

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY, COURTIER-POET AS CRITIC:
A STUDY OF THE LADY OF MAY AND THE OLD ARCADIA.

by

Marlene Goldman
B.A., University of Victoria, 1986

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department

of

English

ACCEPTED

TUD

DEAN

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

[REDACTED]

Dr. Edward I. Berry

[REDACTED]

Dr. Michael R. Best

[REDACTED]

Dr. Lloyd H. Howard

[REDACTED]

Dr. Samuel E. Scully

©

MARLENE GOLDMAN, 1987

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced
in whole or in part, by mimeograph or other means,
without the permission of the author.

PR 2342

L39 G65

THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

WASHINGTON, D. C.

REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF THE
CENSUS OF 1950

ACCEPTED
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

DATE

BY

Supervisor: Professor Edward Berry

ABSTRACT

This study examines two works by the courtier-poet, Sir Philip Sidney: the court entertainment, The Lady of May, and the pastoral romance, the Old Arcadia. In analysing Sidney's writings, I have adopted a new-historicist approach--an approach to understanding the texts which takes into account the author's society and his position within that society. This critical method allows readers to understand how Sidney's works provide a critique of the Elizabethan court-system.

The first chapter outlines how Sidney's writings have been critically received in the past, and elaborates on the nature of the new-historicist approach. A brief outline of Sidney's relation to his culture is provided, which suggests reasons why Sidney found himself at odds with his more conservative sovereign.

In the second chapter the socio-historical circumstances surrounding the composition of The Lady of May are explored, and the function of court entertainments within Elizabethan society is described briefly. Following this, a close reading of the court entertainment is provided. A comparison is drawn between The Lady of May and other court entertainments written during the period to show how the court entertainment covertly criticizes the Queen and the court-system.

In the third chapter, on the Old Arcadia, the circumstances surrounding the composition of the text are investigated. An examination of the genesis of the pastoral romance reveals that the impulse to create the work was related to the difficulties Sidney was experiencing at court. In The Lady of May, Sidney tried unsuccessfully to persuade the Queen to consider the value of an unconventional type of courtier. In the Old Arcadia, Sidney analyses why attempts at advising one's sovereign fail, and he blames the problem on human nature.


The fiction maps out how reason is destabilized by the passions and demonstrates how the supposedly reason-governed processes of communication, judgement, and justice, are distorted by emotional biases. Given the fallibility of humanity, Sidney posits that only God can provide fair judgement.

The final chapter explores the ways in which Sidney's later writings elaborate on the theme of the imperfection of human reason. The sonnet sequence Astrophil and Stella, the New Arcadia, and The Apology for Poetry, all draw upon Sidney's conception of postlapsarian humanity. Of the three, the New Arcadia most clearly articulates the need for faith in God.


Sidney's analysis of the imperfect nature of human beings raises problems for both the reader and writer of the texts. In suggesting that human reason and judgement are distorted by the passions, Sidney, as author, throws his

own reason and judgement into question. In his works, Sidney often introduces a fictional representation of himself. Via these personae, Sidney acknowledges his complicity in the human condition. Readers must decide whether to trust the author's communication, and, when reading the text, whether they ought to trust their own judgment.

Examiners:

 ---
Dr. Edward I. Berry ✓


Dr. Michael R. Best


Dr. Llóyd H. Howard ✓

 ---
Dr. Samuel E. Scully

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	v
Abbreviations	vi
Dedication	vii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: The Lady of May	12
Chapter Three: The Old Arcadia	48
Chapter Four: Conclusion	102
Bibliography	117

ABBREVIATIONS

- Apology Sidney, Sir Philip Sidney: An Apology for Poetry, ed., Geoffrey Shepherd, Edinburgh, 1965
- LM Sidney, The Lady of May, Duncan-Jones, Katherine, Jan van Dorsten eds., Miscellaneous Prose, Oxford, 1973
- MP Sidney, Duncan-Jones, Katherine, Jan van Dorsten eds., Miscellaneous Prose, Oxford, 1973
- NA Sidney, The New Arcadia, ed. M. Evans, Harmondsworth, 1984
- OA Sidney, The Old Arcadia, ed. K. Duncan-Jones, Oxford, 1985

For Bob

Chapter One: Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate two works by the courtier-poet Sir Philip Sidney: his court entertainment, The Lady of May, and his longer prose piece, the Old Arcadia. I have selected these two works from among the more familiar texts, such as Sidney's Apology for Poetry, Astrophil and Stella, and the New Arcadia, for two reasons. For one, The Lady of May and the Old Arcadia were written and completed by Sidney alone, as opposed to his other works (Astrophil and Stella and the New Arcadia), which were altered or, in the case of the New Arcadia, completed by his editors following his death in 1586. Secondly, the two works were written consecutively. The court entertainment was prepared for the Queen's visit to Wanstead in 1578, and, in 1579, Sidney began the Old Arcadia:

The texts have much in common. Both make use of the pastoral tradition as a means of exploring similar issues. In The Lady of May Sidney examines the role of the courtier, the relationship between the courtier and his sovereign, and offers a critique of the court-system. The work itself provides an illustration of the type of communication which exists between monarch and advisor. In the Old Arcadia, Sidney looks more generally at the difficulties involved in giving counsel. Essentially, the work outlines the obstacles impeding rational communication, judgement, and justice. I will show that Sidney views these obstacles as arising through the inherently corrupt nature of postlapsarian humanity.

The examination of the concerns raised in the court entertainment and the Old Arcadia will, I suggest, provide a framework for understanding Sidney's subsequent works. Sidney's later writings expand upon the theme of

communication and probe more deeply into the complexity of human nature.

When one thinks of Sidney, it is likely that the figure of the Shepherd Knight, the paragon of Elizabethan chivalry, springs to mind. Perhaps one recalls his famous gestures on the battlefield. Sidney reportedly threw off his thigh armour in order to be on par with the marshal of the camp who was lightly armed. After having been struck in the thigh with musket shot, Sidney called for drink. As he was putting the flask to his mouth he noticed a wounded soldier "ghastly casting up his eyes at the bottle." Philip promptly delivered the bottle to the soldier, uttering those soon to be immortalized words, "thy necessity is yet greater than mine" (Greville 130). However, I will not treat Sidney as a mythic, heroic figure. This study focuses on the individual who was at odds with his society, frustrated by both servitude and subjection to a wilful monarch.

Critical studies of Sidney's works have varied enormously, ranging from New Critical readings of the Arcadia to psychoanalytic explorations of the Apology.¹ Sidney's editor, W.A. Ringler, has investigated Sidney's poetry with an emphasis on textuality. Ringler focuses on selected pieces without regard for their position within a particular narrative, making no attempt to relate the poems to their larger context. Critics such as Franco Marenco, Peter Lindenbaum, Walter Davis and Richard Lanham, to name a few, have concentrated on equally

¹For a New Critical approach to the Old Arcadia, see Richard A. Lanham's study entitled The Old Arcadia (New Haven: Yale UP, 1965). Margaret Ferguson treats the Apology from a psychoanalytic perspective in her book, Trials of Desire (New Haven: Yale UP, 1984).

formalistic discussions of plot-structure and genre.² Alternatively, several scholars have attempted to treat Sidney's works historically, locating the fictions within the sociohistorical context of the English Renaissance.

For the most part, writers have shied away from biographical investigations. C.S. Lewis argues against treating Sidney's work biographically (Lewis 328), and Richard Lanham, wary of identifying the meaning of the texts with the author's intentions in writing them, proclaims that in treating Sidney's works "we need not flee to biography" (Lanham 179).

Gradually, critics have come to realize that an understanding of the author's circumstances, and an awareness of the author's society, enhances one's appreciation of the texts. The method used to effect this type of analysis is known as "new-historicism." Its proponents--including Annabel Patterson, Stephen Greenblatt, Louis A. Montrose, and Richard McCoy--synthesize various critical approaches, drawing on biography, social history, psychoanalysis, as well as structural criticism.³ It is this type of new-historicist

²See Franco Marengo, "Double Plot in Sidney's Old Arcadia," Modern Language Review 64 (1969): 248-263. Peter Lindenbaum, Changing Landscapes (Athens: U of Georgia P, 1986). Walter David, A Map of Arcadia (New Haven: Yale UP, 1965).

³See Annabel M. Patterson, "Under...Pretty Tales": Intention is Sidney's Arcadia," Studies In The Literary Imagination 15:1 (1982): 5-21. Stephen Greenblatt, Renaissance Self-Fashioning From More to Shakespeare, (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980). Louis A. Montrose "Celebration and Insinuation," Renaissance Drama 8 (1977): 3-35. Richard McCoy, Sir Philip Sidney: Rebellion in Arcadia, (New Jersey: Rutgers UP, 1979).

approach which I bring to bear on the present study of Sidney's court entertainment and the Old Arcadia. The methodological shortcomings of such an approach relate to its all-inclusiveness; one courts the danger of ending up a jack-of-all-trades, and a master of none. However, the failings of the more isolated, reductionist methods employed in the past far outweigh the risks posed by a more broadly-based perspective. As one advocate of the new-historicist approach writes:

Critics who have refused to make such connections [between social history, biography, psychoanalysis, and literary criticism] have overlooked or rationalized the works' recurrent contradictions and diminished the fiction's scope and vitality. I have found that, as difficult as they are to make, these biographical and psychological connections are essential to an interpretation of Sidney's art.

(McCoy xi)

As the title "new-historicist" suggests, emphasis is placed on understanding the work within its historical context. Accordingly, I am concerned in this investigation to locate the works within a specific cultural time-frame. The most crucial portion of this enquiry deals with the role Sidney's writing plays in offering a critique of the court-system, and in offering an analysis of human nature.

In the chapters on The Lady of May and the Old Arcadia, I argue that Sidney's dissatisfactions regarding his society and his circumstances find expression in his fictions. For Sidney, writing was an investigative tool, enabling him to explore his options in the face of political repression. In this regard, I treat his use of the pastoral genre and his use of humour, not solely as structural devices whose impact is restricted to the text, but as devices which have extra-textual repercussions. Sidney is by no means a satirist. However, I argue that

his decision to employ the pastoral genre, together with his brand of humour, places his work in the category of social critique.

In his introduction to Cervantes's Don Quixote, the Spanish writer Carlos Fuentes champions art's ability to comment upon society: "Art gives life to what history killed. Art gives voice to what history denied, silenced or persecuted. Art brings truth to the lies of history" (Fuentes xxiv). A re-examination of Sidney's work from a new-historicist perspective reveals Sidney's ambivalent attitude toward authority and his role as Elizabeth's subservient subject.

In his discussion of the function of humour within Don Quixote, Fuentes maintains that "comic debunking serves the unorthodox vision of the double truth" (xv). Sidney uses comic debunking for similar reasons. Humour and irony are tools for ridiculing absolutism. Irony is used to indicate the opposite of what is stated directly; it subverts the overt assertion by ushering in "the complementary impulse" (Jefferson 87). Alternately, humour provides a safety valve, a means of blowing off steam in the face of tensions generated by irreconcilable divisions within the Elizabethan culture.

Sidney is of interest because of his role as a critic. He was not the passive mouthpiece of cultural dogma; his position in the turbulent Elizabethan dialectic was quite complex. He was sensitive to the currents and counter-currents of his time. To be sure, he was firmly a Protestant and a nobleman, but, if anything, his background enhanced his sensitivity to the multi-faceted problems of his generation.

In many respects, Sidney's frustration mirrors the discontent of his age. In his book, The Aspiring Mind of the Elizabethan Younger Generation, Anthony Esler suggests

that Sidney's generation, born just after the difficult political period of shifting power and allegiances, could neither understand nor sympathize with the conservative policies of the previous generation. These policies were embodied most conspicuously by Queen Elizabeth and her chief advisor Lord Burghley. For the older generation, political and personal survival had depended on repressing ambition and maintaining a low profile; prudence and moderation were not "an ethical choice so much as a practical necessity of life in their troubled world" (Esler 67).

In contrast, men like Sidney, Robert Cecil, the younger Earl of Essex, Fulke Greville, and Sir Walter Raleigh were a fiercely competitive lot. They were openly ambitious, rebellious, and driven by a code of honour concocted from a mixture of the old chivalric courtly tradition and the new Italian ideas regarding honour. Castiglione's Book of the Courtier epitomizes the Italian attitude with its stress on honourable conduct, concern for one's reputation, and skill at arms. While the older generation lived in a "world of difficulties and dangers," these young men inhabited "a world of possibilities" (Esler 73). This divergence in world views precipitated a clash of wills that took its toll on the lives of these young courtiers, and, in Sidney's case, found expression in his works.

Far from passively accepting their elder's Weltanschauung, the younger generation challenged elements of their society, specifically those facets which threatened to limit their quest for power. One of the greatest stumbling blocks proved to be the very principles upon which Elizabethan society was based. In his book The Crisis of the Aristocracy, Lawrence Stone asserts that,

for the Elizabethans, the necessity of maintaining order and the acceptance of subjection was axiomatic:

It was a self-evident truth that peace and order could only be preserved by the maintenance of grades and distinctions and by relentless emphasis on the over-riding need for subjection of the individual will to that of authority.

(Stone 15)

This supposedly self-evident truth was less evident to a generation which had not witnessed previous attempts to defy these imperatives. The "noble heads that rolled during the later 1540's and '50's" all suffered from an excess of ambition, but by 1570, they had been forgotten (Esler 12).

In addition to their distance from the politically troubled past, these young men were affected by the principles of Christian humanism--principles which also led them to question the axioms of their culture. Groomed from birth for careers as statesmen, aristocratic gentlemen were taught that "each man was an empire unto himself whose duty it was to strive for personal glory" (Stone 21). This pursuit of personal glory put them at odds with their sovereign. Intent on maintaining a stable kingdom, rather than furthering the careers of a handful of bright, ambitious social climbers, Elizabeth found it difficult to keep this "aspiring younger generation" in check.

The division between the two generations was augmented by religious differences. In Tudor England, politics and religion were virtually inseparable domains. Elizabeth's political strategy--her adherence to the via media--was equally indicative of her religious attitude. Unlike the radical Puritans (of whom Sidney was a member), who advocated taking strong measures against the Catholic threat, Elizabeth shied away from acting in ways which would alienate her Catholic subjects. Although a

Protestant herself, Elizabeth had to govern a divided nation. The Queen set out to placate as many factions as possible, intent on making allies rather than enemies. Her religious tolerance of the Catholics, and hesitancy in establishing England as an overtly Protestant nation, serving the interests of Protestants abroad, angered her Puritan subjects. They viewed her diplomacy as weak. Her tactics struck them as dangerous, threatening their stability and privileged position in society (Neale 252).

Lawrence Stone points out that the Puritan doctrine emphasized people's direct connection with God. The religion's hierarchy of the "elect and the damned, the godly and the profane...[bore] little relation to existing social gradations" (Stone 21). The Puritans' relationship with God, and their understanding of their position in terms of that divine hierarchy, sometimes conflicted with their culture's conception of their place in society. For example, when Sidney was insulted by a peer, Lord Oxford (whose social standing in the aristocracy was higher than Sidney's), Sidney challenged him to a duel--something unheard of. In defending his actions, Sidney claimed that Oxford was "no lord over him" (Greville 70). Simply put, the nature of the Puritan faith, and the Puritan's orientation to the earthly world, did not always mesh with the demands of Elizabethan society.

These ideological and religious divisions were further exacerbated by the economic situation. Perhaps Sidney would have been able to conceal his dissatisfactions and abide by the system had he benefitted from the system. It was a simple case of supply and demand: there were too many educated young aristocrats and too few positions (Ringler 191). Sidney, like many of his contemporaries, assiduously prepared himself for a post as a statesman, only to find the doors shut on him.

