingly important part of the [late Elizabethan] ideological field',¹⁶¹ and that Sidney was ultimately unable to reconcile it with his interest in 'humane—pagan—learning'.¹⁶² However, as this chapter will demonstrate, Sidney appears to have had a positive view of the ability of the human will to cooperate with God in the cause of the individual's own salvation, which was eminently compatible with study in humane letters.

¹⁵⁵ Sinfield, 'Protestantism: Questions of Subjectivity and Control', p. 143.

¹⁵⁶ *Certain Sermons or Homilies* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1899), pp. 26-7 cited in Sinfield, 'Protestantism: Questions of Subjectivity and Control', p. 144.

¹⁵⁷ Sinfield, 'Protestantism: Questions of Subjectivity and Control', p. 144 (Sinfield's emphasis).

¹⁵⁸ Sinfield, 'Protestantism: Questions of Subjectivity and Control', p. 144.

¹⁵⁹ Timothy Rosendale, *Liturgy and Literature in the Making of Protestant England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 5.

¹⁶⁰ Rosendale, *Liturgy and Literature in the Making of Protestant England*, p. 70.

¹⁶¹ Sinfield, 'Protestantism: Questions of Subjectivity and Control', p. 144.

¹⁶² Sinfield, 'Sidney's *Defence* and the Collective-Farm Chairman', p. 187.

Influenced by the Melanchthonian piety of his mentor, Hubert Languet, who, along with Philippe Duplessis-Mornay, is curiously described by Weiner as a Calvinist, Sidney was free to write his romance.¹⁶³

This alternative view of Sidney's religion, based on a detailed analysis of Sidney's *Defence of Poesy* by Stillman, is informed by another major strand of Reformation theology: Philippism. As with other Protestant confessions, the name is derived from that of the man who defined its beliefs: Philip Melanchthon. Significantly for Sidney scholarship, the English poet's mentor was a pupil of Melanchthon and he, Languet, retained the influence of his teacher throughout his career as a forward Protestant thinker. A native of the German city of Bretten, born in 1497, Melanchthon studied at Heidelberg and Tübingen before moving to the chair of Greek language in Wittenberg and becoming a close associate of Martin Luther. As the author of such fundamental Reformation texts as the *Loci communes* (1521, revised 1535, 1543 and 1555) and the *Augsburg Confession* (1530), Melanchthon was not simply a follower of Luther, but forged his own path and, as his modern biographer, Robert Stupperich, puts it, 'he took into account the heritage of German humanism and the influences of Erasmus'.¹⁶⁴ As such, Philippism is, as Robert Stillman notes, characterized by 'its distinctive humanist program to ally the secular and the sacred, its conspicuous cultivation of moderation in religious matters, and its...optimistic account of human agency', especially 'its frequent invocation of a human will free to cooperate with divine grace'.¹⁶⁵ Indeed, the last of these characteristic positions seems to have been a point of contention between Melanchthon and Luther, as well as a fundamental controversy in Reformation theology in general. Calvin is synonymous with the idea of predestination and a severe limitation on the action of the individual will in securing

¹⁶³ Weiner, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Protestantism*, p. 8.

¹⁶⁴ Robert Stupperich, *Melanchthon*, trans. Robert H. Fischer (London: Lutterworth Press, 1966), p. 50.

¹⁶⁵ Stillman, 'Deadly Stinging Adders', p. 236.

salvation for the human soul. Luther, according to John Schofield, author of *Philip Melancthon and the English Reformation*, ‘still had a bit of the predestinarian in him’, evidenced by his continued adherence to the *Bondage of the Will* among the variety of his own works.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, Luther was frequently at pains to praise Melancthon’s combination of humanistic skill and sound theology, observing on one notable occasion that ‘Philip has the word and the substance, Erasmus has words but no substance, Luther has substance without words, Karlstadt has neither’.¹⁶⁷

In Reformation theologies, justification—‘the action whereby man is justified, or freed from the penalty of sin, and accounted or made righteous by God’¹⁶⁸—is closely tied to beliefs about the agency of the human will in cooperating with God in the process of salvation (of which justification is a prerequisite). The Lutheran position on justification is classically summarized in the phrase ‘by faith alone’. This would normally preclude any role for the human will, especially as expressed through charity and ‘good works’, in the achievement of righteousness. Melancthon’s peculiar interpretation of this tenet is, nevertheless, in keeping with his optimistic view of the will’s role relative to the grace of God and allows a role for charity in justification. Melancthon does not allow for justification *through* good works, as in the Catholic faith, but sees faith *joined* with charity, the latter being a sincere expression of the former and, in that sense, *necessary* for justification. The sincerity of the faith expressed is crucial to Melancthon’s understanding of the role of the will in justification.¹⁶⁹ The same idea is succinctly conveyed in the words of Saint John

¹⁶⁶ John Schofield, *Philip Melancthon and the English Reformation* (Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), p. 83.

¹⁶⁷ *Dr Martin Luthers Werke: Tischreden* (6 vols), Vol. 3, cited and translated in Schofield, *Philip Melancthon and the English Reformation*, p. 83; the original Latin (dated 1537): *Res et verba Philipppus, verba sine re Erasmus, res sine verbis Lutherus, nec res nec verba Carolostadius*.

¹⁶⁸ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, ‘justification’, 4.

¹⁶⁹ Schofield, *Philip Melancthon and the English Reformation*, pp. 61-3, 74-5.

Chrysostom, ‘God draws men, but he draws only willing men’.¹⁷⁰ These words were influential in Melanchthon’s own theology. That his theology incorporates elements such as good works, contrary to early Lutheran teaching, is of particular importance to Melanchthon’s position as a leading figure in the Reformation who had the potential to attract those Christians who retained many of the beliefs associated with Catholicism and extend the reach of Lutheran theology. Melanchthon’s ‘moderation in religious matters’, highlighted by Stillman, was also an asset in this respect. As regards the Eucharist, he held, with Luther against Swiss Christology, that ‘Christ is truly present in His sacrament’,¹⁷¹ but on other matters, of Catholic ceremony and extreme unction, for example, he was prepared to compromise: these were ‘*adiaphora*—things indifferent, unnecessary and generally unwanted by Lutherans, but hardly cardinal sins either’. This moderation characterized Melanchthon’s attitude at the diet of Augsburg (1530) and his acceptance of the distinctly Catholic Leipzig *Interim* (1548), the latter precipitating what has become known as the ‘adiaphora controversy’.¹⁷²

In England, during the reign of Henry VIII, the question of justification was the subject of the fifth of the Ten Articles of faith, produced as a statement of the doctrine of the new English church in the summer of 1536. The fifth article allied elements of charity and good works to the process of justification, and, along with the other nine, bore a strong resemblance to the Wittenberg articles produced by Melanchthon and brought from Germany to England by Bishop Edward Foxe as part of attempts to move Henry politically and spiritually towards continental Lutheranism. The alliance of German princes, formed in 1531 in opposition to the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, and known as the Schmalkaldic League, had much in common theologically and politically with Henry. However, for Henry to be fully included in this Protestant

¹⁷⁰ John Chrysostom, *De ferendis reprehensionibus et de mutatione nominum*, hom. iii. 6, translated in paraphrase from the Latin and cited (but not referenced) in Stupperich, *Melanchthon*, p. 93.

¹⁷¹ Philip Melanchthon, from the *Corpus Reformatorum*, vol. 21, cols 476-79, cited in Schofield, *Philip Melanchthon and the English Reformation*, pp. 206-07.

¹⁷² Schofield, *Philip Melanchthon and the English Reformation*, p. 157.

grouping, he would have to bring the English church into line with the *Augsburg Confession*, Melanchthon's great work and the League's foundational statement of faith. The Wittenberg articles drew largely on both the *Augsburg Confession* and the *Loci communes*, and included their peculiar emphasis on the freedom of the human will to cooperate in salvation. Melanchthon had dedicated his revised *Loci* of 1535 to Henry, and it was sent to him via his chief minister, Thomas Cromwell, with another copy for Archbishop Thomas Cranmer.¹⁷³ Both Cromwell and Cranmer were of an evangelical persuasion at this time, but Henry was less enthusiastic. Schofield argues that the Ten 'English' Articles were the work of Thomas Cromwell, who, in adapting Melanchthon's articles, 'was easing as much Lutheranism past King Henry as he knew he could in 1536'.¹⁷⁴

Henry never became fully reconciled to Lutheranism, but Melanchthon maintained links with England, and the accession of Edward VI renewed hope for a fully-realized Lutheran settlement. This did not materialize. Archbishop Cranmer turned away from Wittenberg and towards Geneva during Edward's reign and the English church turned with him. After the subsequent accession, reign and death of the Catholic Mary Tudor, the return of a Protestant monarch, Elizabeth, held the potential for a reorientation towards Lutheranism. Elizabeth is known to have read and admired Melanchthon, and appeared, prior to 1563, to be willing to take the Augsburg Confession and join the continental league of Protestant princes, for whom the Confession was sacrosanct.¹⁷⁵ Under the tutelage of Roger Ascham, between 1548 and 1550, Princess Elizabeth read Melanchthon's *Loci Communes*, and her chaplain between 1549 and 1553, Edmund Allen, produced a catechism with a notably

¹⁷³ Schofield, *Philip Melanchthon and the English Reformation*, pp. 61-7.

¹⁷⁴ Schofield, *Philip Melanchthon and the English Reformation*, p. 81. See Schofield, *Philip Melanchthon and the English Reformation*, pp. 57-82, for an analysis of the Ten Articles relative to Lutheranism.

¹⁷⁵ See Schofield's chapter, 'Melanchthon and the English Deborah', in *Philip Melanchthon and the English Reformation*, pp. 186-204. As Schofield notes, Elizabeth was still contemplating an alliance with the German princes immediately prior to the production of the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1563. Moreover, these articles do contain some Lutheran and Melancthonian elements.

Melanchthonian take on the Eucharist, calling it the ‘the verye true Communion and participacion of the true bodye and bloude of Christ’; Allen asserts, ‘it is certayne that he is alwayes present, and worketh effectuously therewith’.¹⁷⁶ The true nature of Elizabeth’s flirtation with the idea of an alliance with the Lutheran princes is open to debate. There were pragmatic political reasons for considering and subsequently rejecting this option, as well as significant religious opposition from England’s Calvinist clergy. Melanchthon, perhaps the most persuasive advocate of the Confession, died soon after Elizabeth came to the throne. Nevertheless, several scholars have detected a distinctly Melanchthonian flavour in Elizabeth’s continuing piety.¹⁷⁷ As in earlier struggles over the articles of faith, not least those which divided Germany prior to the Augsburg *Interim* of 1548, the question of what was and what was not necessary for salvation was important to Elizabeth. Just as was evident with Melanchthon at Augsburg in 1530 and 1548, Elizabeth saw no need to worry about the *adiaphora*, ‘things indifferent’. Such ‘things’ included such ‘Catholic objects, practices, and beliefs’ as ‘rosaries, statues..., altars, fasting, and temporizing’.¹⁷⁸ Carol V. Kaske has written extensively on the parallel between the moderate, almost ‘counter-hegemonic’ (Kaske’s term) religious positions adopted by both Elizabeth and Edmund Spenser. With reference to the prevailing Puritan iconoclasm of the late Elizabethan era, Kaske notes, ‘on the Continent, Lutherans retained some images and restrained iconoclasm; but in Elizabethan England the Lutheran influence was far outweighed by iconoclastic

¹⁷⁶ Edmund Allen, *A catechisme that is to say a christen instruccion of the principall pointes of Christes religion necessary as well for youth as for other (that be desirous to be taughte howe to geue a rekenyng of theyr faith) to learne: gathered by Edmond Alen, and now newlye corrected and augmented* (Second Edition, London, 1551), sigs. Kiv^r, Kvi^r.

¹⁷⁷ See: Susan Doran, ‘Elizabeth I’s Religion: The Evidence of her Letters’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 51.4 (2000), pp. 699-720; Clyde L. Manschreck, ‘Preface’, in *Melanchthon on Christian Doctrine: Loci communes, 1555*, trans. Clyde L. Manschreck (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. xx-xxi; Carol V. Kaske, *Spenser and Biblical Poetics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 149-50; Carl S. Meyer, *Elizabeth I and the Religious Settlement of 1559* (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia, 1960), pp. 5-7.

¹⁷⁸ Kaske, *Spenser and Biblical Poetics*, pp. 86-7. Kaske provides a useful definition of adiaphorism in an Elizabethan context.

Zwinglianism and Calvinism'.¹⁷⁹ For Kaske, 'the only vocal English Protestants in Elizabethan times who tried...to conserve some images were Spenser and Elizabeth'.¹⁸⁰ This has been seen as Elizabeth's preference for 'an ideological *via media* between Calvinism and Catholicism',¹⁸¹ and Kaske attributes both this, as well as Spenser's expedient adoption of a similar stance in *The Faerie Queene*, to 'Elizabeth's personal adiaphorism'.¹⁸² Although, as Kaske notes,

'Lutheran' was a term of reproach in England...Spenser could have read and believed Lutheran biblical poetics (and even, on many issues, Lutheran theology) and still remained loyal in practice to the Established Church, as it was vaguely defined by the Book of Common Prayer.¹⁸³

The 'inclusive' or possibly 'evasively heterogeneous' Words of Administration (as Kaske describes them), which are part of the service of Communion in the Elizabethan Prayer Book, are a case in point:

The body of our Lord Christ...preserve thy body and soul into everlasting life...Feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving...The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ...preserve thy body and soul into everlasting life.¹⁸⁴

Similarly, according to Patrick Collinson, the adiaphorism shared by Elizabeth and Spenser 'formed the corner-stone of Anglicanism'.¹⁸⁵

The Elizabethan religious and political context described by Kaske presents the possibility of a further corrective to the Calvinist readings of Sidney's works offered by previous scholars. Much like Spenser, Sidney could have read and believed Lutheran theology and remained eligible to be the hero of the Established Church he, in death, eventually became.¹⁸⁶ Kaske's case for Spenser is based on his evident 'imitation of

¹⁷⁹ Carol V. Kaske, 'The Audiences of *The Faerie Queene*: Iconoclasm and Related Issues in Books I, V, and VI', *Literature and History*, third series, 3.2 (1994), p. 19.

¹⁸⁰ Kaske, 'The Audiences of *The Faerie Queene*', p. 19.

¹⁸¹ Kaske, 'The Audiences of *The Faerie Queene*', p. 19.

¹⁸² Kaske, *Spenser and Biblical Poetics*, p. 90.

¹⁸³ Kaske, *Spenser and Biblical Poetics*, p. 105.

¹⁸⁴ Parker Society, *Liturgical Services*, p. 195, cited in Kaske, *Spenser and Biblical Poetics*, p. 48.

¹⁸⁵ Patrick Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967; reprint, 2004), pp. 27-28.

¹⁸⁶ The literary connections between Sidney and Spenser abound. They include: Spenser's dedication of *The Shepheardes Calender* to Sidney; Sidney's praise of the same work in the *Defence* (p. 133); and the collection of elegies published in 1595 with the title, *Astrophel: A Pastoral Elegy Upon the Death of the*

another text [the Bible]’, a thoroughgoing ‘concern with intertextuality’.¹⁸⁷ For Sidney, Philippism (probably through first-hand reading and as transmitted by Languet) presents a less problematic ‘critical paradigm’ than Calvinism, as Robert Stillman has shown for Sidney’s *Defence*.¹⁸⁸ Stillman emphasizes the combination of religious piety, ethics and politics in a Philippist poetics which cannot exist in Sinfield’s Calvinist context. Philippism, as I shall demonstrate, can also be seen as a form of religious piety amenable to the utilisation of the prose romance for similar pious, ethical and political ends.

What evidence is there in favour of such a conclusion? There is a significant piece of textual evidence that indicates the seemingly improbable harmony between the romance form and Melanchthonian theology. The Latin edition of Heliodorus’s *An Aethiopian History* published in Basel in 1552 and later in Antwerp has a title page prominently bearing the theologian’s name (see Figure 1). Heliodorus’s ancient Greek text was a primary source text for Sidney’s romance, and the personal association with his mentor’s teacher would have provided added resonance for the Elizabethan author. Inside the Latin edition, a relatively short introductory passage (see Figure 2), ostensibly written by Melanchthon, commends the story to a readership who ‘judge writing prudently and correctly’ [*Scio te ipsum prudenter & rectè iudicare de*

Most Notable and Valourous Knight, Sir Philip Sidney, which contains the poem of that title by Spenser and another poem, ‘The Doleful Lay of Clorinda’, which may be by Spenser or the Countess of Pembroke. Biographically speaking, Spenser and Sidney both knew Gabriel Harvey, and Spenser associated himself with the influential circles of Sidney’s uncle, the Earl of Leicester, Sidney himself, and, later, the Countess of Pembroke (see Richard Rambuss, ‘Spenser’s life and career’, in Andrew Hadfield, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Spenser* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 13-36.

¹⁸⁷ Kaske, *Spenser and Biblical Poetics*, p. 64.

¹⁸⁸ Stillman, ‘Deadly Stinging Adders’, p. 243.

HELIODORI AE-
thiopicæ Historiæ libri decem,
nunc primùm è Græco ser-
mone in Latinum
translati:

STANISLAO WARSCHEWICZKI POLONO IN-
TERPRETE.

Adiectum est etiam PHILIPPI MELANTHO-
nis de ipso autore, & hac eiusdem conuer-
sione, iudicium.

Item locuples rerum ac uerborum memora-
bilium Index.



Cum Cæs. Maiest. gratia & priuilegio
ad quinquennium.

BASILEÆ, PER IOAN-
nem Oporinum.

Figure 1.

The title page of Stanislaus Warschewiczki's Latin edition of Heliodorus's *An Aethiopian History* (Basel: Johannes Oporinus, 1552), unsigned leaf (accessible via the *University of Basel Special Online Catalogue* [*Griechischer Geist aus Basler Pressen*]: http://www.ub.unibas.ch/cmsdata/spezialkataloge/gg/images/gg0253_001_tit.jpg).

PHILIPPVS MELANTHON IN-
tegerrimo uiro, eruditione & uirtute præstanti, Ioanni Opo-
rino, cuius Basiliensi, amico suo ca-
rissimo S.

S. D. Integerrime D. Oporine, & amice carissime: Et pro perpe-
tua erga me beneuolentia tua, & pro libris missis, agnosco me tibi
gratitudinem debere, & declarare eam non tantum hac uerborum
commemoratione, sed etiam alijs officijs conabor. Nunc autem ad
te mittimus Latinam interpretationem historię Heliodori. Scio te
ipsum prudenter & rectè iudicare de scriptis: & tibi notum esse au-
torem existimo. Oratio est nitida, & non tumida. Et mira est uarie-
tas, consiliorum, occasionum, euentuum & adfectuum: & uitæ ima-
gines multas continet. Itaq; à multis eam legi utile est, & uarietas le-
ctores inuitare potest. Quare existimo te cum tuo aliquo, & rei-
pub. literariæ commodo hanc interpretationem edere posse. Itaq;
si tuum iudicium cum nostro congruet, quæso ut eam edas. Inter-
pres est Stanislaus Eques Polonicus, nobilitatem generis, erudi-
tione, uirtute, & facundia ornans. Huic etiam hoc tuum offi-
cium gratissimum erit. Bene uale, Die xx.

Aprilis. M. D. LI.

DE AVTÖRE.

Heliodorus Emesenus, Theodosij filius, sophista, is esse uidetur, cuius men-
tionem facit Philostratus, Arabium illum appellans: propterea, ut ego qui-
dem existimo, quod sint gentes conterminæ. Phœnices enim urbs est Emesa,
quæ & Emisus uocatur in Geographicis tabulis. Atq; hæc quidem de autore
coniectari licet, cum ex his quæ à Philostrato scripta sunt, tum ex ipsa confe-
ctione & expositione declamatoriij argumenti. Nam ea quæ in historia reci-
tantur, etsi prorsus figmenta sunt, tamen suauis quadam congruentia sunt ab
illo composita. Ac ipsa etiam elocutio multum habet exquisitæ diligentia;
ueruntamen, ut in eiusmodi argumento, oblectationem quandam
placide fluentem, & cum quadam hilaritate con-
iunctam, secum trahit,

Figure 2.

Foreword to Warschewiczki's Latin edition of Heliodorus's *An Aethiopian History*,
unsigned leaf (*Griechischer Geist aus Basler Pressen*:

http://www.ub.unibas.ch/cmsdata/spezialkataloge/gg/images/gg0253_006_vor.jpg).

scriptis].¹⁸⁹ As Steve Mentz has highlighted, in his book, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England*, Melanchthon favoured the Heliodoran romance form of literary expression because of its narrative arc, in which the characters patiently navigate the contingencies of life, all the while knowing that their ends are subject to the mysteries of Fortune. As Mentz observes, ‘a romance heroine’s greatest powers are internal and psychological; she resists outward temptations and thereby collaborates with her fate’. In Heliodorus’s romance, Chariclea reaches a point at which she ‘come[s] to the conclusion that she owe[s] her salvation to the gods’ and decides ‘not to show ingratitude to heaven by rebuffing its munificence’. Having miraculously escaped being burnt on a pyre, she wonders if she and Theagenes ‘are under heaven’s curse and the victims of divine malevolence—unless it is the divinity’s way of working miracles to plunge us deep in despair and then deliver us from the abyss!’. She receives her answer in poetic form as part of a dream: ‘Miracles may come to pass: for Fate ’tis easy game’.¹⁹⁰ The heroine’s end being conventionally a happy one, her enduring cooperation is, in a Christian context, analogous to a believer’s faith in salvation: ‘God’s plot makes human history a massive romance with salvation at the end’. In other words, the Melanchthonian idea of the human will cooperating with God legitimizes romance as a moral form, Heliodorus’s fiction is ‘compatible with Protestant Providence’, and hence there is no contradiction between this form of literature and religion as there is in Sinfield.¹⁹¹

Nevertheless, as Malcolm Wallace observes in his landmark biography, Sidney’s prose romance has not always been equated with moral seriousness:

¹⁸⁹ Heliodorus, *Aethiopicae Historiae* (Basel: Johannes Oporinus, 1552), unsigned leaf, cited in Mentz, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England*, p. 61; Mentz’s translation.

¹⁹⁰ Heliodorus, *An Ethiopian Story*, trans. J. R. Morgan, in *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, ed. B. P. Reardon (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 527-28.

¹⁹¹ Mentz, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England*, p. 63. Mentz equates Heliodorus’s privileging of ‘emotional states’ over ‘outward actions’ with an emphasis on the faith in the heart of a Christian believer. He also, somewhat against the tenor of my argument, goes on to associate this focus on the inner life with an emphasis on ‘the rewards of passivity’ (p. 63). I prefer to see the characters’ collaboration with God/Fortune as a sign of agency rather than passivity.

Milton's stricture on the romance [meaning Sidney's *Arcadia* in particular]—that it was a vain amatorious poem—cannot be brushed aside. The god of Arcadia is Love, and, like Musidorus, we are sometimes uncertain whether he should be apostrophized as a celestial or as an infernal spirit. The preoccupation of the writer's mind with the facts of sex is much in evidence; even the father and mother of Philoclea and Pamela are made to fill sufficiently unedifying rôles.¹⁹²

Despite such reservations, Wallace goes on to dissociate Sidney from the Elizabethan Puritan types, who would have 'condemned as evil in themselves the desires and passions of the natural man', preferring to see him as 'the more complex Renaissance type in which moral earnestness was not incompatible with an impatient rejection of all ascetic ideals'.¹⁹³ This, I contend, is in concord with a Philippist piety that allies the secular and the sacred, and is characterized by religious moderation.

In Sidney's romances, both the *New* and *Old Arcadias*, the tension between the ascetic ideals of Protestant religion and the secular philosophy of Renaissance humanism is particularly evident in their treatment of love, the desires and passions of the central characters. As Wallace rightly notes, 'the god of Arcadia is Love', and it is open to debate whether this is compatible with Sidney's professed Protestant piety. Is the love of Sidney's *Arcadia* inspired by a recognizable Christian God? Moreover, a Renaissance humanist philosophy, instructed by 'the ethic of reason and temperance', often counselled against succumbing to such undignified passions as love.¹⁹⁴ So, how does a 'complex Renaissance type' achieve 'moral earnestness' in the context of a romance?

The difference most often highlighted between the original version of Sidney's *Arcadia* and later revisions, in terms of ethics in the field of human love, is the apparent turn to a stricter morality as demonstrated by the princes' (Musidorus and Pyrocles) sexual 'restraint' in their respective relationships with the princesses (Pamela and

¹⁹² Malcolm William Wallace, *The Life of Sir Philip Sidney* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915), p. 237.

¹⁹³ Wallace, *The Life of Sir Philip Sidney*, p. 237.

¹⁹⁴ Mark Rose, *Heroic Love: Studies in Sidney and Spenser* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968; reprint 1970), p. 9.

Philoclea). In the *Old Arcadia*, as it appeared in manuscript, Pyrocles goes to Philoclea intent on consummating their relationship:

up to Philoclea's chamber door went Pyrocles, rapt from himself with the excessive forefeeling of his near coming contentment. Whatever pains he had taken, what dangers he had run into, and especially those saucy pangs of love, doubts, griefs, languishing hopes, and threatening despairs, came all now to his mind in one rank to beautify this after-following blissfulness, and to serve for a most fit sauce, whose sourness might give a kind of life to the delightful cheer his imagination fed upon. (228)

Sidney describes Pyrocles in the grip of his own desire, 'by so forcible a holding all senses to one object', such that he is 'grieved only with too much gladness' (229). By the employment of such pointed opposites, the narrator of the *Old Arcadia* signals Pyrocles's moral confusion, yet the prince ultimately achieves his goal, overcoming the princess's initial purpose to hold onto her virtue. At first, Philoclea stops Pyrocles short of his intended conquest, telling him, 'enjoy the conquests you have already won, and assure yourself you are come to the furthest point of your cunning!' Pyrocles then collapses beside her bed, only for the princess to attempt to revive him with kisses and to threaten suicide: 'I will make my soul a tomb of thy memory' (235-36). He does revive and carries her onto her bed, the narrator leaving them at this point, 'lest [his] pen might seem to grudge at the due bliss of these poor lovers whose loyalty had but small respite of their fiery agonies' (237-43). In the light of this conclusion to Book Three, Pyrocles is characterized as nothing more ignoble than an ardent lover.

In the same version of the romance, Musidorus is thwarted in his attempt to rape the sleeping Pamela by the appearance of 'a dozen clownish villains'. Not unlike Pyrocles, he 'has all his senses partial against himself and inclined to his well beloved adversary', when the cast of rogues enter to wake the princess (202). The narrator again indicates that the prince is ethically compromised through the use of oxymoron ('beloved adversary'), but the tone of the scene ('clownish villains'), as well as the conclusion of the whole romance, in which Musidorus is forgiven his crimes,

undermines the possibility of a shift towards moral seriousness. As Jean Robertson argues in the 'Textual Introduction' to her edition of the *Old Arcadia*, the changes to these passages, that appear in the composite edition of the *Arcadia* printed in 1593, under the auspices of the Countess of Pembroke, Sidney's sister, are very likely to be authorial in origin, reflecting not just 'greater maturity or sterner morality', but 'Sidney's incompletely carried-out intention to remedy a serious flaw in the ending of the *Old Arcadia*'. By having Pyrocles and Philoclea collapse in exhaustion with the latter's virtue still intact and excising Musidorus's attempted crime altogether, Sidney was able to remove any vestige of guilt from his heroes once Basilius's miraculous return from the dead had acquitted them of murder.¹⁹⁵ Pyrocles and Philoclea, both asleep, end Book Three of the composite text in an innocent embrace:

So as, laid down so near the beauty of the world, Philoclea, that their necks were subject each to other's chaste embracements, it seemed love had come thither to lay a plot in that picture of death how gladly, if death came, their souls would go together.¹⁹⁶

As Robertson points out, these changes were almost certainly part of Sidney's reworking of the *Old Arcadia* into the *New*, ultimately cut short in the middle of Book III of the latter version, and, as well as correcting a flaw of narrative consistency, they form part of an apparent turn towards consistency with his Heliodoran model. The characters, Theagenes and Chariclea, from *An Aethiopian History*, were noted for their chastity, and Robertson attributes the revisions to Sidney's romance to an authorial desire to emulate his Greek source rather than any editorial attempt at censorship.¹⁹⁷

In his book, *Heroic Love: Studies in Sidney and Spenser*, Mark Rose perceives a similar change in the 'morality of passionate love' between the *Old* and *New Arcadias*. For Rose,

¹⁹⁵ Robertson, 'Textual Introduction', in *The Old Arcadia*, pp. lx-lxii.

¹⁹⁶ This passage is taken from the Textual Apparatus of Robertson's edition: *The Old Arcadia*, p. 237. For a modern edition of the composite text see Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, ed. Maurice Evans (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977).

¹⁹⁷ Robertson, 'Textual Introduction', in *The Old Arcadia*, p. lxii, n. 2.

In the *Old Arcadia* greater weight is given to the humanist ethic of reason. Generally speaking, the *Old Arcadia* portrays the transformation of Pyrocles and Musidorus from models of virtue into examples of the follies and dangers of passionate excess [culminating in their crimes against the princesses].¹⁹⁸

The *New Arcadia*, benefiting from ‘the suppression of the often mocking narrator of the original version’ and ‘many alterations in detail...designed to increase the reader’s respect for Pyrocles and Musidorus’, sanctions ‘the serious claims of love to be put forward for consideration’.¹⁹⁹ Evidently, there is a more earnest, potentially ‘celestial’ rather than ‘infernal’ treatment of love in the *New Arcadia* compared to the *Old*. In this context, ‘Love’, Wallace’s ‘god of Arcadia’, appears to be closer to the image of Sidney’s Christian God. Nevertheless, there remain several occasions in both the original and revised versions of the *Arcadia* when love is characterized as an indignity, a departure from reason in the terms of Renaissance humanism. The passages in which the princes, Pyrocles and Musidorus, struggle with the onset of their respective passions for Philoclea and Pamela are notable in this respect, but even these passages, I contend, may be seen as celestial in origin. The passages I shall be discussing from the *New Arcadia* have similar but significantly different antecedents in the *Old Arcadia*. My conclusions, though in some respects applicable to the original manuscript version of Sidney’s romance, are based on the changes in substance and tone evident in the revised version.

In Book I of the *New Arcadia*, Pyrocles’s song betrays his misgivings about the ‘outward’ and ‘inward’ effects of his love for Philoclea; at this point he has already adopted the appearance of an Amazon:

Transformed in show, but more transformed in mind,
I cease to strive, with double conquest foiled;
For (woe is me) my powers all I find
With outward force and inward treason spoiled.

¹⁹⁸ Rose, *Heroic Love*, p. 37.

¹⁹⁹ Rose, *Heroic Love*, p. 38.

For from without came to mine eyes the blow,
Whereto mine inward thoughts did faintly yield;
Both these conspired poor reason's overthrow;
False in myself, thus have I lost the field.

Thus are my eyes still captive to one sight;
Thus all my thoughts are slaves to one thought still;
Thus reason to his servants yields his right;
Thus is my power transformed to your will.
What marvel, then, I take a woman's hue,
Since what I see, think, know, is all but you? (69)

Pyrocles attributes this 'conquest', in part, to a failure of his own: a treacherous conspiracy of his 'eyes' and his 'thoughts' has overthrown his reason, the latter personified as master to the former cast as unruly 'servants'. Having observed the singer, and overhearing the song from outside Pyrocles's arbour, Musidorus is alerted to the identity of the Amazon before him:

The ditty gave him some suspicion, but the voice gave him almost assurance who the singer was. And therefore boldly thrusting open the door and entering into the arbour, he perceived indeed that it was Pyrocles thus disguised. (69-70)

Musidorus's condemnation of Pyrocles's transformation reveals the nature of the latter's perceived transgression:

'And is it possible that this is Pyrocles, the only young prince in the world formed by nature and framed by education to the true exercise of virtue? ...to lose, nay, to abuse your time; lastly, to overthrow all the excellent things you have done which have filled the world with your fame... Remember, for I know you know it, that if we will be men, the reasonable part of our soul is to have absolute commandment, against which if any sensual weakness arise, we are to yield all our sound forces to the overthrowing of so unnatural a rebellion'. (70)

Pyrocles is betraying his heroic status, failing to be directed by reason and succumbing to 'womanish' weakness (70). Although Pyrocles defends himself and women, who are, according to the prince, 'framed of nature with the same parts of the mind for the exercise of virtue as [men] are' (73), he is still condemned by the words of his own song.

In a later passage from the same book, Musidorus, after he has fallen for Pamela and donned the garb of a lowly shepherd, Menalcas, sings his own self-reproaching song:

Come, shepherd's weeds, become your master's mind:
Yield outward show, what inward change he tries;
Nor be abashed, since such a guest you find,
Whose strongest hope in your weak comfort lies.