Many young gallants, recognizing the difficulty of obtaining an office at court, attempted to gain preferment as a result of their exploits on the battlefield. This proved to be a dangerous method for extracting royal favour; Sidney's prowess on the battlefield won him a fine funeral.

In fact, for much of Sidney's life a military career was not a viable option. His mentor Hubert Languet stressed the immorality of the enterprise and discouraged him from becoming embroiled in civil wars in foreign countries:

You and your fellows, I mean men of noble birth, consider that nothing brings you more honour than wholesale slaughter; and you are generally guilty of the greatest injustice, for if you kill a man against whom you have no lawful cause of war, you are killing an innocent person.

(Pears 154)

In addition to Languet's censure, Elizabeth's own conservative policies made her wary of entering into battles, further reducing Sidney's chances of finding a good war and making his mark as a soldier. Therefore, unlike many of his contemporaries, Sidney was forced to rely solely upon the patronage system as a means of procuring both honour and wealth.

Elizabeth's court became the focus for the ambitions and talents of a great many well-born men of Sidney's generation. Her Highness could confer such honours as knighthoods, nominations to the orders of chivalry, and titles of nobility. Men also sought the more easily obtainable offices in the royal household and the court itself, as well as administrative, legal, military, and ecclesiastical posts (Esler xxi). In theory, a courtier would perform some service for the Queen, and, in turn, he would receive a reward or favour for his efforts. Ultimate

power rested with Elizabeth, who could withhold or grant favours according to her wishes. In practice, Elizabeth's dispensation of favours was notoriously stingy. Sidney himself went for a period of eight years "without an important commission" (Montrose 9). He was constantly in debt.

After visiting the court, Hubert Languet had a less than favourable opinion of the situation. In a letter written to Sidney in November of 1579, he voices his dissatisfactions:

To speak plainly, the habits of your court seemed to me somewhat less manly than I could have wished, and most of your noblemen appeared to me to seek for a reputation more by a kind of affected courtesy than by those virtues which are wholesome to the state, and which are most becoming to generous spirits and to men of high birth. I was sorry therefore, and so were other friends of yours, to see you wasting the flower of your life on such things, and I feared lest that noble nature of yours should be dulled, and lest from habit you should be brought to take pleasure in pursuits which only enervate the mind.

(Pears 167)

Far from taking pleasure in this obsequious and effeminate environment, Sidney began absenting himself from the court with increasing frequency. He made repeated visits to his sister Mary, Countess of Pembroke, staying for months at a time at her country estate.

It is in the light of these less-than-exuberant reactions to court life that I examine Sidney's works. In the first chapter, dealing with the dramatic entertainment The Lady of May, I set out the social and political situation, suggesting that Sidney makes use of the festive atmosphere of the May Day celebration, as well as the conventional structure of the court entertainment, to expose the less than ideal reality of the court-system and to examine two options available to him as a courtier.

Essentially, the performance functions as a vehicle for relaying criticisms to the Queen and for gauging her response.

The text upon which I base my examination is an actual record of the performance prepared for the Queen's visit to Wanstead in 1578. This connection between fiction and reality initiates the reader into Sidney's characteristically unstable fictional realm, where bridging the gap between life and art is commonplace. Throughout the course of my analysis of Sidney's work, I highlight this kind of reciprocity, the various parallels and connections between the world of fiction and the real world.

In my second chapter on the Old Arcadia, I discuss the similarities between The Lady of May and the pastoral romance, positing reasons why Sidney chose to utilize the pastoral genre a second time. My examination of the fiction is once again preceded by an outline of the social and political circumstances. As in the previous chapter, I assert that Sidney's situation prompted him to reevaluate his relationship with Elizabeth, and that his attempt to come to terms with his role in life surfaces in his writings.

In comparison to The Lady of May, the author's analysis of his situation and the options available to him in the Old Arcadia is far more profound. In the court entertainment, Sidney merely sets out his two different types of courtiers and invites Elizabeth to judge between them. In the Old Arcadia, he proceeds to throw the whole notion of persuasion, communication, and judgement into question. Sidney's dissatisfaction with the court system precipitates a full-blown investigation of the fallibility of human nature in his fictions.

Chapter Two: The Lady of May

The court entertainment, The Lady of May, is Sidney's first extant work, prepared for the Queen's visit to Wanstead in May of 1578.¹ During the summer months the Queen and her retinue habitually travelled through the countryside in order to "show themselves to their loving subjects--and to sample their hospitality" (Stone 208). As the royal guest, Elizabeth expected to be "richly feasted and elaborately amused, and to be sent on her way with expensive parting gifts" (Stone 209).²

From the documentation concerning the performance (the text entitled The Lady of May), we know that the entertainment took place in Wanstead Garden, and began when the Queen entered the grove. According to the text, Elizabeth is confronted by a country woman, who begs her to settle a dispute concerning her daughter, the Lady of May. The woman explains that her daughter cannot make up her mind between two suitors: a forester, Therion, and a shepherd, Espilus. The bitter struggle between the two

¹For dating evidence, see Marie Axton's essay, "The Tudor Masque and Elizabethan Court Drama," in English Drama: Forms and Development, ed. Marie Axton and Raymond Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1977).

²In the Lady of May, Rombus admits to having confiscated "a pair of Papistian beads"--a necklace of round agates--from Leicester. Rombus says he overheard Leicester using them as an aid to his daily prayers to Elizabeth. Sidney is both playing on his uncle's role in the Protestant faction, and poking fun at the relationship Elizabeth cultivated between herself and the Virgin Mary. However, agates are only semi-precious stones, and Sidney and Leicester may have been "exploiting the rustic fiction to give the Queen a cheaper present than would normally have been acceptable" (Duncan 180).

rivals has caused the countrywoman to fear for her daughter's safety. At the woman's request, Elizabeth continues walking in the woods. She soon encounters "six shepherds, with as many fosters, haling and pulling to whether side they should draw the Lady of May."³ The Queen's appearance calms the mob. After listening to various opinions on the matter, Elizabeth selects the shepherd as a husband for the Lady of May. Both suitors sing a duet, and the entertainment concludes with the schoolmaster's presentation of the gift of an agate necklace to the Queen.

Wanstead, the site of the performance of The Lady of May, was home to Sidney's powerful uncle Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Dudley was Elizabeth's notorious favorite, and rumoured by some to be her lover. Spectacles prepared for courtly celebrations were standard vehicles for flattery. As host to Elizabeth's progress, Leicester used the opportunity to vie for royal favour and preferment. Both Leicester and Sidney had good reason to attempt to gain the Queen's favour at this time, as they were trying to persuade Elizabeth to support the Protestant cause in the Netherlands.

In May of 1577, one year before the performance, Sidney had returned from a highly successful diplomatic mission to Germany and the Netherlands. He had travelled there to consolidate a Protestant league between these countries, an alliance that was to have kept the Spanish Catholic threat at bay. Leicester, reputed to be the

³Katherine Duncan-Jones and Jan Van Dorsten, eds., Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), 22; future citations will be indicated parenthetically.

"keystone of the whole edifice of Elizabethan Puritanism" (Stone 340), was intimately involved with the plans for the league. The Puritan faction in England aggressively sought the alliance. This group continually demanded that the Queen take bolder measures against the Catholic threat. Had she given way to the Puritan party, Elizabeth would have ruined her "policy of comprehension," and may have "goaded her Catholic subjects into revolt." In the eyes of her Puritan subjects, however, she seemed "more favourable to Catholics than to themselves" (Neale 179).

Sidney's success in interesting foreign powers in the Protestant league aroused the Queen's suspicions. She had no intention of depleting England's treasury for the sake of the war in the Netherlands. She supported Protestant interests abroad only insofar as her actions preserved the delicate political balance between England, France, and Spain. Sidney acquired too many allies in the Netherlands and abroad. He tipped the scale, placing England's tenuous relations with France and Spain in jeopardy.

Within England itself, Sidney's success was also perceived as a threat. Always fearful of rebellion, the Queen grew alarmed when William of Orange, "the richest nobleman in the world's most prosperous economy" (Osborn 496), offered Sidney his daughter's hand in marriage. Elizabeth seems to have feared that Sidney, by way of his powerful connections, would accumulate enough power to make a claim for the throne. She worried that Henry Sidney, (Philip's father), as President of Wales, could by "secret combination" join forces with the Low Countries to support this project (Osborn 496). Elizabeth decided to abandon the Protestant league on the basis of these fears. By October of 1577, to the disappointment of the Protestants, Elizabeth had definitively made up her mind to drop plans for a Protestant league (Osborn 498).

In the spring of 1578, the Protestant faction was urging the Queen to send troops to the Netherlands. Both Leicester and Sidney contemplated joining the war. During her visit to Wanstead, the Queen was in the midst of deliberating whether or not to send a diplomatic embassy to the Netherlands. Leicester anticipated being selected for this mission (Berry 8).

With all of the political jockeying taking place, one can understand why Leicester would see fit to host the Queen's progress. These country-house entertainments provided yet another forum in which to plead the Protestant cause. The Lady of May, like Hamlet's play within the play, could be used to catch the conscience of the Queen. This would neither be the first nor the last time a courtier used a pleasing art form to soften the blow of a didactic message. It was standard practice to couch advice in pastoral entertainment, "under the vaile of homely persons, and in rude speeches to insinuate and glaunce at greater matters, and such as perchance had not bene safe to have beene disclosed in any other sort" (Puttenham qtd. in Montrose 10).

To the detriment of The Lady of May, however, most critics have concentrated almost exclusively on the work's role as a medium for the covert transmission of messages to Elizabeth from Leicester and his faction. In treating the fiction as a strictly political missive, Sidney has been labeled as a minion, the lowly scribe writing at the behest of his uncle. His sole function is whittled down to dogsbody, the lackey disguising a distasteful bit of advice in colourful apparel in order to tempt the Queen.

To fix the work--and Sidney's role--within this narrow framework prevents readers from recognizing Sidney's structural and rhetorical achievement. In the court entertainment, Sidney releases personal tensions,

and expresses his dissatisfaction with being a courtier in Elizabeth's service. Writing provided Sidney with an opportunity to explore his problems. In the dramatic entertainment, Sidney depicts the type of courtier Elizabeth favoured. He matches this type of courtier against his own less conservative model.

My treatment of Sidney's entertainment owes a great deal to Louis Adrian Montrose's study, "Celebration and Insinuation."⁴ Montrose also adopts a biographical and historical approach, demonstrating how the work reflects tensions within Sidney's life. His investigation covers a broad spectrum: the political situation, the conventions of the court entertainment, and even a later entertainment performed in 1581, The Triumph of The Fortress of Perfect Beauty, which may have been written by Sidney.

Although I agree with many of Montrose's conclusions, I find his approach to be too broadly-based. A close reading of the text, such as the one I offer, reveals how Sidney's concerns operate on the level of the discourse itself. In this regard, I compare Sidney's court entertainment to those of his contemporaries, a juxtaposition which makes Sidney's boldness and innovation all the more apparent.

Several critics argue that The Lady of May is an allegory of the Alençon affair, while others assert that it represents a dispute between Leicester and Hatton (Robert Kimbrough qtd. in Stillman 1984, 24). The sheer variety of interpretations indicates an inability to validate any one position. Moreover, whatever stance is

⁴Montrose, "Celebration and Insinuation: Sir Philip Sidney and the Motives of Elizabethan Courtship," Renaissance Drama 8 (1977): 3-36.

taken, it is achieved at the cost of shaving off scraps that cannot be woven successfully into the chosen socio-political interpretation. As it stands, no theory has been able to account for the work's diversity. To rationalize and dismiss the spectacle as a pitch for the Protestant cause does not account for Sidney's lifelong preoccupation with the themes and formal structures generated in The Lady of May.

Certainly Sidney had a vested interest in the success of the Protestant faction. To reduce him to a political mouthpiece, the detached author of a conventional court entertainment, is to lose sight of the fundamental impulses that he exposes in the work. Sidney was not simply voicing the hostility of the Protestant faction; he had his own agenda and his own personal quarrel with Elizabeth.

Sidney was not a favorite of the Queen, due to his involvement with the Protestant league and his relation to the unruly Leicester. As heir to the two most powerful men in England at that time--the Earl of Leicester and his brother the Earl of Warwick--Sidney stood to become one of the most powerful men in England. Elizabeth's coolness toward him may have stemmed from an awareness of this fact. Whatever her motives, Elizabeth seemed bent on thwarting Sidney's career.

In 1577, Elizabeth terminated Sidney's position with the highly successful embassy to establish a Protestant league. Sidney's biographer, James Osborn, maintains that Queen Elizabeth may have wished to send a more experienced politician (Osborn 497). The fact remains that the much sought after Protestant league never materialized, and the Protestants blamed its failure on Elizabeth. Her apparent weakness in handling this area of England's affairs caused

some of her officials to wonder "whether their royal mistress was entirely sane" (Wilson qtd. in Osborn 481).

Elizabeth knew that her reluctance to enter into wars was considered a sign of feminine weakness, but her mind was "never to invade [her] neighbours, or to usurp over any" (Chamberlin 32). Her conservative policies irritated her Protestant subjects. Sidney was particularly frustrated by her decision to abandon plans for the Protestant league. He voices his disappointment in a letter sent March 1, 1578, to his good friend and mentor, Hubert Languet:

For what to what purpose should our thoughts be directed to various kinds of knowledge, unless room be afforded for putting it into practice, so that public advantage may be the result, which in a corrupt age we cannot hope for?

(Pears 143)

The age seemed corrupt because Elizabeth consistently blocked his efforts, denying him the chance to put his ambitious dreams into action.

From a reference in a letter from Languet, July 16, 1579, we learn that Elizabeth bestowed a new honour on Sidney. The honour entailed that he was no longer his own master, but "henceforward must always place his country's foreign policy above private desire or inclination" (Osborn 501). In effect, this supposed honour was nothing more than a tactful means of lawfully enforcing his subjection. The Queen's fear that Sidney would assert himself as a potential rival, or as a too vociferous critic of her policies, may have prompted her to take this precautionary step. To be Elizabeth's courtier was to be a dog on a very short leash, but Sidney continued straining against the collar.

Between the years of 1578 and 1581, Elizabeth kept her subjects in a perpetual state of unease by

entertaining the dangerous notion of marrying the French Duke, Alençon, son of the much hated Catherine de Médicis. The Protestant faction cried out against the prospect of having a Catholic king. Sidney himself had first-hand knowledge of the treachery of the French. He witnessed the St. Bartholemew's Day massacre while he was abroad during the summer of 1572. During this bloody rampage, four thousand Protestants were murdered in Paris alone (Osborn 66).

In August of 1579, a group of powerful Protestants, including Leicester and Philip's father Henry Sidney, gathered to voice their disapproval of Elizabeth's matrimonial plans. They drafted a brief to this effect, and Philip Sidney was given the honour of transforming the notes into a formal letter, which was circulated in manuscript form late in August. Sidney's penmanship seems to have earned him the Queen's permanent disfavour.

As a sign of her disapproval and as a means of curbing her subjects' ambition, Elizabeth withheld offices from unruly courtiers. She seems to have adopted this strategy in Sidney's case. Without the Queen's patronage, Sidney found himself heavily in debt. He sought alternate means of procuring an income.

In 1581, Sidney made secret arrangements to sail with Sir Francis Drake in search of gold. The Queen caught wind of Sidney's plot to join Drake's expedition, and on the eve of their expected departure from Plymouth, she sent Sidney a missive. Her letter was delivered "by a peer of this realm; carrying with it in the one hand grace, the other thunder" (Greville 76). Elizabeth offered Sidney a choice. He could leave with Drake, facing her wrath and punishment upon his return, or he could remain in England and take up a minor post. She was throwing him a sop, and

an unappetizing one at that, but he had no choice. Drake sailed without him.