Come, shepherd's weeds, attend my woeful cries:
Disuse yourselves from sweet Menalcas' voice,
For other be those tunes which sorrow ties
From those clear notes which freely may rejoice.
Then pour out plaint, and in one word say this:
Helpless his plaint who spoils himself of bliss. (105)

Mirroring the earlier episode, Musidorus is overheard and recognized by Pyrocles, who chides his cousin for his previous railing against the effects of love:

'Why, how now, dear cousin!' said she [Pyrocles disguised as the Amazon, Zelmane]. 'You that were last day so high in the pulpit against lovers, are you now become so mean an auditor? Remember that love is a passion, and that a worthy man's reason must ever have the masterhood'. (106)

It is at this point that Musidorus recants his earlier speech and apostrophizes the 'spirit of love', equivocal as to its celestial or infernal nature (106). In his article, 'The Heroic Ideal in Sidney's Revised *Arcadia*', Myron Turner sees Musidorus's condemnation of love (when it affects Pyrocles) and his subsequent recantation (when he falls in love himself) as part of Sidney's overarching ironical treatment of the princes, 'so that they will not live under the illusion that their virtue is other than human, that the deeds they perform on the battlefield entitle them to the dignity of gods'.²⁰⁰ Musidorus's description of Pyrocles before his fall from grace—'the only young prince in the world formed by nature and framed by education to the true exercise of virtue', whose 'excellent' conduct has 'filled the world with your fame'—gives testament to this, their heroic self-image. However, as Turner argues, the terms of reference for Sidney go

²⁰⁰ Myron Turner, 'The Heroic Ideal in Sidney's Revised *Arcadia*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 10.1, The English Renaissance (Winter 1970), p. 81.

beyond that of the ‘god-like heroes’ of classical and romance epics. Indeed, Sidney adopts the ‘sonnet conventions’, also seen in his *Astrophil and Stella*, ‘identifying the active male hero with the lover of the sonneteers’, and so challenging the virtues of the hero with ‘the twofold test of the irrational—Love and Fortune’.²⁰¹ In this formulation, Turner shows how the passions of the princes have a didactic purpose, teaching them that they do not have god-like powers and that they, like all others, are subject to a superior divinity. In Sidney’s romance, Fortune must always be understood in a Christian context, more specifically with reference to divine Providence and the implicit restrictions on human freedom that that implies. Turner sees Pamela’s virtue in the captivity episode of Book III as an example of ‘Christian liberty’: a ‘contempt for fortune’, as it may be expressed through ‘external human authority’ or ‘internal irrationality’, but only where Fortune so expressed goes against the will of God.²⁰² Turner attributes the ideas on Christian liberty that are expressed in the *New Arcadia* to Sidney’s adherence to the doctrines of Calvin, especially those pertaining to ‘*Freedom of conscience from all human law*’:

since believers’ consciences...should not be entangled with any snares of observances in those matters in which the Lord has willed them to be free, we conclude that they are released from the power of all men.²⁰³

Nevertheless, I suggest that Turner’s reading does not preclude (indeed, it may encourage) the application of other Christian doctrines, including those associated with Melancthon, to the same passages in Sidney’s romance. The lessons in the limits of human agency learned by the princes may be understood in terms of the ‘human will free to cooperate with divine grace’ rather than the subjection to God’s will implied by the predestinarian theology of John Calvin.

²⁰¹ Turner, ‘The Heroic Ideal in Sidney’s Revised *Arcadia*’, pp. 81-2.

²⁰² Turner, ‘The Heroic Ideal in Sidney’s Revised *Arcadia*’, pp. 72-4.

²⁰³ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill and trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1960), vol. 1, pp. 846-47 (III. xix. 14); the emphasis belongs to the source text; see Turner, ‘The Heroic Ideal in Sidney’s Revised *Arcadia*’, p. 73.

As such, is it possible to see an accommodation to Philippist principles in the passages I have highlighted here? Firstly, Pyrocles's figurative reference to his cousin, 'so high in the pulpit against lovers' then 'become so mean an auditor', places their encounters with Love in Sidney's own religious context and clearly highlights the potential for hypocrisy in the sermons, formal or informal, of the contemporary 'Puritan types' who condemn human passions as 'evil in themselves'.²⁰⁴ Secondly, Musidorus's reaction to being discovered at the mercy of Love—or 'the goddess of those woods', as Pyrocles is reported as naming her (105)—involves the following words:

'I now...do try what love can do. ...who will resist it must either have no wit, or put out his eyes. Can any man resist his creation? Certainly, by love we are made, and to love we are made. Beasts only cannot discern beauty; and let them be in the roll of beasts that do not honour it'. (106)²⁰⁵

The acceptance of and resistance to Love that Musidorus associates, respectively, with those with and without 'wit' echoes Sidney's own concept of humanity's 'erected wit' from his *Defence of Poesy*. For Sidney, the 'right poet', whose poetry has the power to inspire acts of virtue, can bridge the gap between 'our erected wit' and our post-lapsarian 'infected will', restoring the latter to a 'condition of goodness'.²⁰⁶ Although Musidorus questions the possibility of resistance to Love, there remains the possibility for humanity to be numbered among 'the roll of beasts' by dishonouring the truth of their own creation. In the analogy I have drawn, the beauty that inspires love in Musidorus, that brings him under the influence of apostrophized Love, equates to the poetry that inspires virtue in the reader and restores his/her will to goodness. As such, in Christian terms, there is not a clearly demarcated, predestinarian boundary between those within and those without God's grace. There is still a role for the human will in

²⁰⁴ Wallace, *The Life of Sir Philip Sidney*, p. 237.

²⁰⁵ This passage is original to the *New Arcadia*.

²⁰⁶ Stillman, 'Deadly Stinging Adders', p. 255; Stillman focuses on the passages from Sidney's *Defence* in which he places poets in a hierarchy of three categories; see *The Defence of Poesy*, pp. 101-03.

the salvation of the human soul. All of which recalls the words of Chrysostom and Melanchthon: ‘God draws men, but he draws only willing men’.²⁰⁷

Thirdly, and most significantly, the inspiration for each prince is the respective object of their love, the princesses, Pamela and Philoclea. In the readings of Myron Turner and Richard C. McCoy, and as I will show in chapters Six and Seven, the princesses, as they are presented in the *New Arcadia*, are characterized as superior in virtue to their male counterparts. Not merely because they remain sexually chaste, but because their virtue is so much more radically challenged, the princesses perform a more significant moral function in the revised romance. So much so that even those events surrounding their male counterparts, which remain relatively unchanged from the *Old* to the *New Arcadia*, take on a new ethical tone. Turner has ‘the romance hero out-heroed by the traditionally helpless heroine’.²⁰⁸ In Turner, as in McCoy, the critic emphasizes their passive virtue, their consistent submission to the ends of a mysterious Fortune. In Christian terms, for Fortune read God’s Providence. In the *New Arcadia*, as distinct from the *Old*, under the influence of the princesses, Pyrocles and Musidorus learn that they too are subject to a higher power. Whereas McCoy sees Sidney as exploiting a ‘famous loophole in the Calvinist covenant’ by ‘reliev[ing] the heroes of all responsibility’ and ‘reduc[ing] them to passive vulnerability’, I prefer a more hermeneutically consistent, Philippist reading, in which the loophole allows human agency back into Protestant piety.²⁰⁹ As Steve Mentz notes, a peculiarly Melanchthonian aspect of the Heliodoran romance is the characters’ submission to (or cooperation with) ‘Divine will’, and in this respect the princesses are superior to the male heroes.²¹⁰ The princesses’ maintenance of their chastity may reflect a sterner

²⁰⁷ Paraphrasing Chrysostom differently, Stillman identifies the tragedies of George Buchanan, praised by Sidney in the *Defence*, with Sidney’s concept of ‘right poetry’, ‘a vehicle, in the language of Chrysostom and Melanchthon, for “he who wills to find a way”’ (‘Deadly Stinging Adders’, p. 254).

²⁰⁸ Turner, ‘The Heroic Ideal in Sidney’s Revised *Arcadia*’, p. 81.

²⁰⁹ Richard C. McCoy, *Sir Philip Sidney: Rebellion in Arcadia* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1979), p. 205.

²¹⁰ Mentz, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England*, p. 62.

morality in the revised romance, but it is also testament to the possibility of drawing willing men towards virtue and ultimately to their salvation.

Having established the efficacy of reading the *New Arcadia* in particular through the lens of a Philippist ethos, I will continue to employ this methodology in the following chapters, focusing especially on the character of Amphialus, for whom the prospect of salvation looks faint.

Chapter Three: 'If an excellent man should err': Sir Philip Sidney and Stoical Virtue

In this chapter (and the two that follow immediately after it), I examine how the Philippist ethos that Sidney inherited from Hubert Languet informs his revision of the *Arcadia*, particularly as it is evident in the adventures of the character Amphialus. In this chapter in particular, I show that Languet's Philippism informs Sidney's invention of the apparently irredeemable Amphialus, who is not, to the alert reader, beyond redemption. By inviting his readers to adopt the moderate ethos of his mentor, Sidney places himself in the role of the 'right poet'; by the means of his 'erected wit' he hopes to restore humanity's 'infected will'. I also highlight Sidney's assumption of a pragmatic, if not philosophically sincere, stoical position, which is particularly evident in the episodes featuring his female characters. This last aspect of Sidney's ethical outlook is discussed in more detail in chapters Six and Seven.

In a letter written to Sidney in 1574, Languet defends Guy du Faur de Pibrac's public defence of the St Bartholomew's Day massacre. In doing so, Languet rejects the harsh, apparently stoical, judgements of those who would brand Pibrac 'among the wickedest of men' for this one error, preferring to reserve judgement.²¹¹ He sets himself apart from those harsher judges who would choose martyrdom over living with the shame of defending such acts. Victor Skretkowicz has suggested that this shows a moral distinction between the senior Huguenot, Languet, and a 'younger, more idealistic' group of Huguenots, which, arguably, included Philippe Duplessis-Mornay.²¹² Building on Skretkowicz's work, I will address the question of whether it is possible to discern such a moral distinction in the later works of Philip Sidney himself. I argue that the *New Arcadia* in particular explores the tension between the positions

²¹¹ Osborn, *Young Philip Sidney: 1572-1577*, p. 228; this is Osborn's translation from the Latin of Languet's letter to Sidney; also see Steuart A. Pears, trans., *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet* (London: William Pickering, 1845), p. 88.

²¹² Skretkowicz, 'Mary Sidney Herbert's *Antonius*', p. 11.

adopted by Languet and the putative, ‘more idealistic’ group. Sidney, through the character of Amphialus, stages a defeat of ‘an excellent man’ who has erred (to paraphrase the author’s mentor). Nevertheless, I contend, Amphialus’s fall is attended by sufficient signs of his corrigibility to suggest that Languet’s influence persists. Indeed, within the world of Sidney’s *New Arcadia*, the character of Helen of Corinth represents Languet’s ability to see beyond a person’s ignoble actions (specifically those of Amphialus) to the worthy individual behind. Though it brings her much grief, like Languet, she holds to her principles: ‘O Amphialus, I would thou were not so excellent; or I would I thought thee not so excellent; and yet would I not, that I would so’ (61). By reading the *New Arcadia* through the lens of Languet’s anti-stoical ethos, I also suggest, it is possible to unify other apparently distinct scholarly interpretations of Sidney’s philosophical inheritance. It is important to note, however, that, though Sidney appears to have eschewed the philosophical stance associated with Duplessis-Mornay in this particular respect, it does not preclude his drawing on Duplessis-Mornay’s work in other respects. Indeed, Skretkowicz’s broader argument suggests that Sidney and his sister, Mary Sidney Herbert, advocated a philosophy that incorporated the values of both Languet and Duplessis-Mornay without contradiction. Moreover, Sidney’s debt to Duplessis-Mornay will be particularly evident with regard to the neo-stoical arguments against court factionalism that I will discuss in chapters Six and Seven.

Victor Skretkowicz’s essay discusses Mary Sidney Herbert’s *Antonius* with reference to her other work, *A Discourse of Life and Death*. These translations of works by Robert Garnier and Philippe Duplessis-Mornay respectively were published together in 1592. For Skretkowicz, Mary’s publication of such apparently divergent texts espouses a ‘Huguenot doctrine’ which includes both Duplessis-Mornay’s ethos (which is seen as exemplifying the ‘younger, more idealist’ group) and the philosophy of her

brother's older mentor. However, Skretkowicz does highlight a particular difference between the two men: Duplessis-Mornay's stoical philosophy 'inspires a selfless flight to the end of life', an unwillingness to compromise to save oneself from martyrdom; while Languet 'identifies a very practical need in the world of politics to tolerate personal failings', and is even prepared to excuse those who eschew martyrdom.²¹³ Duplessis-Mornay's combative attitude—what Skretkowicz describes as 'enduring the worst in a positive, fighting spirit'²¹⁴—is evident in his *Discours de la mort et de la vie* (as translated by Sidney Herbert):

We [Christians] must seek to mortify our flesh in us and to cast the world out of us: but to cast ourselves out of the world is in no sort permitted us. The Christian ought willingly to depart out of this life but not cowardly to run away. The Christian is ordained by God to fight therein, and cannot leave his place without incurring reproach and infamy.²¹⁵

More broadly, despite their apparently diverging outlooks, the two men shared a great deal in terms of their philosophical and theological inheritances. Indeed, like Sidney, Duplessis-Mornay was a protégé of Languet, and, although Skretkowicz notes that Duplessis-Mornay 'was very much a Huguenot political reformer who led from the front', whereas Languet favoured 'a politically realistic sense of tolerance and forgiveness', they both may be said to have been 'Politiques'.²¹⁶ Martin N. Raitière defines a 'Politique' as someone adopting 'the conciliatory stance according to which national unity was to be placed above sectarian religious differences'; the Politiques were those French political activists 'for whom no religious dogma was worth the trauma of the civil wars'. As such, though Languet and Duplessis-Mornay appear to have disagreed about the incorporation of a particular classical stoical principle into

²¹³ Skretkowicz, 'Mary Sidney Herbert's *Antonius*', pp. 13-14.

²¹⁴ Skretkowicz, 'Mary Sidney Herbert's *Antonius*', p. 9.

²¹⁵ Sidney Herbert, *A Discourse of Life and Death*, in *Selected Works*, p. 128.

²¹⁶ Skretkowicz, 'Mary Sidney Herbert's *Antonius*', pp. 10-11. Kuin, ('Sir Philip Sidney's Model of the Statesman', *Reformation* 4 [1999], pp. 93-117) highlights the parallels between the lives of Sidney and Duplessis-Mornay, not least their similar educations under the guidance of Hubert Languet. Kuin attributes the parallels between the lives of Sidney and Duplessis-Mornay to 'this mutual relation to Languet' and, in turn, Languet's relation to Philip Melanchthon (p. 102).

their shared religio-political philosophy, they agreed on much else.²¹⁷ Sidney was also able to inhabit this shared philosophical space without contradiction.

Whether fairly attributed or not, the moral distinction between Languet's and Duplessis-Mornay's positions, as highlighted by Skretkowicz, is exemplified by Languet's observations communicated to Philip Sidney in the letter of 24th July, 1574. In the letter, Languet defends Guy du Faur de Pibrac's defence of the St Bartholomew's Day massacre on the grounds that 'he [Pibrac] was compelled to ransom his life' with a letter defending the massacre. Languet goes on to quote a strongly stoical passage from Juvenal, in which one must 'consider it the greatest sin to put breath before shame', before declaring,

I am not a Stoic, and I do not believe that all faults are the same. Our party has this failing, that if an excellent man should err even in the smallest matter, they immediately class him among the wickedest of men. I am by nature and principle averse to judgements of this sort, and I know that many people criticize me for this.²¹⁸

By 1590, when Mary Sidney Herbert came to translate the works of Garnier and Duplessis-Mornay, the 'party' of French Huguenots and their English supporters, to which Languet refers, had endured, though it was missing several central characters such as Languet and Sidney themselves. Nevertheless, as Skretkowicz's article attests, the moderate philosophy of Hubert Languet was still influential with Mary and her brother. It is also notable that William Blount, seventh Lord Mountjoy, in his annotations of a copy of the 1593 edition of the *Arcadia*, apparently made soon after its publication, echoes Languet's sentiments, rejecting 'the notion of the Stoics that all sins are equally bad'.²¹⁹ The annotation in question is, appropriately enough, beside a stanza

²¹⁷ Raitière finds it 'inconceivable' that Mornay, being a Politique, could have written the *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*, famous for its militancy; see Martin N. Raitière, *Faire Bits: Sir Philip Sidney and Renaissance Political Theory* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1984), pp. 125-27.

²¹⁸ Osborn, *Young Philip Sidney: 1572-1577*, p. 228; also see Pears, trans., *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet*, p. 88.

²¹⁹ Fred Schurink, "'Like a hand in the margin of a booke": William Blount's Marginalia and the Politics of Sidney's *Arcadia*", *The Review of English Studies* 59 (2008), p. 17. Schurink paraphrases Blount's Latin.

from Philisides's song, 'As I my little flock on Ister bank', originally in the Third Eclogues of the *Old Arcadia* (254-59). Philisides, who (as I will discuss in more detail in Chapter Four) represents the author in his own text, recalls the 'song old Languet had me taught' (255). Towards the end of the song, the majority of which retells a beast fable, the 'poor beasts' are told to 'in patience bide your hell' (259). It is this instruction that appears to prompt Blount's note, which stresses 'stoical indifference to the adversity of fortune', but also includes his departure from the Stoics on the equality of all sins.²²⁰

Hubert Languet died on 30 September 1581. Katherine Duncan-Jones observes, in her biography of Philip Sidney, that, prior to this date, Languet and Sidney 'seem to have drifted apart'.²²¹ It is, however, as Duncan-Jones admits, difficult to gauge from their surviving correspondence whether this was indeed the case, and the apparent lack of correspondence during Languet's last year may be explained by the loss of one letter-book rather than a waning of their friendship. Languet was in the habit of admonishing his protégé, not least during the period of Sidney's relative retirement, when he was writing the first *Arcadia*. Nevertheless, such differences appear to have been in the nature of their bantering relationship, and, as Richard C. McCoy notes, 'the stance Sidney assumes in his letters...is clearly designed to provoke such urgent and importunate moralizing'.²²² When Sidney came to revise the *Arcadia* (which might have been 'as early as 1582' according to Skretkowicz's 'General Introduction' to his Oxford edition) he, like his sister several years later, still retained many of the ideas expressed to him by his one-time tutor in letters and in person.²²³ There is, however,

²²⁰ Schurink, "“Like a hand in the margine of a booke”", p. 17; for Blount's annotations, see Washington D. C., Folger Shakespeare Library: shelfmark STC 22540 Copy 1, p. 199^r, l. 43 (accessible via the *Folger Digital Image Collection*: <http://luna.folger.edu>).

²²¹ Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet*, p. 217.

²²² McCoy, *Sir Philip Sidney: Rebellion in Arcadia*, p. 55.

²²³ Skretkowicz, 'General Introduction', in *The New Arcadia*, p. xvii.

plenty of room for debate as to what extent such ideas influenced Sidney's literary works.

In addressing this issue, it is useful to remember that Languet's moderate philosophy was itself an inheritance from his own tutor, Philip Melanchthon. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Melanchthon was a key figure in the Lutheran Reformation, noted for his moderation and ecumenical inclusivity, whose works, as Robert Stillman notes, 'were more often owned than those of any other reformed theologian'.²²⁴ Indeed, in his letter to Sidney, Languet acknowledges Melanchthon as the source of his moderate views, and refuses to compromise them:

Thus far I regret neither my teacher nor my principles, and shall not be led away from either by the criticisms of those who are naturally more captious or severe than I am.²²⁵

As we saw in the introduction to this thesis, the Melanchthonian nature of Sidney's *Defence of Poesy* has been established by Stillman.²²⁶ Sidney's contact with Languet and other Melanchthonians among his mentor's circle clearly influenced the nature of his piety, engendering a commitment to the power of the human will to cooperate with God in the quest for salvation.²²⁷ This is evident in the *Defence*'s vision of the 'right poet', with the ability to bridge the gap between humanity's 'erected wit' and 'infected will'. In Stillman's account, Maximilian II is celebrated by Joannes Crato as the epitome of Philippist virtue, attaining the height of the venerated Euarchus in Sidney's *Arcadia*; in the terms of the *Defence*, Maximilian may be said to be 'a Cyrus by which to create many Cyruses'.²²⁸

²²⁴ Stillman, 'Deadly Stinging Adders', p. 231.

²²⁵ Osborn, *Young Philip Sidney: 1572-1577*, p. 228. Jill Kraye notes that Melanchthon himself criticized the adherents of Stoicism, complaining that 'the Stoics wanted to eradicate all emotions, good and bad alike; whereas the good ones, such as fear of God, trust and love for one's wife and children, were actually required by divine law' (Kraye, 'Moral Philosophy', p. 369).

²²⁶ See Stillman, 'Deadly Stinging Adders' and *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism*.

²²⁷ Stillman, 'Deadly Stinging Adders', pp. 245, 257.

²²⁸ Stillman, 'Deadly Stinging Adders', pp. 247-48; Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, pp. 101-02; the association of Euarchus with Philippist virtue that is implicit in Crato's oration does not fully account for

Aside from the association between the Philippist philosophy of Languet and Sidney's critical work, *The Defence of Poesy*, Victor Skretkiewicz has identified the different strands of Huguenot thought at play in the work of Mary Sidney Herbert. In view of these precedents, the relationship between such ideas and Sidney's literary works, specifically the *New Arcadia*, appears to be worth examining. The potential attributed to the human will in Sidney's *Defence* also informs Languet's moderate, Philippist attitude to Pibrac's defence of the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre. I contend that the portrayal of Amphialus in the *New Arcadia* is similarly informed.

Amphialus is usually labelled the 'anti-hero' of the *New Arcadia*. He is, as Skretkiewicz notes, 'relentlessly pilloried' with the use of 'the formulaic epithet', 'the courteous Amphialus'.²²⁹ The comparison with the pious Aeneas of Virgil's epic is made explicit, and is most often seen as ironic. While A. C. Hamilton writes that Amphialus's 'actions outrage courtesy', he also betrays a degree of sympathy for the character when he adds, 'Nothing turns out right for him'.²³⁰ This sympathy, I argue, is not misplaced: there is plenty of textual evidence to suggest that Amphialus ought not to be seen as a wholly wicked character. Even at the nadir of his fortunes, which will be examined in more detail below, he is compared to a Homeric hero. Indeed, to believe that he may be considered 'an excellent man', a reader has only to turn to the testimony of Helen of Corinth in Book I of the revised romance:

Who is courteous, noble, liberal, but he that hath the example before his eyes of Amphialus? Where are all heroical parts, but in Amphialus? O Amphialus, I would thou were not so excellent; or I would I thought thee not so excellent; and yet would I not, that I would so. (61)

Helen clearly loves Amphialus, and it is, therefore, arguable that her opinion of him is unreliable. About to recount the history of their relationship to Musidorus, Helen is

the character's role in the *Arcadia*: his dispensation of justice, discussed below, departs from such a philosophy.

²²⁹ Skretkiewicz, 'General Introduction', in *The New Arcadia*, p. xxxvi.

²³⁰ A. C. Hamilton, *Sir Philip Sidney: A Study of His Life and Works* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 139.

herself equivocal about her feelings for Amphialus. There is, however, much in Amphialus's story to corroborate Helen's judgement. His fight with his friend, Philoxenus, who is jealous of Helen's love for him, ends in Philoxenus's death, but it was a contest which Amphialus did not seek, and the mortal blow was an 'unlucky' accident:

'But he [Philoxenus] would not attend his words, but still strake so fiercely at Amphialus that in the end, nature prevailing above determination, he was fain to defend himself and withal so to offend him that by an unlucky blow the poor Philoxenus fell dead at his feet'. (64)

Amphialus's grief (made worse by the subsequent death of Timotheus, Philoxenus's father and Amphialus's foster-father) leads him to cast off his armour and run 'into the thickest of woods, lamenting, and even crying out so pitifully that [Helen's] servant (though of a fortune not used to much tenderness) could not refrain weeping' while recounting the story. He vows hatred for Helen, 'the cause of all this mischief' (65). Nevertheless, Helen's knowledge of his antipathy towards her does not dampen her ardour, and her continued belief in his excellence reflects the contingent nature of the events that caused the enmity between them.

When, in Book II, Amphialus is led to see his cousin, Philoclea, bathing, he immediately falls in love himself (195-98), and a new sequence of unfortunate episodes is set in motion which occupies most of the incomplete third book of the *New Arcadia*. The book begins with the imprisonment of Philoclea, as well as her sister, Pamela, and Zelmane (Pyrocles dressed as an Amazon), by Cecropia, Amphialus's mother. Cecropia intends to force either Philoclea or her sister to marry her son. Indeed, when she fails to persuade Philoclea into marriage,

she bethought herself to attempt Pamela, whose beauty being equal, she hoped, if she might be won, that her son's thoughts would rather rest on a beautiful gratefulness than still be tormented with a disdaining beauty. (335)

She does not mind which one of his cousins her son marries, as her aim is to win control of her brother-in-law's dukedom. Indeed, Gynecia, the princesses' mother and Cecropia's sister-in-law, mistrusts the apparent accident of Cecropia's 'beasts' interrupting the shepherd's 'sports' as early as Book I:

But Gynecia took a further conceit of it, mistrusting greatly Cecropia because she had heard much of the devilish wickedness of her heart, and that, particularly, she did her best to bring up her son Amphialus, being brother's son to Basilius, to aspire to the crown as next heir male after Basilius. (117)

Cecropia, unlike her son, is irredeemably wicked, and, to reinforce this, Sidney has her resort ultimately to torture and the use of profoundly atheistic arguments in her persuasion of the sisters. Cecropia summarizes her Epicurean philosophy in a speech to Pamela: 'Be wise, and that wisdom shall be a god unto thee; be contented, and that is thy heaven' (359). However, as Richard McCoy has observed, 'Sidney...takes pains to mitigate his male protagonist's guilt by assigning much of the blame to a bad parent'.²³¹ From the outset of the captivity episode, Amphialus is portrayed as innocent in comparison with his mother:

Amphialus was but even then returned from far countries...so as he was utterly ignorant of all his mother's wicked devices—to which he would never have consented, being, like a rose out of a briar, an excellent son of an evil mother. (317)

Under Cecropia's malign influence, but also motivated by the love first kindled at Philoclea's bathing-place, Amphialus embarks on a violent rebellion against Philoclea's father, who besieges the castle where both his daughters are held captive.

The name Amphialus, as A. C. Hamilton records, 'signifies "between two seas"'. In accordance with this translation, Hamilton regards Amphialus as a divided character.²³² This is certainly reflected in the contrast between his reputed virtue and the mischief that befalls him. Indeed, I will argue that Amphialus is subject to the

²³¹ McCoy, *Sir Philip Sidney: Rebellion in Arcadia*, pp. 172-73.

²³² Hamilton, *Sir Philip Sidney*, p. 139.

passive influence of Philoclea, and that he carries this into the martial combat that dominates Book III of the *New Arcadia*. On such occasions, particularly before his contest with Musidorus disguised as the Forsaken Knight (403-05), Amphialus is divided between his love for Philoclea and his own self-defence. This echoes the internal conflict that hampered him when he unwillingly fought his friend, Philoxenus. Amphialus is repeatedly faced with similarly thorny choices, and he repeatedly puts breath before shame, much as Pibrac did over the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre. In doing so, he rejects the 'selfless flight to the end of life', which disqualifies him as a figure representing a strictly stoical doctrine. This might be seen, particularly from the perspective of Languet's putative opponents, as marking Amphialus's story as a thoroughly negative exemplum, much like that of his mother. I, on the contrary, contend that he ought to be seen exactly as the narrative voice of the *New Arcadia* describes him, 'an excellent son of an evil mother'. This is to read Amphialus 'aright', to be no more captious or severe than Hubert Languet. Such a conclusion, already sustained by the textual evidence presented above, is further reinforced by the scene in which Cecropia falls to her death. Here, Cecropia,

fearing [her son] would have stricken her...went back so far till ere she
were aware she overthrew herself from over the leads to receive her
death's kiss at the ground. (440)

Cecropia misreads her son's intentions, as the narrative makes clear in parentheses: 'though indeed he meant it not, but only intended to kill himself in her presence' (440). When the wicked Cecropia judges Amphialus to be 'the wickedest of men', the readers are challenged to use their own moderate, arguably Philippist, tendency and judge him differently.

The moderate, less 'captious or severe' judgement advocated by Languet stems from the optimistic view of human sinfulness found in Melanchthon's theology. The potential within humanity to cooperate with God and achieve freedom from sin

articulated in Melanchthon's works, a marked difference from Calvin's harsher doctrine, informs Languet's position in his letter to Sidney cited above. In the section of the *Loci communes* of 1555 (originally published in 1521) where Melanchthon discusses original sin, there is a clear emphasis on the light placed in man by God at creation and God's renewal in humanity—after the Fall and the intercession of 'the eternal Son of God'—of 'his image and likeness'. For Melanchthon,

because nothing higher can be given than himself and this likeness of his characteristics, it is very clear that his love toward us was not a cold, indolent...thought, as a Stoic might argue, but a genuine, earnest, burning love.²³³

The narrative of the *New Arcadia*, though incomplete, includes the 'fall' of Amphialus. This passage is, as one might expect in a work written during the Renaissance era, attended by classical and Christian images of a fall. Both the classical and Christian contexts for Amphialus's descent serve, paradoxically, to confirm his elevated status in Sidney's narrative. After his mother's death, already severely wounded from combat, he bewails his miserable condition and catalogues his crimes:

'Thou hast lived to be the death of thy most dear companion and friend, Philoxenus, and of his father, thy most careful foster-father. Thou hast lived to kill a lady with thine own hands—and so excellent and virtuous a lady as the fair Parthenia was. Thou hast lived to see thy faithful Ismenus slain in succouring thee—and thou not able to defend him. Thou hast lived to show thyself such a coward as that one unknown knight could overcome thee—in thy lady's presence. Thou hast lived to bear arms against thy rightful prince—thine own uncle. Thou hast lived to be accounted—and justly accounted—a traitor, by the most excellent persons that this world holdeth. Thou hast lived to be the death of her that gave thee life'. (441)

He then stabs himself with Philoclea's knives. Beyond the help of ordinary surgeons, he is eventually carried away by Helen to the accompaniment of a song of lamentation from his people, beginning, 'Since that to death is gone the shepherd high / Who most the silly shepherd's pipe did prize, / Your doleful tunes, sweet muses, now apply' (446). This is termed the 'fall', not the 'death', of Amphialus since Helen of Corinth intends to

²³³ Melanchthon, *Melanchthon on Christian Doctrine: Loci communes*, 1555, pp. 72-3.

test the ability of her surgeon to revive him. It is likely that Helen of Corinth's surgeon would have performed such a miracle in the missing portion of Sidney's revised romance. This surgeon's extraordinary skill is demonstrated in his transformation of Parthenia's appearance (45). Amphialus's apparent end has the trappings of the actual death of an epic hero. Besides the allusion to 'the pious Aeneas' suggested by Amphialus's epithet, there are other pointed similarities between Sidney's characters and the epic heroes of Homer and Virgil. For example, Musidorus and Amphialus, in combat with each other, are likened to 'the lion that beats himself with his own tail to make himself the more angry' (409), which has echoes of Achilles fighting Aeneas in *The Iliad*: '[Achilles] rose like a lion against [Aeneas], / the baleful beast...lashes his own ribs with his tail and the flanks on both sides / as he rouses himself to fury for the fight'.²³⁴ At the moment of his 'death', Amphialus is honoured by his people, 'some throwing themselves upon the ground, some tearing their clothes and casting dust upon their heads, and some even wounding themselves and sprinkling their own blood in the air' (446). This scene is comparable with an episode from *The Iliad*, where Achilles laments the death of Patroclus, and the captive handmaidens do likewise:

In both hands he caught up the grimy dust, and poured it
over his head and face, and fouled his handsome countenance,
and the black ashes were scattered over his immortal tunic.
And he himself, mightily in his might, in the dust lay
at length, and took and tore at his hair with his hands, and defiled it.²³⁵

In a Christian context, Amphialus's fall and likely recovery echo the language of injury (as opposed to that of devastation found in Calvin) applied to the Fall of Man in Melancthon's *Loci* and Sidney's letters to Languet.²³⁶ In Melancthon's terms, humanity has received 'great wounds', but 'our misery of mind should lead us to seek

²³⁴ See Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1951), xx. 164-71 and Skretkowitz, 'General Introduction', in *The New Arcadia*, pp. xxix-xxx, xxxvi-xxxviii, xlii.

²³⁵ Homer, *The Iliad*, xviii. 23-31.

²³⁶ See Stillman, 'Deadly Stinging Adders', p. 266, n. 43 and *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism*, pp. 141-42.

the help of God's Son'.²³⁷ In his *Institutes*, Calvin portrays postlapsarian human reason as so corrupted 'that its misshapen ruins appear'.²³⁸ Both Languet and Sidney are, in their correspondence with each other, inclined to emphasize humanity's retention of 'that particle of the divine mind' which, as Languet puts it, may be used 'for the preservation and not the destruction of men'.²³⁹ Before the abrupt end of the incomplete text, Amphialus has himself been gravely wounded and shows a profound 'misery of mind'. In his final words, he betrays a deep self-awareness and his condemnation of himself, prefaced with a cry of 'Wretched Amphialus!', surpasses any reproof previously directed at the apparently 'courteous' knight (441). It would be an overstatement to suggest that Amphialus has, through the contemplation of his own experiences, achieved the kind of 'self-knowledge' necessary for him to be restored to a 'condition of goodness'. Nevertheless, he may be seen to be beginning to cooperate with God in securing his own salvation (with 'the help of God's son'). Certainly, in the figure of Amphialus, Sidney, the 'right poet', creates a corrigible character with the power to inspire such cooperation in his readers.

To accept such an interpretation of the character of Amphialus does not, however, preclude readers' finding the influence of other, possibly contradictory, philosophies at play in the *New Arcadia*. Sidney's romance is not a work conceived merely as a means of propagating Melancthonian theology, nor any other system of beliefs. As Stillman puts it, with reference to the *Old Arcadia*, Sidney is not 'transmuting morally and religiously approved doctrines into sugar-coated fictions'.²⁴⁰ In spite of Amphialus's refusal of the path of a true Stoic, it is still possible that Sidney was inspired by Stoicism, as was his sister. Indeed, stoical philosophy is found

²³⁷ Melancthon, *Melancthon on Christian Doctrine: Loci communes*, 1555, p. 71.

²³⁸ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 1, p. 270 (II. ii. 12).

²³⁹ Pears, trans., *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet*, pp. 143-50; Sidney's letter (March 1, 1578) attributes the phrase, 'that particle of the divine mind', to Languet (p. 143), and Languet's letter (May 2, 1578) repeats the phrase in a passage encouraging Sidney to make good use of his 'gifts' (p. 147).

²⁴⁰ Stillman, *Sidney's Poetic Justice*, p. 74.

elsewhere in the *New Arcadia*, particularly associated with Pamela and Philoclea during their captivity. Blair Worden, in *The Sound of Virtue*, identifies a neo-Stoic doctrine of fortitude as the dominant creed of the later books of the *Old Arcadia*, where Musidorus and Pyrocles are imprisoned and await their trial. This is seen, by Worden, to be a development from the romance's earlier espousal of a 'creed of action', in which, according to Ciceronian principles, 'virtue consists in action'.²⁴¹ Indeed, drawing on Fulke Greville's 'account of Sidney's fiction', he characterizes the *New Arcadia* as even more wholeheartedly stoical in its ethos than the *Old Arcadia*, describing the sisters' fidelity while imprisoned by Cecropia as 'a feat of Stoic heroism'. More specifically, Pamela's fortitude in the face of Cecropia's persecution is the point 'where Sidney's narrative breaks wholly free of the earlier version', and this passive form of Stoicism reaches its peak.²⁴²

This argument is persuasive, but also problematic if the *New Arcadia* were to be seen as dominated by a passive Stoicism. It is difficult to reconcile a passive ethos with the philosophy of Sidney's party, including Duplessis-Mornay, a 'political reformer who led from the front', and Languet, who counselled Sidney against the hazards of inactivity.²⁴³ Of course, the stoical strand of Sidney's thought need not reside exclusively in the passive virtue of the *New Arcadia*'s female characters, and it ought to be remembered that Sidney was well capable of drawing such ideas from his own reading, unmediated by thinkers like Duplessis-Mornay and Languet. Sidney's education at Shrewsbury School, under the headmastership of Thomas Ashton, would have included extensive instruction in classical authors such as Cicero, Caesar, Sallust, Livy, Seneca, Isocrates and Xenophon. The study of many of these authors' works would have continued at university. There is no shortage of stoical arguments among

²⁴¹ Worden, *Sound of Virtue*, pp. 33, 25.

²⁴² Worden, *Sound of Virtue*, pp. 309, 364-65.

²⁴³ Languet comments on Sidney's 'retirement' in a letter dated September 24, 1580; see Osborn, *Young Philip Sidney: 1572-1577*, pp. 504-05 and Pears, trans., *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet*, pp. 182-86.

such texts, particularly in Seneca's moral *sententiae* and Cicero's *De Officiis*, which were so integral to the humanist education of Sidney and his contemporaries. Sidney was also familiar with the Roman historian Tacitus, whose works inspired a considerable amount of early modern stoical thought. Philip recommended Tacitus to his brother Robert in a letter written in 1580.²⁴⁴ The historian was a source of inspiration for another of Sidney's correspondents, Justus Lipsius, whose *De Constantia* (1584) is a landmark work of early modern Neostoicism.²⁴⁵ An examination of the active or passive expression of virtue and the relationship of such virtue to stoical philosophy in the *Arcadias* reveals Sidney's philosophical eclecticism. Several scholarly interpretations of Sidney's romances are testament to this. I wish to suggest that by reading the *New Arcadia* through the lens of Languet's anti-stoical ethos it is possible to unify these apparently distinct scholarly interpretations of Sidney's philosophical inheritance.

The contrast between the example of virtue offered by the character of Amphialus and that represented by Pyrocles and Musidorus together is examined by Nancy Lindheim, in her *The Structures of Sidney's Arcadia*. In what Lindheim terms the 'Asia Minor paideia' of the *New Arcadia*, the princes undergo an 'education in virtue'.²⁴⁶ Their adventures are a portrait of virtue in action, and, as such, approach the view of virtue implicit in the Aristotelian definition of Justice, also invoked by Lindheim in her discussion of the trial scene of the *Old Arcadia*: 'complete virtue in the fullest sense, because it is the actual exercise of complete virtue'.²⁴⁷ Nevertheless, this

²⁴⁴ *The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. Albert Feuillerat, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 130-33.

²⁴⁵ For details of Sidney's education, see Wallace, *The Life of Sir Philip Sidney*, pp. 35-111; for discussions of the importance of Stoicism to Sidney and the 'Sidney circle', see Joel B. Davis's unpublished dissertation, 'Renaissance Neostoicism and the Sidney Family Literary Discourse', University of Oregon, 1999, and his article, 'Multiple *Arcadias* and the Literary Quarrel between Fulke Greville and the Countess of Pembroke'.

²⁴⁶ Nancy Lindheim, *The Structures of Sidney's Arcadia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), p. 161.

²⁴⁷ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. W. D. Ross, V. i. 1129^b30, cited in Lindheim, *The Structures of Sidney's Arcadia*, p. 161.

high ideal is brought into question through its association with the character of Euarchus, whose actual justice (in the *Old Arcadia*) is pitiless and, as Lindheim notes, he is ‘*too much* the Stoic sage’.²⁴⁸ The text makes plain his stoical command over his passions, and that ‘his mind...hated evil in what colours soever he found it’ (382-83), but, as a consequence of such apparent virtues, he judges Gynecia wrongly. For Lindheim, Euarchus lacks Aristotelian ‘equity’. Defined by Aristotle in the *Rhetoric*, the concept of equity sounds distinctly Melanchthonian in tone:

It is equity to pardon human failings, and to look to the lawgiver and not to the law; to the spirit and not to the letter; to the intention and not the action; to the whole and not to the part; to the character of the actor in the long run and not in the present moment.²⁴⁹

On these terms, Lindheim concludes that the *Arcadias* articulate ‘a view of experience’ founded on an acute ‘sense of the *limitations* of reason, law, and virtue measured in a purely human context’; and the active pursuit of virtue by Sidney’s princes in Asia Minor and ‘the character of Amphialus as it is developed in the Captivity sequence’ suggest the very same conclusion.²⁵⁰ No matter how corrigible Amphialus may be, his actions do not amount to the exercise of virtue, but the *Arcadia*, it may be argued, encourages its readers to judge him with equity and not with the apparent sagacity of the Stoic.²⁵¹

Lindheim’s broader project includes an elucidation of what she terms Sidney’s ‘rhetoricism’, which involves an emphasis on the Sophistic elements of Aristotelian thought represented in Renaissance humanism generally and the ‘structures’ of Sidney’s prose romance in particular.²⁵² She postulates a ‘revision [in the *New Arcadia*] towards

²⁴⁸ Lindheim, *The Structures of Sidney’s Arcadia*, p. 159; Lindheim’s emphasis.

²⁴⁹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I.13.1374^b, cited in Lindheim, *The Structures of Sidney’s Arcadia*, p. 159.

²⁵⁰ Lindheim, *The Structures of Sidney’s Arcadia*, p. 161; the emphasis is mine.

²⁵¹ Like Lindheim, Arthur F. Kinney, ‘Sir Philip Sidney and the Uses of History’, in Heather Dubrow and Richard Strier, eds., *The Historical Renaissance: New Essays on Tudor and Stuart Literature and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 310-11, refers to Aristotle’s definition of equity when he argues for ‘a kind of humanity that might instruct Euarchus if he could only know it’.

²⁵² Lindheim draws on Nancy S. Struener’s *The Language of History in the Renaissance: Rhetoric and Historical Consciousness in Florentine Humanism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970).

Aristotle's ideas of what the good rhetorician will know'. Such knowledge is related to the peculiarly Aristotelian concept of experience which informs Sidney's understanding of 'education in virtue' outlined above. This is exemplified (in a negative fashion), for Lindheim, by the inadequacies of 'knowledge of oneself and of others' demonstrated by Amphialus, Helen of Corinth and Cecropia.²⁵³ Such a reading, though persuasive, leaves out the equity and 'sense of the limitations of reason, law, and virtue', as well as any acknowledgement of the importance of 'human context', that informs Lindheim's readings elsewhere in her thesis. Moreover, this is a denial of the peculiarly Sophistical aspects of the Aristotelian rhetoricism which Lindheim views as important to the reading of Sidney's *New Arcadia* and English Renaissance literature in general: an emphasis on 'human will and choice, insisting on the way action is conditioned by circumstances and capable of ambiguous and conflicting interpretations'.²⁵⁴ I contend that such ideas are more compatible with a Philippist philosophy that also assigns an unusual freedom to the individual human will. Advocates of such a philosophy may also view Amphialus, Helen of Corinth and Cecropia as characters with varying degrees of self-knowledge and knowledge of others that could serve as instructive examples in the education in virtue of Sidney's readers.²⁵⁵

Stillman, on the other hand, engages with Sidney's philosophical inheritance and argues that the *Old Arcadia* be termed a 'Stoic pastoral'. Stillman's case is based on Sidney's adoption of 'the principle that it is man's nature, and therefore his moral duty, to follow the dictates of reason and virtue' derived from classical authors such as Aristotle, Cicero, Plutarch, and, as Stillman observes, 'can appropriately be called "Stoic", since it is framed upon a concept that has been inextricably associated with the

²⁵³ Lindheim, *The Structures of Sidney's Arcadia*, p. 60.

²⁵⁴ Lindheim, *The Structures of Sidney's Arcadia*, p. 7; these ideas flow from a Sophistic epistemology that insists, contrary to the Idealism of Plato and Aristotle, that 'only a world of flux and impurity exists' (Struever, *The Language of History*, p. 10).

²⁵⁵ Mervyn James underlines the peculiarly Platonic 'initiation [of the princes] into the full spectrum of wisdom required for the role of princely governance'; see Mervyn James, *Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 390.

Stoics since the time of Cicero'. However, Stillman is keen to emphasize that Sidney is not a 'philosophical Stoic'. That would involve the belief in, among other philosophical commitments, 'the equal viciousness of all crimes', which would, as I have shown above, go against the tenor of a Philippist ethos.²⁵⁶ It is noteworthy that Sidney distanced himself from the school of Stoics in a letter to Hubert Languet of March 1st 1578 (at the time when Languet was counselling Sidney against passivity), in which he asks, 'Do you not see that I am cleverly playing the stoic?'²⁵⁷ Stillman sees Sidney employing (while not adhering to) philosophical stoicism as a 'defense of retirement in a corrupt age'.²⁵⁸ It is also possible to see Sidney 'cleverly playing the stoic' in the philosophical (or, perhaps, more accurately termed 'theological') arguments of the *New Arcadia*.

During the captivity episode, in the face of Cecropia's argument to persuade the princess to marry Amphialus (in which Cecropia expounds a peculiarly godless epistemology), Pamela produces a sustained case in refutation of her aunt's atheism. Her method involves undermining the philosophical bases of Cecropia's argument one by one. Early in her speech, Pamela challenges the notion that belief in God arose from human ignorance of the 'causes of things' (359):

Nay, because we know that each effect hath a cause, that hath engendered a true and lively devotion; for this goodly work of which we are, and in which we live, hath not his being by chance (on which opinion it is beyond marvel by what chance any brain could stumble!)—for it be eternal as you would seem to conceive of it, eternity and chance are things insufferable together. (359-60)

²⁵⁶ Stillman, *Sidney's Poetic Justice*, p. 71. Stillman cites Cicero's *De Officiis: quod summum bonum a Stoicis dicitur, convenienter naturae vivere, id habet hanc, ut opinor sententiam: cum virtute congruere semper* ('when the Stoics speak of the supreme good as "living conformably to Nature," they mean, as I take it, something like this: that we are always to be in accord with virtue'; see Cicero, *De Officiis* (Loeb Classical Library), trans. Walter Miller (London: Heinemann; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), III. iii. 13; trans., p. 281.

²⁵⁷ Pears, trans., *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet*, p. 143; also see *The Correspondence of Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet*, ed. William Aspenwall Bradley (Boston: The Merrymount Press, 1912), p. 159, cited in Stillman, *Sidney's Poetic Justice*, p. 73.

²⁵⁸ Stillman, *Sidney's Poetic Justice*, p. 73.

This is an articulation of the cosmological (or ‘first cause’) argument for the existence of God, which is expressed most famously in the *Summa Theologica* of St Thomas Aquinas. It also appears in Aristotle, whose philosophy Aquinas sought to reconcile with Christian theology.²⁵⁹ This leads onto a denial of chance, which ‘could never make all things of nothing’, or give rise to ‘perfect order, perfect beauty, perfect constancy’ (360). To the suggestion of a haphazard ‘nature’ as the origin of such things, Pamela retorts that ‘there must needs have been a wisdom which made them concur’ (360-61), and that, in turn, any resort to an ‘universal nature’ must include the qualities of ‘wisdom, goodness and providence’, or else be a further blasphemy (361). Essentially, this is the argument for the existence of God ‘from design’ (the teleological argument), in which a divine wisdom can be inferred from the orderliness and beauty of the natural world, and has a long history including arguments from Aristotle.²⁶⁰

In an article discussing the philosophical and theological background to Pamela’s refutation, D. P. Walker asserts that Pamela, in resorting to the argument from design and its concomitant association of faith with nature, tackles her atheistic foe on the only common ground they have, that of ‘natural reason’.²⁶¹ Walker describes her ‘arguments against chance’ as ‘a bewildering display of sophistry, achieved by sometimes using “chance” as the opposite of intelligent purpose, and sometimes as the opposite of necessary order’. In so doing, ‘she is thus able to switch rapidly from chance—lack of purpose, which includes necessary order, to chance—randomness, which is a contrary of necessary order as well as of purpose’. Although he cites a partial precedent for such ‘sophistry’ in the ‘Stoic...part’ of Cicero’s *De Natura Deorum*,

²⁵⁹ Ted Honderich, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 43-7.

²⁶⁰ This argument also begins Philippe Duplessis-Mornay’s *De la Verité de la Religion Chrestienne*, the English translation of which has been partly attributed to Sidney. In the English version, the orderliness of the natural world ‘ought in all reason to make us all to understand, that in this great universall masse, there is a soveraine Spirite which maketh, moveth, and governeth all that wee see there’. See Duplessis-Mornay *A woorke concerning the trewnesse of the Christian religion*, p. 2.

²⁶¹ D. P. Walker, ‘Ways of Dealing with Atheists: A Background to Pamela’s Refutation of Cecropia’, *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance* 17.2 (1955), p. 269.

Walker sees no other purpose to the princess's stance than theological expediency.²⁶²

Pamela is pragmatically opposing the irredeemable Cecropia with a defensive brand of theology, one that obviates Cecropia's response, but is not necessarily sincerely held.

Walker identifies two groups of Christians: one group (including Philippe Duplessis-Mornay) that 'have some hope of converting atheists', and another that 'have purely protective aims'. Pamela's refutation of Cecropia is characterized by Walker as

belonging to the latter, 'less liberal' theology, held by Montaigne among others, that 'emphasize[s] grace at the expense of free will'.²⁶³ This contrasts starkly with my

'liberal' reading of the 'fall' of Cecropia's son, Amphialus. Nevertheless, Walker's case that Pamela belongs to the second group of Christians rests on Pamela's confession to Cecropia that 'I speak to you without any hope of fruit in so rotten a heart' (359), and it is perhaps a step too far to align her refutation of Cecropia with the less liberal party.

It is possible to argue that Pamela's arguments are not merely a result of theological pragmatism, but a resort to nature in which nature is equated with reason and virtue as part of a stoic pastoral philosophy akin to that identified by Stillman in the *Old Arcadia*.

Walker's sourcing of the ideas in a stoic text and Pamela's 'display of sophistry'

provide strong clues to their shared origin in Sidney's rhetoricism. Moreover, through

Pamela's defensive arguments in this passage, Sidney is again demonstrating his

knowledge of philosophical stoicism without advocating it.

Victor Skretkowicz has shown that Mary Sidney Herbert was influenced by the Huguenot thinkers, Hubert Languet and Philippe Duplessis-Mornay. In doing so, he has

²⁶² Walker, 'Ways of Dealing with Atheists', pp. 271-72.

²⁶³ Walker, 'Ways of Dealing with Atheists', pp. 265-67. Justus Lipsius, in his classic work of sixteenth-century Neostoicism, *De Constantia*, emphasizes God's will, with little, if any, suggestion of human cooperation, but retains the possibility of the conversion of God's foes: 'For what is more able to expresse his mightie power, than that he doth not only vanquish his enemies that withstand him, but so over-ruleth them, that he draweth them to his partie? That they fight in his quarrel? And beare armes for his victorie?' Sidney, I suggest, differs from Lipsius in allowing greater scope for the human will; see Lipsius, *Two Bookes of Constancie*, II, vii, p. 76. Sidney was no doubt familiar with the Latin version of Lipsius's text and its attempted reconciliation of Stoicism and Christianity. Although Stradling's translation did not appear until 1594, the Latin version was available from 1584.

drawn attention to a moral distinction, based on Languet's (and Duplessis-Mornay's) humanistic and theological inheritance from Philip Melanchthon, that, I contend, is of significance for reading Philip Sidney's *New Arcadia*. This thesis, that of a Philippist *Arcadia*, has the potential to unify several apparently distinct readings. It may also resolve the problematic association of Sidney with a passive stoicism in the work of critics like Blair Worden. Through the passive virtue of Pamela and the less than virtuous actions of Amphialus, Sidney is able to use his familiarity with stoical thought to advocate a liberal philosophy that incorporates the Philippism of Languet, the rhetoricism of Aristotle and his own 'stoic pastoral'.

Having elucidated the Philippism at play in Sidney's creation of the character of Amphialus, I now, in the following chapter, demonstrate the further significance of the character for the author's revision of his own work. In what is an unusual example of the conventional device by which authors introduce an image of themselves into their own literary works, Sidney associates himself with a troubled and dishonourable character.

Chapter Four: ‘I am a man; that is to say, a creature whose reason is often darkened with error’: Sir Philip Sidney, Humility and Revising the *Arcadia*

As I maintained in the previous chapter, Sidney invites his readers to judge Amphialus with moderation. In this chapter, I examine the degree to which Sidney himself can be identified with a character such as Amphialus, asking whether he, like Sidney’s other literary persona, Philisides, may represent the author in his own text. If this were the case, the fall of Amphialus could represent a more profound symbol of Sidney’s religious conviction than has hitherto been recognised.

The shepherd Philisides plays a prominent part in Sir Philip Sidney’s *Old Arcadia*, but this cannot be said of his revised romance. Indeed, it is notable that the character most closely associated with the author himself should have his role so diminished in the *New Arcadia*. In the three (incomplete) books of Sidney’s revision, Philisides appears only once, as a knight in the tournament held to celebrate the anniversary of Queen Andromana’s wedding, which forms part of Pyrocles’s retrospective narrative in Book II.²⁶⁴ This single brief appearance by Sidney’s hitherto fictional persona has the hallmarks of a parting cameo for the author in this particular guise.

Is the departure of Philisides also the end of the poet’s participation in his own poem? In the *New Arcadia* in general, Sidney revises his narrative technique, eschewing the guiding voice of the narrator in favour a series of narratives recollected by his characters. By this further means Sidney seems to distance himself and his own biography from the characters and the events of the revised romance. Nevertheless, I

²⁶⁴ In Greville’s edition of the *New Arcadia* (1590), in the First Eclogues, a melancholy, young ‘stranger’ shepherd, who resembles Philisides, sings the song, ‘As I my little flock on Ister bank’ (see *The New Arcadia*, p. 478). As I discussed in the Introduction, I concur with Skretkiewicz’s decision to relegate the Eclogues printed in the text of 1590 to an appendix. Mary Sidney Herbert and her colleagues added the Eclogues, which contain Philisides (as a shepherd), to Books I-III of the 1593 *Arcadia*. Skretkiewicz excludes them from his *New Arcadia* on the grounds that they have no association with Sidney’s revision. Philisides’s only other appearance (apart from the *Old Arcadia*, of course) is in the non-authorial (or at least uncorrected) final page of 1593, which retains the text from the *Old Arcadia*. This appears to be an oversight or left in by the 1593 team to tie up the references in the Eclogues that they included.

will argue that, rather than severing his personal ties with his text, the author replaces his fictional persona with Amphialus, a morally ambiguous, anti-heroic protagonist, who still retains an authorial imprint. As such, Amphialus symbolizes the author's production of a text more ethically unstable and yet significantly more inclusive than his original.

The effect that poets' works may have on their readers is clearly the central subject of Sidney's *Defence*, and the *Arcadia* appears to have participated in this process, the latter maintaining the Melanchthonian ethos of the former in so doing. The construction of the *Arcadia*, a lengthy and complex romance, clearly involved a broader and less idealizing vision of human virtue than was possible in the confines of a defence of poetry, and, as such, allowed Sidney the range to explore the virtues of a multitude of individual characters whose ultimate roles as virtuous examples may be recognized as either positive or negative. Sidney's readers, as I argued in the previous chapter, are invited to judge Amphialus, arguably a negative example, with moderation. In addition, insofar as Sidney's characters are models for and reflections of real human virtues and vices, it is reasonable to ask to what extent Sidney himself identified with his characters, whether they be basically honourable or not. Is it possible that Amphialus, like the other personae from Sidney's literary works that have been associated with their author, may be a figure partly representative of Sidney's self-conception? Could Sidney be indicating some aspect of himself that requires the moderate judgement of his peers, who were also his readers? The character most readily associated with Sidney is Philisides. The obvious resemblance of their names, the 'poetic persona' created from the author's name, as Jean Robertson notes, 'by adding a Greek termination to the first elements of his names', prompts the reader to recognize 'the customary pose of the poet

introduced into his own pastoral poem'.²⁶⁵ The correspondence between Philip Sidney and Philisides has formed the central pillar of several scholarly readings of the *Arcadia*.

For Blair Worden, Philisides represents the serious purpose behind Sidney's apparently trifling fiction:

He wrote at a grave political moment, when he believed the survival of Protestantism and liberty to be at stake. [...] Politics, it is true, can sharply interrupt the love story, surprising the characters by their intervention and surprising us too... In the Third Eclogues, where the shepherds, free for once of the presence of princes, celebrate a wedding among themselves, the mood is abruptly changed by Philisides, Sidney's fictional representative, who perplexes the company by singing the song he learned from Sidney's mentor Hubert Languet about the origins and rise of tyranny.²⁶⁶

Here, in the *Old Arcadia*, according to Worden, Philisides represents Sidney as the courtier-poet who wishes to sing the political gravity of the times, but he lacks the appropriate occasion:

Philisides knew it no good manners to be squeamish of his cunning, having put himself in their company, and yet loath either in time of marriage to sing his sorrows, more fit for funerals, or by any outward matter to be drawn to such mirth as to betray (as it were) that passion to which he had given over himself, he took a mean way betwixt both and sang this song he had learned before he had ever subjected his thoughts to acknowledge no master but a mistress. (254)

The song itself, beginning 'As I my little flock on Ister bank / (A little flock, but well my pipe they couthe) / Did piping lead', recalls the 'song old Languet had me taught' (254-55). Sidney was with Languet, to whom the song is a poetic tribute, in Vienna, on the banks of the Ister (the Danube), in August of both 1573 and 1574. According to Robertson, Philisides sings a beast fable that expounds the moral that 'a powerful aristocracy is the best safeguard of the common people against tyranny'.²⁶⁷ Worden draws the parallel between Philisides's song and a putative occasion when Sidney might have been 'called on to produce poetry for a wedding: the wedding [the match between

²⁶⁵ Robertson, 'Commentary', in *The Old Arcadia*, p. 430. Robertson cites the precedents of Sannazaro as Sincero in his *Arcadia* and Virgil's first Eclogue: *Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi* ('You, Tityrus, lie under the shade of a spreading beech tree').

²⁶⁶ Worden, *The Sound of Virtue*, pp. 4-5.

²⁶⁷ Robertson, 'Commentary', in *The Old Arcadia*, pp. 463-64.

Elizabeth and Anjou] which, he believed, would be a prelude to the destruction of England's religion and liberty'. For Worden, Sidney's 'A Letter to Queen Elizabeth, Touching her Marriage with Monsieur' and Philisides's song are the author's own 'mean way' of negotiating a similar conflict of occasion and conviction, not by singing a 'song he had learned', but 'by taking up his pen'.²⁶⁸

Philisides's role in the *New Arcadia*, as a knight in Queen Andromana's tournament, is a significant departure from that which he performs in the original text. Formerly a shepherd, now 'sudden growing a man-of-arms', Philisides jousts against Lelius, who, being Philisides's friend, senior in age and superior in the art of tilting, deliberately misses. Before the tilt, as befits a shepherd-knight, Philisides enters the tiltyard

with bagpipes instead of trumpets, a shepherd's boy before him for a page, and by him a dozen apparelled like shepherds...who carried his lances which, though strong to give a lancely blow indeed, yet so were they coloured, with hooks near the morne, that they prettily represented sheephooks. (255)

The associations between Philisides and Sidney's own biography remain: his *impresa*— 'a sheep marked with pitch, with this word: "Spotted to be known"'—closely resembles the device which Abraham Fraunce describes and attributes to Sidney in the manuscript, *Symbolicae Philosophiae*, likely to have been offered to Robert Sidney shortly after Philip's death.²⁶⁹ Moreover, the lady, the 'star' for whose affections Philisides is jousting (255), has been associated with 'Stella' from Sidney's sonnet sequence, *Astrophil and Stella*, which is famously presumed to be at least partially based on Sidney's own relationship, of whatever significance, with Penelope, Lady Rich (*née* Devereux).²⁷⁰ The possibility that Philisides's opponent, Lelius, represents one of

²⁶⁸ Worden, *Sound of Virtue*, p. 293.

²⁶⁹ For the dating of the MS. to the period immediately after Philip Sidney's death and the significance of the device in Sidney's own tiltyard career see D. Coulman, "'Spotted to Be Known'", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 20.1/2 (January-June 1957), pp. 179-80 and Victor Skretkowicz, "'A More Lively Monument': Philisides in *Arcadia*", in *Sir Philip Sidney's Achievements*, pp. 194-200.

²⁷⁰ Skretkowicz, 'General Introduction', in *The New Arcadia*, pp. xiv-xvi.

Sidney's real-life tiltyard opponents, either Sir Henry Lee or Edward Dyer, has also provoked scholarly conjecture.²⁷¹ In keeping with the widely-observed generic differences between the *Old* and *New Arcadia*, what Skretkowicz terms 'the overt alteration from a dramatic romance of mixed genres [including pastoral] to a complex heroic poem', Philisides is transformed from a 'melancholy lover turned shepherd' into 'one of the leading tilters in an important festival'. Indeed, Skretkowicz notes a change from dejection to optimism in this new portrayal of the author.²⁷²

Nevertheless, despite the strength of these associations and their obvious interest to historians and literary critics, this is a short-lived appearance (occupying 44 lines in the Oxford edition) and it figures in a half-remembered, occasionally second-hand section of Pyrocles's account of the tournament. In this context, given the nature of Philisides's shepherd-like outward appearance and the bathos of his uncontested joust with Lelius, the passage evokes more of a sense of mock-epic than anything more laudable. This suggests that Philisides's transformation into a 'man-of-arms' signifies a more general change in the atmosphere of Sidney's romance, a change from the pastoral to the martial, but (as far as is discernible from the incomplete text) it does not herald the continued, though modified, participation of the author's previous persona. Rather than representing the beginning of a new optimistic persona for the author, this appears to be a fond farewell to an old and henceforth largely redundant one.

Is the departure of Philisides also the end of the poet's participation in his own poem? In the *New Arcadia* in general, Sidney revises his narrative technique, eschewing the guiding voice of the narrator in favour a series of narratives recollected by his characters. This would seem to be a means by which Sidney distances his own

²⁷¹ For the evidence in favour of such attributions see James Holly Hanford and Sara Ruth Watson, 'Personal Allegory in the *Arcadia*: Philisides and Lelius', *Modern Philology* 32.1 (August 1934), pp. 1-10 and Frances A. Yates, 'Elizabethan Chivalry: The Romance of the Accession Day Tilts', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 20.1/2 (January-June 1957), pp. 4-25. For a more judicious response to this evidence, see Skretkowicz, 'General Introduction', in *The New Arcadia*, pp. xiv-xv and "'A More Lively Monument'", p. 196.

²⁷² Skretkowicz, "'A More Lively Monument'", pp. 195-96.

biography from the characters and the events of the *New Arcadia*. In the passage from Book II in which Philisides appears, Pyrocles takes up the narrator's role and, in doing so, becomes the character whose voice is most closely linked to that of Sidney himself. This association is made most plain in the account of Andromana's tournament, where the events surrounding Philisides, the character previously most identified with the author himself, are related by Pyrocles. Nevertheless, through the employment of the prince's reporting of hearsay and the inclusion of occasional gaps in his recollection of the shepherd-knight's tilt, as Skretkowicz notes, '[e]ven while speaking through Pyrocles, Sidney dissociates himself from the narrative'.²⁷³

Despite this apparent distancing, Sidney's revisions can be seen as retaining certain important associations with his biography and political philosophy. The departure of Philisides and related arrival of Amphialus are key to this reading. The displacement of one by the other is signalled by the transference of the poem in which Philisides's origins are narrated from the shepherd himself to Amphialus, for whom the poem is a vain fantasy of a pastoral idyll wrapped in a dream:

Methought—nay, sure, I was—I was in fairest wood
Of Samothea land, a land which whilom stood
An honour to the world (while honour was their end,
And while their line of years they did in virtue spend);
But there I was, and there my calmy thoughts I fed
On nature's sweet repast, as healthful senses led (347).

Victor Skretkowicz, building on earlier scholarship, connects Philisides's place of birth with Sidney's biography and more tellingly, his political ethos.²⁷⁴ Philisides is a Samothean. As several scholars have noted, Samothea, far from being a place conjured from Sidney's imagination, as two of his editors believed, is, in fact a place in 'the

²⁷³ Skretkowicz, "A More Lively Monument", p. 196.

²⁷⁴ Victor Skretkowicz, "'O pugnā infaustā': Sidney's Transformations and the Last of the Samotheans", *Sidney Journal* 22.1-2 (2004), pp. 1-24. Also see Skretkowicz, *European Erotic Romance: Philhellene Protestantism, Renaissance Translation and English Literary Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. 168-224.

“alternative” myth of the ancient glory of Britain’.²⁷⁵ Skretkowicz underlines what he terms Sidney’s

notion of his location in religio-political history...formed by his understanding of politics among the powerbrokers of France, Spain, and the states within the Holy Roman Empire, especially the Netherlands. This understanding appears to be coloured by an amalgam of mythical concepts. It consists of the intersection of Annius of Viterbo’s construction of divinely ordained European political unity with the obscurities of Anglo-Norman history. It combines with real late sixteenth-century politics to form an idealised view of a Renaissance English nation, with origins and responsibilities to Europe and Christianity that long predate, and far outweigh, the aberrations of contemporary interests.²⁷⁶

The Dominican friar, Annius of Viterbo, published a supposed fragment of the lost books of a third-century Babylonian author, Berosus, in his *Commentaria* (1498), in which the ‘ancient Celtic, Western European coastal kingdom of Samothrea’ was ruled by Samotus.²⁷⁷ In Annius’s fabricated history, the ruler of Samothrea was the son of Japheth, son of Noah, ensuring the divine sanction of a pre-existing political entity larger than any of the European states that had since occupied the same territory.²⁷⁸ Sidney and his relatives appear to have seen themselves as descendants of Anglo-Norman families with an even older Celtic heritage in Samothrea. Sidney’s father, Sir Henry Sidney, commissioned the tracing of the family’s lineage, which purported to show their ‘descent in unbroken male succession from the time of King Stephen or Henry II’; William de Sidne, from whom the Sidneys claimed descent, accompanied the uncrowned Henry from Anjou, later becoming his Chamberlain.²⁷⁹ This genealogy endowed them with what Skretkowicz terms ‘origins and responsibilities to Europe and

²⁷⁵ Katherine Duncan-Jones, ‘Sidney in Samothrea: A Forgotten National Myth’, *Review of English Studies* xxv (1974), p. 174; also see William A. Ringler, Jr, ‘Arthur Kelton’s Contributions to Early British History’, *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 40.4 (August 1977), pp. 353-56, W. L. Godshalk, ‘Correspondence’, *Review of English Studies* xxix (1978), pp. 325-26, W. L. Godshalk, ‘Correspondence’, *Review of English Studies* xxxi (1980), p. 192 and Katherine Duncan-Jones, ‘Sidney in Samothrea Yet Again’, *Review of English Studies* xxxviii (1987), pp. 226-27. The editors, Ringler, *The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney*, p. 419, and Robertson, *The Old Arcadia*, p. 504, attribute ‘Samothrea’ to Sidney’s original creation.

²⁷⁶ Skretkowicz, “‘O pugnam infaustam’”, p. 1.

²⁷⁷ Skretkowicz, “‘O pugnam infaustam’”, pp. 12-13.

²⁷⁸ Samotus’s biblical name is Meshech; see Genesis 10, *The Bible, Authorized King James Version*, pp. 10-11.

²⁷⁹ Wallace, *The Life of Sir Philip Sidney*, p. 4; also see Skretkowicz, “‘O pugnam infaustam’”, p. 6.

Christianity that long predate, and far outweigh, the aberrations of contemporary interests'.²⁸⁰ Such concerns also clearly overlapped with the religio-political aspirations of Sidney's Huguenot associates, like Languet, who were faced with the bloody divisions wrought by the Reformation on the continent of Europe.

It should be also noted that, while Sidney probably did consider himself to be the bearer of such responsibilities, he also seems to have had an ambivalent attitude to the scholarship on which such genealogies were based. Responding to a letter from Languet (dated 28th January, 1574), in which the Frenchman describes the happy accident of having burnt one such book of antiquarian scholarship, Sidney appears both to share and to question Languet's disdain.²⁸¹ In the book in question, Humphrey Llwyd's unfinished survey of Britain, *Commentarioli Britannicae descriptionis fragmentum* (1572; translated into English as *The Breviary of Britayne*, 1573), Llwyd claims, to Languet's amusement, that the ancient Gaulish leader, Brennus, was, in fact, a Welshman. In response, Sidney, together with a great deal of what he professes to be mere 'jesting', actually defends Llwyd's claim. He frames his defence with what he maintains are the reported comments of his Welsh servant, Griffin Madox:

Among other things, in order to efface the brand of folly which you had stamped on the worthy Lhuid, he [Madox] says that as far as regards Brennus he [Llwyd] is quite right, and proves it from the name, for in their language, the ancient Briton, Brennus means King, and was as much in vogue with them as Pharaoh or Ptolemy with the Egyptians, Arsaces among the Kings of Parthia, and Hubert among hunters.²⁸²

As Philip Schwyzer observes, 'Languet was astute enough to detect something forced in Sidney's jesting',²⁸³ and his reply seems to acknowledge the sensitivity of this subject for Sidney:

²⁸⁰ Skretkiewicz, "O pugnam infaustam", p. 1.

²⁸¹ Pears, trans., *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet*, pp. 30-7.

²⁸² Pears, trans., *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet*, pp. 35-6.