Relations between Philip and Elizabeth were strained even further in August of 1579. During the heat of the Queen's marriage negotiations, and the surprising disclosure of Leicester's secret marriage, Sidney had an untimely quarrel with the Earl of Oxford, an admirer of Alençon. The altercation took place on the tennis court, and began when Oxford commanded Sidney to leave the court because the French visitors were seated in the gallery. Sidney stood his ground. The two men made arrangements to duel, but before they fought, the Queen interceded.

Uncomfortably aware of the rebellious urges coming to the fore in her young subject, Elizabeth reminded Sidney of the difference in degree between earls and gentlemen, insisting on the respect "inferiors owed to their superiors" (Greville 69). A maintenance of degree and subservience was essential to the preservation of her monarchy, and to this end, Elizabeth informed him "how the gentleman's neglect of the nobility taught the peasant to insult upon both."

Sidney countered her argument, claiming that "although he [the Earl of Oxford] were a great lord by birth, alliance, and grace; yet he was no lord over him" (Greville 70). Sidney's insistence on autonomy and individual freedom, so clearly articulated in this instance, epitomizes the prominent dynamic at work in his writings. In his fictions, the structure of this confrontation repeats itself with only minor variations. Often the confrontation takes the form of a trial, where the youthful voice, championing freedom and autonomy, is pitted against an equally powerful voice of authority, calling for the renunciation of those urges which threaten the unity of the social order. In this sense, Sidney's

fictions map out an ongoing struggle for self-assertion in the face of a prevailing atmosphere of repression.

But it was not simply Sidney's behaviour which angered the Queen. Her Highness conspicuously mistreated his entire family. When Elizabeth contracted smallpox during the 1562 epidemic, Philip's mother, Mary Sidney, nursed her back to health. While tending the Queen, Lady Sidney contracted the disease and infected Philip who was eight years old at the time (Osborn 518). Lady Sidney's face was so badly disfigured by the pox that she was ashamed to appear in public. In a letter written to Sir Francis Walsingham, Sir Henry Sidney describes his wife's ghastly transformation:

I lefte her a full faire Ladie in myne
eye at least the fayerest, and when I returned
I found her as fowle a ladie as the smale poxe
coulde make her, which she did take by contynuall
attendaunce of her Majesty's most precious person.
(Osborn 5)

One would expect Elizabeth to appreciate the sacrifice made on her behalf, but she showed no such compassion. Court officials assigned Lady Sidney cold and drafty rooms while she was convalescing, and the income for her duties "dwindled to a trickle" (Osborn 311).

Philip's father met with the same strain of apathy. Sir Henry spent most of his life separated from his family, working under extremely difficult conditions in Ireland, without the Queen's support or assistance. Dissatisfied with his performance in 1578, Elizabeth recalled Henry Sidney from his appointment as Lord Deputy of Ireland. He returned to England in September "shaken in body and spirit," and his arrival "cast a pall over most

of that year" (Osborn 501).⁵ When Henry Sidney finally received the meager honour of a barony, Lady Sidney had to write a letter asking the Queen not to bestow the title because they could not afford the title without lands to support it (Osborn 310). While other court favourites were being lavishly rewarded, the Sidney family was exploited. This discrepancy must have been a source of frustration and bitterness for the family, and could only have added fuel to Sidney's discontent.

This brief overview of the socio-political context in which the work was written enables one to realize that, concomitant with whatever political message was being relayed, Sidney was in the position to have considerable frustrations of his own which required an outlet. But Elizabeth's power over him and his entire family was such that the release of these frustrations had to be covert. Under these delicate circumstances, where great risk was involved, Sidney channeled his disappointment and frustration into his art. Tensions and frustrations crystallize in the form of serio-comedic literature.

Sidney consciously used humour as a method of psychological unburdening. In a letter to his close friend and mentor, Languet, Sidney writes candidly about his own sense of humour and why it surfaces during the most grievous of times:

But my dear Languet, what are we doing?
 Jestng in times like these? I cannot think
 there is any man possessed with common
 understanding, who does not see to what these
 rough storms are driving, by which all
 Christendom has been agitated now these many

⁵The Queen's distrust of Henry Sidney may have been a large factor influencing her waning affection for Philip Sidney.

years...But here we have the true enjoyment, or rather the true fruit of friendship, namely, that the recollection of a dear friend is not only a great relief under all sorrow, but that it doth in the midst of most grave affairs, force a man to descend to a certain relaxation of his mind. And this refreshing of the mind consists, more than any thing else, in that seemly play of humour which is so natural, and so ingrafted, so to speak, in the characters of some of the wisest men, that neither Socrates nor our own More could lose their jest even in the hour of death. So let us even be merry.

(Pears 65)

Comedy provides a temporary form of release akin to a holiday, but it can also be used effectively as a tool for subversion, as Bakhtin observes:

Laughter has the remarkable power of making an object come up close, of drawing it into a zone of crude contact where one can finger it familiarly on all sides...doubt it, take it apart, dismember it, lay it bare and expose it, examine it freely and experiment with it. Laughter demolishes fear and piety....

(Bakhtin 23)

The crude, close proximity afforded by comedy enables Sidney to lay bare the corruptions of court-life within the safety of his fiction.

In the case of The Lady of May, far from being a trivial scribe, Sidney is the engineer of a piece of brilliant social criticism. He creates a dramatic spectacle which both clarifies his understanding of himself and challenges the conventions of the court. The entertainment becomes a vehicle for a personal inquiry into the cultural limits controlling and shaping his identity. To examine his manifest and potential roles as an Elizabethan courtier-poet, Sidney stages a debate between personified options. Montrose maintains that the shepherd and forester are "objectionable extremes...

allegorical caricatures of courtier types" (Montrose 15). However, I suggest that, of the two suitors, only the shepherd's character was objectionable in Sidney's eyes.

In the suitor's pastoral singing contest, the shepherd champions an ideal image of the court and court-life. The forester strips away his false pretenses, the web of idealistic illusions, laying bare what he considers to be the realities of life at court: its idle conservatism, fawning obsequious courtiers, and obligatory participation in futile struggles to capture royal favour.

Writing afforded Sidney a therapeutic opportunity to analyze his options, a chance to distance himself from his role, in order to acquire perspective on his life. This capacity to objectify one's experience has been cited as a salient feature related to the rise of Renaissance individualism, a movement which saw the emergence of men "who [were] able to imagine themselves in more than one role; who [stood] as it were outside or above their own personalities..." (Delany 11). Sidney, like several gifted men of his time, was able to separate himself from an unworkable situation to test out alternatives, and to develop a strategy better suited to the conditions.

But why did Sidney choose to make his private concerns public? The Lady of May is not a diary entry, the private thoughts of a frustrated young man. The text, as I have already mentioned, is a record of an actual show performed before the Queen in the grove at Wanstead. Nor was the audience simply a group of sympathetic courtier-chums. The work was prepared specifically for the Queen's visit, and the requirements of the genre entail that the monarch be the center of the entertainment. In Sidney's drama, Elizabeth is asked to arbitrate between two suitors: a shepherd and a woodsman, two men with vastly different ideologies and temperaments. By placing

Elizabeth in the role of the judge--a role she normally occupied in her daily life, and frequently occupied in courtly entertainments⁶--Sidney recreates the actual dynamics of the court (Montrose 14).

Sidney's decision to involve the Queen in his personal inquiry is a tacit acknowledgment of his need for royal approval. He may have had the freedom to decide whom he wanted to be, and to commit himself imaginatively to this ideal, but, ultimately, Elizabeth had the final word. She selected the personalities who adorned her court and received preferment. While ceding to Elizabeth's power to control her subjects, Sidney, as author, however, challenges her authority. He creates an entertainment which places Elizabeth in a position where she is both the witness to, and the target of, his humorous critique.

Sidney's recognition of, and rebellion against, authority highlights a dynamic which surfaces repeatedly in his art as well as his life. One senses his rebellious urges coming to the fore in his quarrel with Oxford, and in his justification of his actions before the Queen. These urges also surfaced when he drafted his "Letter to Elizabeth," regarding her plans to marry Alençon. In a nutshell, Sidney's submission to authority was less than wholehearted. The fact that he wrote a court entertainment which expresses personal tensions, and criticizes Elizabeth and her court, indicates that he was not going to let his sovereign's wishes dictate the course of his life. Instead of remaining passively subservient, Sidney

⁶Elizabeth was frequently cast as a judge. She took the biblical role of Deborah in a coronation show, as well as portraying Judith and Esther in other pageants. These roles were "most typical of the imagery surrounding the queen during the early years of her reign" (Wilson 7).

actively made a bid to persuade the Queen to sanction the quality he valued most: independence of mind. Not surprisingly, the fiery temper of the forester, Therion, bears a strong resemblance to Sidney's own temper.

Crucial to my argument, which deals with the work's role as an outlet for frustration and a medium for the clarification of issues relating to identity, is the fact that the entertainment was prepared for the May Day celebrations. Sidney staged his public display of self-assertion and self-justification at this time because "it was one of the few opportunities in a thoroughly repressive culture where a celebration of liberty and misrule was permitted." The holiday's cult of natural vitality was "maintained within a civilization whose daily view focused on the mortality implicit in vitality" (Barber 10).

Sidney's unconventional arguments and attacks on the corruptions of the court were, in essence, camouflaged by the holiday atmosphere. His criticisms could be construed, if necessary, as generic and harmless revelry appropriate for the occasion. Under the cover of the carnival atmosphere, the work could escape the limits of protocol and slip undetected into the zone of critique. By mimicking the pretensions of the Queen and her court, the "covert and possibly wilful misrule of constituted authority is exposed" (Bristol 52).

In his book, Shakespeare's Festive Comedy, C.L. Barber observes that the basic gestures of the holiday are invocation and abuse. Revelers are encouraged to "flout and fleer at what on other days commanded respect" (Barber 7). May Day was the time for mocking authority and power structures. Under these circumstances, people who are unable to join in the festive activities are treated as outcasts, ridiculed for their inability to appreciate the

pleasures of misrule. Individuals, whose high-flown idealism renders them scornful of the pursuit of pleasure and freedom, become targets for festive abuse.

In creating his court entertainment, Sidney was banking on the Queen's holiday humour and her participation in the festive spirit. At the end of the work, the May Lady says to Elizabeth, "I should do you wrong to beseech you to take our follies well, since your bounty is such as to pardon greater faults" (31). Sidney knew he was treading on the Royal toes, and his apology is the Renaissance equivalent of "Be a good sport! I've insulted you but I was only joking." Using what amounts to peer pressure to force his audience to identify with the revelers, Sidney was stacking the odds in his favour. If Elizabeth, choosing to go against the tide of merriment, awarded the Lady of May to the idle and conservative shepherd, she would be transgressing the protocol of the holiday world and running the risk of earning a reputation as a wet blanket.

To discover how the entertainment serves Sidney's personal goals, we must turn to the work itself. As I mentioned above, the woman is brought before her Majesty and explains the problem: her daughter, the Lady of May, cannot decide between two suitors, Espilus, a shepherd and Therion, a woodsman. The country people look to the Queen for assistance in solving the dilemma. She must judge the merits of both young men and choose the more worthy husband.

Immediately we are struck by the sense of abruptness and urgency which characterizes the whole affair: "we are turned without warning from a country garden to the world of pastoral" (Orgel 44). The transition happens in the blink of an eye. The intensity of the problem draws the audience into the complexities of the author's dramatic

illusion before we have the chance to realize a shift has taken place. The seamlessness of this transition is enhanced by the behaviour of actors who "deny that they are characters, treating their audience exactly as they treat each other...We cannot tell them apart from ourselves" (Orgel 45). As C.L. Barber puts it, "the narrative structure puts its persons in the position of festive celebrants: they do not seek holiday, it happens to them" (Barber 6). Further, this blending of art and life promotes the audience's involvement in the festive spirit.

The atmosphere of urgency is generated initially through the countrywoman's hurried entrance and exit, and her bizarre rhetoric. Her discourse resonates with implications of impending disaster. She tells the Queen that her daughter is "oppressed," and that the two suitors are engaged in a "bloody controversy"--terms more appropriate to describe a civil war than a May Day celebration. Moreover, she informs the Queen that the crisis has escalated to the point where she fears for her daughter's sanity, saying, "I cannot choose but fear the loss of her wits." Before she races off, the countrywoman tells Elizabeth that if she continues walking she will arrive at the place where the two men "encumber" her daughter. Again, the rhetoric is charged with disturbingly violent undertones, as if the girl is being held hostage.

And she is. When the Queen arrives she finds the group of foresters and shepherds literally pulling the girl apart. Discord is portrayed in an emblematic tableau; the dynamics of the situation are akin to a powder-keg ready to blow.

The foreboding and savage energy may have been a ploy to revivify a familiar form and to prevent the audience from drifting into a complacent, amused stupor on a warm

day. However, the energy bound up in the work may also indicate that the content was of vital concern to the author.

The pervading sense of desperation is only one of the many oddities in Sidney's spectacle. Another prominent deviation from the traditional form of the court entertainment is the characters' attitude to the Queen. In most court performances, the actors typically pay elaborate compliments to their royal audiences, glorifying the sovereign for his or her innate virtues. In entertainments such as Jonson's Oberon the monarch is depicted as being graced with superhuman capabilities.

The compliments to the Queen in The Lady of May are conspicuously restrained. Sidney barely manages to fulfill the requirements, injecting his entertainment with the absolute minimum of solemn flattery.⁷ He does not, for example, suggest that Elizabeth's presence revivifies the countryside, as Nashe does in his pageant "Summer's Last Will and Testament." In Nashe's work, which is typical of the period, the sovereign acts as a magic elixir prolonging the life of the natural environment. In this case, as Summer explains, Elizabeth has enabled the season to live on until late in the year:

And died I had indeed unto the earth
But that Eliza, England's beauteous queen,
On whom all seasons prosperously attend,
Forbade the execution of my fate,
Until her joyful progress was expir'd.

⁷ He was not about to make the same mistake made by the group of ardently Protestant Cambridge men who presented a satire--a burlesque of the Mass--before the Queen in 1564. The performance so outraged her Majesty that she "quitted the chamber, taking the torchbearers with her and leaving the would-be satirists in the dark" (Barber 51).

(Barber 84)

Similarly, in Gascoigne's spectacle, presented to the Queen at Kenilworth in 1575, Elizabeth's presence has a magical effect upon the surly Porter. Enraged by the comings and goings of the strangers (the Queen and her retinue), he is suddenly transfixed by the sight of Elizabeth:

[He] found himself pierced at the presence of a personage so evidently expressing an heroic sovereignty over all the whole estates and by degrees there beside calmed his astonishment, proclaims open gates and free passage to all, yields up his club, his keys, his office and all on his knees humbly prays for pardon of his ignorance and impatience.

(Nichols 3: 430)

The Wildman, in the same entertainment, flatters the Queen profusely, extolling her innate virtues: "her exquisite countenance, proportion of body, princely grace of presence, gracious gifts of nature, and the rare and singular quality of both body and mind." He ends the torrent of praise with "presage and prayer of perpetual felicity and with humble subjection of him and hiszen" (Nichols 3: 437).

The Queen's arrival in the Lady of May evinces a far more subdued response from Sidney's country people: "though they knew not her estate, yet something there was which made them startle aside and gaze at her" (22). No one falls down on his knees and grovels before Her Eminence. During the course of the entertainment, the rustics are cognizant of her virtues. The May Lady cedes to Elizabeth's superior beauty and the Queen is appropriately treated as "the supreme Summer Lady" (Orgel 84). Sidney even structures his entertainment to include the conventional "gathering in of the power reigning in the countryside [which is] given to Elizabeth" (32). However, the country people's appreciation of the Queen

stems more from an awareness of her innate functional capacity, rather than her goddess-like qualities. They sense in her an authority, but the overt idolatry evident in other entertainments is replaced by restrained admiration for her gift of fair judgement.

Sidney fashions characters who, like himself, are not overly fond of Elizabeth. Both author and characters view her as a means to an end--and not necessarily an effective one at that. In a letter written to his father-in-law Sir Francis Walsingham, Sidney makes it explicit that, in his eyes, Elizabeth is a far cry from a deity, and if she is a Fairy Queen, or a Lady of the Lake (Wilson 25-6), then the lake seems to have suffered a serious drought:

If her Majesty wear the fowntain I
would fear considring what I daily fynd
that we shold wax dry, but she is but a
means whom God useth and I know not whether
I am deceived but I am faithfully persuaded
that if she shold withdraw her self other
springes woold ryse to help this action.

(Osborn 513)

The tone of the letter is once again indicative of his frustration. It is understandable why, for integrity's sake, Sidney would avoid excessive and dishonest avowals of appreciation. Luckily for him, a pastoral written for this holiday could "take special advantage of the genre's traditional freedom to dispense with the formalities of civilized society" (Stillman 1984, 25).

Sidney, however, strains the limits of tolerance. The countrywoman who accosts Elizabeth behaves almost rudely. When she greets the Queen, due to haste or lack of concern, she dispenses with decorous behaviour altogether: "Most fair lady; for as for other your titles of state, statelier persons shall give you" (21). After she outlines the problem, she races away as if the Queen were deadly

poison: "I dare stay here no longer, for our men say here in the country, the sight of you is infectious" (21).

The word "infectious" is a malapropism of "destructive" (Duncan 177), and Sidney's use of the term may merely be a conventional compliment, a literary allusion to the hazardous allure and beauty of the Petrarchan mistresses whose beauty had the power to enchant and even blind the beholders (Duncan 177). But even if this were his reason, an awareness of his intent does not completely dispel the pejorative connotations of the word, whose definition entails having the quality or the power of "communicating disease by infection; infecting with disease, pestilential and unhealthy..." (OED).

Sidney's word choice takes on darker implications when we recall that his mother contracted smallpox while nursing the Queen back to health. Although it is far from an overt reference, the fact that this is the final statement uttered by a fictional mother to the Queen strengthens the hypothesis that Sidney is taking a literary stab at revenge. If this were Sidney's intention, and the import of the allusion dawned on Elizabeth, then, from the start, he may have ruined his chances of persuading the Queen to select the forester.

The Queen's ability to wreak havoc is similarly flagged in the formal supplication which the mother leaves with Elizabeth:

SUPPLICATION

Most gracious Sovereigne:

To one whose state is raised over all,
 Whose face doth oft the bravest sort enchant,
 Whose mind is such, as wisest minds appal,
 Who in one self these diverse gifts can plant:
 How dare I wretch seek there my woes to rest,
 Where ears be burnt, eyes dazzled, hearts
 oppressed?

Your state is great, your greatness is our shield,
 Your face hurts oft, but still it doth delight,
 Your mind is wise, your wisdom makes you mild,
 Such planted gifts enrich even beggars sight;
 So dare I wretch, my bashful fear subdue,
 And feed mine ears, mine eyes, my heart in
 you.

(22)

The supplication fulfills the requirements of the traditional gesture of poetic invocation and draws on the standard literary conventions and stock tropes: the beautiful, all-powerful sovereign is beseeched by the helpless wretch. Unlike any other writers of court entertainments at the time, Sidney balances praising statements with phrases that reinforce the image of Elizabeth, not as a beneficent Queen, but as a climatic menace. In the letter to Walsingham, Sidney compares the Queen to a dry fountain; here she is akin to a scorching desert, "Where ears be burnt, eyes dazzled, hearts oppressed." The word "oppressed" was used by the mother in her description of the May Lady's problem (p.20 l.19), and the repetition of the word in this instance forges a subtle connection between the country people's troubles and the Queen's personality--a link which is strengthened and clarified as the work progresses.

The drama continues as old father Lalus, "one of the substantiallest shepherds" (22), steps forward from the crush to address the Queen. Shepherds are traditionally the heroes of the pastoral world (Orgel 48), but in this May Day entertainment, Sidney inverts the established form. The shepherds in The Lady of May represent the unappealing, everyday world.

Although the pastoral setting is used to contrast the courtly environment, Sidney does not glorify the pastoral realm. Preferring to be an active statesman and diplomat, Sidney distrusted the pastoral's traditional celebration

of contemplation and ease (Lindenbaum 17). In The Lady of May (and, as we shall see in the next chapter, in the Old Arcadia), Sidney does not portray the pastoral world as an Edenic environment, sealed off from the problems of the everyday world. Instead, the problems which arise within the pastoral sphere mirror the difficulties which plague the world at large.

In the season where youth takes precedence over age, and love is given free rein, we expect the heroes of a May Day entertainment to be in their prime. The shepherd Lalus, whose name means "babbling," does not fit the bill. He is portrayed as a doddering fool who further excludes himself from the May Day festivities by voicing his outright hostility and distaste for love, a condition which he describes as "a certain fransical malady...[that] when [he] was a young man they called flat folly" (23).

In addition to his age, profession, and mental rigidity, Lalus's wealth also distinguishes him from the festive celebrants. In the holiday world which rules the day, money is an unpleasant reminder of the real world.

When he greets the Queen, Lalus bestows lavish and flowery titles on her, parodying the obligatory forms of courtly etiquette. He calls Elizabeth "your benignity," and your "right worshipful audience" (22). Lalus takes everything to extremes. He even accounts for the sound of his own voice, inviting the Queen to listen to that "which, with the opening of my mouth, my tongue and teeth shall deliver unto you." Lalus shares his fascination with the origin of his words with another old shepherd, Dorcas. As Dorcas champions the shepherd's cause, he announces, "I must give up from the bottom of my stomach what my conscience doth find in the behalf of shepherds" (28). In both cases, the speakers are coarse clowns. The auditor's

first impulse is to recoil from their spray of rhetorical vomit.

The chief literary buffoon is the schoolmaster Rombus. Following Lalus, he is the next in line to offer his explanation of the Lady of May's dilemma, and he does so with the aid of his rhomboid (i.e., crooked) reasoning: "I use such geometrical proportion, as neither wanteth mansuetude nor correction" (23). Inventing a language of his own out of scraps of misremembered Latin quotations, Rombus acts as a reminder to both Sidney and Elizabeth of the futility of applying schoolroom logic where matters of passion are concerned. Where Lalus showed a repugnance for love, Rombus suffocates passion in layers of qualification and alliteration:

[The May Lady] hath been quodammo do hunted,
as you would say, pursued, by two, a brace,
a couple, a cast of young men, to whom the
crafty coward Cupid had inquam delivered
his dire doleful digging dignifying dart.

Rombus is a parody of the humanist scholar--the inept phrase-maker. His advice, offered to the disputants, falls on deaf ears. Worse still, he is beaten for his efforts.

Sidney may have been caricaturing himself in this portrait of Rombus, the learned fool who is completely ineffectual as a mediator between opposing parties. His desire to speak is irrepressible, yet his advice is senseless. Rombus is certain that he can solve matters best left to the Queen to resolve. Edward Berry calls Rombus Sidney's "negative self-image...a travesty of the very role for which Sidney had been trained and to which he aspired--that of humanist statesman and diplomat" (Berry 18). In the next chapter on the Old Arcadia, I will discuss Sidney's efficacy, or rather, inefficacy, as an advisor. Although Sidney's self-portraits in his later

works are more well-defined, Rombus may very well be the germ of this self-referential impulse.

The profusion of linguistic bumblers in the entertainment signals Sidney's delight in fashioning characters whose power lies in their ability to violate limits--in this case, the limits of discourse. The May Day spectacle allows Sidney to engage in vicarious misrule. Through the mouthpiece of his verbose characters, he spews the most far-fetched phrases he can imagine, transgressing with impunity laws he himself promoted in his theoretical treatise. In the Apology for Poetry, Sidney both stakes out the limits of rhetorical convention and describes a kind of ecstatic freedom available to the writer: "[The poet] goeth hand in hand with Nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging only within the zodiac of his own wit" (Apology 100).

The linguistic violations in The Lady of May draw our attention to the way in which language is used and abused. Glaring rhetorical transgressions put readers on the alert, drawing their attention to the form and content of the statements, making critics just that much more critical. Paradoxically, Sidney creates fools who enjoy the liberty that, as a poet, he yearns for, yet their outrageous rhetoric signals the reader to act as watchdog. Thus Sidney escapes his prison only to notify the jailor.

This self-sabotaging manoeuvre becomes comprehensible only when we realize that Sidney suffers from a form of self-division. He is both the impassioned artist and the judgmental critic. As a result of this duality, Sidney is driven to strike a balance between personal satisfaction and social good. The presence of these buffoons achieves this twin objective: the writer gains a measure of freedom, while the reader is prompted to take a critical stance, rather than expect to be amused.

Clowning and misrule are not simply one-dimensional activities where the release of rebellious impulses is sanctioned. In allowing for the discharge of pent-up energy, festive behaviour also reinforces the conventions of the everyday world which the revelers defy. Misrule provides both "release for impulses which run counter to decency and decorum, and clarification about limits which comes from going beyond the limits" (Barber 13).

Sidney understood that misrule is ultimately judged by the social order. His awareness of this accounts for his lifelong preoccupation with trials "in which young men who resemble their creator are accused by social authority or the voice of reason in their own minds" (Ferguson 137). As in many of his writings, the court entertainment reaches a forensic conclusion. It is not only the Queen who is drawn into the complexities and must act as arbiter, but readers must also examine and re-examine the verity of each argument before casting their vote.⁸

In the case of Rombus's arguments, Sidney's audience does not have to decide whether or not to trust his discourse. His windy oration is cut short by the Lady of May: "Away, away you tedious fool, your eyes are not worthy to look to yonder princely sight, much less your foolish tongue to trouble her wise ears" (24).

After silencing the schoolmaster, the Lady of May proceeds to describe her two suitors. She tells the Queen that the shepherd Espilus possesses riches and is "of a

⁸This type of weighing and balancing is characteristic of fictions which deal with the decomposition of identity. Lawrence Kohlberg argues that, essentially, decomposition is not so much a splitting of selves, as "an obsessive balancing or undoing of one idea or force with its opposite" (Kohlberg qtd. in Delany 14).

mild disposition." But like the boy in the Christian parable who is given ten talents, Espilus does nothing with his wealth. The Lady of May explains: "his fortune hath not been to do me great service, so hath he never done me any wrong."

Therion, on the other hand, although poor, is "livelier" than Espilus. Unlike the idle shepherd, Therion provides the Lady of May with many pleasures, and performs many "pretty services." Therion's morality, however, is questionable. One of his "pretty services" involves stealing venison. Periodically, he becomes physically abusive: "he grows to such rages, that sometimes he strikes me, sometimes he rails at me" (25).

One of the more satisfying elements of the work is that there is no obvious victor. The characters of both suitors are a complex mixture of positive and negative traits. Espilus is decidedly self-interested and indolent, as content to graze off the fat of the land as are his sheep, but he is harmless. Therion, however, brings the positive capacity for action together with a mercurial temperament. The Queen is left with the difficult task of deciding "whether the many deserts and many faults of Therion, or the very small deserts and no faults of Espilus be to be preferred" (25). The ambiguous natures of the suitors suggest that there is more to this debate than the classic toss-up between contemplation and action.

The shepherd and the forester effectively represent the two options open to the author. As a courtier, Sidney could model himself after either one. By nature Sidney was a bold and rebellious young man, prone to bouts of melancholy and fits of anger. His temperament strongly

aligns him with Therion.⁹ Moreover, the entertainment takes place on Therion's turf (in the grove), indicating that, from the start, the argument is weighted in the woodsman's favour.

Espilus, however, possesses the qualities which Elizabeth most admired. Her Highness appreciated men who played it safe, hugged the middle ground--men like her counsellor Robert Cecil, Lord Burghley. Individuals such as Burghley reaped substantial reward as a result of their conservatism. (This is probably why the shepherds who populate Sidney's work are portrayed as being very wealthy.) But the demoralizing element in being an Espilus lies in having to sacrifice one's autonomy.

In Sidney's court entertainment, the shepherds are revealed to be ex-courtiers who spent much of their lives enslaved to a cruel mistress (28). Their situation parallels the life of aristocrats dependent upon the patronage of Elizabeth. To secure royal approval, a courtier had to sacrifice himself to the service of the Queen. In a letter to Elizabeth, Burghley proclaims his allegiance to this credo of self-abnegation;

[I will] be a minister of your Majesty's determinations and not of my own, or of others, though they be never so many....And as for any other service, though it were in your Majesty's kitchen or garden, from the bottom

⁹Sidney's friend and mentor Languet repeatedly mentions Sidney's irascibility (Osborn 228) and his tendency toward melancholy (Osborn 130-131, 136-139, 143, 492, 505). When his father was sent back to England in 1578, Sidney's temper flared and he savagely accused Sir Henry's secretary, Molyneaux, of violating the privacy of his correspondence with his father, threatening to run the man through with his dagger (Howell 57). Sidney also impetuously challenged his superior, the Earl of Oxford, to a duel.

of my heart I am ready without respect of estimation, wealth or ease, to do your Majesty's commandment.

(qtd. in McCoy 5)

For her own peace of mind, and the harmony of the nation, Elizabeth was determined to bridle the spirit of her rebellious courtiers. She wanted dominion over a flock of domesticated sheep. Her ability to control the fortunes of her courtiers by withholding employment and interfering in their marriage plans proved to be an effective means of curbing the ambitions of her impecunious young subjects. Even Fulke Greville, Sidney's boyhood friend, who at one time shared the same streak of rebelliousness and independence, broke down and renounced his will in favor of the royal will (Greville 146).

At first glance, it seems that Sidney reduced his chances of persuading the Queen to favour Therion by openly admitting to the forester's fiery temper. But there was no reason for Sidney to dissemble. The Queen was well-acquainted with Sidney's boldness, his efficacy as a political emissary, and his frustration at being denied employment. Elizabeth had already summed up Sidney's character. When she reprimanded one of her courtiers for running off to fight in the Netherlands, she compared him to Sidney, saying, "you will never leave off till you are knocked over the head as that inconsiderate fellow Sidney was" (Chamberlin 173).

By fairly matching the strengths of Therion against those of Espilus, Sidney was following Aristotle's advice with regard to the orator whose object of praise is weak: "If you cannot find enough to say of a man himself, you may pit him against others" (Aristotle's Basic Works qtd. in Ferguson 142). By pitting his man against the shepherd, Sidney was simultaneously reaffirming the woodsman's qualities for himself, and enjoining Elizabeth to

recognize that, like the Lady of May, she could benefit from a relationship with such an unconventional courtier. The Lady of May's attitude toward her suitors--she "likes them both and loves neither" (25)--frees her from emotional bias. Sidney may have hoped that Elizabeth would adopt a similarly objective attitude.

Before the Queen is allowed to decide between the two suitors, Therion challenges Espilus to a traditional, pastoral singing match. (Note that it is Therion who takes the initiative.) When the piece was performed before the Queen, at this point in the entertainment, a comical layering between art and life occurred. Sidney and his characters were engaged in contemporaneous acts of self-assertion: author and fictive suitors vying for the approval of the same woman.

During the course of the contest, Espilus consistently plays straightman to Therion. The shepherd boasts of his riches: "Two thousand sheep I have as white as milk...pasture rich...wool as soft as silk" (26). Espilus offers his wealth in exchange for the right to possess the Lady of May's "grace." Therion, on the other hand, does not speak of ownership. Instead, he champions individual freedom: "Two thousand deer in wildest woods I have/ Them can I take, but you I cannot hold:/ He is not poor, who can his freedom save" (26).