²⁸³ Philip Schwyzer, 'British History and "The British History": the same old story?', in David J. Baker and Willy Maley, eds., *British Identities and English Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 14-5.

I have no wish to deprive you and Griffin of your Brennus, although he is said to have been my fellow countryman (for the Senones are believed to have been from Burgundy), I will even permit you to choose a few other robbers of this sort from French history to adopt into your nation.²⁸⁴

Perhaps out of a sense of loyalty to ‘a particularly distinguished Welsh scholar, some of whose work... was completed under the patronage of Sir Henry Sidney’ (Philip’s father), or because of his own belief in the work’s veracity, Sidney asks Languet to concede this narrow point of lineage. Whatever his reasons were for holding onto this piece of British heritage, Sidney appears to have been torn between the concerns of his fellow countrymen (broadly defined), symbolized by Llwyd, and those broader European interests, embodied by his mentor, Languet.²⁸⁵ Nevertheless, by alluding, in the *Arcadia*, to the ancient unity of European lands under the name of Samothia, Sidney is able, however transiently, to resolve this apparent tension.

Duncan-Jones sees Sidney’s use of Samothia as a means of suggesting ‘a British Golden Age, revived in the reign of Elizabeth’. Indeed, during the reign of Samotus (or Samothia as he is also known) and his successors, Samothia was a place ‘characterized by stable government, development of the arts, and high and devout philosophical speculations’.²⁸⁶ Such high-minded and effective government is reminiscent of Corinth under Helen’s rule, which I discussed in relation to Elizabeth’s government in Chapter One. Pyrocles attests that,

‘as [Helen’s] beauty hath won the prize from all women that stand in degree of comparison (for, as for the two sisters of Arcadia, they are far beyond all conceit of comparison!), so hath her government been such as hath been no less beautiful to men’s judgements than her beauty to the eyesight. [...] she made her people (by peace) warlike, her courtiers (by sports) learned, her ladies (by love) chaste; for, by continual martial exercises without blood, she made them perfect in that bloody art; her sports were such as carried riches of knowledge upon the stream of delight’. (253-54)

²⁸⁴ This is Osborn’s translation of Languet’s Latin; see Osborn, *Young Philip Sidney: 1572-1577*, p. 150.

²⁸⁵ Duncan-Jones, ‘Sidney in Samothia Yet Again’, pp. 226-27; also see Schwyzer, ‘British History and “The British History”: the same old story?’, pp. 11-23.

²⁸⁶ Duncan-Jones, ‘Sidney in Samothia: A Forgotten National Myth’, p. 176.

The association of Amphialus, rather than Philisides, with the benignly-ruled Samothea might appear less inappropriate if the unspotted Helen were, through her attachment to Amphialus, somehow involved. Moreover, as Sidney's fictional persona, Philisides of Samothea symbolizes European and Christian unity. Yet, by replacing Philisides with Amphialus, whose very name suggests division, or at least ambivalence, Sidney would seem to be casting off his pan-European political interests. Nevertheless, this could also reflect Sidney's own sense of dividedness, simultaneously a proud Briton and a friend of the continental Protestant cause.²⁸⁷ Such ambivalence could also be at play in the famous phrase from *Astrophil and Stella*, 'that sweet enemy, France' (41. 4), as well as being indicated by the author's attitude to Languet's jibe at the expense of this carefully protected version of British history.²⁸⁸

Amphialus is also a less than virtuous character, and if he represents Sidney in his own text, it would require considerably humility on the author's part to make such a connection plain. Although, it might be argued, the connection is not what might ordinarily be described as explicit. Nevertheless, there are grounds on which to make this association. Firstly, as I highlighted in Chapter Three, the song of lamentation sung at Amphialus's apparent demise (in the *New Arcadia*), characterizes him as 'the shepherd high / Who most the silly shepherd's pipe did prize', which might be said of a loftier version of Philisides, Sidney's alter ego in the *Old Arcadia*. Secondly, and more significantly, as Kenneth Myrick notes,

Amphialus undoubtedly bears in some particulars a striking resemblance to Sidney himself. They are alike in courtesy, in energetic leadership, in courage and skill in tourney, perhaps in melancholy. Each, until he

²⁸⁷ Alan Stewart's biography, *Philip Sidney: A Double Life* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2000), as its title suggests, describes Sidney as being 'forced to lead a double life: of fame and praise abroad, and of comparative—and deliberate—neglect at home' (p. 7).

²⁸⁸ Schwyzer notes that '[e]verything that made the British history valuable for the purposes of sixteenth-century nationalism—in sum, its vision of the nation as ancient, insular, uncorrupt, and imperial—referred very specifically and exclusively to the nation of the Britons, that is the Welsh'. Moreover, as Schwyzer continues, '[w]hile Llwyd and his [Welsh] colleagues were exposed to the withering scorn of their fellow humanists, the fruits of their work were eagerly co-opted for the service of English power' ('British History and "The British History": the same old story?', pp. 16-8).

reached manhood, was heir to his uncle, Basilius and Leicester respectively; and each had his hopes of inheritance cut off by his uncle's marriage, though Leicester's son, unlike the princesses of Arcadia, died in infancy.²⁸⁹

Indeed, Helen of Corinth describes Amphialus in terms that bear out such a comparison:

'This knight, then, whose figure you see, but whose mind can be painted by nothing but by the true shape of virtue, is brother's son to Basilius, king of Arcadia, and in his childhood esteemed his heir; till Basilius, in his old years marrying a young and a fair lady, had of her those two daughters (so famous for their perfection in beauty), which put by their young cousin from that expectation; whereupon his mother (a woman of a haughty heart, being daughter to the king of Argos), either disdainig or fearing that her son should live under the power of Basilius, sent him to that Lord Timotheus...—a happy resolution for Amphialus, whose excellent nature was by this means trained on with as good education as any prince's son in the world could have'. (61)

It is not necessary for all the particulars of Amphialus's story to mirror Sidney's life for the parallel to be instructive. Sidney would not, I am sure, describe his own mother as 'a woman of a haughty heart', nor liken her in any way to Cecropia. Myrick speculates that 'a Freudian critic could argue that Amphialus represents the author as he might have been, had he not suppressed one side of his nature'.²⁹⁰ I suggest that this portrait might be better explained within a Melanchthonian framework (as opposed to a Freudian one), where the author acknowledges, rather than suppresses, the fallen aspect of his character, hoping ultimately to be judged with moderation.

As we have seen, Sidney has been linked to his character Pyrocles, who is just as capable of cruelty as Amphialus. This is most poignantly displayed in the revised *Arcadia* when Pyrocles kills Lycurgus in a manner very reminiscent of Aeneas's killing of Turnus in Book XII of Virgil's *Aeneid*. In Virgil's epic, Aeneas, initially tending towards compassion, sees Turnus wearing Pallas's belt, a battle spoil, and is roused to pitiless anger:

²⁸⁹ Kenneth Orne Myrick, *Sir Philip Sidney as a Literary Craftsman* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), pp. 237-38.

²⁹⁰ Myrick, *Sir Philip Sidney as a Literary Craftsman*, p. 238.

There stood Aeneas, deadly in his armour, rolling his eyes, but he checked his hand, hesitating more and more as the words of Turnus began to move him, when suddenly his eyes caught the fatal baldric of the boy Pallas high on Turnus' shoulder with the glittering studs he knew so well. Turnus had defeated and wounded him and then killed him, and now he was wearing his belt on his shoulder as a battle honour taken from an enemy. Aeneas feasted his eyes on the sight of this spoil, this reminder of his own wild grief, then, burning with mad passion and terrible in his wrath, he cried: 'Are you to escape me now, wearing the spoils stripped from the body of those I loved? By this wound which I now give, it is Pallas who makes sacrifice of you. It is Pallas who exacts the penalty in your guilty blood.' Blazing with rage, he plunged the steel full into his enemy's breast. The limbs of Turnus were dissolved in cold and his life left him with a groan, fleeing in anger down to the shades.²⁹¹

Similarly, Pyrocles, at first disdaining cruelty, sees Lycurgus wearing the bejewelled garter that he had given to Philoclea, and, putting aside any thoughts of mercy, kills him, adding that he does so in Philoclea's name, much as Aeneas kills Turnus in the name of his friend, Pallas:

Zelmane [Pyrocles in female guise] repressed a while her great heart—either disdaining to be cruel, or pitiful, & therefore not cruel. And now the image of human condition, began to be an orator unto her of compassion, when she saw, as he lifted up his arms with a suppliant's grace, about one of them unhappily tied a garter with a jewel, which given to Pyrocles by his aunt of Thessalia and greatly esteemed by him, he had presented to Philoclea, and with inward rage promising extreme hatred had seen Lycurgus (with a proud force and not without some hurt unto her) pull away from Philoclea, because at entreaty she would not give it him. But the sight of that was like a cipher signifying all the injuries which Philoclea had of him suffered; and that remembrance feeding upon wrath, trod down all conceits of mercy. And therefore saying no more but, 'No villain, die! It is Philoclea that sends thee this token for thy love', with that, she made her sword drink the blood of his heart—though he wresting his body, and with a countenance prepared to excuse, would fain have delayed the receiving of death's ambassadors. (462)

Sidney's version includes the depiction of Lycurgus as a suppliant, appealing for compassion such that he represents 'the image of human condition'. This has the effect of draining Pyrocles's vengeful act of much of its justification. Like Amphialus, who is also repeatedly described in terms that echo Virgil's epic hero, Pyrocles is morally compromised. Despite comparing his characters to such a virtuous example as Aeneas,

²⁹¹ Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. David West (London: Penguin 1990; revised, Penguin Classics, 2003), xii. 940-52.

it seems that Sidney does not wish them to be unspotted. As Peter Lindenbaum observes, with reference to Sidney's Virgilian scene,

it does not seem likely that Sidney would present this picture of a man in a position of prayer or supplication, and call that position an image of the human condition generally, if he meant us to approve unequivocally of Pyrocles' angered killing of Lycurgus.²⁹²

In such moments, the *New Arcadia* displays its recognition of human frailty. For Colin Burrow, Sidney's "'image of human condition'" is an almost Homeric acknowledgement of the humanity which the hero shares with his adversary'.²⁹³ Rather than remain in his fiction as a paradigm of virtue, Sidney leaves traces of his persona associated with flawed characters, especially Amphialus.

Sidney's 'Samothean', pan-European political inheritance remains, but in the form of an ambivalent figure, both politically and morally, who signals the enlargement of a maxim already articulated by the sage judge of the *Old Arcadia*, Euarchus: 'I am a man; that is to say, a creature whose reason is often darkened with error' (365). The development of an idea found in the *Old Arcadia* is more in line with a sense of Sidney revising the romance by bringing forward certain elements already present, not the complete change of purpose often described. Indeed, Burrow sees the *New Arcadia* as poised between genres and Sidney faced with 'his impossible desire to write an epic in the language of romance, a work which praised vehement justice in a culture attuned to the power of pity'.²⁹⁴ It is my contention that Sidney was more adept at bridging this divide than Burrow's assessment would suggest, at least in a literary context. In the real world, the author felt he had grave responsibilities to Europe and Christianity, but, fully aware of the contingent nature of life and his obligations at home, he wished his discharging of them to be judged with due equity. As the incomplete revision of the

²⁹² Peter Lindenbaum, 'Sidney and the Active Life', in *Sir Philip Sidney's Achievements*, p. 187.

²⁹³ Colin Burrow, *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993; reprint, 2001), p. 140.

²⁹⁴ Burrow, *Epic Romance*, p. 141.

Arcadia breaks off, Amphialus is apparently fatally wounded. His fate is, however, in the hands of an impeccably virtuous woman, Helen of Corinth, whose judgement we might assume is not so ‘darkened with error’.

What fate Sidney intended for Amphialus and Helen cannot be known for certain. However, there is a strong linguistic association between the two characters, which may indicate what he had in mind for them. ‘Amphialus’ is a name with a classical Greek origin, recorded in Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott’s *A Greek-English Lexicon* as ἀμφιάλος. As Liddell and Scott attest, it appears in Homer’s *Odyssey* as a constant epithet of Ithaca, in the formula, ἀμφιάλῳ Ἰθάκῃ. Here, it means ‘sea-girt’. Even more interestingly for the context of the *New Arcadia*, Liddell and Scott cite its use in Pindar’s *Odes*, where it is associated with Corinth and the Isthmian games: ἀμφιάλοισι Ποτειδᾶνος τεθμοῖσιν (‘[In] Poseidon’s sea-girt festivals’). This and the Homeric epithet have their later Latin equivalent, also associated with Corinth: *bimaris Corinthus* (‘Corinth, between two seas’), which can be found in, among other places, Horace’s *Odes* and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. This echoes A. C. Hamilton’s translation of ‘Amphialus’ as ‘between two seas’.²⁹⁵ In Book I of the *New Arcadia*,

²⁹⁵ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Fifth Edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1863), p. 73; Homer, *The Odyssey*, vol. 1 (Loeb Classical Library), trans. A. T. Murray (London: Heinemann; New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1919; reprint, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1976), I. 386, 395; *The Odes of Pindar*, trans. C. M. Bowra (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), ‘Olympian XIII’, l. 41; *The Odes of Horace*, trans. James Michie (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1967; reprint, 1970), I. vii. 2-3 (for Pindar’s Greek see the *Perseus Digital Library*: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>); Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Books I-VIII (Loeb Classical Library), trans. Frank Justus Miller; rev. G.P. Goold (London: Heinemann; New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1916; Third Edition, Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1977; reprint, 2004), V. 407; the relevant passage from Ovid (*bimari gens orta Corintha*) is translated by Arthur Golding as ‘folke of Corinth with the double Seas’ (see Golding, *The. xv. Bookes of P. Ouidius Naso, entytuled Metamorphosis*, p. 63 [misprinted as ‘64’]); Hamilton, *Sir Philip Sidney*, p. 139. There are two characters with the name Amphialus associated with Homer’s *Odyssey*: one, a participant in the Phaeacian Games, appears in *The Odyssey* itself (VIII. 114, 128); and another is among the list of Penelope’s suitors in the epitome of Apollodorus’s *The Library*, a Greek compendium of myths, thought to have been compiled in the first or second century C.E. (Apollodorus, *The Library*, vol. 2 (Loeb Classical Library), trans. Sir James George Frazer [London: Heinemann; New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1921], VII. 30). Yet another Amphialus appears in the *Fabulae* of Hyginus (a Latin work probably of the second century C.E.), as a son of Neoptolemus and Andromache (*The Myths of Hyginus*, ed. Mary Grant [Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1960], CXXIII. ‘Neoptolemus’, pp. 102-03). The first printed edition of the *Fabulae* was published in Basel, in 1535, by Jacob Micyllus, who was Melanchthon’s pupil in Wittenberg (see M. D. Reeve, ‘Hyginus: *Fabulae*’, in L. D. Reynolds, ed., *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983; reprint, 1986], pp. 189-90 and John Edwin Sandys, *A History of*

Musidorus (in the guise of Palladius) visits the isthmus of Corinth in search of Pyrocles (known during this episode as Daiphantus). The narrator records that he ‘passed through Achaia and Sicyonia to the Corinthians, proud of their two seas, to learn whether by the strait of that isthmus it were possible to know of his [Daiphantus’s] passage’ (67-8). Sidney, who was clearly aware of Corinth’s position between two bodies of water, is also likely, as a well-known reader of Horace, to have recognized the association between its Latin epithet and its Greek antecedent, and, therefore, the philological connection between Helen of Corinth and Amphialus. As such, it seems that the destinies of these two characters are entwined.

Of the many continuations of Sidney’s narrative that appeared in the years after his death, three include episodes in which Helen and Amphialus live on as a couple, not unlike the inevitable pairing of the princesses with the princes at the conclusion of the *Old Arcadia*. The first printed *Arcadias*, Greville’s of 1590 and those supervised by the countess (of 1593, and the slightly emended version of the same text of 1598) became much more widely available than the manuscript of the original version.²⁹⁶ And, it is from the printed text of 1593 that Gervase Markham took the inspiration to write the two volumes of his prose completion: *The English Arcadia, Alluding his beginning from Sir Philip Sydneys ending* (1607) and *The Second and Last Part of the First Book of the English Arcadia* (1613).²⁹⁷ Markham unites Amphialus with Helen, but also revisits the disharmony of Sidney’s romance by having Amphialus mistakenly suspect Helen of infidelity.²⁹⁸ During the 1590s, Markham’s works were, as Matthew Steggle notes,

Classical Scholarship, vol. 2: From the Revival of Learning to the End of the Eighteenth Century in Italy, France, England, and the Netherlands [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908], p. 267).

²⁹⁶ Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558-1640*, pp. 299-355 and Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 137-95.

²⁹⁷ Skretkiewicz, ‘General Introduction’, in *The New Arcadia*, p. xlvii.

²⁹⁸ Gervase Markham, *The English Arcadia alluding his beginning from Sir Philip Sydneys ending* (London: Henrie Rocket, 1607). Also see Martin Garrett, ed., *Sidney: The Critical Heritage* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 141-45.

‘strongly identified with the faction of the earl of Essex’.²⁹⁹ The significance of this association is discussed in greater detail in chapters Six and Seven. Richard Bellings’s *A Sixth Booke to the Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia*, written during his time as a student at Lincoln’s Inn, which began in 1619, and first published in 1624, has Amphialus fight (in the name of his now beloved, though absent, Helen) in a tournament to celebrate the weddings of Sidney’s princesses. Eventually, Amphialus and Helen are united by Basilius, who forgives the courteous knight his past deeds.³⁰⁰ Anna Weamys’s *A Continuation of Sir Philip Sydney's Arcadia: Wherein is handled The Loves of Amphialus and Helena Queen of Corinth, Prince Plangus and Erona* (1651), in Martin Garrett’s assessment, treats Amphialus’s rebellion ‘chiefly as a personal aberration which can be atoned for by marrying Helena [Helen in Sidney’s version]’, which he does.³⁰¹

Those early readers of the *Arcadia* who went on to compose their own endings to Sidney’s incomplete narrative seem to have understood the signs already in place that Amphialus would be saved *by* Helen for a better future *with* Helen. An ascent to royal, or even exalted, status for Amphialus would also chime with the contents of the seventeenth-century miscellany of Sir Francis Castillion (1561-1638), son of Giovanni Battista, the Italian tutor and groom of the Privy Chamber to Elizabeth. Within Castillion’s folio manuscript of 136 leaves, there are notes on Sidney’s *Arcadia*, including what the author terms ‘The Interpretation of the cheefeste names in Sir Philip

²⁹⁹ Matthew Steggle, ‘Markham, Gervase (1568?-1637)’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, October 2006.

³⁰⁰ Richard Bellings, *A Sixth Booke to the Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia* (Dublin: The Societie of Stationers, 1624). Also see Garrett, ed., *Sidney: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 213-17 and Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, ‘Bellings, Richard (c.1603–1677)’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2006.

³⁰¹ Garrett, ed., *Sidney: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 253-56. See Anna Weamys, *A Continuation of Sir Philip Sydney's Arcadia: Wherein is handled The Loves of Amphialus and Helena Queen of Corinth, Prince Plangus and Erona* (London: Thomas Heath, 1651). There is also a modern edition of this text: Anna Weamys, *A Continuation of Sir Philip Sydney's Arcadia*, ed. Patrick Colborn Cullen (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

Sydnes Arcadia'. Here, the name 'Amphialus' is glossed as 'compassed w^t a crowne'.³⁰² This suggests an etymology based on the Greek word ἄλως, which, among other meanings, can signify 'halo'.³⁰³ The symbolic relationship between a halo and a crown could be the reason for this translation of 'Amphialus'. Whatever its precise foundation, it is another linguistic association that suggests a potentially noble future for this apparently ignoble character.

The significance of Amphialus's fall and putative salvation does not merely rest on the character's ability to lead readers towards a moderate judgement of the romance's author. Nor, I suggest, did Sidney conceive this character as a lesser version of Pyrocles and Musidorus, in order to improve the princes' standing. Joan Rees argues that Amphialus's 'principal function in [the] *New Arcadia*'s overall organization is to clear the princes of any ambiguity that may have attached to their behavior in [the] *Old Arcadia*'. While acknowledging that Amphialus is 'a subtle character study', 'who might well compete with Pyrocles and Musidorus for the reader's sympathy and admiration', Rees also contends that, '[by] demonstrating his affinities with Pyrocles and Musidorus and yet discriminating him from them, Sidney clarifies and enhances the status of his central figures'.³⁰⁴ In this reading, the correspondences between Amphialus, Pyrocles and Musidorus are understood chiefly for their clarification of the princes' virtues, rather than the ambiguity that they may bring to Amphialus's moral status. Furthermore, Rees's conception of the principles behind Sidney's revision of the *Arcadia* assumes a discontinuity between the moral philosophy of the *Old* and *New*

³⁰² New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library: MS Osborn fb 69, p. 203, reproduced in Fred Schurink, 'Lives and Letters: Three Early Seventeenth-Century Manuscripts with Extracts from Sidney's *Arcadia*', *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700* 16 (2011), Plate 3, p. 185. As Schurink notes, another sixteenth-century manuscript, Bodleian: MS Eng. e. 2017, fols 14^r-38^r contains a similar etymological list: 'A Clavis opening y^e names and referring to the Charrecters' (Schurink, 'Lives and Letters: Three Early Seventeenth-Century Manuscripts with Extracts from Sidney's *Arcadia*', p. 196, n. 56; also see John Buxton, 'Sidney and Theophrastus', *English Literary Renaissance* 2 (Winter 1972), pp. 79-82, for a discussion of this manuscript.

³⁰³ Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 61.

³⁰⁴ Joan Rees, *Sir Philip Sidney and Arcadia* (Cranbury, NJ, London and Mississauga: Associated University Presses, 1991), p. 27.

Arcadias. I suggest, on the contrary, that there are fundamental continuities between the two versions of the romance, not least in terms of the moral ambiguity of the characters. Moreover, even if, in revising his work, Sidney had wished to raise the moral standing of his principal male protagonists by modifying their actions, particularly in their conduct towards the princesses, and contrasting their virtues with a new, similarly heroic and martial character, this would not necessarily imply that the romance's guiding moral tenets had changed significantly. Indeed, in the *Old Arcadia*, any stain there may have been on the princes' characters, as a result of their behaviour, is forgiven, if not expunged, in Book V, with the revival of Basilius; and, if Amphialus is a new repository for what were the princes' moral lapses in a new, morally less ambiguous *Arcadia*, he might be expected to fall without any hope of resurrection; this is certainly not the case.

As I suggested in the previous chapter, in theological terms, Amphialus's 'fall' is described more in the language of injury than that of devastation, and, as such, is more reminiscent of Melancthon than Calvin. Although he appears to be beyond help (in both material and spiritual senses), he, not unlike Pyrocles and Musidorus in the *Old Arcadia*, may yet be saved. Indeed, there are indications, in the detail of his descent, that Sidney may have wished his readers to align Amphialus with, as well as discriminate him from, the princes. As his apparent annihilation approaches, further misfortunes pile upon the already numberless calamities that Amphialus has borne: he intentionally breaks his sword and retires in melancholic torpor after killing the quintessence of virtue-in-love that was Parthenia, while she was disguised as the Knight of the Tomb (396-401), before being stirred to further combat by a challenge from Musidorus, as the Forsaken Knight, and, without 'his good sword', receiving such grievous wounds that he has to be carried away and put in the care of physicians (403-14). During his forced incapacity, Cecropia perpetrates the most heinous torments upon

the captive princesses: ‘She, resolving all extremities rather than fail of conquest, pursued on her rugged way, letting no day pass without new and new perplexing the poor ladies’ minds and troubling their bodies’ (420). This rouses Amphialus to further desperate action, ending with his mother’s death and his attempted suicide (440-42). Even in the turmoil of this plummet from grace, Amphialus retains those characteristics which connect him to Sidney’s putative heroes.

As Rees notes, in these final passages of the incomplete *New Arcadia*, Amphialus ‘speaks a terrible elegy on himself, summarizing a career of destruction and disgrace’.³⁰⁵ There are, however, earlier examples of Amphialus’s self-reproach that presage this final summation of his wretchedness. On discovering that he has mortally wounded Parthenia, he is ‘astonished with grief, compassion, and shame, detesting his fortune that made him unfortunate in victory’. He removes his helmet and gauntlet before ‘kneeling down unto her, and with tears testifying his sorrow, he [offers] his by-himself-accursed hands to help her, protesting his life and power to be ready to do her honour’. Parthenia replies that he has already rendered her all ‘the service which [she] desired’ of him: to die and ‘go live with [Argalus]’ (397-98). Having had a hand in the deaths of both these ‘living embodiments of human love at its finest’,³⁰⁶ Amphialus might be expected to proceed without any semblance of sympathy, but Sidney, through the omniscient narrator, contrasts the reactions of Amphialus and the Basilian camp to the spreading of the news of Parthenia’s fate—the journey of ‘fame itself’ throughout the region (390); the Basilians, ensconced outside Cecropia’s castle, ‘returned they to the camp with more and more hate against Amphialus, who (poor gentleman) had therefore greater portion of woe than any of them’ (400). One might read the epithet, ‘poor gentleman’, as less than sincere if it was not for the lengthy qualification that his

³⁰⁵ Rees, *Sir Philip Sidney and Arcadia*, p. 33.

³⁰⁶ Rees, *Sir Philip Sidney and Arcadia*, p. 33.

courteous heart, which would have grieved but to have heard the like adventure, was rent with remembering himself to be the author, so that his wisdom could not so far temper his passion, but that he took his sword (counted the best in the world, which with much blood he had once conquered of a mighty giant) and brake it into many pieces—which afterwards he had good cause to repent—saying that neither it was worthy to serve the noble exercise of chivalry, nor any other worthy to feel that sword which had stroken so excellent a lady. (400)

Amphialus removes himself from ‘all company’ and collapses into melancholy, which brings ‘before him all the mishaps with which his life has wrestled, taking this not only as a confirming of the former, but a presage of following misery’ (400). Cecropia attempts to move him to action by inciting him to ravish Philoclea as Theseus did Antiope (402), but, before Amphialus can answer, a messenger brings the challenge to combat from the Forsaken Knight. The contest that ensues is a brutal encounter between equally-matched foes that, going by their *imprese*, are also counterparts.³⁰⁷

The noise made by ‘those noble knights’ as their swords clash is likened to the sound of Vulcan’s hammer ‘when he wrought...Aeneas an armour’ in *The Aeneid*, and, as I noted in Chapter Three, both their escalating furies are compared to ‘the lion that beats himself with his own tail to make himself the more angry’, as are Achilles and Aeneas in *The Iliad* (406, 409).³⁰⁸ Indeed, in the midst of this epic contest, each knight falls ‘out with himself’ and admonishing himself for a lack of courage continually re-enters the fray, ‘like an arrow, shot upward by the force of the bow, though by his own nature he would go downward’ (409-10). Eventually, they are both carried bleeding from the field of battle to recover, but each similarly ‘[falls] to a fresh war with his own thoughts’, both with thoughts of their unworthiness in the eyes of one of the princesses. Amphialus’s ‘sorrow and shame, like two corrupted servants, ...laid before his eyes his present case, painting every piece of it in most ugly colours’, and he declares himself

³⁰⁷ I discuss the significance of the knights’ *imprese* in Chapter Six. The Forsaken Knight’s armour bears an *impresa* in the form of ‘a catoblepta’, a creature that is stirred by the appearance of the moon, which is depicted within Amphialus’s *impresa* (*New Arcadia*, p. 405).

³⁰⁸ For Venus’s request of Vulcan to make the armour and its manufacture, see Virgil, *The Aeneid*, viii. 370-453; for the allusion to Achilles fighting Aeneas, see Homer, *The Iliad*, xx. 164-71.

‘Recreant Amphialus!’ before apostrophizing the absent Philoclea: ‘I would, sweet Philoclea, I had died before thy eyes had seen my weakness’. The Forsaken Knight,

now that he had promised himself not only the conquest of him
[Amphialus], but the scaling of the walls and delivery of Pamela, though
he had done beyond all others’ expectation, yet so short was he of his own
that he hated to look upon the sun that had seen him do so weakly. (413-4)

Now, with both Amphialus and his ally, Anaxius, injured, and the castle under a renewed threat from the Basilian besiegers, Cecropia threatens, in turn, to kill the princesses if the siege is not raised. Her threats having succeeded, she directs her evil attentions towards the sisters once more: ‘resolving all extremities rather than fail of conquest, pursued on her rugged way, letting no day pass without new and new perplexing the poor ladies’ minds and troubling their bodies’ (419-20). These machinations, including the elaborate stagings of the executions of both Pamela and Philoclea before each respective other sister in order to persuade them to accede to Cecropia’s wishes, eventually come, if only partially, to the attention of the debilitated Amphialus, who intervenes to the princesses’ benefit and, ignorant of the full extent of the tortures, asks their pardon and seeks to excuse their treatment. Although both Pamela and Philoclea condemn him and reject his entreaty, he is yet again afforded the epithet ‘poor gentleman’ by the narrator as an indication of the element of misfortune that attends his behaviour (439). Indeed, Philoclea indicates some sympathy for her ‘gentle cousin Amphialus’ when she relates her belief that he has acted to end their torture (437) and again when she echoes her sister’s rejection of his justifications; on this latter occasion, ‘partly unkindness of his wrong, partly pity of his case, made her sweet mind yield some tears before she could answer’ (440).

This latter scene is the prelude to what Rees terms Amphialus’s ‘terrible elegy on himself’, followed by his attempted suicide and unintentional hand in his mother’s death. For Rees, Amphialus’s repeated privileging of his own desires over ‘honor and loyalty’ seals his destiny:

His is not the tragedy of a malign fate, but full expression is given to the operations of a fatal flaw in an otherwise great and noble character, and what is put before the reader is the logical development of one unhappy event out of another and the torment of a good man who sees himself acting as an agent of evil.³⁰⁹

But this ostensibly reasonable summary, which is consistent with Rees's broader argument about Amphialus's role in the revised romance, as a touchstone for the morality of the other arguably more sympathetic characters, does not account for the persistent expressions of pity for Amphialus and his inescapable condition. This betrays a degree of significance attendant upon the fate of this 'subtle character study' beyond that which it implies for the moral standing of Sidney's other protagonists. The probability of Amphialus's salvation at the hands of Helen's surgeon, who restored the beauty of Parthenia's face, is in itself a complicating element in the relationship between the romance's image of idealized love and the agent of that image's destruction, never mind the endorsement he thus receives from the irreproachable Helen. Adding these elements to the barely indistinguishable heroic credentials of all three of the knights, Pyrocles, Musidorus and Amphialus, the latter's status in the 'overall organization' of the *New Arcadia* is clearly greater than the instrumental role attributed to him in Rees's thesis. Moreover, Amphialus's humiliation, including his clearly articulated self-knowledge and humility, is analogous to that which has been highlighted in Shakespeare's *Lear*; according to John J. Norton, such humiliation is of the kind 'that Reformation theologians would attribute to divine grace', and leads to spiritual redemption.³¹⁰

In his book, *Shame in Shakespeare*, Ewan Fernie identifies 'an experience of ingrained human fallenness' and 'a revelation of the absolute' that is common to the

³⁰⁹ Rees, *Sir Philip Sidney and Arcadia*, p. 34.

³¹⁰ John J. Norton, *Humiliation, Redemption, and Reformation Theology in Shakespeare's Tragedies and Late Plays* (PhD diss., Sheffield Hallam University, 2008), p. 92.

eponymous characters of *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *King Lear*.³¹¹ It is in the case of *Lear* that, for Fernie, ‘the pattern of moving through shame towards relationship’ is most plain. *Lear*’s progress towards redemption, which, as Norton suggests, is analogous to the work of divine grace in Reformation theologies, is plotted by his being ‘stripped and reduced to nothing in a process which is as long as the play itself’.³¹² Just as Shakespeare adapts Sidney’s passage from the *New Arcadia* on the King of Paphlagonia for the events of the plot involving Gloucester, Edgar and Edmund, the journey of Amphialus from courtly excellence to recreancy, humiliation and concomitant humility could be an Arcadian precursor of the degradation of *Lear*, the Ancient Briton. As Fernie makes plain, ‘the abject hero’, ‘the shameful death of the champion’, and ‘in a Christian context [the] re-enactment of the original Fall’ are all inevitable ingredients of Renaissance tragedy, a genre founded on classical precepts and precedents and performed before early modern Christian audiences.³¹³ As a quintessentially heroic character whose fall might be readily co-opted for Christian allegorical purposes, Amphialus has the right qualities to be the eponymous hero of his own Renaissance tragedy. Nevertheless, he is a character in a romance not a tragedy, and, as such, his end need not, indeed, by definition, *must* not be tragic.

The internal rules of romance as a genre allow for a miraculous recovery, as seems probable for Amphialus. Therefore, although the occasion of his fall may be attended by the catharsis of tragedy, both for Amphialus’s own people – ‘some throwing themselves upon the ground, some tearing their clothes and casting dust upon their heads, and some even wounding themselves and sprinkling their own blood in the air’ (446) – and Sidney’s readers, it is to Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* rather than his *Poetics* that one must look for the guiding principal controlling his fate. As noted in Chapter Three,

³¹¹ Ewan Fernie, *Shame in Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 173.

³¹² Fernie, *Shame in Shakespeare*, pp. 173-74.

³¹³ Fernie, *Shame in Shakespeare*, p. 109.

the *Arcadia* is bound by the Aristotelian notion of equity, which is worth repeating at length:

It is equity to pardon human failings, and to look to the lawgiver and not to the law; to the spirit and not to the letter; to the intention and not the action; to the whole and not to the part; to the character of the actor in the long run and not in the present moment.³¹⁴

On these terms, Amphialus's 'present moment' may be tragic, his fall may re-enact the original Fall, but, 'in the long run', he will rise again and re-enact man's salvation through the grace of the divine lawgiver, who knows his true character and sees the whole not the part, all of which is ironically analogous to the author's relationship with his own incomplete, partially revised text.

As well as having importance for Sidney from a purely theological perspective, his Philippism impinges on his political philosophy as well. Indeed, these two spheres of thought were inseparable in the early modern period. In this context, I now wish to examine the martial adventures of the *New Arcadia* for indications of Sidney's political stance. The significance of Sidney's relationship with Elizabeth, as it was established in Chapter One, becomes more apparent in the chapters that follow, which deal with the political consequences of Sidney's ethos more explicitly.