Espilus's limp-wristed warning to the Lady of May, "but still take heed, lest thou thyself submit/ To one that hath no wealth, and wants his wit" (26) withers in the blast of Therion's rejoinder: "but take this beast [Espilus], if beasts you fear to miss,/ For of his beasts the greatest beast he is" (26). Espilus is out of his depth in the give and take of the rhetorical exchange. Sidney structures the debate so that Therion, always in

the position of having the last word, has the rhetorical advantage.

After the singing match between the suitors, the argument is taken up by the youth's supporters: the young forester, Rixus, and the old shepherd, Dorcas (mentioned above in relation to his rhetorical excess). Rixus asks Dorcas how he can dare to compare a fool like Espilus to a noble huntsman such as Therion "in the presence of such a one as even with her eye can give the cruel punishment?" Once again, Sidney touches on Elizabeth's terrible power.¹⁰

Dorcas, in defending the character of the shepherd, draws a comparison between the shepherd and his sheep, stressing the gentle nature of each: "O sweet honey milken lambs, and is there any so flinty a heart that can find about him to speak against them, that have the charge of so good souls as you be" (28). Both shepherd and sheep are creatures "among whom there is no envy, but all obedience." The stress on obedience brings to mind men such as Burghley, the epitome of docile subservience. Although Elizabeth appreciated this quality, within Sidney's court entertainment, obedience is aligned with idle subservience.

Sidney never overtly disparages court-life. He attacks the court-system indirectly. For example, Dorcas says that the shepherd's life is neither subject to

¹⁰Dorcas's answer is peculiar. He replies, "I will neither meddle with her nor her eyes. They say in our town, they are dangerous both." Sidney may well be drawing on the conventional attributes of the Petrarchan mistress whose eyes have the power to injure the love-struck individual. But the way he personifies eyes-- "they are dangerous both,"--indicates that he was punning on his Elizabeth's nickname for Leicester.

"violent oppression, nor servile flattery" (28). Although unstated, the courtier's life is, again, implicated. Sidney's frustration regarding the court-system, and Elizabeth's treatment of her courtiers, provides an unsettling undertone in the entertainment. Surprisingly, Elizabeth tolerated the performance, with its barely veiled insults and subtle remarks vilifying courtiers and court-life.

Sidney's hostility peaks when Dorcas explains how the shepherds came to their pastoral profession. As I mentioned earlier, they are ex-courtiers, youths who (like Sidney) were failures at court. In the refuge of the country they while away the hours lying in the fields and under bushes, venting their anger poetically. "O how often," says Dorcas, "have I heard one name sound in many mouths, making our vales witness of their doleful agonies!" The shepherds complain about "the greatness of their mistress' estate...some of the extremity of her beauty mixed with extreme cruelty; some of her too much wit, which made all their loving labours folly" (28).

The mysterious mistress is none other than Elizabeth. In Dorcas's catalogue of the shepherds' complaints, the stress falls on the Queen's penchant for making the courtiers' "loving labours folly." Sidney may have been alluding to his attempt to establish a Protestant league, a "loving labour" which never reached fruition, or he may have been referring to Puritans' interests in general, which Elizabeth most often ignored.

Rixus, whose youth immediately makes him a more credible May Day spokesman than the aged Dorcas, counters Dorcas's claims for the superiority of the shepherd's life. Rixus begins by agreeing that the shepherd's life has its merits. Whatever advantages it offers, however,

are ultimately subsumed in the forester's existence, a life which synthesizes and improves upon the shepherd's.

According to Rixus, the woodsman combines the shepherd's life of contemplation with a "gallant sort of activity" (29). He uses the example of the "hurtless trees"--an appropriate vegetative symbol for the holiday--to clarify the woodsman's nature. The trees' unimpeded growth symbolizes Sidney's vision of the personal and political freedom available to a courtier under ideal circumstances. Rixus says that the trees grow upwards without disturbing their fellows, only "enviously troubl[ing]" those who are "crookedly bent" (29). The analogy Rixus draws between foresters and trees may have been an attempt on Sidney's part to lay Elizabeth's fears to rest. Sidney assures the Queen that his model courtier will not pose a threat to her pawns, unless they purposely interfere with him.

Rixus also says that foresters no longer expect preferment: "We have no hopes, but we may quickly go about them, and going about them, we soon obtain them" (29). Unlike the pack of courtiers who slavishly pursue the favours of the Queen--"those who have long followed one most excellent chase"--the foresters are able to act. Sidney's portrait of individuals engaged in a futile hunt echoes Petrarch's poem about the man who has "strayed from every task" to capture an elusive white doe (Petrarch 246). Sidney emphasizes the uselessness of the pursuit and depicts the almost flirtatious quality of the deer, who, "if she stayed at any time near her pursuers, it was never meant to tarry with them, but only to take breath to fly further from them": a rather blunt allusion to Elizabeth's parsimonious distribution of favours.

Following the debate between Dorcas and Rixus, the Lady of May asks Elizabeth to choose, warning her that in

"judging me, you judge more than me in it." This grave statement acts as a reminder to Elizabeth, and to the audience as a whole, of the importance of the decision. Sidney structures the entertainment in such a way as to force the Queen "to make a statement about her own values" (Berry 12). In a sense, it is Sidney himself who is on trial. Elizabeth's decision would affect the course of his life.

Critics have noted that writers of court entertainments engage in what comes "very close to an exercise in sympathetic magic" (Wilson 9). In these court entertainments, the border between art and life is blurry from the start; "distinctions between life and art, the stage and the world, which are obvious for our epoch, were not altogether settled for Elizabethans" (Barber 36).

In The Lady of May, Sidney tries to persuade the Queen to sanction a more assertive type of courtier. From the beginning of her reign, Elizabeth understood the importance of the public entertainment "for the purpose of popular propaganda," and she displayed an "adeptness at theatrical extemporization to serve that purpose" (Wilson 7). The Queen's decision, made within the confines of Sidney's dramatic illusion, would have been applicable in the real world.

In keeping with her conservative nature, and despite the festive occasion, "it pleased her Majesty to judge that Espilus did the better deserve her [the Lady of May]" (30). Her Highness knew perfectly well what Sidney desired, but she was in no mood to license his rebellious dreams--May Day celebration or no. In crushing his hopes for acceptance on his terms, Elizabeth short-circuited the long-awaited release of tensions, blocking Sidney's effort to effect a transformation--his complete identification with the forester type.

From the bungling of the songs at the end--songs which were composed with the triumph of the forester in mind--we know that Sidney did not expect rejection. However, Espilus dutifully sang what should have been Therion's celebratory speech--a ditty recounting the success of the forest god, Silvanus, in love--while Therion sang a song which dealt with the defeat of Pan, god of the shepherds.

Elizabeth's seemingly prudish decision was actually a wise choice when viewed from the broader, social perspective. She had to govern a factious realm, divided by religion. In this light, her selection of the shepherd was politically shrewd, and it was also dramatically appropriate.

Typically, festive comedy ends in the "return of a repressive order characterized by a wise and tolerant acceptance of individual waywardness" (Bristol 32). The larger order is restored at the cost of personal fulfillment. Willingly or unwillingly, the energy of individual desire is redirected back "toward the necessary imperatives of social order" (Bristol 32).

The effect of Elizabeth's decision was twofold. On the one hand, it reestablished her power and supremacy. Sidney never again left his public discourses involving Elizabeth open-ended. In the entertainment, The Triumph of The Fortress of Perfect Beauty, which he most likely had a hand in writing three years after The Lady of May, the outcome--the Queen's unassailable power and virtue--is written into the script. Sidney learned to plan for failure.

On the other hand, Elizabeth's choice prolonged Sidney's frustration with the court and drove his anger further underground. We have the Queen to thank for drawing out Sidney's anxiety, providing him with a chronic

need to seek the release only afforded by fiction. He proceeded to write rebellious compositions, not for public consumption, but for the amusement of a group of sympathetic family and friends. In these private works, the same themes reassert themselves. He continues to depict young male heroes who "seek to justify their desire for amorous or political action of a type not allowed by social conventions" (Ferguson 137).

If anything, Sidney's desire to express his values and opinions increased. However, in his attempts to persuade the Queen of their validity, he was as successful as the bumbling schoolmaster, Rombus. Sidney's inability to convince the Queen to follow his suggestions prompted him to examine his rhetorical method, and the nature of communication in general. In the following chapter on the Old Arcadia, I will discuss the ways in which Sidney addresses the problem of offering counsel. In the Old Arcadia, Sidney analyses the process of communication, and suggests why attempts at communication often fail.

Chapter Three: The Old Arcadia

The Old Arcadia, like The Lady of May, is set within a pastoral landscape. The story begins when Arcadia's ruler, Basilius, acts contrary to his adviser Philanax's counsel. He decides to retire himself, his wife Gynecia, and his two daughters, Philoclea and Pamela to a secluded place in an attempt to escape a frightening oracular pronouncement. In the meantime, two young princes, Pyrocles and his cousin Musidorus, arrive in Arcadia and fall in love with the unfortunate princesses. In order to gain access to the girls, the heroes don disguises and the festive masquerading begins: Pyrocles becomes the beautiful Cleophila and Musidorus is transformed into the shepherd Dorus.

Complications arise when the duke and duchess are also stricken with Cleophila's charms, and the counterfeit-courtesan must engage in some fancy footwork in order to avoid their amorous clutches. Similarly, Dorus must outwit Pamela's clownish keepers, the Dametas family. Just when it appears as if the princes have met with success (Pyrocles has bedded Philoclea, and Musidorus has run away with Pamela), events take a turn for the worse. Arcadia collapses in ruin as Basilius is found dead; Gynecia claims responsibility; Pyrocles is caught in Philoclea's chambers; and Musidorus is arrested in mid-flight with Pamela.

The stunned Arcadians call upon the foreign king Euarchus (who is actually Pyrocles's father), to try the guilty parties. Even when their kinship ties are revealed, Euarchus insists on enforcing his judgement, decreeing that Gynecia should be buried alive and his son and nephew should be put to death. Happily Basilius, who was not dead, but only sleeping off the effects of a potion,

awakens in time to reverse the sentence. The princes are married off to the princesses and presumably everyone lives happily ever after.

The composition of the Old Arcadia spanned a period of three years, from the latter part of 1577 to the latter part of 1580 (Ringler 365). In his dedication, Sidney writes that the work was done in the presence of his sister, the Countess of Pembroke. Sidney visited his sister in August, September, and December of 1577, but probably finished the work during his long visit from March to August of 1580. In any case, Sidney composed the court entertainment while he was writing the Old Arcadia. As a result, the two works have much in common. For our purposes, the Old Arcadia provides a natural progression from the investigation of The Lady of May.

Sidney's interest in rebellious heroes and festive misrule persists in the pastoral romance. In the court entertainment, Therion's unruly behaviour was overlooked because of the season. In the Old Arcadia, the princes' disguises exploit the "licence and liberty" that masquerading invites (Castiglione 119).

Another similarity between the two works lies in their mutual reliance on the pastoral tradition. Characters introduced in the Lady of May reappear in the eclogue sections of the Old Arcadia. The topics of freedom and wealth, debated by the Lady of May's suitors, recur almost verbatim in the first eclogues.¹

¹ In the first eclogues (OA 52), Dorus repeats Therion's witty barb: "The highest note comes oft from basest mind,/ As shallow brooks do yield the greatest sound" (LM 26). Both suitors also profess a lack of wealth. Compare Dorus's statements (OA 55) with Therion's (LM 26).

In the Old Arcadia, as in his court entertainment, Sidney does not depict the pastoral world as a place where people can escape from the problems of the world. Arcadia is not sealed off from everyday cares. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Sidney was suspicious of individuals seeking "an easy, carefree existence" (Lindenbaum 17). In his portrait of Arcadia's ruler, Sidney shows the folly of trying to avoid the responsibilities of the real world. Basilius's retreat into the pastoral realm brings misfortune to his entire kingdom.

Very likely, Sidney chose to use the pastoral mode a second time because the genre continued to afford a means of exploring and throwing into question issues that could not be raised otherwise. Under the cover of pretty tales about sheep and shepherds in The Lady of May, Sidney unsuccessfully tried to persuade Elizabeth to consider the value of a more independently-minded courtier. In the Old Arcadia Sidney focuses on the reasons why eloquent persuasion often fails, tracing the problem to its source: human nature.

Within his pastoral romance, Sidney lays bare the stumbling blocks which impair sound judgement and destabilize more idealistic notions of communication. According to the author, human beings are divided by nature. Both the ability to think rationally and the capacity to experience the passions are constitutive of human nature. However, the passions--specifically the emotions of pity, compassion, and love--impede the ability to reason. Once people's reason is destabilized, their perception of the world and their circumstances becomes distorted, and their actions, which are normally suited to these circumstances, are no longer rational.

Sidney demonstrates that people who are driven by passion ignore or reject information which contradicts

their perceptions or is critical of their actions. Individuals deal with criticism in this way because they do not recognize that their behaviour is inappropriate, or because they know that the criticism, if heeded, would necessitate abandoning a course of action that excites and promises the fulfillment of some desire. Emotions paralyze people's ability to determine the soundness of their actions. Any judgement individuals make when driven by the passions is partial, and this is true whether they judge themselves or another person.

The reader is afforded an opportunity to evaluate the behaviour of characters from all walks of life who succumb to their emotions and encounter the difficulties outlined above. Kings, queens, princes, princesses, royal advisors, rebels and rustic clowns are carried away by passion and are simultaneously involved in attempts to communicate, to persuade, and to convince--activities assumed to be governed by reason. The author juxtaposes the experiences of each group so that the conduct of one party acts as a parodic mirror for another. Much of the fiction's humour springs from the repetition of patterns of behaviour. For example, Basilius's disregard for the welfare of his kingdom is duplicated by the heedlessness of a lovesick prince.

Sidney's interest in communication may be partially rooted in the widespread humanist concern for language and its relationship to the truth. His upbringing certainly enhanced the subject's appeal. The first letter he received from his father when he was a young boy away at school stresses the need for control and self-awareness with regard to speech:

Think upon every word that you will speak
before you utter it, and remember how nature
hath ramparted up, as it were, the tongue with
teeth, lips--yea, and hair without the lips,

and all betokening reins and bridles for the loose use of that member.

(Osborn 13)

Knowing when to hold forth and when to hold one's tongue was crucial for a potential statesman. Throughout his university career, Sidney honed his rhetorical skills in compulsory debates.

His fascination for the art of persuasion pervades The Lady of May, a work which, like the Old Arcadia, draws on the debate structure. Sidney's concern for communication is also manifest in portrayals of a certain type of character. The author populates the court entertainment with fools who love the sound of their own voice and who abuse the logical and rhetorical structures at the disposal of the humanist scholar. These chatterers show total disregard for Sir Henry Sidney's advice. With the ostensible aim of clarifying the situation, characters like Lalus and Rombus prattle, never stopping to reflect on their discourse or its reception. Under the guise of these bumbler, Sidney engages in literary misrule, poking fun at his own vocation as an advisor to the Queen.

The topic of judgement and justice was also of concern to humanists. Sidney's close friend Languet encouraged him to take up a consideration of "that branch of moral philosophy which treats of justice and injustice" (Pears 26).

Possibly in the course of his examination of moral philosophy, Sidney realized that the ability to judge and the notion of justice rest on the capacity to communicate. In order to judge ourselves or another person we must be able to both offer and receive information. In the Old Arcadia, the writer demonstrates that the passions obstruct rational communication. Given the divided nature of human beings, it would seem that earthly justice is unattainable.

Sidney's interest in persuasion and the issues of justice and injustice was not solely the result of his humanist education. Rather, his curiosity was borne of a confluence of education and personal experience. In this chapter I will be examining the issue of communication and its effect upon judgement and justice as outlined in the Old Arcadia. I will show how Sidney's treatment of these issues owes something to the difficulties he experienced as Elizabeth's courtier.