³¹⁴ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I.13.1374^b, cited in Lindheim, *The Structures of Sidney's Arcadia*, p. 159.

Chapter Five: ‘Think nature me a man of arms did make’?: Conflicted Conflicts in *Astrophil and Stella* and the *New Arcadia*

The martial adventures of the *New Arcadia* have produced a good deal of critical opinion about what such knightly escapades might suggest about Sidney’s political philosophy. Sidney’s position, as a well-connected courtier who opposed Elizabeth’s marriage to Anjou and who favoured a more active foreign policy in defence of the Protestant religion, provides a ready point of departure for such discussions. In this chapter, I engage with the strand of critical thought that finds there to be a mismatch between the chivalric ethos of the *New Arcadia* and Sidney’s real-world political ambitions. The particular moral outlook that I have attributed to Sidney in previous chapters and the figure of Amphialus are again useful in resolving this critical issue.

It is a critical commonplace of Sidneian scholarship to note that the change in tone between the *Old* and *New* versions of the *Arcadia* echoes Sidney’s own personal circumstances at the time of the latter’s composition. After the circulation of his ‘Letter to Queen Elizabeth’, advising her against a marriage to Francis, Duke of Anjou, in 1579 or 1580, Sidney is thought either to have been banished from court or to have removed himself, spending much of his time at his sister’s home at Wilton. Given the fate of Stubbs, Sidney appears to have been either fortunate or wise. The *New Arcadia*, probably written between 1582 and 1584, is often said to reflect Sidney’s political marginalisation and a new seriousness in his outlook following this setback. David Norbrook, for example, suggests that ‘the imagery of courtly ceremonial [in the *New Arcadia*] is associated with violence and imprisonment rather than delight. The claustrophobic atmosphere reflects Sidney’s frustration at enforced inactivity’. Norbrook speculates further that ‘Sidney broke off the revision [of his romance] before he had reached the end of the third book...because he realised that the work’s serious religious and political concerns, and its increasing inwardness, were becoming

incompatible with the courtly framework'.³¹⁵ The *New Arcadia* does contain notable echoes of actual jousts held at the court, in which Sidney is known to have had a role, and as Norbrook observes, Sidney's participation in such tournaments was coloured by his wish 'to turn tiltyard fictions into military reality'.³¹⁶ The darkening situation in the Low Countries, where Catholic Spain was inflicting heavy defeats on Protestant provinces, was of acute concern to Sidney. Eventually, in 1585, his wish for military service was granted. He was appointed Governor of Flushing as part of Elizabeth's belated intervention in the Netherlands. Joining an expedition under the command of his uncle, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, Sidney was charged with holding the strategically important port of Flushing in the face of Spanish expansion under the military command of Alexander Farnese, Prince of Parma. The expedition claimed Sidney's life in the following year without halting the Spanish advance.

For Norbrook, this military adventure, conducted by Leicester and other similarly forward Protestants, such as Sidney, was 'marred by tensions analogous to those which prevented Sidney from completing the "Arcadia"'.³¹⁷ While Sidney's religious and political concerns could not be reconciled with the 'courtly framework' of the revised *Arcadia*, so, according to Norbrook, the 'military effectiveness [of Sidney and his like-minded party] may have been diminished by the fact that they were much more experienced in symbolic conflicts in the tiltyard than in real warfare'.³¹⁸ That is to say, Sidney's symbolic conflicts, constructed in a context of frustrated enthusiasm for action, could neither satisfactorily express his religious and political ethos, nor

³¹⁵ Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, p. 106.

³¹⁶ Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, p. 107.

³¹⁷ Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, p. 108. The activist Protestant party associated with Leicester (and later with the second Earl of Essex) has been conveniently termed, by Blair Worden, as the 'forward Protestants'; although they cannot be considered a 'party' in the modern sense, they were 'united in their diagnosis of the ills of Elizabethan policy...and worked together in vain attempts to remedy them'; see Worden, *The Sound of Virtue*, p. xxii; Patrick Collinson's use of the same phrase to describe other groups of Protestants from different periods predates Worden's use; see, for example, Patrick Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal, 1519-1583: the Struggle for a Reformed Church* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1979), p. 61.

³¹⁸ Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, p. 108.

adequately prepare him for the battle proper. I am also interested in exploring the differences between the two *Arcadias*. However, in contrast to Norbrook, I wish to suggest that Sidney's revisions, rather than introducing a change in tone 'incompatible with the courtly framework', produce a text that interrogates courtly values in a manner consistent with his religious and political ethos.

In order to understand Sidney's particular critique of courtly values, I wish to first employ Sidney's sonnet sequence, *Astrophil and Stella*, as a prism for viewing his revised romance. The links between the sonnets, the romance and Sidney's activities during the period of their composition have been noted. There is some evidence to suggest that the tournament to celebrate Andromana's wedding anniversary, part of the revised romance, resembles a tournament in which Sidney himself is thought to have participated. Moreover, there is a suggestion that the character Philisides, who in some respects represents Sidney himself, opposes a knight, in the presence of a lady, who both resemble real-life figures from the author's tiltyard experience. The 'lady' in question is Penelope Devereux, the 'Stella' of Sidney's sonnet sequence.³¹⁹ Indeed, in sonnets 41 and 53, Astrophil jousts before Stella, and in sonnet 41 in particular Sidney seems to be referring to another tournament in which he participated, conducted in May, 1581 before the queen and a party of French Commissioners, who were at court to discuss the by now fading prospect of a marriage to the Duke of Anjou³²⁰:

Having this day my horse, my hand, my lance,
Guided so well, that I obtained the prize,
Both by the judgement of the English eyes
And of some sent from that sweet enemy, France;
Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance;
Town-folks my strength; a daintier judge applies
His praise to sleight, which from good use doth rise;
Some lucky wits impute it but to chance;
Others, because of both sides I do take
My blood from them, who did excel in this,
Think nature me a man of arms did make.

³¹⁹ See Skretkiewicz, 'General Introduction', in *The New Arcadia*, pp. xiv-xvi.

³²⁰ See Katherine Duncan-Jones, 'Notes' in Sidney, *The Major Works*, pp. 363, 402-403.

How far they shoot awry! The true cause is,
Stella looked on, and from her heavenly face
Sent forth the beams, which made so fair my race. (41. 1-14)

The significance of these correspondences between reality and fiction, I contend, lies in the very different tone offered by these symbolic conflicts when compared to the apparently darker mood of the *New Arcadia*, and yet both are ostensibly reflecting the same politically vexed situation: the queen's proposed marriage and the marginalisation of Sidney and his allies from political influence. Norbrook attributes Sidney's inability to construct a fictional framework suited to his religious and political objectives to his peculiarly 'courtly style'.³²¹ Essentially, Norbrook argues, Sidney's aristocratic, tiltyard sensibility, reflected in his increasing taste for plunging his characters into spectacular chivalric adventures, cannot meet the needs of a serious political and religious agenda. I hope to offer a solution to Norbrook's apparently insoluble problem.

Returning to sonnet 41, it is clear that, at least in the arena of the lyric, Sidney conceives of himself as the victor in the tournament contested over the queen's French marriage. He (insofar as Sidney is Astrophil) stresses his skill as a knight, perfected by much practice, but he is most at pains to emphasize his 'blood' (l. 10), his 'race' (in one sense [l. 14]): 'Think nature me a man of arms did make' (l. 11). Both sides of Sidney's family, the Sidneys and the Dudleys, were successful tilters.³²² Sidney is also, like several of the characters in his fiction, in Martin N. Raitière's terms, 'a member of the warrior aristocracy'. As such, he might be expected to uphold the courtly values of honour, virtue and martial virtue. Nevertheless, as Raitière argues, the *New Arcadia* demonstrates Sidney's 'skeptical attitude' toward this cult of 'martial "courage"'. Sidney's scepticism, it may be argued, is also at play in Astrophil's exclamation, 'How far they shoot awry!' (l. 12) For Raitière, it is the "'private" glory' pursued by the characters that brings the martial cult into disrepute, tending to deflect the warrior's

³²¹ Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, p. 106.

³²² Duncan-Jones, 'Notes', in *The Major Works*, p. 363.

attention away from ‘the purposes of the...larger political unit’.³²³ In having his fictional warriors follow their personal agendas, Raitière believes Sidney to be rehearsing the arguments of certain continental political radicals called monarchomachs, only to reject them. The monarchomachs advocated resistance to royal absolutism as a form of government, and, in Raitière’s account, relied on ‘the feudal warrior as an agent of reformation’; Sidney, on the other hand, favoured what Raitière terms ‘urbane monarchic vigilance’.³²⁴ As such, Raitière’s view of Sidney’s political philosophy agrees with the tenor of my argument as it will unfold in this chapter. I also agree with Raitière that Sidney does not embrace the cult of martial virtue, and that this is evident in the ‘ironic energy’ that surrounds the adventures of his knightly characters.³²⁵ Indeed, I wish to suggest, like Raitière, that Sidney’s scepticism toward such courtly values is a function of his concern for something of greater significance than his characters’ private follies. However, unlike Raitière, who interprets such misgivings to be fundamentally about the political order, I wish to emphasize their ethical dimension. In this context, the adventures and subsequent fates of Sidney’s characters become part of a grander, religiously-inspired purpose.

In Book II of the *New Arcadia*, the primary story of the princes, Pyrocles and Musidorus, is supplemented by a secondary plot involving the blind king of Paphlagonia and his sons, Leonatus and Plexirtus. The Grecian princes do indeed ‘go *privately* to seek exercises of their virtue’ and ‘as they rid alone armed...they met an adventure...worthy to be remembered for the unused examples therein’ (179).³²⁶

³²³ Raitière, *Faire Bitts*, p. 35.

³²⁴ Raitière, *Faire Bitts*, p. 37. Raitière (*Faire Bitts*, pp. 3-7) outlines the main arguments of the monarchomachs, made in three central texts: François Hotman’s *Francogallia* (1573); Theodore Beza’s *Du droit des magistrats* (1574); and the *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* (1579). Skretkiewicz characterizes Sidney and his mentor, Languet, as ‘selective monarchomachists’ who focused on Catholic tyrants (*European Erotic Romance*, pp. 174-79).

³²⁵ Raitière, *Faire Bitts*, p. 35.

³²⁶ The emphasis is mine.

‘Unused’ here means ‘unusual’,³²⁷ and the unusual nature of the story made it a fruitful source for Shakespeare in the composition of *King Lear*. The blind king wishes, like Shakespeare’s Gloucester, to be led by his son, Leonatus (not unlike Edgar in *King Lear*), to a high point where he can jump to his death; this circumstance has arisen from the malevolent dealings of the king’s bastard son, Plexirtus, who resembles Edmund in Shakespeare’s play. In Sidney’s story, the king of Paphlagonia asks Pyrocles and Musidorus to undertake the task of leading him to his death, the task which Leonatus refuses to perform: ‘And if it may be, let me obtain that of you which my son denies me, for never was there more pity in saving any than in ending me’. However, rather than grant his wish, the princes become embroiled in a struggle to overcome the tyrannous rule of Plexirtus, who has usurped his father’s throne. Pyrocles and Musidorus are moved to action by the king’s plight:

‘The matter in itself lamentable, lamentably expressed by the old prince which needed not take to himself the gestures of pity, since his face could not put off the marks thereof, greatly moved the two princes to compassion, which could not stay in such hearts as theirs without seeking remedy’. (183)

And when Plexirtus’s ‘followers’ attempt to kill Leonatus, the Grecian princes ‘quickly become parties’ to the affray. Inspired by a dream, the king of Pontus, ‘with a hundred horses’, also rides to their aid (183). Plexirtus, on the verge of defeat, is taken to a place of safety by his childhood companions, the brothers Tydeus and Telenor, who, although they ‘did not like the evil he did, yet they liked him that did the evil’ (184). With Plexirtus under siege, Leonatus is eventually crowned king of Paphlagonia by his father, who soon dies. After protracted resistance and facing starvation, the bastard son cunningly persuades his brother to grant him a pardon. At this point, the princes depart in the company of the ‘the two valiant brothers’ who had opposed them (186).

³²⁷ See Skretkowicz, ‘Glossary’, in *The New Arcadia*, p. 598.

This is an apparently self-contained episode in which the princes can ‘seek exercises of their virtue’. Indeed, after overhearing the king’s plight, they are soon ‘moved...to compassion’, and the narration of the unfolding events highlights those virtues which are reflected in the princes themselves, the same virtues being evident in the brothers, Tydeus and Telenor. The brothers are described as

men of such prowess as not to know fear in themselves, and yet to teach it others that should deal with them, for they had often made their lives triumph over most terrible dangers, never dismayed, and ever fortunate; and truly, no more settled in their valure than disposed to goodness and justice. (184)

The princes depart the scene of the struggle between Leonatus and Plexirtus with their counterparts, Tydeus and Telenor, and together the four valiant comrades set about ‘doing acts more dangerous, though less famous, because they were but *private* chivalries’ (186).³²⁸

The readiness of Pyrocles and Musidorus to join forces with their former foes is a reflection of the value attributed to the brothers’ valour; their virtue, however, is more in question. Tydeus and Telenor choose ‘rather to be good friends [to Plexirtus] than good men’, and they are, ‘though not counsellors of the offence, yet protectors of the offender’ (184). The brothers’ choice between friendship and virtuous action foreshadows the similar dilemma faced by Pyrocles later in Book II and, as such, extends the significance of the ‘unused examples’ portrayed in the episode under discussion.

Pyrocles’s dilemma also involves the fate of Plexirtus. Plexirtus’s daughter, Zelmane, who disguises herself as a page in order to accompany Pyrocles (the object of her affection), asks the prince to rescue her father. The moving nature of Zelmane’s request, made while she is in the throes of death, prompts Pyrocles to vow to save his former foe. Also similarly obliged to the king of Pontus, who ‘had appointed the

³²⁸ My emphasis.

combat between him and [the princes] against Otanes and the two giants', Pyrocles resolves 'to go save him whom for just causes [he] hated' (269). As Richard C. McCoy notes, 'Honor binds [Pyrocles] to fulfill his oath to Zelmane, yet his success in this enterprise ensures the survival and freedom of a malicious villain'.³²⁹ Furthermore, Pyrocles puts his promise above his friendship to Musidorus, who is left to fight the giants and Otanes without his cousin. It is notable that Pyrocles chooses virtue over friendship, unlike Tydeus and Telenor, who put friendship over virtue (and, interestingly, their loyalty is rewarded with death). Pyrocles's choice, complicated by his erotic passion for the dead Zelmane, is not without penalty, but both he and Musidorus survive to tell the tale.³³⁰

The whole episode is characterized by the morally ambiguous nature of the princes' service to the characters they encounter. Whether motivated by compassion in the case of the king of Paphlagonia or fulfilling a pledge to the daughter of their enemy in the case of Zelmane and Plexirtus, their actions originate with a sense of honour and virtue, and, in each case, the potentially iniquitous consequences of their actions are subordinated to these values. The addition of such passages to the revised *Arcadia* is conventionally seen as part of Sidney's attempt to transform his characters into analogues of epic heroes. This is, in part, achieved, as I have discussed in earlier chapters. In Norbrook's account, such chivalric derring-do reflects Sidney's taste for symbolic conflict, which, he contends, had no place in the real Elizabethan political arena. I wish to argue that they perform a different function in the broader project of the romance, and can begin to answer the question as to what Sidney had in mind when he revised the *Arcadia*.

³²⁹ McCoy, *Sir Philip Sidney: Rebellion in Arcadia*, p. 160.

³³⁰ Pyrocles, when disguised as an Amazon, names himself Zelmane 'for that dear lady's sake to whose memory [he is] so much bound' (80).

Unfortunately, he did not complete his revision, and so critics have, in general, had to make do with the ending of the *Old Arcadia* in judging Sidney's overarching philosophy. In the plot of the complete text the princes' adventures take a sinister turn, including the violation of the Arcadian princesses and the death of Duke Basilius, the princesses' father, for all of which the princes are put on trial. They are judged and sentenced to death by Euarchus, Pyrocles's father. Raitière draws on this evidence from the *Old Arcadia* and concludes that the princes' crimes are an occasion for the exercise of Sidney's 'ideal' form of monarchy, exemplified by 'the moderately absolute rule of Euarchus (= good king), who imperiously "thunder[s] a duetie into the subjects hartes" by way of securing the rule of law', even when that law requires the death of his own son.³³¹ This, as we shall see, is not a satisfactory explanation for the events of the revised romance.

One critic does, in my view, go part of the way to resolving this issue. In her article, 'Castigating Livy: The Rape of Lucretia and *The Old Arcadia*', Debora Shuger offers an alternative view of Sidney's political sympathy, also based on the plot of the complete text, but, unlike that offered by Raitière, I believe her interpretation is also valid for what we have of the revised version. She highlights the *Old Arcadia*'s 'skepticism about law as an instrument of moral reform and its claim that inner virtue—rather than outward obedience to the law—constitutes the true subject of ethical judgment'.³³² This is evident, Shuger argues, in the trial of Musidorus and Pyrocles, where the princes are forgiven their offences against the Duke and the princesses by a miraculously revived Basilius, who 'exercises the specifically royal prerogative of

³³¹ Raitière, *Faire Bits*, p. 51; Raitière cites the *Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. Albert Feuillerat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), I, p.186. Blair Worden likens Euarchus to William of Orange, who garnered much praise among Sidney's circle (see *The Sound of Virtue*, pp. 235-38). Other critics who see Euarchus as the ideological heart of Sidney's *Arcadia* include Edwin Greenlaw ('Sidney's *Arcadia* as an Example of Elizabethan Allegory'), Richard A. Lanham (*The Old Arcadia*, Yale Studies in English, vol. 158 [London; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965]), and Peter Lindenbaum ('Sidney and the Active Life').

³³² Debora Shuger, 'Castigating Livy: The Rape of Lucretia and *The Old Arcadia*', *Renaissance Quarterly* 51.2 (Summer 1998), p. 544.

suspending the law in the interests of equity'.³³³ As was seen in chapters Three and Four, the concept of equity plays an important role in the overall morality of the *Arcadia*. According to Shuger's analysis, Sidney rewrites the rape of Lucrece and the killing of Brutus's sons, from Livy's *History of Rome*, and, in so doing, 'upholds the cause of young noblemen against the austere law of the father'.³³⁴ Both Brutus in Livy's *History* and Euarchus in the *Old Arcadia* wish to uphold the rule of law, even when the defendants are princes. As we know from the marginalia of Gabriel Harvey's copy of Livy, Harvey and Sidney read the Roman historian's work together:

The courtier Philip Sidney and I had privately discussed these three books of Livy [the first three books of Livy's *History*], scrutinizing them so far as we could from all points of view, applying a political analysis, just before his embassy to the emperor Rudolph II.³³⁵

Sidney's ambassadorial journey to the emperor began in February 1577, a mere four months after his return from Ireland, where he had been assisting his father, Henry, in his role as Lord Deputy of Ireland. It seems that Harvey and Sidney read the beginning of Livy's *History* some time during this hiatus. The principal matter of these books is the story of the foundation of the Roman republic: the rape of Lucretia by Sextus Tarquinius, the son of Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, the last king of Rome, and the subsequent expulsion of the ruling family by a republican movement led by Lucius Junius Brutus. Book Two of Livy's *History*, in which Brutus's party defends the new republic from those 'young aristocrats' who would restore the monarchy, provides, in Shuger's account, the source for Euarchus.³³⁶

In Livy, Brutus, after applying the law equally and unflinchingly to all the monarchist rebels, has to watch while his own sons are executed for their part in the plot

³³³ Shuger, 'Castigating Livy', p. 532.

³³⁴ Shuger, 'Castigating Livy', p. 533.

³³⁵ Translated from the Latin marginalia in Gabriel Harvey's copy of Livy: Princeton University Library, Deposit of Lucius Wilmerding Jr., *T. Livii Patavini, Romanae historiae principis, decades tres, cum dimidia* (Basle, 1555), p. 93, cited in Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, "'Studied for Action": How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy', *Past and Present* 129.1 (1990), p. 36.

³³⁶ Shuger, 'Castigating Livy', p. 527. Duncan-Jones draws the same parallel; see *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet*, p. 119.

to reinstate the Tarquins. In Book Five of Sidney's *Old Arcadia*, Euarchus sentences his son, Pyrocles, and his nephew, Musidorus, to death for their sexual crimes against the Arcadian princesses, Philoclea and Pamela:

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. No, no, Pyrocles and Musidorus, I prefer you much before my
life, but I prefer justice as far before you. (411)

As Shuger points out, the two stories resemble each other in that '[l]ike Brutus's sons, Sidney's princes both defend aristocratic licence and conspire against the state'.³³⁷ At the beginning of Book Three of the *Old Arcadia*, before their assaults on the princesses' virtues, Pyrocles and Musidorus, frustrated by their lack of success with Philoclea and Pamela so far, agree (on parting) to meet 'shortly with an army' to attack Arcadia as a whole (176). Aristocratic licence is identified with sexual violence in both cases (in Livy's *History* and in Sidney's *Arcadia*), and much of Renaissance republican theory, drawing on classical precedent, highlights the necessity of the law to restrain the dangerous passions of unrestrained youth. As such, Euarchus's judgement might be said to follow the tenor of such arguments. He says, taking into account the princes' concealment of their aristocratic origins,

For no proportion it were of justice that a man might make himself no
prince when he would do evil, and might anew create himself a prince
when he would not suffer evil. Thus, therefore, by all laws of nature and
nations, and especially by their own putting themselves out of the
sanctuary of them, these young men cannot in justice avoid the judgement,
but like private men must have their doings either cleared, excused, or
condemned. (404)

Here, as elsewhere in his speeches, Euarchus makes it clear that the princes are unavoidably subject to the very same customs and laws which sanction the privileges they themselves enjoy. As he puts it, 'they that will receive the benefit of a custom must not be the first to break it' (404), and, in this case, the cousins' 'vices have degraded [them] from being princes' (412).

³³⁷ Shuger, 'Castigating Livy', p. 528.

As Shuger notes, but for Euarchus's status as a king, his position would be a Renaissance analogue of the Roman republicanism exemplified by Brutus:

The founding myth of both Roman and Renaissance republicanism associates tyranny with the unchecked freedom of aristocratic male sexuality, and republicanism with the severe and impartial rule of law over those libidinal transgressions.³³⁸

But Euarchus is a king, and so his judgement, as Shuger suggests, 'loses any republican coloration; the opposition between monarchic and republican government...disappears from *The Arcadia*'.³³⁹ Moreover, the princes escape the fate of Brutus's sons and are ultimately restored to their roles as, essentially, the heroes of Sidney's epic romance. This is brought about through the revival of the apparently dead king of Arcadia, Basilius, who pardons the princes. This act of royal mercy chimes with the argument for monarchy, and against republican law, put forward by Brutus's sons in Livy's account:

A king, they argued, was, after all, a human being, and there was a chance of getting from him what one wanted, rightly or wrongly; under a monarchy there was room for influence and favour; a king could be angry, and forgive; he knew the difference between an enemy and a friend. Law, on the other hand, was impersonal and inexorable. Law had no ears. An excellent thing, no doubt, for paupers, it was worse than useless for the great, as it admitted no relaxation or indulgence towards a man who ventured beyond the bounds of mediocrity.³⁴⁰

However, against the tenor of Livy's *History*, Sidney's fiction appears to regard Basilius's employment of the royal prerogative as an example of true equity being brought to bear on an overly strict legal judgement. As Norbrook observes, 'Sidney clearly expects his readers to feel the injustice of treating noble and magnanimous princes in the same way as anyone else'.³⁴¹ Indeed, given the eventual outcome,

³³⁸ Shuger, 'Castigating Livy', pp. 530-31.

³³⁹ Shuger, 'Castigating Livy', p. 531.

³⁴⁰ Livy, *The Early History of Rome: Books I-V of 'The History of Rome from its Foundation'*, trans. Aubrey De Selincourt (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 2.3.2-4, p. 108, adapted and cited in Shuger, 'Castigating Livy', pp. 527-28.

³⁴¹ Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, p. 101. McCoy characterizes Sidney's ending to the *Old Arcadia* as 'blatant favoritism' (*Sir Philip Sidney: Rebellion in Arcadia*, p. 136).

Pyrocles's earlier declaration, 'My blood will satisfy the highest point of equity' (413), strikes an ironic note.

Sidney did have strong connections with, and a great deal of sympathy for the ideas of, contemporary republican and monarchomach theorists, such as George Buchanan, Languet and Duplessis-Mornay. However, his own political position, as evidenced by the conclusion to the *Old Arcadia*, would seem to be, as Shuger notes, ideologically quite different from that which such associations might suggest.³⁴² In Robert E. Stillman's view, it would be incorrect to describe the likes of Duplessis-Mornay and Buchanan as 'republicans in any meaningful sense of the term', arguing instead that they were 'proponents of limited monarchy', whose views were not incompatible with those of Sidney.³⁴³ Such limitations of royal authority are, however, for Shuger, what separate Sidney's politics from that of the radicals. Shuger (against some critical opinion) attributes to Languet the authorship of the *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*, the famous monarchomach tract published under the apt pseudonym, Junius Brutus. Highlighting the tract's privileging of 'the Authority of the Laws' over royal authority, Shuger suggests,

it seems impossible to identify Languet's politics with *The Arcadia*'s authorial voice. The whole emotional and narrative energy of Sidney's romance resists this austere legalistic republicanism, which allows so little room for royal equity or the erotic escapades of young noblemen.³⁴⁴

³⁴² Shuger, 'Castigating Livy', p. 537. Norbrook associates Sidney's views more definitely with these 'radical political thinkers', but acknowledges he probably 'had to adjust himself to political realities' (Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, pp. 98-9). Andrew Hadfield's book, *Shakespeare and Republicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005; reprint, 2008), especially chapters One and Two (pp. 17-95), details the extent of republican thought in late sixteenth-century England. Hadfield argues that Sidney's song, 'On Ister bank', in the context of the rest of the *Arcadia*, 'makes the case' for a republic, or a 'monarchical republic' (pp. 87-9). For Sidney's links to Buchanan, see James E. Phillips, 'George Buchanan and the Sidney Circle', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 12.1 (November 1948), pp. 23-55.

³⁴³ Stillman, *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism*, p. 200.

³⁴⁴ *A Defence of Liberty against Tyrants: a translation of the Vindiciae contra tyrannos by Junius Brutus*, with an historical introduction by Harold J. Laski (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1925), pp. 63, 145-46, 152-53, cited in Shuger, 'Castigating Livy', pp. 537-38; Shuger, 'Castigating Livy', p. 538. For a relatively recent discussion of the debate surrounding the authorship of the *Vindiciae*, see Béatrice Nicollier-De Weck, *Hubert Languet (1518-1581): un réseau politique international de Melanchthon à Guillaume d'Orange* (Genève: Droz, 1995), pp. 465-87. George Garnett, in the 'Editor's Introduction' to his edition of the *Vindiciae*, concludes that 'the most likely scenario is some form of close collaboration between Languet and [Duplessis-]Mornay'; see *Vindiciae contra tyrannos, or, Concerning the legitimate*

The *Vindiciae*, which may or may not have been written by Languet, is quite clear on the scope of royal authority:

You may say that it is, perhaps, not regal to have one's will bound by laws. But I answer that there is nothing more regal than to restrain desire with the bonds of laws. It is wretched not to do all you want to do; still more wretched to want what is not lawful; and most wretched to be able to do whatever you wish.³⁴⁵

This would seem to echo Euarchus's speech to his condemned son: 'I prefer you much before my life, but I prefer justice as far before you' (411). Nevertheless, Euarchus does not have the last word in the *Old Arcadia*. Indeed, because this severe vision of justice does not prevail in Sidney's pastoral romance, Shuger prefers to associate Sidney with what she terms "'princely" theory' rather than republicanism.³⁴⁶ Drawn from the stoical thought of the classical authors, Plato, Seneca and Tacitus, especially as it is represented in the sixteenth century by Justus Lipsius, 'princely theory' resembles 'the relation between law and equity' symbolized by Basilius, as opposed to the strict application of the law represented by Euarchus, in the *Arcadia*. In Shuger's account, 'the central text of princely theory' for Sidney and his contemporaries (including Lipsius) is Seneca's *De clementia*.³⁴⁷ In *De clementia*, '[t]he ruler is...superior to the laws *because* he can mitigate their severity: "to save life is the peculiar privilege of exalted station"''.³⁴⁸

The aspect of this justification of regal ascendancy over the law that is most peculiarly Tacitean in origin is its historical scepticism. As Shuger puts it, [i]n Tacitus, there is no escape from the realm of conjecture and rumor'. This has implications for the legal field as well, such that 'the Tacitean historian cannot pierce the fog of

power of a prince over the people, and of the people over a prince (by Stephanus Junius Brutus, the Celt), ed. and trans. George Garnett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. lxxvi.

³⁴⁵ *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*, ed. and trans. George Garnett, p. 98.

³⁴⁶ Shuger, 'Castigating Livy', p. 538.

³⁴⁷ Shuger, 'Castigating Livy', p. 539.

³⁴⁸ Shuger, 'Castigating Livy', p. 540; Shuger's emphasis. Shuger cites *De clementia*, 1.26.5, in *Seneca: Moral Essays*, vol. 1, trans. John W. Basore (London: Loeb Classical Library, 1928), p. 429.

conjecture and probabilities that enshrouds the domain of historical and juridic inquiry'.³⁴⁹ This epistemological failure leaves room for the intervention of those of 'exalted station' who can see through the fog to the truth hidden within. Sidney's own *Defence of Poesy* echoes this idea, privileging the 'poetical' discovery of causes over the historical method: the historian is 'bound to tell things as things were', but 'he can yield no cause'.³⁵⁰ For Sidney, the poet occupies the role of the magnanimous ruler, similarly able to 'maketh magnanimity and justice shine throughout all misty fearfulness and foggy desires'.³⁵¹ Nevertheless, the clemency afforded the princes leaves the reader with the sense that, as 'peerless princes' (417), Musidorus and Pyrocles are above the law. It would seem that Musidorus's appeal for mercy, on the grounds of his 'just excuses of love's force', within which he invokes 'manlike courages', 'virtuous minds' and 'honourable desires', succeeds in diminishing his crime to a mere 'venial trespass' (402).

The incomplete text of the *New Arcadia* does not include the trial of Musidorus and Pyrocles, nor is it known that Sidney planned a similar conclusion. It would seem that, as Debora Shuger notes, '*The New Arcadia* largely erases the Livian subtext of the earlier version: because the princes do not violate their ladies' chastity, the analogy with Livy's aristocratic libertines vanishes'. Shuger suggests the analogy may still apply, though with different ethical implications, if it is 'transferred to Amphialus, whose forcible abduction of an unwilling Philoclea seems closer to Tarquin's rape than to the youthful erotic freedoms that Brutus's sons claim as their birthright'. As such, for Shuger, '*The Old Arcadia*'s princely politics and aristocratic ethos turn into something quite different in Sidney's revised romance'.³⁵² Nevertheless, contrary to Shuger's analysis, it may be argued that the *New Arcadia* does retain the spirit of Seneca's *De*

³⁴⁹ Shuger, 'Castigating Livy', p. 543.

³⁵⁰ Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, p. 110.

³⁵¹ Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, p. 119.

³⁵² Shuger, 'Castigating Livy', p. 544.

clementia, and that even a character such as Amphialus may benefit from the application of the royal prerogative in the interests of equity. I contend that the martial adventures of Sidney's characters in the revised text are a heightened representation of aristocratic freedom. Sidney's turn to an epic sensibility involves all his chivalric characters. And, although Pyrocles and Musidorus are often seen as more sympathetic in the *New Arcadia*, both for not violating the princesses and for their heroic deeds, the passages I have highlighted here see them severely morally compromised, like the much less sympathetic character, Amphialus. And yet, even a villain like Amphialus is likened to the heroes of Homer and Virgil.

In chapters Three and Four of this thesis, I showed how Sidney opens the way for Amphialus's moral rehabilitation, illustrating his belief in the corrigibility of sinners. Here, I have suggested how the crooked path followed by Amphialus might be consistent with a Senecan view of justice. Indeed, Amphialus's narrative could be in accordance with one of the precepts set down in Lipsius's Senecan text, *Sixe Bookes of Politickes or Civil Doctrine*. In demarcating the limits of princely justice, with an eye to employing due equity, Lipsius observes that it may 'be sometimes lawfull, and reasonable to trace out indirect courses, in this tempestuous sea of affayres of the world'.³⁵³ Such a doctrine not only has the effect of sanctioning the wayward behaviour of Sidney's aristocratic characters, but permits the author himself to follow an 'indirect course' to the moral end of his fiction. As such, Sidney's literary works reflect his developing Protestant piety, which incorporated many humanistic ideas, including, without contradiction, Seneca's principles of law and equity. I suggest that the martial adventures of the princes in Sidney's *New Arcadia*, ranging over broad geographical and moral terrain, are central to this distinctly outward looking and optimistic poetic

³⁵³ Justus Lipsius, *Sixe bookes of politickes or ciuill doctrine, written in Latine by Iustus Lipsius: which doe especially concerne principallitie. Done into English by William Iones Gentleman* (London, 1594), p. 114.

sensibility, and that, in the end, the princes will be treated with due equity, probably by Basilius, the very same embodiment of that quality who judges them in the older text. As such, Sidney's revised *Arcadia*, rather than being incompatible with a 'courtly framework', is in fact a peculiarly courtly text: a sophisticated, yet inclusive, literary representation of human experience. Sidney, like Astrophil, may have been thought a natural 'man of arms', but he was a pious and politically sophisticated poet as well.

Continuing the theme of the politically-interested poet, the next two chapters investigate Sidney's political legacy as it is represented by his revised romance. By considering the afterlives of Sidney's *Arcadia*, in the 1590s and the early seventeenth century, it is possible to discern those aspects of the literary work that were most relevant to its early readers. As we saw in Chapter One, the roles of both the Countess of Pembroke and Fulke Greville (whose own literary and political careers were profoundly influenced by Sidney's life and works), as the poet's literary executors, are central to this discussion. With this in mind, I undertake readings of the *Arcadia* that privilege the continuities between the religio-political environment while Sidney was pursuing his political and literary careers and that which obtained in the period following his death. The issue of court factionalism became increasingly important in the latter of these two eras, and Sidney's prose romance would have been an instructive text for those navigating a path through the turbulent world of Elizabethan national politics. Unexpectedly perhaps, it is the passive stoicism of Sidney's female characters that provides the key to the text's value in such circumstances.