Like most of the Queen's courtiers, Sidney ran into problems with his sovereign--problems which laid bare flaws in the mechanisms of communication in the court. The years 1579/80 were the most frustrating period for him as an aspiring politician. Contrary to the Queen's desires, he spoke out directly on several occasions. His presumption lost him the opportunity to play the role of the active statesman that he and his supporters had so greatly anticipated, and he was restricted to watching state activities from the sidelines.

Sidney refused to remain an idle spectator; he was far too dedicated a statesman for that. Banished from the court, he occupied himself with literary pursuits. Neil Rudenstine has documented parallels between speeches in the Old Arcadia and conversations recorded in the correspondence between Sidney and Languet,² confirming that Sidney carried his moral and political concerns into the creation of his fiction: "the shape of the works derives from that of the life, and the questions raised by the life become those of the works" (Helgerson 131).

²Refer to Rudenstine's chapter "The Letters and the Old Arcadia," in Sidney's Poetic Development (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1967) 16-23.

The Old Arcadia mirrors difficulties Sidney encountered in his career, particularly with respect to communication. When advising the Queen, Sidney employed a direct approach, relaying his criticism of Elizabeth's policies directly and honestly. For example, in his "Letter to Elizabeth Touching her Marriage with Monsieur," Sidney begins, "I will in simple and direct terms...set down the overflowing of my mind."

The infamous letter, written to dissuade Elizabeth from marrying the French Duke, Alençon, earned him Elizabeth's outright hostility. Sidney's biographer, Malcolm Wallace, conjectures that Elizabeth had probably "never in the whole course of her reign received a letter comparable with this for boldness and frankness of speech" (Wallace 218).

Another attempt at a direct approach, his defense of his father's policies in Ireland, the Discourse on Irish Affairs, was equally ineffectual. Elizabeth, as discussed in the first chapter, recalled Sir Henry in 1578 despite his son's "special pleading," and he returned home "frail and beaten in spirit" in September (Osborn 499). If these enthusiastic, patriotic displays were not enough, Sidney had the audacity to quarrel with the Earl of Oxford, Elizabeth's favorite, and an advocate of the Alençon marriage. When the Queen rebuked him for his actions, Sidney plainly and directly expressed his opinion on the matter, outlining his reasons for his breach in decorum. Needless to say, he failed to persuade the Queen that his behaviour was called for. In each case, Sidney's method of direct communication failed to achieve his aims.

Despite these setbacks, Sidney's desire to advise the Queen and to articulate his opinion remained fixed. Barred from offering his counsel publicly, Sidney poured out his thoughts into his fiction. Essentially, he shifted from a

direct to an indirect approach. As Andrew Weiner puts it, "he did not forget those ideas...but rather tried to achieve them through another mode of endeavor" (Weiner 3).

In the letter to the Queen, Sidney asserts that he will set down the "overflowing of his mind." In the preface to the Old Arcadia he writes:

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.

While the same compulsion to speak is evident, the medium has altered. The urge to communicate the facts has changed to a compulsion to tell the tale. The nature of the discourse has shifted to accommodate the hostile reception of his thoughts.

Sidney may or may not have been writing solely for the pleasure of his sister and her friends, the coterie of "Dear Ladies" the narrator addresses throughout the work. There is some evidence to support the claim that he penned the Old Arcadia hoping that Elizabeth would chance to read the work. On the whole, however, it is doubtful that Sidney wrote specifically with this end in mind. He was not a powerful counsellor, and to imagine that the Queen would take note of allusions buried within his fiction seems far fetched. Yet, one cannot completely discount this possibility in the light of Sidney's attitude concerning the didactic function of literature.

Sidney believed that a message, which would be rejected if told directly, is often heeded when set out as a story. In his Apology, he states that admonitions are best communicated through poetry, claiming that this "medicine of cherries" will be consumed before the patient realizes what he has swallowed (114-5). Sidney cites the biblical example of Nathan the prophet. Nathan tells King

David the story about a man whose beloved lamb was taken from him. The distance provided by the fiction enables the King to recognize and judge the wickedness of his own adulterous behaviour.

Sidney also maintains that comedy is one of the most effective means of conveying criticism:

Comedy is an imitation of the common errors of our life, which he [the poet] representeth in the most ridiculous and scornfull sort that may be, so as it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one.

(Apology 117)

Again, he highlights the efficacy of indirect communication, within the genre of comedy, to relay a message that could not otherwise be communicated or received directly. For Sidney, the genres were not merely "ways of classifying various tropes and topoi, but ethical insights into experience, modes of moral vision and judgement" (Greenblatt 1973, 273).

In the light of what has been said regarding the efficacy of fiction to convey messages, it may seem strange that The Lady of May failed to persuade Elizabeth to recognize the value of a more assertive courtier. No amount of rhetorical flourish, social pressure, or seasonal aptness could make her choose the independently-minded, rebellious forester over the submissive shepherd. Although the entertainment falls under the category of fiction, and meets the requirements of indirect communication, it seems that the medicine was not sufficiently disguised. After all, the Queen's role in the performance was identical to her role in real life, and the shepherds and foresters were transparently courtier-figures. As a result, The Lady of May did not provide the necessary distance for Elizabeth to be able to accept criticism and view her policies objectively.

All of Sidney's attempts at direct counsel were unsuccessful in persuading Elizabeth to heed his advice, or worse, they earned him the Queen's disfavour. His friend Greville explains that, after the Alençon affair, Philip found the "sweet stream of sovereign humours in that well-tempered Lady to run against him" (Greville 63). Languet says a "sort of cloud" hung over his fortunes at this time (Pears 185). Sidney's decision to retire to Wilton, his sister's estate, and write the Old Arcadia was made in response to the difficulties he was experiencing at court. He was forced to wait for the royal tide of his sovereign's humours to turn, and he used the typical excuse of illness to absent himself politely from the court.³ Although he was banished, he did not renounce the belief that his counsel was just. Ironically, by retreating to the countryside to reflect on the situation, Sidney was patterning himself after the shepherds he describes in The Lady of May, men whose inability to capture royal favour prompt them to escape to pastoral settings where they lie under bushes and make their "woeful complaints."

Elizabeth's repeated rejections of his counsel raised doubts in Sidney's mind regarding the efficacy of the process of counselling one's sovereign. A letter written by Languet verifies Sidney's frustration:

If the advice which you offered, believing it to be good for England, was not received as it deserved, you must not therefore be angry with your country; for good citizens ought to pardon her every wrong...When Themistocles was proposing measures that

³ G.K. Hunter describes how many famous courtiers feigned illness in his book John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier, (London: Routledge, 1962) 151.

were salutary to his country,
 Eurybiades threatened to strike him if he
 did not hold his peace; to which he replied,
 'Strike, but hear.'

(Pears 185)

Languet encouraged Sidney to withstand Elizabeth's wrath and to persist in his efforts to communicate a valuable message to the Queen because his counsel still needed to be heard.

Sidney was in a difficult position. His whole life had been structured to enable him to achieve a single goal: to become an effective courtier. His father's first letter to him concludes with a blessing asking Almighty God "to make [him] a good servant to [his] prince and country" (Osborn 13). Sidney's friend, Languet, also groomed him for a career as a statesman. Yet it seemed that no matter how hard he tried--in fact, the harder he tried the worse off he was--Sidney could not achieve this goal. He seemed to think that all he had to do was to set out a rational argument and that his message would be accepted on these grounds. His "heart and his tongue went the same way" (Greville 39). But the Queen would not suffer criticism.

The Old Arcadia resonates with uncertainties regarding the potential for honest service in a "corrupt age." As in the court entertainment, Sidney once again questions his role as a courtier. In the pastoral romance, he takes a more profound stance, examining, not just the merits of various types of courtiers, but the strengths and weaknesses of human nature itself. Stephen Greenblatt rightly calls Sidney the "connoisseur of doubt" (Greenblatt 1973, 274), asserting that the Old Arcadia exposes "the instability and uncertainty of human judgement." Sidney doubts the usefulness of a rational faculty which so easily gives way to passion. He doubts

people's ability to perceive the world around them correctly. He doubts the soundness of the judgement which proceeds from the divided minds of human beings. He doubts that human justice is possible. Sidney, however, was not the only statesman to raise these concerns about the courtier's ability to counsel his sovereign.

Sir Thomas More also questions the process of advising royalty. In his Utopia, the character Raphael Nonsenso voices his disgust at the life of a courtier and scoffs openly at those who imagine that the king pays any attention to wise counsel. But Raphael's cynicism is countered by the optimism of the character named More. The author's vision of Utopia suggests that people are redeemable, and, if they would just behave according to the guidelines he sets out, things would take care of themselves. Sidney, on the other hand, raises doubts about the psychological make-up of mankind, and demonstrates that change is impossible given humanity's irrevocably divided condition. His skepticism regarding Elizabeth's questionable judgement surfaces in comic portrayals of royalty suffering from defective reasoning.

Sidney's imposed exile gave him the chance to reevaluate his relationship with Elizabeth, a sovereign who made it clear that she preferred flattery over wise counsel; if flattery was not possible, then silence was the next best thing. The Queen was renowned for her preference for adoration over sage advice (Hunter 150). On the subject of her toleration for diverse opinions, A.F Herr has written, "to speak freely before her was to displease her, for one of her few consistencies was her hatred of liberty of speech, especially if the speech concerned her" (Herr qtd. in Hunter 148).

Her Highness's aversion for liberal speech was exacerbated by the public's outrage which mounted as a

result of her prospective marriage to Alencon. Her brutal treatment of John Stubbs, author of "The Gaping Gulf," epitomizes the uncompromising stance she maintained in the face of critics, no matter how well-intentioned their remarks.⁴ John Neale writes that, "measured by the offense and the age, the sentence was not vicious, but it was certainly tactless and unmerciful" (Neale 243).

Elizabeth's desire to silence opposition drove her to implement even more forcible strategies. In January of 1581, the Commons responded to a bill from the Lords calling for the repression of any further public comment on the marriage question. The so-called Statute of Silence increased the penalty for seditious publication from "loss of the right hand to capital punishment" (Patterson 366). Sidney was not only a member of the Parliament at the time, but he actually sat on the Commons committee that amended the bill and "softened its rigor" (Patterson 336).

For Sidney, the notion of justice involved communication, as I have suggested earlier. In his chapter on justice, Sir Thomas Elyot writes that "in everything concerning a public weal no good counsellor be omitted or passed over, but that his reason therein be heard to an end" (238). Thus, according to Sidney and Elyot, justice is based on objective facts derived from reasonable arguments. Elizabeth's determination to repress counsel she found objectionable made justice unattainable.

It may seem strange to take up an examination of silencing in a chapter which purports to be concerned with

⁴Stubbs seems to have been fervently loyal to Elizabeth. As soon as his right hand was cut off, he "put off his hat with his left and cried aloud 'God save the Queen'" (Lee qtd. in Sinfield 1985, 259).

communication and justice. But unless we appreciate the fierce repression of speech in Tudor England, we will miss one of the essential concerns of the Old Arcadia, a work which locates power and the abuse of power at the level of communication, and clothes the painful futility of advising one's sovereign in comedy. An awareness of Elizabeth's treatment of overly-zealous critics enables us to comprehend what initially appear to be disjointed references to silencing throughout Sidney's works. We will begin by examining references to silencing within the pastoral eclogues of the Old Arcadia.

Pastoral literature was traditionally used to treat subjects that required some sort of disguise in order to be discussed. Sidney acknowledges the covert function of the genre in his Apology for Poetry:

Is the poor pipe disdained, which sometimes
out of Meliboeus' mouth can show the misery of
people under hard lords or ravening soldiers?
And again, by Tityrus, what blessedness is
derived to them that lie lowest from the
goodness of them that sit highest; sometimes,
under the pretty tales of wolves and sheep,
can include the whole considerations of wrong-
doing and patience.

(Apology 116)

In making use of the pastoral genre, Sidney was drawing on the same technique the prophet Nathan used to direct King David's attention to "wrong-doing."

Within the Old Arcadia, similar reasons are offered to account for the shepherds' delight in eclogues:

Sometimes they would contend for a prize
of well singing, sometimes lament the
unhappy pursuit of their affections.
Sometimes, again, under hidden forms
utter such matters as otherwise were
not fit for their delivery. [underlining
mine]

(50)

Central to our reading of the Old Arcadia, where disguise and trickery abound, is an awareness that things are not always what they seem. The narrator explicitly says that the "estate is not always to be rejected, since under that veil there may be hidden things to be esteemed" (93). Thus, in situations where it is dangerous to speak outright, one can resort to conveying one's message indirectly.

I am not promoting the idea that the work is a political or biographical allegory, or that if we are clever readers we can make out a one to one correspondence between fictive events in the work and events which are historically based. However, issues pertinent to Sidney's life surface in the pastoral eclogues, and an awareness of the author's situation can aid us in clarifying complicated allusions.

In the First Eclogues the notion of silencing is flagged when the old shepherd Geron chastises the overly-zealous Mastix for offering too hasty criticism of the behaviour of shepherds. Warning him of the fate of vociferous critics, Geron recites the fable of the silencing of the swan:

Let swan's example sicker serve for thee,
Who once all birds in sweetly singing passed,
But now to silence turned his minstrelsy.
For he would sing, but others were defaced.

(70)

Sidney's editor, Katherine Duncan-Jones, confirms that Sidney was not drawing on any particular mythical reference for this story: "this fable, explaining the swan's muteness by its former biting tongue, appears to be Sidney's invention" (373). Moreover, according to John Buxton, author of Sir Philip Sidney and the English Renaissance, Sidney's French admirers "made play with the similarity of sound between Sidney and Cygne, and made

puns about Swans" (106). In the light of these two pieces of information, we can conjecture that the fable may relate to Sidney's experience at court. Geron continues:

Of all the birds, but namely those were grieved,
Of fowls there called was a parliament.
There was the swan of dignity deprived,
And statute made he never should have voice,
Since when, I think, he hath in silence lived.

Annabel Patterson links the fable to the Statute of Silence I discussed earlier (Patterson 14). Whether Sidney consciously refers to this particular historical event is unimportant. What is of concern is the theme of silencing and repression, which provides the subtext for many of these enigmatic tales of sheep and shepherds.

The repressiveness of the court is targeted more overtly, and perhaps more conventionally, in the singing match between Dorus and Cleophila. Dorus commends the pastoral existence over life at court:

Then do I think, indeed, better it is to be private
In sorrow's torments than, tied to the pomps of a
palace,
Nurse inward maladies, which have not scope to be
breathed out,
But perforce digest all bitter juices off horror
In silence, from a man's own self with company
robbed.
Better yet do I live, that though my thoughts I be
plunged
Into my life's bondage, yet may disburden a passion
(Oppressed with ruinous conceits) by the help of any
outcry:
Not limited to a whisp'ring note, the lament of a
courtier.
(76)

The shepherd's invective may simply be a reiteration of the commonplace arguments in favor of the pastoral otium. The argument takes on added significance in the light of the repeated references to silencing within the work.

In the Second Eclogues, the topic of silencing is raised again. Dicus compels Dorus to sing of his love, taunting him:

Silence doth seem the mask of base oppression
 Who glories in his love doth make love glorious:
 But who doth fear, or bideth muett wilfully,
 Shows guilty heart doth deem his state opprobrious.

(121)

In the course of his response, Dorus informs us that his mistress is angry with him: "Is she in rage? So is the sun in summer hot" (122). He also asserts that for all the misfortune which has befallen him, he does not regret arousing her temper:

Thus then (I say) my mischiefs have contributed
 A greater good by her divine reflection;
 My harms to me, my bliss to her attributed.
 Thus she is framed: her eyes are my direction;
 Her love my life; her anger my instruction.