Chapter Six: 'The representing of so strange a power in love': Sir Philip Sidney's Legacy of Anti-factionalism

Although Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* was completed in the previous decade, it was in fact a work of great literary significance to the 1590s. In particular, the literary quarrel associated with the different publications of the romance reflected the conflicting political philosophies of the publications' editors. This was a dispute over Sidney's literary heritage, with added importance for the possible future direction of a state dogged by factionalism. As one of Sidney's early editors, Fulke Greville chose to connect the *Arcadia* with one particularly prominent faction of the 1590s: the Essex circle. In doing so, as Joel Davis observes, Greville associated the romance with the divisiveness 'that eventually wore down men like himself and Robert Sidney [Philip's brother] —and which would help destroy [Robert Devereux, second Earl of] Essex'.³⁵⁴ The other party to this literary argument, Mary Sidney Herbert (Philip's sister), had a different conception of the political importance of the *Arcadia*, based on an anti-factionalist agenda. I contend that this latter philosophy is the more significant of the two for reading the *New Arcadia* (Sidney's incomplete revision) in particular, and that the key to understanding the conciliatory nature of the revised romance lies with its female characters; they are crucial elements in Sidney's legacy to later decades. More specifically, in this chapter, it is Philoclea's emollient influence over Amphialus that represents the irenical philosophy of the *New Arcadia*, and offers a solution to the factionalism that had the potential to undermine the late Elizabethan polity.

The marked differences between Greville's 1590 edition, based on the revised romance, and the Countess of Pembroke's later edition, combining the revised work with the last three books of the *Old Arcadia*, have been the subject of much scholarly debate, often centring on the contrasting literary agendas they reveal. In his article,

³⁵⁴ Davis, 'Multiple *Arcadias*', p. 408.

‘Multiple *Arcadias* and the Literary Quarrel between Fulke Greville and the Countess of Pembroke’, Joel Davis examines the writings of both Greville and the Countess that were produced around the time they were involved in editing their respective *Arcadias*. Davis concludes that Greville’s editorial practices serve ‘to highlight philosophical similarities between himself and Sidney’, thus casting Sidney as ‘a courtier-soldier who had rejected the effeminate lures of pastoralism to embrace a stern Stoic moral and political philosophy’.³⁵⁵ In doing so, Davis argues, Greville wished

to represent Sidney and the *Arcadia* as intellectual precursors to the Tacitean political thought beginning to emerge at the same time in the circle of Robert Devereux, the earl of Essex, who had become Greville’s patron.³⁵⁶

The ‘Tacitean political thought’ that became associated with the Essex circle in the 1590s was of a more pessimistic strain than that often associated with the reading of Tacitus before the disappointments, as Greville would have seen them, of the 1580s. Greville and other like-minded forward Protestants, including Sidney, while he was still alive, were most disappointed with Elizabeth’s failure to sanction active military opposition to the forces of Catholicism on the Continent, particularly in the Low Countries. Paradoxically, the Earl of Leicester’s belated and brief attempt to prosecute this very action on Elizabeth’s behalf symbolized the collapse of Greville’s hopes; it was during Leicester’s campaign that Sidney met his death in battle, at Zutphen in 1586.

The use of the writings of the Roman historian, Tacitus, in Renaissance political theory originates with Leonardo Bruni, the Florentine humanist (c.1370 – 1444). Bruni believed, based on his interpretation of Tacitus, ‘that a people is bound to achieve greatness as long as there is freedom to take part in the business of government, and bound to fall into corruption as soon as this liberty is taken away from them’.³⁵⁷ Such

³⁵⁵ Davis, ‘Multiple *Arcadias*’, p. 415.

³⁵⁶ Davis, ‘Multiple *Arcadias*’, p. 404.

³⁵⁷ Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol. 1: The Renaissance (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 83.

ideas were still current during the latter part of the sixteenth century and they would have chimed very clearly with those members of Elizabeth's court who felt they were excluded from participation in the serious matters of state. In the early 1580s, while it still appeared that the likes of Sidney might achieve some influence over the course of political events, Tacitus was read as part of a broader, optimistic Neostoicism, which encouraged such courtiers to view themselves as more powerful than the realities of Elizabethan absolutism would seem to have allowed. This outlook is most tellingly evoked in the work of Justus Lipsius, a prominent Flemish Neostoic who was heavily influenced by contemporary Taciteanism, and who was a correspondent of Philip Sidney. Lipsius, elucidating the meaning of the Stoic motto, *nec spe nec metu* ('neither in hope nor in fear'), wrote, 'Thou shalt be a king free indeed, only subject unto God, enfranchized from the servile yoke of Fortune and affections'.³⁵⁸

Such optimism was not to last. Whether he had intended it or not, by associating Sidney's *Arcadia* with Tacitean thought, Greville had in fact yoked Sidney's romance to an increasingly bleak philosophy: a philosophy espoused by Elizabethans who sought 'examples of tyranny and corruption that might validate their own experience' rather than 'examples of virtue amid adversity'.³⁵⁹ Joel Davis's thorough analysis of the chapter summaries added to the 1590 *Arcadia* suggests that Sidney's friend was indeed at pains to highlight 'the darker and more politically cynical aspects' of the romance, stressing 'whenever possible Sidney's treatments of constancy in the face of political oppression' and trying 'to make his audience read Sidney as the English Taciteans [were now reading] Roman imperial history'.³⁶⁰

Mary Sidney Herbert, in the construction of the 1593 edition of the *Arcadia*, removes the editorial scaffolding with which Greville's 'Tacitean' edition had

³⁵⁸ Justus Lipsius, *Two Bookes of Constancie*, I, vi, pp. 13-4.

³⁵⁹ Davis, 'Multiple *Arcadias*', pp. 408-09.

³⁶⁰ Davis, 'Multiple *Arcadias*', p. 420.

apparently been erected: the chapter divisions and summaries are excised; the work's pastoral nature is underscored; and, as Joel Davis puts it, 'under the rubric of pastoralism, [Sidney Herbert seeks] to extend a blanket of familial sympathy around the *Arcadia* that excludes Greville and his interpretation of the work'.³⁶¹ As both Victor Skretkiewicz and Joel Davis have argued, Mary Sidney Herbert's conception of the Sidney family discourse, however consciously she herself thought of it in those terms, was at odds with that of Greville and the Essex circle.³⁶² Most significantly, Sidney Herbert espoused an alternative version of Neostoicism from that attributed to Greville. As is evident from Mary Sidney Herbert's translation of Philippe Duplessis-Mornay's *Discours de la mort et de la vie*, published in 1592, the Countess shared Duplessis-Mornay's belief that corruption stems from the kind of political factionalism that was prevalent in Elizabeth's court. Rather than associating corruption with the lack of freedom available under a tyrannical regime, as Greville does, Duplessis-Mornay and Sidney Herbert place the responsibility with the court and, by implication, the courtiers themselves. As Duplessis-Mornay argues (in his *Discours de la mort et de la vie*, as translated by Sidney Herbert), the morally corrupt atmosphere of the court, suffused with 'external' factional politics, fosters division and an apparently irredeemable corruption of the courtiers' inner worlds:

when we are out of these external wars and troubles, we find greater civil war within ourselves: the flesh against the spirit, passion against reason, earth against heaven, the world within us fighting for the world, evermore so lodged in the bottom of our own hearts, that on no side we can fly from it.³⁶³

Unlike, Greville, who advocates stoic 'submission to sovereign will' as a means of 'maintaining one's virtue' under an oppressive monarch, Duplessis-Mornay sees no value in this approach in a factionalized court. For Duplessis-Mornay, courtiers are

³⁶¹ Davis, 'Multiple *Arcadias*', p. 425.

³⁶² See Skretkiewicz, 'Mary Sidney Herbert's *Antonius*', pp. 7-25 and Davis, 'Multiple *Arcadias*', pp. 421-25.

³⁶³ Sidney Herbert, *A Discourse of Life and Death*, in *Selected Works*, p. 124.

always in danger of falling foul of either their jealous peers or the judgement of God.³⁶⁴ As such, Duplessis-Mornay's and Sidney Herbert's Stoicism more closely reflects Lipsius's motto: 'only subject unto God, enfranchized from the servile yoke of Fortune and affections'.

There is also much evidence to support the idea that Philip Sidney shared his sister's beliefs, not least from his own unfinished translation of Duplessis-Mornay's *De la vérité de la religion Chrestienne*, which was apparently completed by Arthur Golding, the renowned translator of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and published in 1587.³⁶⁵ As Martin Raitière observes, Duplessis-Mornay's *De la vérité de la religion Chrestienne* 'may be viewed as an attempt to give a philosophical underpinning to the Politique idea' that, in France, 'to holy war should be preferred the mundane compromise of peace'.³⁶⁶ In his sophisticated argument against Duplessis-Mornay's authorship of the monarchomach treatise, *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* (1579), Raitière characterizes Duplessis-Mornay's publications as consistently irenic, from the *Remonstrances* in favour of peace of 1576 (also the year of the *Discours*), through the *Vérité* (1581) and beyond.³⁶⁷ Citing the chapter from the *Vérité* in which Duplessis-Mornay makes the case that there is only one God, Raitière notes that Duplessis-Mornay 'develops the theme of unity in a political sense'.³⁶⁸ Golding's translation of the same passage retains Duplessis-Mornay's meaning:

Morall Philosophie subdeweth many diuers passions and affections vnto one reason, in one man. Howsholdgouernment bringeth many men to the obeying of one householder: Ciuillgouernment reduceth many households into one Commonweale, which is nothing but an vnitie of many people, whether it be vnder one Lawe or vnder one magistrate; insomuch that eue[n] the most popular Comonweales haue (in their extremities) taken a

³⁶⁴ Davis, 'Multiple Arcadias', pp. 424-25.

³⁶⁵ It is known that Sidney began a translation of Duplessis-Mornay's *De la vérité de la religion Chrestienne*, but it seems unlikely that the published work was a completion of what Sidney started, as Golding claimed, due to its consistent deviation from Sidney's known style; see Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet*, pp. 251-52.

³⁶⁶ Raitière, *Faire Bitts*, pp. 128, 125.

³⁶⁷ Raitière, *Faire Bitts*, pp. 124-29.

³⁶⁸ Raitière, *Faire Bitts*, p. 128, n. 47.

Dictator, and in their ordinarie course of gouernment a Consull, the one after the other. Nowthen all that euer man conceiueth, inuenteth and disposeth, doth leade vs alwayes to an vnitie. Where vnitie is lost, there things goe to wrecke, Artes are confounded, and Commonweales are dissolued'.³⁶⁹

Both translations, Philip's of the *Vérité* and Mary's of the *Discours*, make Duplessis-Mornay's anti-factionalist doctrine more widely available. Although the two texts may differ quite significantly in several other respects, it is their consistent irenicism which is significant here. In this instance, Sidney shares an aspect of his philosophical outlook with an author, Duplessis-Mornay, who, as we saw in Chapter Three, adheres to the stoical doctrine, eschewed by Sidney, that 'all sins are equally bad'. Nevertheless, as we also saw above, such disagreements were tolerated among those Politique thinkers who adopted the irenic stance which valued unity above religious differences.

The sequential publication of a second edition of the translation of the *Vérité* in 1592, Mary Sidney Herbert's 'composite *Arcadia*' in 1593, and the countess's collection of Sidney's works in the edition of the *Arcadia* published in 1598 (each arguably consistent in their philosophy) successfully, as Davis concludes, 'reclaimed from Greville the literary figure of Sir Philip Sidney for the Sidney family'.³⁷⁰ It is particularly ironic that this early division about the correct way of reading Sidney's work should rest on the damaging effects of divisiveness. Knowledge of the anti-factionalism at the heart of Mary Sidney Herbert's conception of the Sidney family discourse is significant, I contend, for reading the *New Arcadia*. Moreover, the association, highlighted above, between Mary Sidney Herbert's philosophy and the 'effeminate lures of pastoralism' readily suggests the importance of gender for such a reading. As such, I argue that Sidney's female characters hold the key to understanding the anti-factionalist agenda of the *New Arcadia*.

³⁶⁹ *A Worke concerning the trewnesse of the Christian religion*, p. 18.

³⁷⁰ Davis, 'Multiple *Arcadias*', p. 430.

Though the latter stages of the narrative of the *Old Arcadia* include the trial of Pyrocles and Musidorus, where they are eventually judged and condemned to death by Euarchus, Basilius does, eventually, return, apparently from the dead, to forgive everyone their wrongdoings and sanction the princes' marriage to his daughters. The *New Arcadia*, by contrast, has been described by Richard McCoy as 'culminat[ing] in a pattern of ambivalence and evasion'.³⁷¹ Indeed, apparently echoing this assessment, it has elicited a less than securely founded criticism. Katherine Duncan-Jones, in an insightful reading of the revised text, summarizes the characteristics that have induced such hesitancy among other critics:

As the narrative unfolds, it is full of surprises. Books 1 and 2 have a labyrinthine structure of episodes, flashbacks and subsidiary narratives, yet incorporate most of the narrative of the equivalent books of the 'Old' version. Book 3 leaves it far behind, both emotionally and geographically, replacing sexual intrigue with dark images of imprisonment and pointless conflict.³⁷²

It is with those 'dark images of imprisonment and pointless conflict' that I particularly wish to engage: I shall illuminate my argument by reference to a much debated portion of the *New Arcadia*: the 'captivity episode' from Book III.³⁷³

In this section of the *New Arcadia*, Pamela, Philoclea and Zelmane (the name assumed by the cross-dressing Pyrocles) are captured by the agents of Cecropia, Basilius's ambitious sister-in-law. She wishes to force one of the princesses to marry her son, Amphialus, and win control of her brother-in-law's dukedom. The captives, after their hoods are removed, come face-to-face with Cecropia herself: 'at the castle gate their faces were discovered, and there were met with a great number of torches,

³⁷¹ McCoy, *Sir Philip Sidney: Rebellion in Arcadia*, p. 216.

³⁷² Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet*, p. 261.

³⁷³ The relationship between Neostoicism (whether of the kind associated with Mary Sidney Herbert or Fulke Greville) and anti-factionalism is potentially slippery, and may be differently inflected elsewhere in Sidney's works. Nevertheless, I maintain, the close association between the two concepts holds with reference to Book III of the *New Arcadia*, and, by extension, as significant for reading the revised romance as an incomplete whole. As both Greville's and Sidney Herbert's editions contain the three books of the revised romance, the key to understanding their differing philosophies lies in their contrasting editorial practices rather than any fundamental differences between the captivity episodes in the two texts.

after whom the sisters knew their aunt-in-law Cecropia'. Philoclea, sharing in 'the deadly terror' that this meeting produces in the sisters, beseeches her aunt-in-law 'to be good unto them, having never deserved evil of her'. Pamela, however, signals her intention to endure whatever torments lay in store with stoical fortitude: "'Aunt," said she, "what you have determined of us, I pray you, do it speedily. For my part, I look for no service where I find violence"' (317). Of the two sisters, Pamela judges Cecropia correctly, and it is Pamela's stoical resistance to the torments which follow that has coloured much of the critical response to the *New Arcadia*. This is unsurprising. The staged contest between Pamela's proto-Christian Stoicism and the atheist Epicureanism of Cecropia would have provided a ready model of stoical Christian virtue for Sidney's contemporary audience and his readership in the decades which followed. Indeed, the author of *Eikon Basilike* (1648) suggested that Pamela's prayer from this episode of Book III was used by Charles I during his imprisonment at Carisbrooke Castle, prior to his execution in 1649.³⁷⁴ Nevertheless, I wish to draw attention to the other princess who is subjected to Cecropia's malicious attentions, Philoclea. Although she is rather dismissively described by Katherine Duncan-Jones as 'giv[ing] herself up to weeping and self-neglect', I suggest Philoclea's captivity narrative provides an illustrative example of the complex relationships that arise between members of the apparently diverse factions in Sidney's revised romance.³⁷⁵

Amphialus, having already declared his desire for Philoclea, but also under the malign influence of his mother, Cecropia, approaches Philoclea's chamber intending to seduce her. He finds her with her head partially covered, facing the wall, but does not disturb her:

her hands and fingers as it were indented one within the other, her shoulder leaning to her bed's head, and over her head a scarf which did eclipse almost half her eyes, which under it fixed their beams upon the

³⁷⁴ Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet*, p. 265.

³⁷⁵ Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet*, p. 264.

wall by, with so steady a manner, as if in that place they might well change, but not mend, their object—and so remained they a good while after his coming in, he not daring to trouble her, nor she perceiving him; till that, a little varying her thoughts something quickening her senses, she heard him as he happened to stir his upper garment. (321-22)

And so their meeting begins in silent passivity. Even when Philoclea does notice him,

Amphialus, that had entrusted his memory with long and forcible speeches, found it so locked up in amazement that he could pick nothing out of it but the beseeching her to take what was done in good part. (322)

And when they do speak at more length, Amphialus seeks to distance himself from active participation in the maintenance of the princess's captivity, preferring to resort to the trope of personified 'love' as the agent of her imprisonment:

that tyrant, love, which now possesseth the hold of all my life and reason... It is love! It is love, not I, which disobey you... I am not the stay of your freedom, but love—love, which ties you in your own knots. (323)

Here Philoclea, literally Cecropia's captive, is also apparently the passive victim of her own allure, this latter, metaphorical, captivity being the work of 'that tyrant love'.

Indeed, Amphialus is also, as he later claims, so restrained by 'love' that he is unable to fulfil his mother's wishes, and so Philoclea's virtue remains intact. Philoclea's influence over Amphialus does not merely extend to maintaining her own safety: she is able to reconcile him to sparing his enemies from death.

Amphialus, having captured Basilius's appointed regent, Philanax, calls for the prisoner to be brought before him with the intention 'to cause him to be executed'.

Amphialus 'had not only long hated [Philanax], but now had his hate greatly increased by the death of his squire'. Nevertheless, Philoclea's influence stays Amphialus's hand:

[Philoclea's] message was delivered even as Philanax was entering to the presence of Amphialus, coming, according to the warning was given him, to receive judgement of death. ...Amphialus turned quite the form of his pretended speech, and yielded him humble thanks that by his means he had come to that happiness as to receive a commandment of his lady; and therefore he willingly gave him liberty to return in safety whither he would,

quitting him not only of all former grudge, but assuring him that he would be willing to do him any friendship and service. (352)³⁷⁶

Philanax's answer to Amphialus's leniency indicates the familial bonds that cross the divide between the two Arcadian factions:

let me now (having received my life by your grace), let me give you your life and honour by my counsel, protesting unto you that I cannot choose but love you, being my master's nephew... You know his nature is as apt to forgive as his power is able to conquer. [...] Do not urge the effects of angry victory, but rather seek to obtain that constantly by courtesy which you can never, assuredly, enjoy by violence. (353)

Philanax's appeal to 'courtesy' reflects what Blair Worden describes as the 'emollient influence' of the themes of courtesy and chivalry, widely considered to be much more evident in the *New Arcadia* than the *Old*.³⁷⁷ Worden challenges, if rather courteously, the view, posited by Richard C. McCoy and David Norbrook, that 'Sidney's representation of chivalry contains the aggression and resentment characteristic of a martial nobility half-tamed by the Tudor court', and that, as such, 'the politeness of the *New Arcadia* cannot go very deep'.³⁷⁸ Indeed, the politeness may not 'go very deep', but, I contend, the anti-factionalism does. This is apparent in Philanax's invocation of Amphialus's family ties, which, in turn, might be what prompts Basilius's nephew to think on his cousin, Philoclea, again in response:

One might easily have seen in the cheer of Amphialus that disdainful choler would fain have made the answer for him, but the remembrance of Philoclea served for forcible barriers between anger and angry effects. (353-54)

However, it is important to note that Amphialus's conciliatory behaviour is not produced by his recognition of a common ancestry with his enemies. The common theme is that of Philoclea's sway, in whatever manner it is brought to bear.

³⁷⁶ In the phrase, 'his pretended speech', 'pretended' means 'intended'; see Skretkiewicz, 'Glossary', in *New Arcadia*, p. 594.

³⁷⁷ Worden, *The Sound of Virtue*, pp. 359-60, n. 23.

³⁷⁸ Worden, *The Sound of Virtue*, p. 360, n. 23; see: McCoy, *The Rites of Knighthood*, ch. 3 and 'Sir Philip Sidney and Elizabethan Chivalry'; and Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, pp. 106-07.

The nature of Philoclea's influence over Amphialus is important to understanding the efficacy of the irenical philosophy of the *New Arcadia* that she represents. As I indicated above, Amphialus, when speaking to Philoclea, characterizes her imprisonment as the work of 'that tyrant love'. In a later dispute with his mother, Amphialus depicts 'true love', of which he professes to be the embodiment, as 'a servant' and 'lust' as the 'tyrant':

Mother, O mother! Lust may well be a tyrant, but true love, where it is indeed, it is a servant...if ever I did approach her, but that I freezed as much in fearful reverence as I burned in a vehement desire. Did ever man's eye look thorough love upon the majesty of virtue shining through beauty, but that he became—as it well became him—a captive? (401-02)

In both instances Amphialus attributes his behaviour to the agency of 'love', a force inspired by, if not originating with, Philoclea. In the former case, when speaking to the princess, it is possible, for the sake of expediency, that Amphialus might wish to emphasize the influence that true love, rather than lust, has over his actions, and, similarly, in his conversations with Cecropia, that he is more concerned to deny, rather than admit, any suggestion of his own ineptitude. However, throughout the episode as a whole, it is clear that Amphialus's encounters with Philoclea, and her 'majesty of virtue shining through beauty' effect more than a mere change in his rhetoric. Indeed, as we have already seen, Amphialus's 'captivity', as he portrays it, has prevented him from assailing the princess's virtue, and his memory of her has functioned as 'forcible barriers between anger and angry effects', to Philanax's benefit. Nevertheless, despite Philoclea's presence, as Katherine Duncan-Jones might put it, 'the imprisonment and pointless conflict' continue. Certainly, the conflict, at least as far as the incomplete revised version of the romance is concerned, has no end: the text finishes mid-sentence, and Sidney's resolution, if indeed he intended one, remains unknown. This presents obvious problems of interpretation, particularly with regard to the philosophical implications of Sidney's revisions. It does, however, have the advantage of reflecting

the Elizabethan political scene as Sidney himself left it: riven by factions. This is the same political context that informed the divergent philosophies of Mary Sidney Herbert and Fulke Greville. In the worlds of the *New Arcadia* and Elizabethan politics, Philoclea's (or Mary Sidney Herbert's) irenical Stoicism had yet to prove a success or a failure. Yet, despite the lack of any such conclusive fictional, or historical, approval, I suggest the signs of its effectiveness are discernible in Sidney's text, even, rather paradoxically, in martial combat.

Throughout Book III, as a counterpoint to Amphialus's restraint, Cecropia emphasizes her disdain for any form of passivity; she tells her son, 'I, remembering that in all miseries weeping becomes fools, and practice wise folks, have tried divers means to pull us out of the mire of subjection' (319). This contrast in their outlooks is further emphasized when, in the midst of her son's paralysis, Cecropia personifies love as a military general:

If you command your soldier to march foremost, and he for courtesy put
others before him, would you praise his modesty? Love is your general.
He bids you dare. And will Amphialus be a dastard? (402)

Cecropia even resorts to classical exemplars of forceful action to further induce her son: 'Do you think Theseus should ever have gotten Antiope with sighing and crossing his arms?'; 'Iole had her own father killed by Hercules, and herself ravished—by force ravished'; 'But above all, mark Helen, daughter to Jupiter, who could never brook her mannerly-wooing Menelaus, but disdained his humbleness and loathed his softness. But so well she could like the force of enforcing Paris that for him she could abide what might be abidden' (402). It is notable, particularly when determining where the balance of sympathy should fall between mother and son, that things end badly for the active parties in all of Cecropia's classical allusions.

When Cecropia finally concludes her entreaty, likening a woman to 'a ready horse [that] straight yields when he finds one that will have him yield' and imploring

Amphialus to ‘show thyself a man’ (403), her son is prevented from replying by the arrival of a messenger carrying a challenge from the Forsaken Knight (Musidorus in disguise). There is a parallel here with the occasion when Philoclea’s message to Amphialus prevented the execution of Philanax: in both instances Amphialus is interrupted by messengers. He accepts the contest, ‘shaking off with resolution his mother’s importunate dissuasions’ (404), and rides to meet his challenger. This timely opportunity for Amphialus to truly ‘show himself a man’ appears to place the virtue of knightly combat in favourable and stark contrast to Cecropia’s ‘battle’ of the sexes; the juxtaposition also, seemingly, privileges honourable martial action over Cecropia’s ‘divers means’. However, it is clear from Amphialus’s demeanour, as he rides to meet his foe, that he is still primarily under the influence of Philoclea and her passive virtue:

Amphialus (already tender-minded by the afflictions of love)...without staff, or sword drawn...trotted fairly to the Forsaken Knight, willing to have put off his combat, to which his melancholy heart did, more than ever in like occasion, misgive him. (405)

Hence, rather than leaving his ‘womanly’ passivity behind (as Cecropia would have it), he, paradoxically, carries it into the contest. In discussing another passage from the *New Arcadia* that also involves Amphialus, that which concerns the fates of Argalus and Parthenia (the romance’s epitomes of perfect love), Roland Greene highlights an aspect of Sidney’s fiction that also applies here. Greene notes of the death of Argalus—who dies from, ‘not so much striving with Amphialus’, but the self-destructive ‘fire of that strife’ (377), derived from his love for Parthenia—that

the most accomplished knight in the *Arcadia* is defeated not by physical force but by the emotional and ethical resistances (including self-resistance) that are produced through relation, through love as much as war.³⁷⁹

Although Amphialus is implicated in the destruction of this image of love, he is just as susceptible as Argalus to what is figured as a female form of resistance, ‘produced

³⁷⁹ Greene, ‘Resistance in Process’, p. 106.

through relation'. Love is clearly a participant force in Amphialus's struggle, and this is further underlined in his contest with the Forsaken Knight when it is employed as one of two figurative trumpeters calling the knights to arms:

This fight, being the more cruel since both love and hatred conspired to sharpen their humours, that hard it was to say whether love with one trumpet, or hatred with another, gave the louder alarm to their courages.
(406)

The gendered nature of Amphialus's passive attitude as he enters the fray is particularly emphasized by the use of the phrase 'without staff or sword drawn'. As well as the obvious connotation of male sexual impotence, there is a further, less immediate association between the phrase 'without staff' and the word 'distaff'. A distaff is a staff on which wool or flax was wound in spinning. As spinning was historically a form of labour usually performed by women, the distaff came to symbolize 'women's work', and, by extension, the female sex: 'the "spindle-side" as opposed to the "spear-side"' of the family.³⁸⁰ If Amphialus is temporarily 'without staff' (dis-staff?), perhaps he is 'fitter...to hold a distaff'; this is how Thomas Moffett, in his biography, *Nobilis* (presented to Sidney's nephew, William, Lord Herbert, in 1594), characterizes the 'effeminate' men who, as Moffett believed, envied Philip Sidney.³⁸¹

It is noteworthy that Sidney himself, both in his *Defence of Poesy* and Book I of the *New Arcadia*, should also allude to the often depicted classical scene of 'Hercules, painted with his great beard and furious countenance, in women's attire, spinning at Omphale's commandment'.³⁸² In the latter of the two cases, Palladius (Musidorus in disguise) meets Pyrocles, who is in the guise of an Amazon, wearing a mantle held in place by

a very rich jewel, the device whereof...was this: a Hercules made in little form, but set with a distaff in his hand (as he once was by Omphale's

³⁸⁰ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, 'distaff', 3.b.

³⁸¹ Thomas Moffett, *Nobilis or A View of the Life and Death of a Sidney and Lessus Lugubris*, ed. Virgil B. Heltzel and Hoyt H. Hudson (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1940), p. 82, cited in Hannay, *Philip's Phoenix*, p. 81.

³⁸² Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, p. 136.

commandment), with a word in Greek, but this to be interpreted: 'Never more valiant'. (69)³⁸³

The image of Hercules spinning is invoked in the *Defence* to illustrate Sidney's case that laughter does not proceed from delight, but that they may coincide. Hercules's love for Omphale has persuaded him to undertake this action, and, for Sidney, 'the representing of so strange a power in love procureth delight: and the scornfulness of the action stirreth laughter'.³⁸⁴ The potential for laughter notwithstanding, Pyrocles's actions are presented in a favourable light. He is apparently 'Never more valiant', and although he is wearing a sword on his thigh, as is the custom of an Amazon, 'it seemed but a needless weapon, since her other forces were without withstanding' (69). It might be said that he needs nothing other than Hercules's distaff. Indeed, the same could be said of Amphialus when he is 'without staff': if not 'commanded' by a woman, he is certainly strongly influenced by one. He is, like Hercules spinning, another representation of that 'so strange a power in love' that has the ability to 'procureth delight'. In the *New Arcadia*, Palladius scorns Pyrocles, telling him that the 'effeminate love of a woman [Philoclea in this case] doth so womanize a man that, if you yield to it, it will not only make you an Amazon, but a launder, a distaff-spinner' (72). In response, Pyrocles argues against any suggestion that his transformation implies a weakening, and even charges his own sex with going against its nature:

I am not yet come to that degree of wisdom to think light of the sex of whom I have my life; since if I be anything..., I was to come to it born of a woman, and nursed of a woman. And certainly...it is strange to see the unmanlike cruelty of mankind, who not content with their tyrannous ambition to have brought the others' virtuous patience under them, like childish masters think their masterhood nothing without doing injury to them, who (if we will argue by reason) are framed of nature with the same parts of the mind for the exercise of virtue as we are. (72-3)

³⁸³ In the *Old Arcadia*, Pyrocles's device is 'an eagle covered with the feathers of a dove, and yet lying under another dove, in such sort as 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' (*The Old Arcadia*, p. 27).

³⁸⁴ Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, p. 136.

Although, as Mary Ellen Lamb observes, Pyrocles's arguments are undermined by his admissions (in his song and elsewhere) that his 'poor reason's overthrow' (69) and his 'heart is too far possessed' (75), the case for the 'power in love', both here and in Book III, remains strong.³⁸⁵

Philoclea's influence over Pyrocles is clearly problematic, not least in terms of gender equality, if the latter's adoption of the feminine requires the deposition of reason in favour of the unruly heart. When, in Book III, Amphialus rides to meet the Forsaken Knight's challenge, Philoclea's irenicism would seem similarly to have reached its limits. Musidorus (as the Forsaken Knight) is acting primarily in defence of Pamela, but Amphialus mistakenly perceives that he is 'his rival' in love for Philoclea—'each indeed mistaking other'. On this occasion remembrance of the princess does not prevent Amphialus engaging with his opponent in active combat, rather, he declares that 'it proceeds from their [the princesses'] own beauty to enforce love to offer this force'. Nevertheless, there is a final parallel that serves to confirm the importance of Philoclea's Stoicism in what might otherwise seem like 'pointless conflict': the Forsaken Knight's armour bears an *impresa* (or emblem) in the form of 'a catoblepta' (405). A catoblepta (often referred to with various spellings, including catoblepas and catablepon) is an animal, apparently from Egypt, that Sidney could have first read about in Duplessis-Mornay's *De la vérité de la religion Chrestienne* or Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis historia*. As can be seen from the image on the title page of Edward Topsell's *The historie of foure-footed beastes* (published in 1607; see Figure 3), the catoblepta has its head lowered and a considerable fringe covering its eyes.³⁸⁶ This countenance is associated with the belief that such a creature's eyes, if seen, would kill the viewer:

³⁸⁵ Mary Ellen Lamb, *Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), p. 84; Lamb refers to the corresponding episode from the *Old Arcadia*, but her argument remains relevant to the revised version.

³⁸⁶ Title page of Edward Topsell, *The historie of foure-footed beastes* (London, 1607).

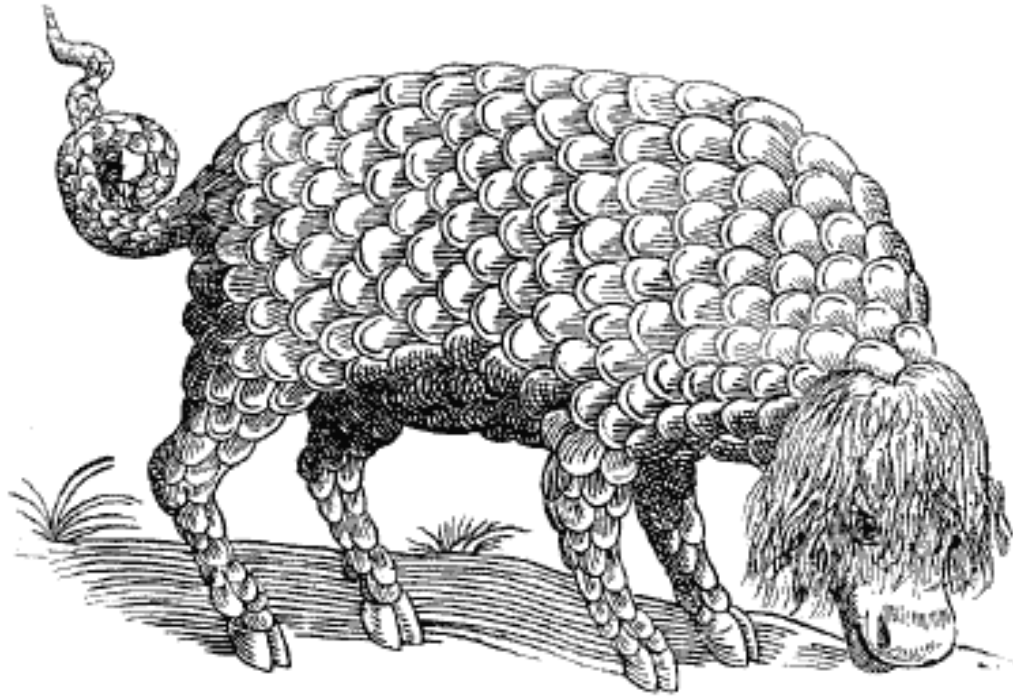


Figure 3.
A catoblepta, from the title page of Edward Topsell, *The historie of foure-footed beastes* (London, 1607).