(122)

The curious aspect of this song is that the detail about the mistress's anger does not mesh with the events which have taken place in the work. According to the narrative, Dorus has been successful in love. In the preceding book, he informs Pamela of his true estate and all but convinces her to run away with him. Thus, the poem's description of an irate mistress bears no resemblance to the princess.

One can make sense of this discrepancy by offering a variety of explanations. Perhaps Sidney did not write the eclogues and the narrative at the same time; hence, some of the details concerning the plot do not match up. Perhaps Dorus is imagining a hypothetical case, describing how he would feel if Pamela were to become angry with him. But the fact remains that Dorus describes or imagines a situation which involves an angry mistress and a mute suitor. The presence of this dynamic in the fiction may reflect Sidney's impulse to explore the nature of his difficulties with Elizabeth.

Silence and repression, or more specifically tyranny, are the central concerns of Sidney's Ister Bank poem, located within the Third Eclogues. Jan Van Dorsten calls this Sidney's "most autobiographical poem" (237). The mysterious Philisides, generally accepted to be Sidney's persona (Ringler 418), sings this bleak song in the midst of a gay, pastoral wedding scene.⁵ Philisides says he learned the song from his mentor Languet. Life and fiction intersect.

The song is a beast-fable describing what happened when the animals chose man as their king. The topic falls squarely within the parameters of the pastoral genre, being a story about the "misery of people under hard lords" (Apology 50). According to the song, every animal gave the king one of its characteristic attributes. The chief privilege involved the power to speak: "from thenceforth to all eternity/ No beast should freely speak, but only he" (224). The situation in the fable mirrors the circumstances in Tudor England, where the privilege of free speech was reserved for the Queen.

Soon the sovereign slides into utter viciousness, creating factions among the animals and killing the weaker ones for the pleasures of "glutton taste" and "sport." The climax of the song occurs when Philisides implores the kings not to "swell in tyranny," reminding them "Thou art of blood; joy not to make things bleed./ Thou fearest death; think they are loath to die." The advice Philisides gives to the beasts is far more ambiguous: "in patience

⁵ Van Dorsten feels that the timing of this song "invites an association with Alençon's wooing during these months." See his article, "Recollections: Sidney's Ister Bank Poem," Danish Quarterly Review 15 (1985) 237.

bide your hell/ Or know your strengths and then you shall do well" (225).

Although they admire the singing, the other shepherds cannot understand the import of Philisides's fable. Geron, who held a grudge against Philisides because the latter rudely rejected his advice, intimates that Philisides cannot fathom his own meaning: "this is the right conceit of young men who think then they speak wiseliest when they cannot understand themselves" (226).

As Annabel Patterson points out, Philisides's beast-fable is "clearly not the appeal of an early ecologist" (Patterson 16). He is treating the relationship between kings and their subjects allegorically, illustrating the abuses perpetrated by monarchs. Patterson, whose argument reflects her belief that the work was aimed at Elizabeth, notes that obscurity is one of the hazards of disguising criticism in pretty tales:

If [Sidney] chose to write in a pastoral form because in Elizabeth's culture that form was privileged and so might get access to the Queen where direct address had failed, he ran the danger that she would choose to read it, if at all, only as a pastime, as entertainment. If he chose covert discourse because ambiguity gave him some protection, he ran the risk of going safe but unheard or misinterpreted. The hermeneutics of censorship create their own paradoxes.

(Patterson 19)

While Patterson proposes the impossibility of solving the paradox, I would argue that Philisides's counsel to the animals offers two mutually compatible solutions to the problem of living under a tyrant.

The beasts have two options available to them. The first option entails suffering patiently. In his chapter on justice, Sir Thomas Elyot cites patience as a chief virtue to maintain in dealing with tyrants. Sidney was likely influenced by Elyot's treatise, and he may have had

Elyot's example of patience in mind when he composed Philisides's beast-fable. Elyot mentions the example of the philosopher Zeno Eleates who was forced to draw upon all of his reserves of patience to persuade the most "cruel tyrant of all the world, Phalaris, to temperance" (Elyot 190). Philisides's comment to the beasts regarding patience may have been a cryptic allusion to Elyot's depiction of Zeno.

The autobiographical nature of the fable leads me to speculate that Sidney used his fiction to examine his own situation with regard to Elizabeth, and to evaluate his options. Patience was certainly an alternative open to him in the face of the difficulties he was experiencing at court. He could have continued to bide his time mutely at Wilton, suffering what he considered to be the Queen's injustice.

The second suggestion Philisides offers is that of knowing one's strengths. Again, Sidney may have been recalling Elyot's discussion on justice. Elyot postulates that justice rests on three principles: reason, society and knowledge [underlining mine]. Reason implies doing unto others as you would have them do unto you. Society similarly involves loving one's neighbour as oneself, while knowledge entails self-knowledge. In his Apology for Poetry, Sidney claims that knowledge of a man's self is the "highest end of the mistress-knowledge" (104).

A ruler who knows himself recognizes that what separates him from his subjects is merely a cloak or crown. Fundamentally he is made of the same corrupt stock: flesh and blood. The ruler, "in knowing the condition of his soul and body, knoweth himself, and consequently in the same thing he knoweth every other man" (Elyot 165). A sovereign who has acquired self-knowledge operates according to this principle of universal brotherhood, and

treats his subjects with compassion. Within the beast fable, Philisides enjoins the tyrant man to apply these principles of reason, society, and self-knowledge. He begs the kings to remember: "Thou art of blood; joy not to make things bleed./ Thou fearest death; think they are loath to die" (225).

Sidney seems to have chosen a course combining patience and self-knowledge for himself. He was not in a position to oppose his sovereign, no matter how tyrannical her judgements appeared. Contradicting the Queen would be considered treasonous. Martin Raitiere agrees with my sentiments, arguing that Sidney was not a "king-fighter." Raitiere also suggests that the use of the verb "know" in Philisides's advice to the beasts: "know your strengths and then you shall do well" is indicative of a passive, rather than active stance (Raitiere 69). Although the beast-fable refers to the monarchomach position held by some of his contemporaries, Sidney does not promote this position. Instead, he enjoins the beasts to choose (as he himself did), to investigate human nature--to know both the strengths and weakness of human beings.

Sidney's analysis, which is expressed fictionally in the Old Arcadia, conveys the idea that judgement and justice are bound up with communication. I have already argued that Sidney felt that communication was distorted by passion (I will expand on this theme in a moment). His study of human nature reveals that the supposedly rational human activities of offering counsel and passing judgement are actually governed by passion. Hence, knowing oneself implies recognizing that human justice is biased. For uncorrupted justice, one must look to God. Raitiere explains that this is why the beasts in Philisides's fable address their cries of agony, not to the tyrant, but to the sky; "a plaint of guiltless hurt doth pierce the sky"

(Raitiere 68). Like slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, they call upon God to witness their plight and judge their oppressor. Faith in divine justice lends one the strength to bear worldly injustices, and suggests why Philisides offers this as an alternative to biding one's hell.

Thus far, I have focused primarily on the ways in which the notions of silencing and repression surface within the eclogues. The fable of the swan locates the problem within the setting of the court. In the second example, Dorus commends the pastoral environment over the court on the grounds that a person who has left the court is not limited to the whispering lament of the courtier. Next, I turned to Dorus's description of his angry mistress, a dynamic which echoes Sidney's difficulties with the Queen. Finally, I examined Philisides's beast-fable, which outlines the two options available to the victims of tyrannical rulers. The tale indicates that justice is bound up with religious faith. In each case, the allusions to silencing seem to owe something to Sidney's own difficulties regarding the reception of his counsel at court. Tensions within his culture crystallize, producing enigmatic motifs within his art.

In the next section, I will analyse the narrative passages of the Old Arcadia, moving from an examination of silencing to a study of the problems involved in communication, and the implications these problems have for judgement and justice. Sidney's narrative reveals the discrepancy between human nature as he sees it and the humanist's ideal of the rational man.

Humanists such as Pico della Mirandola suggest that there is no obstacle preventing an individual from becoming "whatever he chooses...whatever he wills." In his "Oration on the Dignity of Man," Pico claims that humanity has the power to be "reborn" into the higher forms: if a

person is rational he or she "will grow into a heavenly being. If intellectual, he [or she] will be an angel and the son of God" (Pico 225). Sidney, whose humanism blended uneasily with Calvinism, believed that the nature of post-lapsarian humanity prevented individuals from ascending the Platonic ladder and standing among the angels.

The Old Arcadia dramatizes the fierce interplay between our "erected wit" and our "infected will" (Apology 101). The work depicts human intelligence afflicted by the emotions. Passions work via our fancy, or what moderns refer to as the imagination. Throughout the Old Arcadia, individuals overcome by passion construct pictures of reality in their minds. From these pictures, the individuals determines their course of action. The most potent of all the passions is love. In Arcadia all of the characters are made to experience this emotion:

Love had purposed to make in those
solitary woods a perfect demonstration
of his irresistible force, to show that
no desert place can avoid his dart. He must
fly from himself that will shun his evil.

(44)

Sidney was not the only one to discern that passion confounds justice. Sir Thomas Elyot writes that "nothing does so sharply assaileth a man's mind as doth carnal affection, called (by the followers thereof) love" (204). Both Sidney and Elyot realized that love provides the ultimate test for the rational or just individual.

After Musidorus is transformed by love into the shepherd Dorus, he describes the effects of carnal affection upon him, saying:

Such weight it has which once is full possessed
That I become a vision,
Which hath in other's head his only being
And lives in fancy's seeing.
O wretched state of man in self-division.

(56)

Typically, lovers claim that their existence depends upon the image their beloved has of them. Passion transports individuals from the rational world to the realm of the imagination--a solipsistic world of self-generated images. And so Dorus has become a vision, an imaginative fiction which exists in the mind of his beloved; if she does not think of him, he ceases to exist. Plato writes that "the soul of a man which by love is possessed dieth in his own body, and liveth in another" (Plato qtd. in Elyot 204). Rationally this is nonsense. But Sidney's point is that human beings are not rational creatures. The pathos and humour of the Old Arcadia spring from passion's capacity to divorce us from our reason.

Robert Stillman asserts that the Old Arcadia offers a "critique of the dangers of the imagination" (Stillman 1984, 1). From Dorus's assertion above, one realizes that the power of the imagination rests in its ability to fabricate images--images which include visions of one's beloved as well as conceptions of the world. The mind can easily breed a plethora of fancies which do not correspond to reality. The danger lies in the fact that fancies are often more compelling than an accurate perception of reality, and false images are credited to be true.

Sidney's work is highly self-reflexive and self-critical. In alerting us to the dangers of the imagination, Sidney calls his own fictions into question. In the preface to the Old Arcadia, Sidney admits that the work springs from the "many many fancies" which were in his head (3). In acknowledging his susceptibility to fancies, Sidney implicates himself, as author, in the human condition.

Michel Foucault writes that madness begins where the relation of individuals to the truth is disturbed or

darkened (Foucault 104). He outlines both a physical truth, which relates to the "accurate relation of our sensations with physical objects," and a moral truth, which consists of the "exactitude of the relations we discern either between moral objects, or between those objects and ourselves" (Foucault 105).

Sidney proves that humanity's relationship to the truth is chronically obscured. In his pastoral romance, the characters' minds are constantly preyed upon by passions which are likened to diseases. Love is "a cup of poison deeply tasted" by all of the protagonists (80). The narrator repeatedly refers to the characters as "weak vessels,"⁶ and even Philoclea, the apple of the narrator's eye, is tainted by earthly corruption. She too is afflicted by her emotions and experiences the contradictions common to those who "neither absolutely embrace goodness nor freely yield to evil" (106). Sir Francis Bacon similarly views passion as a weakness, linking strong passions to madness: "every passion is a short frenzy and if it be vehement, lasting, and take deep root, it terminates in madness" (Bacon 136).

The entire cast of characters in the Old Arcadia suffers from an array of disturbances springing from their imaginations. It is clearly irrational behaviour resulting from fancies that sets the plot in motion. Basilius's passionate faith in superstition prompts him to reject Philanax's wise advice and to abandon his kingdom. Throughout the work superstitious beliefs are mocked. Dametas, Pamela's cowardly guardian, has a similar faith

⁶Basilius is referred to as a "weak vessel" p. 41; Musidorus, p. 89; Mopsa, p. 169.

in omens.⁷ The knave's superstition makes the duke's credence in the oracular pronouncement seem all the more foolish, since the only two people who believe in omens and oracles are the duke and Dametas. Basilius even misinterprets the oracular pronouncement, construing its meaning to suit his own distorted perceptions. At one point, he mistakenly believes the prophecy to have been fulfilled and he thanks Apollo for clearing his "inward sight" (117), which remains as dim as ever.

The strength of Basilius's passionate belief in the Delphic oracle prevents his counsellor Philanax from penetrating the mists of his ruler's delusion. As I mentioned earlier, Sidney indicates how people driven by passion ignore or reject advice which contradicts their own fanciful beliefs. This dynamic is at work when communication between the duke and his advisor goes awry. Basilius fears the future. He imagines impending disaster, as foretold by the Delphic oracle. Completely impervious to his Philanax's arguments, Basilius seeks only "confirmation for his fancies." Fancies take the place of sound arguments and reason: a picture of reality is taken for reality itself. When Basilius proceeds to make his "will his wisdom" (8), essentially, his "erected wit" is toppled by his "infected will."

Philanax's discussion with Basilius echoes Sidney's "Letter to the Queen." As far as Philanax is concerned, there is no need for Basilius to alter his method of government: "why should you now seek new courses, since your own example comforts you to continue on...why should

⁷ Dametas recalls the evil portents which prophesied misfortune, p. 236; and on p. 244, he makes circles against devils, 244.

you deprive yourself of governing your dukedom for fear of losing your dukedom?" (7). Philanax suggests that nothing has altered within Basilius's kingdom to call for drastic changes, such as the duke's proposal to abandon his realm. Basilius argues that "to give place to blows is thought no small wisdom." Philanax responds, "but to give place before they come takes away the occasion, when they come, to give place" (8). Philanax bases his argument on the virtues of constancy and the folly of giving credence to the imagination and fear of the future.

This is precisely Sidney's argument in his "Letter to Elizabeth." Like Basilius, the Queen's reasons for wanting to marry are based on her fear: "the fear of standing alone in respect of foreign dealings" (MP 51). Sidney (like Philanax) tries to persuade his ruler not to alter her style of government, and, like his fictional counter-part, Sidney also advocates a course of constancy.

Throughout the letter, Sidney stresses that the fears prompting Elizabeth to marry are purely imaginary: "you imagine two natural causes thereof, and two effects you think you find thereof" [underlining mine] (MP 53). Sidney claims that, if the Queen had not prophesied her subjects' "contempt" or problems with foreign powers, they would never have "come to the possibility of my [Sidney's] imagination" (MP 53). Sidney stresses that her fears are irrational: "fear hath as little show of reasonable cause to match you [Elizabeth and Alençon] together" (MP 52); "that uncertain good should bring contempt to certain good, I think it is beyond all reach of reason" (MP 54). Elizabeth, like Basilius, is ready to give place to imaginary blows.

The correspondence between Philanax's advice and Sidney's "Letter to Elizabeth" indicates that, once again, tensions within the author's life surface in his fiction.

In debunking Basilius and his superstitious faith, Sidney mocks the insubstantial foundation upon which royal judgements are based. His portrayal of the foolish duke, and the duke's treatment of Philanax, may well be a response to the Queen's unjust rejection of his own advice. As I argued in the previous chapter, Sidney's frustration was often relieved through comedy.

For Sidney, however, writing offered more than an outlet for rebellious impulses. Fiction was also a tool for effecting social and political criticism. I mentioned above that, for Sidney, comedy provided "an imitation of the common errors of our life." Individuals witnessing their own actions humorously portrayed would find it impossible to continue behaving foolishly (Apology 117). Readers are not encouraged merely to laugh at Basilius. They are to learn from his mistakes.