From the crowne of their head downe to their nose they haue a long hanging mane, which maketh them to look fearefully...These *Gorgons* [as Topsell categorises them] ...haue such haire about their heads as not onely exceedeth all other beastes, but also poysoneth when he standeth vpright. *Pliny* calleth this beast *Catablepon*, because it continually looketh downeward, and saith that all the parts of it are but smal excepting the head which is very heauy, and exceedeth the proportion of his body which is neuer lifted vp, but all liuing creatures die that see his eies.³⁸⁷

Although the comparison is less than flattering, there is a parallel between the appearance of the catoblepta and that of the imprisoned Philoclea: ‘over her head a scarf which did eclipse almost half her eyes, which under it fixed their beams upon the wall by, with so steady a manner, as if in that place they might well change, but not mend, their object’ (321). Moreover, Philoclea has a similar ability to transform, if not to kill, someone who gazes upon her. As Amphialus puts it, ‘Did ever man’s eye look thorough love upon the majesty of virtue shining through beauty, but that he became—as it well became him—a captive?’ (401-02)

There is a degree of ambiguity in the language of seeing and being seen in the *New Arcadia* which appears to make the correspondence between Philoclea’s capacity and that of the catoblepta rather imprecise. The princess’s eyes ‘fixed their beams upon the wall...as if in that place they might well change, but not mend, their object’, whereas, elsewhere the emphasis is on being seen. Indeed, the catoblepta would seem to require its eyes to be seen to have its fatal effect. This conundrum may be solved, I suggest, by adopting the ancient concept of ‘visual rays’ as a means of explaining the faculty of sight, still prevalent in the early modern period, at least up to the early seventeenth century and the revolutionary work of Johannes Kepler.³⁸⁸ Indeed, this early scientific hypothesis, whereby the eye emits a ‘seeing’ beam rather than receives light, would seem to be at play in the English translation, partly attributed to Sidney, of Duplessis-Mornay’s *De la vérité de la religion Chrestienne*, where it discusses the catoblepta.

³⁸⁷ Topsell, *The historie of foure-footed beastes*, pp. 262-63.

³⁸⁸ For a discussion of the slow decline of the emission theory of sight, see David C. Lindberg, ‘Alhazen’s Theory of Vision and Its Reception in the West’, *Isis* 58.3 (Autumn 1967), pp. 321-41.

The English translation of this text is partly attributed to Sidney himself. The curious Egyptian creature serves as an analogy for understanding the minds of men ‘bent and intended to nothing but mischief’:

Or what els is such a mynd, than y^e eye of the beast of AEgypt, which
killeth those whom it looketh vpon, and it self also by y^e rebounding back
of his owne sight? Some in deede doo lift vp y^e eye of their mynd aloft;
but how farre or what see they?³⁸⁹

Here seeing the eyes and being seen by them are equally hazardous. Moreover, the suggestion that Philoclea’s averted gaze, her ‘scarf which did eclipse almost half her eyes’, and the creature’s ‘long hanging mane, which maketh [it] to look fearefully’, are means of self-preservation echoes the double-edged nature of the princess allowing Amphialus to see her: her shining virtue (her defence) becomes visible and henceforth active, but she also arouses her captor’s desire.

For her virtue to have an active influence in her world Philoclea must be seen, but this exposes her to tyranny. In this respect Philoclea and Amphialus complement each other. Rather pointedly, this reflects the relationship between the two emblems emblazoned on the armour of both the Forsaken Knight and Amphialus as they enter combat. As we have seen, the Forsaken Knight’s *impresa* is a catoblepta. Amphialus, seeming ‘as if he would turn his inside outward’, clothes himself ‘all in black’, and ‘In his shield he bare for his device a night, by an excellent painter excellently painted’ (404).³⁹⁰ The catoblepta of the Forsaken Knight’s *impresa* ‘lies dead as the moon, where it hath so natural a sympathy, wants her light’, and written beside it, ‘The word signified that the moon wanted not the light, but the poor beast wanted the moon’s light’ (405). Therefore, as Victor Skretkowicz observes, the catoblepta is ‘sure to be aroused

³⁸⁹ Duplessis-Mornay, *A woorke concerning the trewnesse of the Christian religion*, p. 299.

³⁹⁰ The ‘night’ of Amphialus’s *impresa*, as well as the stars and clouds associated with his apparel elsewhere in the romance, bears comparison with Sidney’s own device on an ensign depicted in Thomas Lant’s *Funeral Roll of Sir Philip Sidney*. The starry, though partially clouded sky of the ensign is accompanied by the words, ‘Per tenebras’; see Katherine Duncan-Jones, ‘Sidney’s Personal Imprese’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 33 (1970), p. 322 and plate 46a, and Victor Skretkowicz, ‘Devices and Their Narrative Function in Sidney’s *Arcadia*’, *Emblematika: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Emblem Studies* 1.2 (Fall 1986), pp. 283-86.

to its most dangerous state by seeing night approaching in the form of Amphialus' impresa'.³⁹¹ These foes are in fact true counterparts.

The emblems displayed by the knights betoken the mode by which Philoclea may influence others, but to what end is this influence exercised? The example of Philoclea's resistance to tyranny, I wish to suggest, has all the ethical intricacy of the code by which Sidney and his forward Protestant associates contended with real-world tyrants. Languet, mentor to Duplessis-Mornay as well as Sidney, contributed significantly to the ethical code of resistance to Catholic tyranny in Europe developed in the wake of such events as the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572. Sidney witnessed this slaughter of French Protestants first-hand and it had a profound effect on the course of his life. Nevertheless, Sidney, together with Languet and Duplessis-Mornay, subscribed to an irenic, even ecumenical, philosophy of resistance to tyranny, maintaining a high-minded tolerance for 'the inevitable weakness of people who are oppressed by its power'.³⁹² The occasion of Sidney's letter, written to Elizabeth, opposing her proposed marriage to the Catholic Francis, Duke of Anjou, is instructive here. As Stillman asserts in his book on Sidney's *Defence of Poesy*, Sidney's circle, unlike the unfortunate John Stubbs (the publication of whose *Gaping Gulf* resulted in the loss of his hand), understood the need 'to cross party-political lines between opposing confessions as well as opposing nationalities' when entering into public discourse.³⁹³ Such principled anti-factionalism and tolerance is also at play in Philoclea's resistance. Both Sidney and Philoclea may be charged with an all too passive response to tyranny. On the other hand, as Stillman shows, with reference to

³⁹¹ See Skretkiewicz, 'Commentary', in *The New Arcadia*, p. 573. In his article, 'Devices and Their Narrative Function in Sidney's *Arcadia*', Skretkiewicz also attributes the appearance of Amphialus's attire during combat to 'his steadfast love for Philoclea', but differs from my reading when assigning allegorical and narrative purposes to the knights' devices (see pp. 283-86).

³⁹² Stillman, *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism*, p. 176. Also see Kuin, 'Sir Philip Sidney's Model of the Statesman', for a discussion of the parallels between the careers of Sidney and Duplessis-Mornay.

³⁹³ Stillman, *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism*, p. 27.

the *Defence*, Sidney imputed an active role to his authorship, as the ‘right poet’ inspiring virtue in others. Philoclea, by comparison, has her ‘virtue shining through beauty’, and as with Sidney, tyranny must and will be opposed, but not at the expense of that which is shared: in Sidney’s case, it is a common humanity and membership of the Christian church, for Philoclea, a common Arcadian heritage. Her ability to inspire a degree of reconciliation among warring Arcadians is testament to this.

It is through the complex employment of the parallel images discussed in this chapter that, I contend, even the most labyrinthine and apparently pointless passages of the *New Arcadia* reveal its philosophy. Unlike his avowedly wicked mother, Amphialus is shown to be open to the influence of the princesses’ stoical virtue. Hence, that virtue, perhaps like Sidney’s literary project itself, has the potential to reconcile apparently irreconcilable factions. Here Stoicism can be seen as an ‘emollient influence’, a status previously reserved for ‘courtesy and chivalry’ in the world of Sidney’s *New Arcadia*.³⁹⁴ It is this very ‘nexus of ethics, politics, and rhetoric’ that provided the philosophical basis for the *New Arcadia*’s solution to the factionalism that, Sidney believed, was weakening England.³⁹⁵ Through its consecutive publications, Sidney’s romance was able to represent ‘so strange a power in love’ throughout the 1590s and beyond.

³⁹⁴ Worden, *The Sound of Virtue*, pp. 359-60, n. 23.

³⁹⁵ Davis, ‘Renaissance Neostoicism and the Sidney Family Literary Discourse’, p. 56.

Chapter Seven: ‘Cleverly playing the stoic’: the Earl of Essex, Sir Philip Sidney and Surviving Elizabeth’s Court

The truest test of Sidney’s legacy of anti-factionalism would have been to provide a guiding philosophy at the time when court politics was at its most polarized. In such circumstances, which, arguably, the 1590s were for Elizabethan courtiers, Sidney’s ethos would have been invaluable. As we saw in Chapter One, and as I show in this chapter, Sidney’s sophisticated, textually-mediated relationship with his monarch has the potential to mitigate the most difficult of political situations. Sidney’s discourse of pragmatic stoicism and principled anti-factionalism, associated with the female characters of the *New Arcadia*, is recognisable by its characteristics even after the historical moment of its creation has passed. Sidney’s prose fiction was, indeed, still influential long after its composition, not least with certain members of the circle of Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex. An apposite example is Gervase Markham, who wrote a completion of Sidney’s *Arcadia*, the first volume of which was published in 1607, though internal evidence suggests it may have been written ten years earlier. Significantly for my argument here, he also wrote numerous poems associated with Essex. Markham’s ‘Essexian’ poetry included *The most honorable tragedie of Sir Richard Grinuile, Knight* (1595), dedicated to Charles Blount, eighth Lord Mountjoy, and in which Markham invokes the ghost of Sidney,³⁹⁶ *The poem of poems* (1596), dedicated to Elizabeth Sidney, daughter of Philip, and *Deuoreux Vertues teares for the losse of the most christian King Henry* (1597), dedicated to Essex’s sisters, Dorothy Percy, Countess of Northumberland, and Penelope, Lady Rich, the latter being the

³⁹⁶ Steggle, ‘Essexianism and the Work of Gervase Markham’, in Lisa Hopkins and Annaliese Connolly, eds., *Essex: The Cultural Impact of an Elizabethan Courtier* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, forthcoming). Steggle sees Sidney’s ghost as ‘a potent metaphor for the anxiety of influence felt by Essexian writing more widely in connection with Sidney, the pre-eminent soldier-poet’. Charles Blount’s brother, William, owned and annotated a copy of the 1593 *Arcadia*, as discussed in Chapter Three. The eighth Lord Mountjoy’s close relationship with the Earl of Essex is outlined in Christopher Maginn, ‘Blount, Charles, eighth Baron Mountjoy and earl of Devonshire (1563-1606)’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008.

putative subject of Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*.³⁹⁷ As Markham's literary career attests, the Essex circle had Sidney at its centre.

As the title of Paul E. J. Hammer's landmark book indicates, the political career of Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex is associated with the polarization of Elizabethan politics towards the end of the sixteenth century.³⁹⁸ And, although, as Hammer notes, the traditional image of Essex, as 'the ill-fated favourite of Elizabeth', who 'lost his head, both metaphorically and literally', and whose career historians have employed as 'an easy explanation for the political problems of the 1590s', is a 'caricature', there is a persistent sense that the earl's personal qualities, often characterized as exclusively negative, were the most significant factors in determining the events of the period. That several scholars (including Hammer) have repeatedly countered this impression over a long period of time has not completely debased its currency.³⁹⁹ In the entry on Essex published in the *Dictionary of National Biography* in 1888, Sidney Lee observes that

Essex's character is a simple one. He was devoid of nearly every quality of which statesmen are made. Frank, passionate, and impulsive as a schoolboy, he had no control whatever over his feelings; and at a court like Elizabeth's, split into warring factions, whose members strove to supplant one another by intricate diplomacy, his attempt to make a great political position by force of his personal character was doomed to failure.⁴⁰⁰

This nineteenth-century example of a caricature of Essex's career contains the essential elements of many others: he is painted as an over-ambitious, arrogant courtier, who

³⁹⁷ See Steggle, 'Markham, Gervase (1568?-1637)'.

³⁹⁸ Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: the Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, 1585-1597*.

³⁹⁹ Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics*, pp. 3-6. Such studies as Stephen Coote, *A Play of Passion: the Life of Sir Walter Raleigh* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), M. M. Reese, *The Royal Office of Master of the Horse* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 1976) and L. B. Smith, *Treason in Tudor England: Politics and Paranoia* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1986) are cited by Hammer as examples of the perpetuation of the negative image of Essex's career; he cites the work, conducted over several decades, of E. M. Tenison as evidence for the long-standing opposition to the caricatured view; see E. M. Tenison, *Elizabethan England: being the history of this country 'In relation to all foreign princes'* (12 vols., Royal Leamington Spa: Issued for the author to subscribers only, 1933-61).

⁴⁰⁰ Sidney Lee, 'Devereux, Robert, second Earl of Essex (1566-1601)', in *Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (22 vols., London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1885-1900), XIV (1888); online ed., *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Archive*.

lacked the self-control and diplomatic ability to survive in the already over-heated atmosphere of the late-Elizabethan court. In Hammer's entry in the 2004 edition of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, he outlines a 'more complex', 'modern historiographical image of Essex' in which research demonstrates that

Essex developed a coherent military strategy for the war against Spain and examined the broader cultural context which helped to shape his career. More recent works have illuminated his role in intelligence gathering and his patronage of university scholars, whose research helped to serve his political needs.⁴⁰¹

This latter view of Essex echoes that presented by Mervyn James, in his influential book, *Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England*. In a chapter entitled 'At a crossroads of the political culture: the Essex revolt, 1601', James acknowledges that time was running out for figures in Essex's mould, but, even so, prefers to emphasize the earl's political and cultural sophistication. Indeed, he asserts that 'the most interesting feature of the Essex revolt is not so much the fact of its failure, as that it was the last of its kind'. For James, 'the revolt was motivated by, and arose out of, a specific aspect of the political culture of Elizabethan England: the cult of honour and its code'; 'it was the last honour revolt'; Essex himself, a product of his 'aristocratic lineage, his military career, and the tradition he inherited', was 'a paradigm of honour'.⁴⁰² Moreover, a dominant feature of Essex's makeup, according to James, was a new chivalric romanticism, 'a synthesis of honour, humanism and religion', inherited from Sir Philip Sidney and epitomized by his prose romance, the *Arcadia*.⁴⁰³

And so, building on the work of historians like James and Hammer, and in order to further the ongoing reappraisal of the political and cultural career of the Earl of Essex,

⁴⁰¹ Hammer, 'Devereux, Robert, second earl of Essex (1565-1601)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, October 2008.

⁴⁰² James, *Society, Politics and Culture*, p. 416.

⁴⁰³ James delineates the nature of this 'Sidneian chivalric romanticism' in the preceding chapter of the same book, which is entitled 'English politics and the concept of honour, 1485-1642' (pp. 308-415); see especially pp. 387-91. This chapter first appeared with the same title as *Past and Present* Supplement no. 3 (1978).

I wish to examine the relationship between the earl and the ‘specific aspect of the political culture of Elizabethan England’ (that ‘synthesis’) that is ‘Sidneian chivalric romanticism’.⁴⁰⁴ More specifically, I shall read the *Arcadia*, Sidney’s prose romance and the chief source for what James terms ‘Sidneian romanticism’, with reference to the issues of counsel and court factionalism, which have particular relevance for Essex’s career and the 1590s in general. Employing the work of historians of the late Elizabethan polity, I shall argue that the revised *Arcadia* in particular, written in the 1580s, ought to be read in accordance with a distinctly feminine discourse of pragmatic stoicism and principled anti-factionalism. This reading privileges the philosophy of the Countess of Pembroke, the supervisor of the publication of the 1593 edition of the *Arcadia*, over that of Fulke Greville, the editor of the 1590 edition. Importantly, as Joel Davis has shown, Mary shunned the factionalism and the pessimistic Taciteanism of the circle of the Earl of Essex, with which Greville had become associated.⁴⁰⁵ In this chapter, though I continue to accept Davis’s arguments about the differences between Greville and the countess, I wish to emphasize the continuities between Sidney Herbert’s philosophical outlook and that of the Earl of Essex, in effect bypassing Greville’s agenda as it is evident in his role as an editor of the *Arcadia*. Ironically, by publishing the *New Arcadia*, Greville put a text into the public domain that, I suggest, undermined his intention in doing so, not least because he prompted the Countess of Pembroke to publish what she believed to be a more Sidneian text. My approach will shed light on the more optimistic and conciliatory aspects of Essex’s career that are arguably part of Sidney’s legacy, while also bringing to prominence the differences of emphasis and circumstance that produced a political culture that was peculiar to Essex.

The fact that Essex was the chief legatee of the political and cultural position established by Sidney has long been accepted. Both Essex and Sidney fought in the

⁴⁰⁴ James, *Society, Politics and Culture*, p. 391.

⁴⁰⁵ Davis, ‘Multiple *Arcadias*’, pp. 421-30.

military campaign against Catholic Spain in the Low Countries that was led by Sidney's uncle, Essex's stepfather, Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester. This was a campaign, begun in 1585, that was intended to fulfil the political aims of Leicester and his party, who pursued a 'policy of Protestant activism' that, though barely realized,

involved a European Protestant league, a larger investment of resources in the war with Spain, wider military commitments abroad, westward oceanic expansion, and an extended naval assault on the Spanish empire.⁴⁰⁶

Indeed, it is the tension between the activism of this party, to which Sidney and Essex belonged, and the more passive approach of Elizabeth and her closest aides, including the Cecils, William and Robert, that forms the background to this discussion of Sidney's legacy and Essex's inheritance. The death of Sidney, in October 1586, as part of the same war in the Low Countries, after receiving a wound at Zutphen, where he fought beside Essex, was a significant blow to the long-term project of Leicester's party. Not long after this loss of one of the cause's two bright young hopes, the other took his ally's place as one of the main challengers in the tilt held regularly on 17 November to celebrate the accession to the throne of Queen Elizabeth. Essex was bequeathed Sidney's sword, and, later, married his widow. In the years immediately following Sidney's demise, in both action and written word, Essex was both encouraging others and 'being encouraged to think of himself as Sidney's military and political heir'.⁴⁰⁷ Essex's New Year's gift to Elizabeth in 1587 was a jewel that showed a rainbow above two pillars, one of which was cracked to represent Sidney, the other intact to represent himself.⁴⁰⁸ In the dedicatory epistle to his *The life and death of Sir Phillip Sidney*, dedicated to Essex and published in 1587, John Philip asks, 'But is Sidney deade', and answers by addressing Essex directly:

⁴⁰⁶ James, *Society, Politics and Culture*, p. 391.

⁴⁰⁷ Alexander, *Writing After Sidney*, p. 61.

⁴⁰⁸ For discussions of contemporary allusions to Essex as Sidney's legatee see Alexander, *Writing After Sidney*, pp. 61-3 and Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics*, pp. 53-4.

no he liveth, his virtues in this life have made a conquest of death, and in the world to come his faith hath obtained him the glorious presence of Jesus Christe in the kingdome of heaven. And to put you out of doubt, his virtues so revive him from the grave, that he in truth speaketh unto you.⁴⁰⁹

In 1589, George Peele addressed a pastoral work to Essex on the occasion of the earl's return from his unsanctioned participation in the forward Protestant expedition to Spain and Portugal, under the command of Sir John Norris and Sir Francis Drake.⁴¹⁰ The full title of the work is *An Eglogue Gratulatorie. Entituled: To the right honorable, and renowned Shepheard of Albions Arcadia: Robert Earle of Essex and Ewe, for his welcome into England from Portugall*. This reference to Essex as the 'renowned Shepheard of Albions Arcadia' alludes to the earl as the inheritor of Sidney's symbolic role as the shepherd knight, Philisides, from the *Arcadia*. The text of the poem makes explicit this allusion, while acknowledging their shared military experiences and Essex's appearance at the Accession Day tilt dressed in black:

Fellow in Armes he was, in their flowing deies,
With that great *Shepherd* good *Philisides*:
And in sad sable did I see him dight,
Moning the misse of *Pallas* peereles Knight ...

With him he serv'd, and watcht and waited fate,
To keepe the grim Wolfe from *Elizaes* gate:
And for their *Mistresse* thoughten these two swains,
They moughten never take too mickle paines ...

But, ah for griefe, that jolly groome is dead,
For whome the *Muses* silver teares have shed:
Yet in this lovelie swaine, source of our glee,
Mun all his Vertues sweet revive bee.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁹ John Philip, *The Life and Death of Sir Phillip Sidney, late Lord gouvernour of Flushing: His funerals Solemnized in Paules Church where he lyeth interred; with the whole order of the mournfull shewe, as they marched thorowe the citie of London, on Thursday the 16 of February, 1587* (1587), sig. A2^v.

⁴¹⁰ This expedition is detailed by Hammer in *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics*, pp. 82-5 and *Elizabeth's Wars: War, Government and Society in Tudor England, 1544-1604* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 154-61.

⁴¹¹ George Peele, *An Eglogue Gratulatorie. Entituled: To the right honorable, and renowned Shepheard of Albions Arcadia: Robert Earle of Essex and Ewe, for his welcome into England from Portugall* (1589), sigs. A1^r, A3^v. For a detailed analysis of this and other poems occasioned by the expedition to Portugal see Hugh Gazzard, "'Many a Herdsman more dispoſde to morne': Peele, Campion, and the Portugal Expedition of 1589", *The Review of English Studies* 57 (2006), pp. 16-42.

Essex, here poetically characterized as the dutiful Arcadian shepherd of the nation's flock, keeping 'the grim Wolfe [of Catholic Spain] from *Elizaes* gate', was in reality also capable of behaviour reminiscent of the knights and princes from Sidney's romance. Sidney introduces the symbolic display and martial chivalry of the Elizabethan tiltyard into the conflicts represented in his fiction, and it has been argued that the 'military effectiveness [of Sidney and his like-minded party] may have been diminished by the fact that they were much more experienced in symbolic conflicts in the tiltyard than in real warfare'.⁴¹²

In another ill-fated military campaign (begun in 1591) in the wider conflict with Spain, to aid the Protestant King of France, Henri IV, in his besieging of Rouen, Essex commanded an army of 4,000 men.⁴¹³ As the conflict progressed, Essex's forces became severely depleted and the earl came under severe criticism from Elizabeth for his own behaviour, which was typified by a 'sharp dash' to Compiègne to meet Henri, where Essex, with 'one hundred horsemen ... trimmed in the best Devereux tangerine', designed to produce an impressive display for the king, found himself and his men 'outflanked – and stranded', before taking a 'circuitous and hard-riding route to regain his companions' and losing a number of his soldiers in the process.⁴¹⁴ Yet, this did not dim Essex's fondness for the grand chivalric gesture. Just before returning to England for the final time during a sporadic and failing campaign, Essex challenged the governor of Rouen to 'personal combat, on foot or horse'. This again proved to be an empty deed

⁴¹² Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, p. 108. Sidney's participation in the cult of honour was most publically displayed during his involvement in numerous prestigious tilts, not least the entertainment that he devised (and in which he participated) for the occasion of the visit of the French Ambassadors to Elizabeth's court that began in April 1581, known as the 'Four Foster Children of Desire'; see Wallace, *The Life of Sir Philip Sidney*, pp. 263-67. For a discussion of (and guidance towards) the fictional parallels with Sidney's real-life tiltyard experience see Skretkiewicz, 'General Introduction', in *The New Arcadia*, pp. xiv-xv, xxi-xxii.

⁴¹³ For accounts of this campaign see Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics*, pp. 97-108 and Chapter Six, as well as Howell A. Lloyd, *The Rouen Campaign 1590-1592: Politics, Warfare and the Early-Modern State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973).

⁴¹⁴ Robert Lacey, *Robert, Earl of Essex: An Elizabethan Icarus* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971; reprint, London: Phoenix Press, 2001), pp. 84-5.

when the governor politely declined the earl's offer 'on the grounds of his responsibility as governor'.⁴¹⁵

Essex's chivalry, however, was not all about public display. It was also of serious political and cultural significance. The new chivalric romanticism, putatively inherited by Essex from Sidney, was, as Mervyn James observes, 'a synthesis of honour, humanism and religion' that was intended to fortify Elizabethan men such as Sidney and Essex against the vicissitudes of fickle Fortune. And, as Sidney's friend, Fulke Greville, outlines in his biography of Sidney, 'A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney', the *Arcadia* could be seen as a guidebook to this new ethos:

In which traverses [of the *Arcadia*] I know his [Sidney's] purpose was to limn out such exact pictures of every posture in the mind that any man, being forced in the strains of this life to pass through any straits or latitudes of good or ill fortune, might (as in a glass) see how to set a good countenance upon all the discountenances of adversity, and a stay upon the exorbitant smilings of chance.⁴¹⁶

James's conception of Sidney's purpose in writing the *Arcadia* also relies on the suitability of Greville's 'A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney' for reading the *Arcadia*. However, given that it was completed in the Jacobean (between 1610 and 1612) rather than the Elizabethan era, in a different political and philosophical climate, its suitability is open to doubt. Greville's early career under the reign of James I was marked by the loss of his position as treasurer of the navy, which he had gained with Essex's aid in 1599.⁴¹⁷ Indeed, Mervyn James acknowledges that during Greville's post-Elizabethan career, 'under the pressure of political disillusionment, his mind showed a progressive disintegration of the synthesis of wisdom, honour and religion which, under Sidney's

⁴¹⁵ Lacey, *Robert, Earl of Essex*, p. 90. There are accounts of Essex's challenge to the governor in the memoirs of Maximilien de Béthune, duc de Sully (1559-1641), a minister of Henri IV, and in the *Essais historiques* of Saint-Foix; see *Memoirs of the Duke of Sully ... a new edition, revised and corrected; with additional notes, and an historical introduction, attributed to Sir Walter Scott*, tr. Charlotte Lennox (London: H.G. Bohn, 1856), p. 274, and Monsieur de (Germain-François Poullain) Saint-Foix, *Essais historiques sur Paris*, Fifth Edition (Paris, Veuve Duchesne, 1776-77), p. 368.

⁴¹⁶ Greville, 'A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney', p. 11.

⁴¹⁷ John Gouws, 'Greville, Fulke, first Baron Brooke of Beauchamps Court (1554-1628)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, May 2007.

influence, had sustained the idealism of his youth'.⁴¹⁸ Given this disintegration, it is debatable whether Greville's Jacobean articulation of Sidney's purpose in writing the *Arcadia* and the nature of the chivalric romanticism expressed in the romance, and passed on to Essex, are wholly the same.

James's formulation of the threefold nature of the *Arcadia* ('a synthesis of honour, humanism and religion') is derived from Greville's reading of the *Arcadia*, particularly as it may be applied to the careers of the romance's heroes, Pyrocles and Musidorus. It is these princes who must endure Greville's 'exorbitant smilings of chance', and 'pass through any straits or latitudes of good or ill fortune' they encounter, acquiring, according to James, 'first wisdom, then...Christian "patience"' to add to their well-established magnanimity and honour. Through their love for the princesses, Philoclea and Pamela, which 'first reveals to the princes their own weaknesses and breaks down their heroic self-sufficiency', they attain 'a knowledge of the finite weakness of the fallen self, converting...heroic self-sufficiency into a dependence on others, and on the divine order of things'. During the princes' later imprisonment, facing execution for the murder of the princesses' father, Basilius, they 'assert their completion of the full circuit of wisdom through the attainment of a religious fortitude, that of patience'.

As James notes, there is a strong influence in this synthesis of Platonic and Stoic philosophies, neither of which was wholeheartedly embraced by Sidney, who did not hold with their 'introverted unworldly emphasis'.⁴¹⁹ Greville, by contrast, seems to have adhered to a more stoical philosophy, at least after Sidney's death, when he became linked to a fashion for reading the Roman historian, Tacitus, associated with the

⁴¹⁸ James, *Society, Politics and Culture*, p. 397.

⁴¹⁹ James, *Society, Politics and Culture*, pp. 388-91.

circle of the Earl of Essex.⁴²⁰ The reading of Tacitus, whose works contain numerous examples of high political factionalism, was associated with the polarization of politics in the 1590s, as both a philosophical shield from the vagaries of court politicking and a source of a divisive and often passive political ethos. In the case of the military-minded Essex himself, as David Womersley notes, the attraction may also have been Tacitus' lessons for increasing the 'political gravity' of military office.⁴²¹ Sidney's activist attitude is famously expressed in his *Defence of Poesy*, where he endorses 'the end of well-doing and not of well-knowing only'.⁴²² Indeed, considering the epic adventures of Sidney's Arcadian heroes, it would be difficult to derive from their example a version of chivalric romanticism that was passive in nature. Yet, James's conception of this new style of honour remains strongly inflected with what he terms 'an acceptance in "patience" of a discipline of suffering', which appears to be derived more from Greville's mature, Jacobean 'Dedication' than from Sidney's romance of the 1580s.⁴²³ Indeed, a 'discipline of suffering' hardly sounds like the kind of philosophical outlook that would sustain the idealism of youth, and, in his 'Dedication', Greville himself bemoans the passive effeminacy of the present (Jacobean) age, contrasting it with the late Elizabethan era: 'the real and large complexions of those active times'.⁴²⁴

It is here that I depart from James's account. On this issue, James is in danger of obscuring the optimistic aspects of Sidney's outlook, which are, I contend, discernible in his *Arcadia*, especially the revised version.⁴²⁵ The vestiges of this ethos can be seen in Essex's career in the 1590s, even in the events leading to his fateful 'revolt' in 1601.

⁴²⁰ Davis, 'Multiple Arcadias', pp. 401-30. For an examination of the complex response to the *Arcadia* by a Tacitus-reading associate of the Earl of Essex see Schurink, "'Like a hand in the margine of a booke'", pp. 1-24.

⁴²¹ David Womersley, 'Sir Henry Savile's Translation of Tacitus and the Political Interpretation of Elizabethan Texts', *The Review of English Studies* 42 (1991), p. 341.

⁴²² Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, p. 104.

⁴²³ James, *Society, Politics and Culture*, p. 387.

⁴²⁴ Greville, 'A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney', p. 7.

⁴²⁵ In his delineation of Sidney's romanticism, Mervyn James uses the composite *Arcadia* of 1593, which includes, broadly speaking, the revised books of the *New Arcadia* and the ending of the *Old Arcadia*. My reading makes use of the revised version, which, I contend, represents Sidney's ethos in its clearest and latest form.

The Earl of Essex is undoubtedly associated with the polarization of Elizabethan politics in this later period of his career, but it is possible to see, in the midst of an era of division, the legacy of Sidney's own anti-divisive philosophy in the earl's attitudes and behaviour. Of vital importance to the polarization of Elizabethan politics at that time was the issue of who was able to counsel the monarch and to what effect.

After returning from the Rouen campaign, in 1592, Essex 'sought to reinforce his special personal relationship with Elizabeth, which had been severely strained', not least because of his own wilful behaviour in the martial arena. To his prowess as a military man, Essex 'added the objective of becoming a formal participant in state affairs as a member of the privy council'. This he achieved in February 1593. In this new position, he hoped to influence the monarch, through counsel, to back the same 'forward Protestant' policies that he had pursued in battle.⁴²⁶ Unfortunately, as the decade proceeded he came up against similar resistance to that which had opposed his stepfather, the Earl of Leicester, in the form of a rival party headed by Elizabeth's Principal Secretary of State, Sir Robert Cecil. Most significantly, while Essex was away from the court, pursuing his cause by military means, he would often fall prey to the misrepresentation of his actions by his rivals. This was never more evident than during his campaign in Ireland in 1599, when Essex's inability to overcome the forces of the earl of Tyrone led to mutual suspicions between Essex and his rivals, each side fostering the impression that the other's actions were traitorous with regard to the ongoing conflict with Spain. Eventually, on 28 September 1599, in an act of consiliary desperation, Essex returned from Ireland and burst into the queen's bedchamber when she was only partially dressed.⁴²⁷ From this point onwards, Essex's precipitate 'revolt', begun in further desperation to recover his devastated political position, appears to have

⁴²⁶ Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics*, pp. 111-20.

⁴²⁷ Hammer, 'Shakespeare's *Richard II*, the Play of 7 February 1601, and the Essex Rising', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59.1 (Spring 2008), pp. 4-6.

been inevitable. His subsequent execution seems, in this context, to have been a result of his failure to fortify himself against the vicissitudes of a factionalized polity, something his inheritance from Philip Sidney had the potential to achieve.

The work of historians like Simon Adams and Paul Hammer suggests that ‘the Elizabethan polity was not characterized by persistent factionalism until the 1590s’.⁴²⁸ For Adams, such a conclusion rests, in part, on his own ‘narrow definition’ of the term ‘faction’: ‘a personal following employed in direct opposition to another personal following’.⁴²⁹ On this basis, the rivalry between Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and William Cecil, Lord Burghley is not considered to be evidence of factionalism. As Adams notes, during the period prior to 1588 (the year of Leicester’s death), Burghley’s power was ‘limited by the influence of Leicester’, but a ‘sustained struggle’ was obviated by ‘their similar outlook in religion and agreement on most matters of state, together with a mutual appreciation of their joint intimacy with the Queen’.⁴³⁰ Such ‘political homogeneity’ was characteristic of both the Elizabethan court and council, not least due to successive events in the 1570s that necessitated a closing of Protestant ranks: the papal bull declaring Elizabeth a heretic in 1570; the Ridolfi Plot of 1571; and the St Bartholomew’s Day Massacre in 1572.⁴³¹

As we saw above, particularly in Chapter One, the arguably most contentious issue of the period following these events and prior to the 1590s was the proposed marriage of Elizabeth to Francis, Duke of Anjou. This was linked to the similarly divisive question of whether to intervene in the Netherlands, where the Dutch Protestant rebellion against Spanish rule was undergoing a resurgence after 1572.⁴³² Burghley

⁴²⁸ Natalie Mears, ‘Counsel, Public Debate, and Queenship’, p. 633.

⁴²⁹ Simon Adams, ‘Faction, Clientage and Party: English Politics, 1550-1603’, *History Today* 32 (December 1982), p. 34.

⁴³⁰ Adams, ‘Eliza Enthroned? The Court and its Politics’, in Christopher Haigh, ed., *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1984; reprint, 1994), p. 63.

⁴³¹ Adams, ‘Eliza Enthroned?’, pp. 66-7.

⁴³² The ‘capture of Brielle and Flushing by William of Orange and the Sea Beggars signalled open but confused revolt (April 1572)’; see John Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988),

adopted a ‘cautious role’, shy of ‘military overextension’; Leicester favoured intervention.⁴³³ The proposed marriage to Anjou was also the occasion for John Stubbs to write *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf*, Edmund Spenser *The Shepheardes Calender* and Philip Sidney his ‘A Letter to Queen Elizabeth, Touching her Marriage with Monsieur’, all either printed or circulated in manuscript in 1579, or 1580 at the latest in the case of Sidney’s letter. The putative background to the production of these writings, that of debate about military intervention and the marriage to Anjou, but not specifically factional dispute, shapes Natalie Mears’s case that Stubbs, Spenser and Sidney were not ‘hired’ by a particular court faction (Leicester and Walsingham) to push Elizabeth into intervention.⁴³⁴

This subtle distinction, between ‘debate’ and ‘factionalism’, has a bearing on the reading of Sidney’s *Arcadia*, begun in the late 1570s and continued and revised in the early 1580s, but first published in the 1590s. As we saw in Chapter Six, Fulke Greville wished, in the 1590 edition of the *Arcadia*, to associate Sidney and the *Arcadia* with the Tacitean political thought gaining prominence in the circle of the earl of Essex.⁴³⁵ In doing so, Greville paid particular attention to the *Arcadia*’s portraits of stoical ‘constancy in the face of political oppression’.⁴³⁶ Such an association is, indisputably, with a political faction in a time of factionalism; political divisions are seen to have widened after Essex’s unsuccessful Rouen campaign, of 1591-92, and the earl’s push towards statesmanship.⁴³⁷ Nevertheless, the revised *Arcadia*, of which Greville’s edition is a version, ought to be read in accordance with the alternative philosophy of Mary Sidney Herbert, who shunned the factionalism and pessimistic Taciteanism of the

pp. 276-77. Susan Doran does regard such divisions as arose over the royal marriage proposal as being between factions. See Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 174, 215-17.

⁴³³ Adams, ‘Eliza Enthroned?’, p. 67.

⁴³⁴ See Mears, ‘Counsel, Public Debate, and Queenship’.

⁴³⁵ Davis, ‘Multiple *Arcadias*’, p. 404.

⁴³⁶ Davis, ‘Multiple *Arcadias*’, p. 420.

⁴³⁷ See Adams, ‘Faction, Clientage and Party’, p. 38.

Essex circle. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Sidney Herbert's edition of the *Arcadia* displays the same philosophy demonstrated by Duplessis-Mornay in his *Discours de la mort et de la vie*; they both considered political factionalism, rather than the tyrannical nature of the regime, to be the root of court corruption. Such a reading has one advantage, among others, of being more in tune with the politics of the time in which the romance was composed, the pre-factional 1580s. Although Sidney Herbert's philosophy can be seen purely as a response to a later, truly factional polity, it is nonetheless an ethos more in keeping with the earlier reality than that of Fulke Greville. Significantly, in my reading of the *New Arcadia*, Sidney does not adhere to a form of stoicism in which the individual is cast as the passive victim of events. Indeed, it is a peculiar paradox of this interpretation that it is exemplified by the suffering of the princesses, Pamela and Philoclea, during their captivity in Book III of the revised version of Sidney's romance.

In associating the *New Arcadia* with an anti-factional ethos I do not wish to imply that Sidney, who died in 1586, was not conscious of the detrimental effects of political division, nor do I wish to suggest that the *Old Arcadia* does not display such a consciousness. On the contrary, Sidney, as heir to the title of his uncle, the Earl of Leicester, until June 1581 (when Leicester's son was born), was acutely aware of the political struggles at court and their significance for Elizabethan foreign policy. Indeed, the international consequences of the divisions at home were of great importance to both Sidney and his sister, and they were influenced in their less pessimistic philosophical outlooks by continental Protestant activists such as Languet and Duplessis-Mornay.

Furthermore, despite Mary Sidney Herbert's dislike for the Taciteanism associated with Essex and his circle, the Sidneys' international perspective was inherited by Essex, whose particular focus in the 1590s was the defence of the

Protestant cause in France, in support of Henri IV. Paul Hammer sees in Essex a combination of religious piety and ‘profound commitment to European affairs’ rooted in ‘his upbringing in the Protestant cause’; and this is the very same cause that the Sidneys shared with their continental allies, at least one of whom was still active during Essex’s rise to prominence.⁴³⁸ Philippe Duplessis-Mornay, who had been a friend and ally to Philip Sidney, was Henri IV’s special envoy, and was sent to England, in 1592, during the siege of Rouen, to ask Elizabeth for more aid in Essex’s cherished campaign; he was refused, however, and Essex returned to England soon afterwards. Duplessis-Mornay, in a notable display of loyalty to the earl, records in his *Mémoires et correspondance* that Elizabeth overlooked Essex for the chancellorship of Oxford soon after the earl’s return from France as a punishment for his behaviour during the Rouen campaign.⁴³⁹ While in England, Duplessis-Mornay is likely to have met Mary Sidney Herbert. Their probable meeting and the subsequent publication of Sidney Herbert’s translation of Duplessis-Mornay’s work have come to be seen, by scholars such as Victor Skretkowicz and Margaret P. Hannay, as part of the continuation of support for the long-standing, forward Protestant cause, by then associated with both the Sidney and Essex circles.⁴⁴⁰ Indeed, in November 1593, Robert Sidney – younger brother to Philip and Mary, and by then, like Greville, a member of the Essex circle – was ordered to go ‘on an embassy to Henri IV of France, whose recent conversion to Catholicism had raised concerns in England’. And the ‘same prudence and discretion that made [Robert] Sidney a successful ambassador helped him survive the treacherous cross-currents at

⁴³⁸ Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics*, pp. 241-44.

⁴³⁹ Philippe de Mornay, sieur du Plessis, *Mémoires et correspondance pour servir à l’histoire de la Réformation...édition complète...* (12 vols., Paris, 1824-5), V, p. 170, cited in Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics*, p. 108.

⁴⁴⁰ See Skretkowicz, ‘Mary Sidney Herbert’s *Antonius*’, pp. 11-12 and Hannay, *Philip’s Phoenix*, pp. 60-3. Also, for the parallels between the lives of Philip Sidney and Philippe Duplessis-Mornay, including their similar educations under the guidance of Hubert Languet, see Kuin, ‘Sir Philip Sidney’s Model of the Statesman’.

court towards the end of Elizabeth's reign'.⁴⁴¹ Such characteristics, especially as displayed by a member of Essex's notorious faction, might also be considered a further testament to the enduring nature of the Sidney family's anti-factionalist philosophy.

If Robert Sidney's prudence enabled him to avoid the harshest consequences of having been in Essex's circle in the 1590s, a similar discretion may have saved Philip Sidney from the fate that befell John Stubbs after the publication of *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf* in 1579; in Philip's case, his abjuration of factionalism may be what saved him from severe punishment for his writing of 'A Letter to Queen Elizabeth'. Natalie Mears's distinction, which I discussed in Chapter One, between the different attitudes to counselling the monarch revealed in the writings of Sidney, Stubbs and, also, Spenser, suggests that this is the case. *A Gaping Gulf*, written by a politically active citizen from beyond the legitimate circles of court counsel, 'suggests [for Mears] the existence of a lively public sphere',⁴⁴² but it clearly misjudged Elizabeth's acceptance of counsel as necessary to her reign as a woman,⁴⁴³ and resulted in Stubbs's right hand being struck off as punishment. Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* 'emanated from the same milieu as *A gaping gulf*: the independent response of a politically active and aware man'. In contrast to both Stubbs and Spenser, Sidney's letter demonstrated his understanding of the noble tradition of court counsel, and that he appreciated that counsel was merely advisory.⁴⁴⁴ It is also interesting to note that Stubbs's illegitimate contribution was

⁴⁴¹ Robert Shephard, 'Sidney, Robert, first earl of Leicester (1563-1626)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008.

⁴⁴² Mears, 'Counsel, Public Debate, and Queenship', p.650.

⁴⁴³ Mears, 'Counsel, Public Debate, and Queenship', p. 647. See Stubbs, *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf*, sigs. F4, A5^v-A6, E1^v.

⁴⁴⁴ Mears, 'Counsel, Public Debate, and Queenship', p. 646. For further discussions of the significance of the content of Stubbs's ill-advised publication see Jacqueline Vanhoutte, 'Queen and Country?: Female Monarchs and Feminized Nations in Elizabethan Political Pamphlets', in Carole Levin, Jo Eldridge Carney and Debra Barrett-Graves, eds., *Elizabeth I: Always Her Own Free Woman* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 7-19 and Leah S. Marcus, *Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Reading and Its Discontents* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 67-83. Vanhoutte highlights Stubbs's use of the rhetorical tropes of nationalism and motherhood, and Marcus places Stubbs's subversive use of Elizabeth's own 'male' rhetoric in a broader context of contemporary representations of the dominant woman, including Joan of Arc in Shakespeare's *1 Henry VI*.

discussed by Sidney's associates, Languet and Duplessis-Mornay, in terms that examine 'how best to devise—an eloquent and politically serviceable—means of writing that could enable the restoration of the true religion', avoiding 'polemicism', which 'can have no consequence except to exacerbate the very confessional divisions whose proliferation militates against the triumph of the church'.⁴⁴⁵ This stance, by two of Sidney's closest philosophical allies, emphasizes the anti-factional nature of their vision of the legitimate courtier. However, an interpretation of Sidney's position as that of a legitimate courtier, with leave to counsel the monarch, is complicated by the fact that he was rebuked by Elizabeth after his famous tennis-court argument with Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford (protégé of Lord Burghley) in August 1579.⁴⁴⁶ Pointedly, Elizabeth advised Sidney on 'the difference in degree between earls and gentlemen'.⁴⁴⁷ As Leicester's heir, Sidney clearly believed he had a legitimate claim to counsel the queen. In reality, he seems to have been denied this privilege, but did not receive the severity of punishment meted out to Stubbs. Shortly after the period of the circulation of his 'Letter to Queen Elizabeth' and the quarrel with Oxford, Sidney chose to retreat from his life as a courtier and appears to have spent a great deal of time at his sister's home, at Wilton, writing the *Arcadia*, which was ultimately dedicated to her. Andrew Hadfield, in *Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance*, draws attention to the 'anxiety regarding the form of public/national political participation and representation' evident in the *Old* and *New Arcadias*. With reference to the figure of the 'poor painter', who loses both hands in the rebellion of the revised text (282), Hadfield suggests that 'the painter without hands resembles a gagged Sidney whose aesthetic work has been mutilated'. Based on the conjecture that Sidney's revisions were, in part, influenced by state censorship, Hadfield's argument suggests

⁴⁴⁵ Stillman, *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism*, pp. 24-6.

⁴⁴⁶ Woudhuysen, 'Sidney, Sir Philip (1554–1586)'.

⁴⁴⁷ Greville, 'A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney', p. 40.

that, despite their different rhetorical approaches and fates, Sidney and Stubbs were subject to similar political strictures.⁴⁴⁸ As we shall see, there are also parallels between Sidney's retreat and Essex's own beleaguered position in the mid-1590s.⁴⁴⁹

Sidney's status as a courtier, his employment of the conventions of consiliary rhetoric and his exclusion from an advisory role all suggest that during his time at Wilton (and at other times after 1579) he was writing from a social position both within and without the limits of 'noble counsel'. This paradoxical position has echoes of the status of Lady Mary Sidney, Philip's mother, who, was 'a gentlewoman "without wages" of Elizabeth I's privy chamber' for twenty years between 1559 and 1579, when finally ill health appears to have enforced her retirement.⁴⁵⁰ As Natalie Mears observes, 'Elizabeth's network was male-dominated but not exclusively male. Parallel to the inner ring of counsellors was a group of female intimates often holding...privy chamber posts'. Nevertheless, their roles appear to have been restricted to that of 'barometers of the queen's moods or channels of communication...and as negotiators in marriage diplomacy'.⁴⁵¹ Lady Mary was one of this 'group of female intimates', though, apparently, excluded from an advisory role. On a notable occasion, Lady Mary was in touch with the Spanish ambassador responsible for Elizabeth's marriage negotiations

⁴⁴⁸ Hadfield, *Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 165-68. See also, Hadfield, 'Sidney's "poor painter" and John Stubbs's *Gaping Gulf*', *Sidney Journal* 15.2 (Fall 1997), pp. 45-8. For Sidney and censorship, see Annabel M. Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: the Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), pp. 32-51.

⁴⁴⁹ The editors of the Oxford World's Classics edition of *The Sidney Psalter* assert in their 'Introduction' that Sidney 'was forced to leave the court [royal, not tennis] after a heated public quarrel at a tennis court with the Earl of Oxford over precedence and Elizabeth's plans for a French marriage' ('Introduction', in *The Sidney Psalter*, p. xiii). The events in question—the sporting disagreement with Oxford, Sidney's letter to the queen counselling against the French match and Sidney's temporary retirement from court—did coincide, but Sidney appears not to have been banished, but to have retreated for the sake of expedience.

⁴⁵⁰ Adams, 'Sidney, Mary, Lady Sidney (1530x35-1586)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008.

⁴⁵¹ Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse in the Elizabethan Realms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 54.

with Charles, Archduke of Austria, but the queen fell short of explicitly sanctioning her in this quasi-ambassadorial position.⁴⁵²

I wish to suggest that in the revised *Arcadia*, more specifically in the captivity episode of Book III, Sidney was writing to an agenda, informed by his own retirement, but also participating in a discourse associated with the restricted political role of female members of the aristocracy, like his mother. Moreover, I contend this literary stance, which has been characterized by Lisa Hopkins as ‘writing to a woman’s aesthetic agenda’,⁴⁵³ is not only reflected in his dedication of the *Arcadia* to his sister and his well-known narrative address to the ‘fair ladies’, but also in the peculiarly stoical activities of his female characters.⁴⁵⁴

In a famous scene from Book III of the revised *Arcadia*, while the princesses are held captive, Cecropia approaches the solitary Pamela with the intention of persuading her into marriage. Much has been made of the ensuing philosophical contest between the Epicurean and atheistic arguments of Cecropia and the proto-Christian stoicism of Pamela. However, I wish to discuss that part of the text which precedes the verbal disputation, in which Pamela is described as ‘working upon a purse certain roses and lilies’. The reader is given a detailed portrait of Pamela, ‘disdaining to keep company with any of the gentlewomen appointed to attend her, whom she accounted her jailers’, but rather ‘borrow[ing] her wits of the sorrow that then owed them, and len[ding] them wholly to that exercise’ (354). This may easily be seen as a situation closely analogous

⁴⁵² Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse*, p. 55. See the *Calendar of Letters and State Papers Relating to English Affairs, Preserved Principally in the Archives of Simancas*, vol. 1: Elizabeth 1558-1567, ed. Martin A. S. Hume (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, for Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1892), pp. 95-101, 106-07, 111-13, 115-16.

⁴⁵³ Lisa Hopkins, *Writing Renaissance Queens: Texts by and about Elizabeth I and Mary, Queen of Scots* (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 2002), p. 56.

⁴⁵⁴ Sidney, *The Old Arcadia*, p. 27 (among numerous others). For a discussion of Sidney’s female audience see Lamb, *Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle*, pp. 72-114. It should be noted that I am not suggesting that Sidney wrote the particular revisions to the *Arcadia* I discuss here during his initial retirement at Wilton. Rather, that such periods and their association with Sidney’s marginalisation, in terms of court counsel, did inform his writing, and that this episode from the revised romance is particularly representative of this influence. Skretkiewicz suggests that ‘Sidney might have begun composition [of the *New Arcadia*] as early as 1582 and continued into 1584’; see Skretkiewicz, ‘General Introduction’, in *The New Arcadia*, pp. xiii-xvii.

to Sidney's own: the composition of the *Arcadia* is to Sidney, in unwanted retirement, what the working of the flowers upon the purse is for Pamela. Both are, arguably, turning their 'wits', previously possessed by their enforced predicament, to a finely wrought creative piece of their own design. Indeed, this parallel is further enhanced by the description of Pamela's flowers as 'carr[ying] such life in them that the cunningest painter might have learned of her needle' (31-2). This echoes Sidney's own definition of the art of poetry as '*mimesis*, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth—to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture—with this end, to teach and delight'.⁴⁵⁵ It is in such moments, in the face of her imprisonment and, elsewhere, cruel torment, that Pamela displays what Blair Worden terms 'the Stoic...doctrine of fortitude'. It is, in Worden's analysis, a passive form of stoicism, distinct from the Ciceronian virtue, which is displayed elsewhere in the romance through dynamic action.⁴⁵⁶ A similar point is made by Nancy Lindheim, who refers to the Aristotelian concept of 'complete virtue' as 'the exercise of virtue' in her discussion of the trial scene in the *Old Arcadia*.⁴⁵⁷ Although critics such as Worden have identified episodes in the *Arcadia* when the princes, Musidorus and Pyrocles, and other male characters display a similar passive virtue, it is usually associated with the female characters and seen at its height during the captivity of the princesses in the revised version.⁴⁵⁸ Of course, Pyrocles is also held captive, but, tellingly, he is disguised as the female Zelmane. If Sidney's project is seen as analogous to that of Pamela, he would appear to be participating in the pointedly gendered discourse of stoical retreat. Nevertheless, I wish to suggest that, on the contrary, he, like Pamela, is adopting a stoical attitude as a means of strategically occupying a liminal social position, not unlike a gentlewoman of

⁴⁵⁵ Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, p. 101.

⁴⁵⁶ Worden, *The Sound of Virtue*, pp. 33, 25.

⁴⁵⁷ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. W. D. Ross, V. i. 1129^b30, cited in Lindheim, *The Structures of Sidney's Arcadia*, p. 161.

⁴⁵⁸ Worden, *The Sound of Virtue*, p. 365.

the queen's privy chamber, neither within nor without the circle of legitimate court counsel.

The significance of this for the Earl of Essex lies in his own compromised status, during the 1590s, as an embattled member of the privy council. It is possible to plot a career trajectory for Essex that is parallel to that of Sidney and identify where along that path the former's inheritance from the latter is evident. The most telling parallel is the possibility of the earl's retirement and the adoption of a literary career. This was suggested in the presentation to the earl of three alternative courses, those of soldier, secretary of state and hermit, as part of the symbolism of the Accession Day tilt devised by Essex in 1595;⁴⁵⁹ the hermit invited Essex to eschew the active life and 'offer his service to the Muses'.⁴⁶⁰ The temptation to withdraw from the court appears to have been attractive to Essex, who, according to Ray Heffner, 'withdrew himself into the country when his wishes were not granted by Elizabeth'.⁴⁶¹ Moreover, he did have a poetic aspect to his life, that is often evocative of retreat, and he has been said to have 'produced a calculated poetics', with direct allusions to contemporary politics.⁴⁶² His 'Happy were Hee could finish foorth his Fate' meets all these criteria:

Happy were Hee could finish foorth his Fate
In some unhaunted Desert, most Obscure;
From all Society, from Love, from Hate
Of Worldly Folke! Then should Hee Sleepe Secure;
Then Wake againe, and yield God ever Praise,
Content with Hipps, and Hawes, and Brambleberry,
In Contemplation passing still his Daies,
And Change of Holy Thoughts to make him Merry;
Who when Hee dies, his Tombe may bee a Bush,
Where Harmeles Robin dwells with Gentle Thrush.
Your Majesty's Exiled Servant

⁴⁵⁹ Steven W. May, 'The Poems of Edward De Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford and of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex', *Studies in Philology* 77.5 Texts and Studies (1980), p. 18.

⁴⁶⁰ John Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth* (3 vols., London, 1823), III, p. 373. Linda Shenk in her recent book, *Learned Queen: The Image of Elizabeth I in Politics and Poetry*, sees Essex's entertainment as a notable example of the kind of literature that invoked 'Elizabeth's learned persona', in this case to further the earl's own 'military and transnational interests' (pp. 188, 159).

⁴⁶¹ Ray Heffner, 'Essex, the Ideal Courtier', *English Literary History* 1.1 (1934), pp. 31-2.

⁴⁶² May, 'The Poems of Edward De Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford and of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex', p. 21.

This poem, with its evocation of escape from the ‘love’ and ‘hate’ of the ‘worldly’ court, was composed with his ‘reluctance to undertake the Irish campaign’ in mind.⁴⁶⁴ The similarity between this poetically calculated retreat and Sidney’s expedient consiliary position, as represented by his female characters, is notable, if, in literary terms, the quality and sophistication do not bear comparison.

Of course, Essex, like Sidney, was a man of action, and it is not immediately apparent how either of them may be properly represented by the passivity of an Arcadian princess. However, it is possible to free Pamela from her indolence, and both Elizabethan courtiers with her. The key to understanding Pamela as representing something other than the passive virtue of Blair Worden’s analysis is the philosophical status of her refutation of Cecropia’s atheism in the scene under consideration. D. P. Walker, in an article that I discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, describes Pamela’s arguments as ‘a bewildering display of sophistry’.⁴⁶⁵ To summarize Walker’s comprehensive examination of the theological and philosophical background to the Pamela-Cecropia episode, Pamela demonstrates a broad knowledge of arguments from the school of Stoics, employed to pragmatically oppose the irredeemable Cecropia. In other words, Pamela’s stoicism obviates Cecropia’s response, but is not necessarily a sincerely held philosophical creed. There is a foreshadowing of the artificial nature of this dispute in the preliminary discussion between Cecropia and Pamela of the significance of the princess’s purse. Cecropia suggests that the lucky man to whom Pamela is dedicating her skill in needlework, with a clear implication that it might be Amphialus, would be

⁴⁶³ Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, ‘Poem No. 7’, in May, ‘The Poems of Edward De Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford and of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex’, p. 47.

⁴⁶⁴ May, ‘The Poems of Edward De Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford and of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex’, p. 21.

⁴⁶⁵ Walker, ‘Ways of Dealing with Atheists’, p. 271.

‘Full happy...at least if he knew his own happiness...in faith, he shall have cause to count it not as a purse for treasure but as a treasure itself worthy to be pursed up in the purse of his own heart’. (355)

Pamela responds in a manner which punctures Cecropia’s rhetorical affectation, and sets the tone for the exchange which follows:

‘I promise you, I wrought it but to make some tedious hours believe that I thought not of them; for else, I valued it but even as a very purse’. (355-56)

This passage has attracted the critical attention of Lisa Hopkins, who identifies Pamela’s ‘activity...as having no meaning in itself’, and argues that, more broadly, the princesses’ incarceration represents the meaninglessness of the imprisonment of early modern women in general.⁴⁶⁶ Hopkins equates the Arcadian detention of the princesses with the real case of Mary Stuart, and concludes that

detention can serve only a spiritual function, humbling the patience of the proudly inclined Pamela, and not a political one. At best a stopgap...it operates primarily as a ploy to gain time or in the hope of manipulating the outcome of future events.⁴⁶⁷

The function of this episode, as evident in Hopkins’s reading, is suggestive of the motivations behind the circumstances of Sidney’s own retirement and quiet industry at Wilton: ‘a stopgap’; ‘a ploy to gain time’; or ‘in the hope of manipulating future events’. The lack of significance imputed by Pamela to her own creation, echoes Sidney’s reference, in the dedication of the *Arcadia*, to ‘this idle work of mine’ (506). Of greater importance is the sense of expediency implied by Pamela’s refutation of Cecropia. She might be said, as Sidney said of his own apparent inactivity in a letter to Languet, to be ‘cleverly playing the stoic’.⁴⁶⁸ Stillman, as I noted in Chapter Three, uses this pointed reference to bolster his argument that Sidney is not a true philosophical stoic, but someone with the necessary acquaintance with stoical doctrines to adapt them to his

⁴⁶⁶ Hopkins, *Writing Renaissance Queens*, pp. 64-6.

⁴⁶⁷ Hopkins, *Writing Renaissance Queens*, pp. 65-6.

⁴⁶⁸ Pears, trans., *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet*, p. 143 and Bradley, ed., *The Correspondence of Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet*, p. 159, cited in Stillman, *Sidney’s Poetic Justice*, p. 73.

own purposes in the pastoral context of the *Arcadia*.⁴⁶⁹ Sidney self-consciously puts on the garb of stoical passivity, without truly inhabiting the role of a Stoic. In such a mode, Sidney would appear to be conforming to a similar rhetorical model as he did with the humanist-classical tradition employed in his 'Letter to Queen Elizabeth'. And yet, as in that instance, his status as a *bona fide* member of the school, or circle of counsel, is in doubt, if not utterly compromised.

If Essex is adopting a similarly pragmatic approach to political counsel as suggested by my reading of the *Arcadia*, it would not be completely untypical of a man often otherwise characterized as 'hubristic'.⁴⁷⁰ Indeed, he showed significant signs of taking to heart the strictures placed on court counsellors stressed by the likes of Languet and Duplessis-Mornay. An 'unusual willingness to accept constructive criticism' was on display when (during 1594-96) he received 'blunt cautions', from Lord Henry Howard and Francis Bacon, 'to be more subtle in his courting of public acclaim lest the queen come to see him as a political threat—and his rivals be able to exploit these fears against him'.⁴⁷¹ And, more significantly with respect to the issue of court counsel, Paul E. J. Hammer's account of the 'Essex Rising', in which the rebels are associated with the ideas of the publication *The State of Christendom*, is evidence of a greater appreciation of the delicacy of their relationship to monarchy than has often been attributed to Essex's party.⁴⁷² *The State of Christendom* is an unpublished work, of the mid-1590s, that may have been written by Anthony Bacon, Essex's 'chief intelligence gatherer'.⁴⁷³ It was published in 1657 and attributed to Sir Henry Wotton, Essex's secretary. Its significance is in its cautious directions for 'petitioning a delinquent

⁴⁶⁹ Stillman, *Sidney's Poetic Justice*, pp. 72-4.

⁴⁷⁰ Hammer, 'Shakespeare's *Richard II*', pp. 24-5.

⁴⁷¹ Hammer, 'Shakespeare's *Richard II*', p. 23.

⁴⁷² Hammer, 'Shakespeare's *Richard II*', pp. 12-13.

⁴⁷³ Alexandra Gajda, 'The State of Christendom: History, Political Thought and the Essex Circle', *Historical Research* 81 (August 2008), p. 425. Gajda shows that there is 'a body of evidence that firmly grounds the text in the scholarly and political interests of the associates of Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex, in the years 1594-5' (p. 425).

sovereign to save the state from oppression by corrupt and over-mighty councillors', which, as Hammer observes, represents a highly appropriate guide for Essex's party in their exploits on 8 February 1601.⁴⁷⁴ Its language is one of humility, toleration and mitigation, in recognition of the gravity of the petitioners' act:

Let the Subjects be therefore humble Petitioners unto the Princes to reform such abuses as are notoriously known to be abuses. Let them yeeld such measure unto their kings as they would desire for themselves; let them when neither their humble suits may prevail, nor their gentle connivence or toleration mitigate the wrath, or moderate the affections of their Sovereigns, humbly beseech the Peers of the Realm to be their Patrons and Protectors of their Innocency.⁴⁷⁵

This tract, like Sidney's romance and Essex's poetic works which were similarly the fruits of a humanistic education, were the kinds of text employed, if Francis Walsingham (Essex's father-in-law and Elizabeth's joint Principal Secretary of State) is to be believed, as 'better courses of action and counsel' to Walsingham and the privy council.⁴⁷⁶ They were what Lorna Hutson terms a 'textualized intelligence service'.⁴⁷⁷ It is this 'textualized intelligence' which Essex seems to have found most deleterious to his standing while in Ireland and at other times.⁴⁷⁸ In effect, he lost the war of the counsellors, not of the soldiers.

To conclude, I wish to suggest that such a reading of the *Arcadia* may have some significance for Sidney's reception in the 1590s, which is particularly significant for Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex and his circle. As I have demonstrated, there was a direct line of political and cultural inheritance between Sidney, the man and his works, and the Earl of Essex and his political ambitions, which culminated in the disastrous rebellion of 1601. Furthermore, by associating the *Arcadia* with a distinctly

⁴⁷⁴ Hammer, 'Shakespeare's *Richard II*', p. 12.

⁴⁷⁵ *The State of Christendom, or, a Most Exact and Curious Discovery of Many Secret Passages and Hidden Mysteries of the Times* (London, 1657), sigs. L13^{r-v}.

⁴⁷⁶ Conyers Read, *Mr Secretary Walsingham*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), I, p. 18, cited in Lorna Hutson, *The Usurer's Daughter: Male Friendship and Fictions of Women in Sixteenth-Century England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 105.

⁴⁷⁷ Hutson, *The Usurer's Daughter*, p. 105.

⁴⁷⁸ Hammer, 'Shakespeare's *Richard II*', p. 4ff.

feminine discourse of pragmatic stoicism and principled anti-factionalism, it is possible that some of the usual literary-political boundaries of the 1590s could be redrawn. Gavin Alexander, in his examination of Sidney's reception, *Writing After Sidney*, describes how Samuel Daniel, who had dedicated his sonnet sequence, *Delia*, to Sidney's sister in 1592, later 'aligned himself with what [the Countess of] Pembroke would have seen as the wrong side—not Sidney's literary and biological heirs, but his chivalric and political heirs—Mountjoy, Greville, Essex'.⁴⁷⁹ However, as my argument suggests, Essex may be regarded as Sidney's literary (as well as chivalric and political) heir, at least with regard to the pragmatic stoicism handed down in Sidney's *Arcadia*. I propose that, rather than consider the divide to be between the literary-biological and the chivalric-political, it might be instructive to posit an alternative paradigm by which the politics of the 1590s could be judged, based on the gendered access to counsel and a concomitant philosophical attitude to factions. A shift in perspective of this kind, recognizing the endurance of values such as humility, toleration and mitigation throughout a period of intense conflict, may contribute to what Paul E. J. Hammer describes as 'an attempt...to re-contour our understanding of Elizabethan political life'.⁴⁸⁰ Indeed, in the light of this suggestion, there is an interesting historical footnote in Margaret P. Hannay's study of the Countess of Pembroke, the definitive account of her role as patron and executor to her brother's literary and political legacy. In the mid-to late-1590s, during a protracted factional dispute between the countess's husband, the Earl of Pembroke and the Earl of Essex, which began over their interests in Wales, it is noted that 'the Sidney/Herbert women took no part in the quarrel and continued to treat Frances Walsingham, Sir Philip's widow and Countess of Essex, as a sister'.⁴⁸¹ Both Essex women were protected by Mary Sidney Herbert at the height of Essex's ill-fated

⁴⁷⁹ Alexander, *Writing After Sidney*, pp. 136, 140-41.

⁴⁸⁰ Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics*, p. xi.

⁴⁸¹ Hannay, *Philip's Phoenix*, p. 155.

revolt.⁴⁸² In the midst of such political schisms the discourse of principled anti-factionalism appears to have held, at least among the women.

⁴⁸² Hannay, *Philip's Phoenix*, pp. 155-56.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have read Sidney's *Arcadia*, particularly its revised version, in the light of a distinct ethos known as Philippism after the followers of Philip Melancthon, the Protestant theologian. In keeping with the principles of Philippism, which was, as a form of Protestant piety, peculiarly open to the ideas of humanist scholarship, Sidney draws the philosophical precepts that are evident in his prose romance from an eclectic mix of sources. Nevertheless, I have shown that these various strands of philosophical, political and theological thought can be accommodated within both the heterogeneous text of the *New Arcadia* and the inclusive philosophy that Sidney appears to have adopted.

In the readings of some other critics, and in the opinion of Fulke Greville, Sidney's characters, especially the princesses, Philoclea and Pamela, symbolize a passive form of Christian Stoicism. In my view, these fictional figures respond to the fluctuations in their fortunes in a way that betokens a more actively engaged outlook than the conventionally passive virtue associated with Sidney's late Elizabethan political climate. Sidney is able to employ this philosophy in his own political activities, not least in his relationship with the queen, Elizabeth. Either directly, in his letter intervening in Elizabeth's marriage negotiations, or indirectly, in his politically-interested fiction, he is able to negotiate for himself a significant, if restricted, role in the affairs of the Elizabethan court. As such, he acted as a model for his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, and his friend, Fulke Greville, in their roles as prominent players in the political and literary circles of Elizabethan and Jacobean England. The primary inheritor of Sidney's political and cultural legacy was Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex. Even he, the embodiment of court factionalism and the vicissitudes political counsel, appears, as we have seen, to have drawn on the optimistic and conciliatory philosophy signified by Sidney's *New Arcadia*.

Sidney's revised romance, rather than being indicative of moral confusion, confirms its author's inclusive Christian philosophy, in which the fallibility of human actions is recognized and tolerated. Such principles are also evident in Sidney's primary model for revising his original romance: Heliodorus's *An Aethiopian History*. This text appears to have been particularly important to Sidney, perhaps because it was praised by Melanchthon for its life-like heterogeneity and its examples of virtue.

Of all the characters in the *New Arcadia*, Amphialus represents most poignantly the ethos with which Sidney appears to have revised his romance. Though he is an epic, martial figure, he also participates in some of the most dishonourable activities in the whole text. Amphialus is also a pointed example of a representation of the author in his own text, and, as such, his fate is linked to the author's self-conception. It appears, therefore, that, through the representation of this apparently irredeemable character, who, nevertheless, will be saved, Sidney displays his faith in God's Providence and his own salvation.

In delineating the relevance of Sidney's Philippist beliefs for reading his prose fiction, I have narrowed the gap that critics have often found between Sidney's theory and practice. I have shown how the heroic, yet flawed characters of the *New Arcadia*, often in the most desperate circumstances, represent the same beliefs that informed the writing of *The Defence of Poesy*. In its recognition of human frailty, its portrait of the 'image of human condition', Sidney's incomplete romance points towards an ultimate resolution of the conflicts of virtue.

Word count: 67,167

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