Throughout the work, Basilius is constantly tripped up by the workings of his imagination. His decision to hire Dametas as principal herdsman and guardian of the princess Pamela results from his fanciful interpretation of the shepherd's communication. The duke takes Dametas's "rudeness" for "plainness of speech" (28), and he completely misinterprets Dametas's character: his "silence grew wit, his bluntness integrity, his beastly ignorance virtuous simplicity." Dametas wins royal favour because he is a "flattering courtier." This statement may be a reference to Elizabeth. The Queen's method for selecting her courtiers was rather dubious--it is rumoured that Christopher Hatton danced his way into her heart.

The Arcadian duke is so tangled in the web of his imagination that, until his resurrection at the end of the story, he is blind to the infection which clouds his reason. When Cleophila takes advantage of his delusions to trick him into meeting his wife in the cave, Basilius is

so mired in the froth of his imagination that he believes he has made love to Cleophila. His wife can only marvel at this paralysis of the powers of reason, seeing in her husband "how much fancy doth not only darken reason but beguile sense" (239).

Basilus is not the only character who suffers from a dangerously hyper-active imagination. Immediately after the failed attempt at communication between Philanax and Basilus, a debate between Pyrocles and Musidorus ensues. Structurally this suggests a connection between the two counselling sessions. In effect, both conversations show the obstacles impeding communication and the deleterious effect passion has on one's faculty of reason.

Pyrocles, like Basilus, is bent on pursuing his desires. He has fallen head-over-heels in love with Philoclea after seeing her portrait, and he is oblivious to his cousin's sage advice. In contrast to Pyrocles, Musidorus (akin to Philanax) clings to reason and remains emotionally aloof. Mystified by his cousin's desire to prolong their stay in Arcadia and his sudden preference for solitariness, Musidorus announces: "I have marked in you... a relenting, truly, and slacking of the main career you had so notably begun and almost performed" (12).⁸

Not only does his passion for the duke's youngest daughter cause Pyrocles to stray from the path of heroic action, but it also entices him to lie. Pyrocles's conduct provides us with another example of the irrational behaviour characteristic of an individual driven by

⁸Evidence suggests that Sidney was drawing on his personal experience in writing this debate. Musidorus's statements echo Sidney's friends' concerns regarding his prolonged retirement as relayed by Languet. See Pears 183.

passion. In defending himself against Musidorus's accusations, Pyrocles offers a series of mendacious counter-arguments. He accuses his cousin of distorted perception, claiming that he has not succumbed to weakness at all, and it only seems that way because Musidorus has grown more virtuous of late. He defends his desire to remain in Arcadia on the grounds that individuals, no matter how rational, require certain periods for relaxation: the bow must sometimes be unbent or it will break (13).⁹

Pyrocles, "breathing out some part of his inward evil" (14)--his passion--admits that he has been stricken by Cupid. Musidorus tries to persuade him that he is driven by a passion which has become "a measure for other things, which never received measure in itself" (21). This is the danger of passion. One does not analyse the emotions which motivate one's conduct, one simply acts on impulse.

Musidorus's rational argument is abruptly cut off when he threatens to leave Pyrocles altogether. Upon hearing this, Pyrocles swoons. Instantly, Musidorus is overcome by pity for his friend and he promptly enlists as a willing accomplice in his cousin's plot to obtain Philoclea. In a split-second Musidorus's reasonable course of action and advice are over-turned. His reason has been effaced by a deluge of pity.

Passion disarms its victims before they have the chance to recognize the trap. During the heroes' conversation, the reader is reminded that the Pyrocles is

⁹Sidney made a similar comment to Languet in a letter, and also used the image of the bow. See Osborn, Young Sir Philip Sidney (New Haven: Yale UP, 1972) 147.

"more desirous of pity than pleading" (14). All along, his strategy for winning Musidorus over is based on an appeal to pity. After revealing his intention to masquerade as Cleophila, he announces, "I have told you all, have pity on me" (17). The reader soon realizes that pity--a relative of that dangerous passion, love--anesthetizes reason. Sir Francis Bacon notes the role imagination plays in sabotaging the reason by means of passionate persuasion:

the imagination has a considerable sway in persuasion, insinuated by the power of eloquence: for when the mind is soothed, enraged, or any way drawn aside by the artifice of speech, all this is done by raising the imagination; which, now grown unruly, not only insults over, but, in a manner, offers violence to reason, partly by blinding, partly by incensing it.

(Bacon 211)

Passion, together with the imagination, effaces reason. Bacon, like Foucault, argues that passion (which he views as a form of madness), blinds the reason. Sidney comically demonstrates how quickly reason is eclipsed by passion sparked by appeals to pity. In the encounter between Musidorus and Pyrocles, the floodgates of emotion are opened by a fainting trick.

Pyrocles overcomes Philoclea's rational arguments and seduces her in exactly the same manner. After spurning Philoclea and behaving as if he is attracted to her mother, Pyrocles tries to tell her the truth. He explains that he behaved coldly toward her and feigned affection for her mother to prevent the duchess from giving away his disguise. Philoclea remains unconvinced. She is rightly distrustful of this protean prince. In the face of her obstinate, "unjust condemnation" (206), Pyrocles falls down in a death-like faint by her bedside, moaning "Oh,

whom dost thou kill, Philoclea?" The swoon works every time; Philoclea's rational objections vanish.

The power of the imagination and the effect of pity are forcibly illustrated when Pyrocles first views Philoclea's portrait and learns of her confinement. He is instantly moved to pity, which gives way to love. Ronald Levao suspects that Pyrocles's confrontation with Philoclea's image is meant to parody the neo-Platonic icones symbolicae, "stimuli that supposedly provoked ever-widening speculation" (Levao 187). The ever-widening speculations the neo-Platonists had in mind were undoubtedly rational speculations. In Pyrocles's case, the visual image stimulates not the reason, but the imagination, and the prince is fired by the baser passion, lust.

Inherent in Sidney's treatment of the concept of the icones symbolicae is an attack on the conception of mankind which the theory promotes. Sidney treats the humanist's belief in peoples' capacity to "rise from bestial muddle to angelic clarity by embracing reason" (Hunter 141) with a great deal of skepticism. His characters' behaviour reinforces an awareness that human beings are divided creatures who cannot perceive anything without having the image affect their passionate nature; perception is never solely a rational activity free of emotional bias.

Passionate persuasion and appeals to pity are powerful, argumentative tools in the Old Arcadia--tools which stimulate the imagination. In his Apology, Sidney asserts that literature's greatest asset lies in its ability to excite the imagination and to compel us to virtuous action. In the Old Arcadia, however, poetry has a corrupting influence; it misfires, and even incites the wrong party to act: Dametas does not fall for Cleophila's

charms, while Basilius and Gynecia are captivated by them. The lofty, theoretical optimism of the Apology is humorously effaced by the events depicted in the pastoral romance. Artful persuasion and appeals to pity excite the imagination, but do not lead to virtuous action. They generate fancies which subvert reason, causing people to behave irrationally.

Thus far, we have limited our examination to the ways in which passion impedes rational communication and behaviour within the plot. Basilius's passionate belief in the oracle renders him deaf to his counsellor's advice. Pyrocles is overcome with pity for Philoclea. Musidorus shifts from a rational critic to an accomplice in crime because of the love he bears for Pyrocles. Lastly, pity or love, or a mixture of the two, silences Philoclea's objections regarding Pyrocles's inconstant behaviour.

Sidney does not restrict his demonstration of the effects of passion to the story. If this were the case, readers could still refuse to accept his message concerning human nature. They could assume that only in stories is communication distorted by emotion. Sidney structures his campaign to ensure that his audience will also fall prey to passion. Readers see for themselves how passion operates, paralysing reason and distorting judgement.

Before we go on to look at the narrative technique, I would like to take a moment to point out evidence of passionate persuasion within the preface. In his dedication, Sidney attempts to short-circuit his sister's criticism: "I hope, for the father's sake, it will be pardoned, perchance made much of, though in itself it have deformities. For indeed, for severer eyes it is not" (3). Thus, before we have even read the story, we are witnesses to this attempt to manipulate the Countess's emotions with

the aim of restricting her judgement. Sidney concludes the dedication by saying that he hopes his sister will "continue to love the writer who doth exceedingly love you." Although this is a charming, affectionate letter, the undertones of emotional blackmail are still palpable.¹⁰

As I mentioned earlier, the emotional arena in which pity operates is wider than the preface and the plot, far wider than we might first suspect. While the reader delights in the accounts of characters dazzled by fancies, the narrator sneaks up from behind, as it were, to work at the reader's sympathies.

Throughout the first half of the book, the narrator enjoins the reader to share in his affection for his favorite characters. He appeals to the emotions of his hypothetical audience of "Dear Ladies," in a bid to convince them to hold off judgement. The device of a fictional, receptive audience achieves the same effect as canned laughter on the sound-track of a t.v. show. The spokesperson's success in extracting the desired emotional response from his fictive audience considerably affects the actual reader's perceptions; both hypothetical and authentic listeners are drawn into the trap of sympathy.

The narrator makes us privy to the thoughts and feelings of his heroes and heroines, and pleads for sympathy on their behalf. His tender regard for Pyrocles is of such magnitude that when the prince decides to

¹⁰ A similar appeal to pity occurs in the Apology for Poetry where Sidney asks readers to bear with him if he handles the defense of his "unelected vocation" with more "good will then good reasons," claiming, "I have just cause to make a pittiful defence of poore Poetry" (Apology 96).

assume the disguise of the Amazon, the narrator compassionately refers to him as Cleophila (25). Any objections that might come from the reader are stamped out. The listener's support is taken for granted: "you fair ladies that vouchsafe to read this, I doubt not will account excusable." When Musidorus undergoes his transformation, becoming Dorus the shepherd, the narrator immediately refers to him as Dorus (46). After all, readers supposedly consented in the first instance, so why should the narrator trouble them any further?

Throughout the first half of the work, the narrator maintains a familiar and bantering tone, interrupting the tale frequently to address his coterie of dear ladies. Everyone is infected with the holiday spirit. Following the narrator's example, the reader forgives the heroes for their peccadilloes. We laugh along with the narrator, who, like a tour-guide bussing us through a foreign country, points out the charming natives and their ridiculous gestures.

By the time Pyrocles and Philoclea are united at the end of Book Three, we do not blink an eye. The reader happily acquiesces as the narrator tucks the pair into bed, breaking off the description lest his pen "might seem to grudge at the due bliss of these poor lovers" (211). Swept along by the current of emotion, the reader becomes an accomplice in the crimes of passion--we do not put the book down and exclaim, Why this is immoral! Instead, we tacitly approve of premarital sex in a kingdom where the punishment for this behaviour is death. The narrator withholds this information until after the fact, so that nothing will disturb our reverie as we follow the story.

In the second half of the book, the asides to the Dear Ladies vanish. From Book Four on, the spokesperson's friendly tone shifts to one of moralistic iciness. No

longer is the narrator sympathetic to his imperfect heroes. Instead of commiserating with his characters, as one equally guilty of the common faults of humanity, the narrator now peers down from a celestial height. The narrator relates events as if he were sitting beside God, the everlasting justice, who controls the destiny of human beings. Hovering over the heads of his earth-bound characters, the narrator proceeds to unravel God's plans. In the opening of Book Four, the narrator explains that providence has subverted Pyrocles's seduction of Philoclea, using Dametas to discover the pair in bed: "the everlasting justice...took Dametas...to be the instrument of revealing the secretest cunning" (230).

With the disappearance of the sympathetic narrator, readers are caught out, suddenly stranded in a country whose inhabitants are no longer depicted as charming. While readers cling to their emotionally charged visions of the heroes and their behaviour, the narrator challenges this sympathetic interpretation.

The reader's attitude toward Musidorus is substantially altered in the light of the narrator's newly-adopted perspective. The narrator explains that the rebels who catch Musidorus and Pamela (the moment Musidorus was about to ravish the princess), were "guided by the everlasting justice to be chastisers of Musidorus's broken vow" (266). The audience's opinion of Musidorus, as a heroic figure, is destabilized when the narrator gravely refers to Musidorus's slip as a "broken vow." Emotionally distanced, the spokesperson reviews the heroes' conduct and, to the reader's astonishment, sides with the everlasting justice in labelling their actions crimes.

Samuel Johnson warns authors against fashioning characters who are partially flawed because they will cause us "to lose the abhorrence of faults because they do

not hinder our pleasure," or worse, we may "regard them with some kindness for being united with so much merit" (Johnson as cited in Spacks). This is Sidney's master plan. All his characters are flawed. He sets out to demonstrate that we are passionate creatures whose perception and judgement are distorted by emotional bias. Human beings are not rational angels. They are a mixture of animal attributes and heavenly fire. Philisides makes this explicit in his beast-fable when he says that God lends man part of "his heav'nly fire," and informs the beasts "the rest yourselves must give" (225).

Sidney creates flawed characters and alternates the narrative's perspective to teach the reader a lesson. The act of reading the text becomes an exercise in gaining self-awareness. We come to recognize the imperfection of our reason. His heroes arouse our compassion so that we will lose sight of their faults until it is too late--until we can no longer step back and deny that had we been in their shoes, we would not have behaved in exactly the same way.

At first, passion seems innocent enough. Love is a comical and completely unavoidable infection. We delight in the festive misrule, cheering as the Arcadian landscape is turned upside-down and reason is abandoned. Princes are transformed into Amazons and shepherds, an old duke falls in love with a young man, and a dignified duchess is seized with passion, becoming the jealous rival of her youngest daughter for the affections of a youth young enough to be her son.

We continue to be amused as passion runs its course, celebrating the vital force that brings about such wondrous changes, compelling men and women to rush off to secluded spots to release their emotion in poetry. In the Lady of May the morally ambiguous figure Therion provides

the festive energy which destabilizes the complacent Espilus. The vacationing princes in Arcadia are equally impulsive. While readers may balk at the fierceness of a Therion and the havoc created by Pyrocles and Musidorus, they recognize the need for a reawakening of energy that has been blocked by the static constraints of the older generation.

The young princes take the decaying kingdom by storm, bringing change for good or ill. At one point, Cleophila, in a passionate reverie, scratches out doleful verses in the sand beside a stream. Our much-changed hero is surrounded by images which reinforce the protean quality of life. If human beings are not totally rational, as Sidney asserts, then change is humanity's lot. Events in the Old Arcadia bear this out, as people are carried hither and thither by storms of emotion.

Sidney, like most Elizabethans, was concerned with the notion of mutability. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he saw the need for flexibility. In a letter to his father, he writes:

So strangely and dyversely goes the course
of the worlde by the enterchanginge humors
of those that governe it, that though it be
most noble to have allweyes one mynde and one
constancy, yet can it not be allwaies directed
to one pointe; but must needes sometymes alter
his course, accordinge to the force of others
changes drivyes it.

(Feuillerat 122)

Sidney points out that the "enterchanginge humors" of those in power necessitate a certain plasticity. Languet also recognizes that if one is to survive at court, one has to be accommodating:

One who wishes to live free of scorn in the
courts...must govern his emotions, swallow many
vexations, very carefully avoid all motives of
controversy, and cultivate those men in whose hands
supreme power lies.

(Osborn 296)

In any discussion of Sidney's works, one has to take into account the author's evasiveness and irresolution. While he asserts the need for flexibility, given the inconstancy of earthly rulers, he still asserts the ideal virtue of constancy. This duality is mirrored in the Old Arcadia where the princes' protean transformations and clever schemes are at the same time viewed as both politic maneuvering and the worst sort of fraud and deceit.

As I mentioned earlier, during the first half of the book the discourse is framed by a narrator whose viewpoint is sympathetic. The judgement which proceeds from the spokesperson and the audience in his sway is softened by compassion. During the second half of the work, the story is mediated by the voice of omniscient reason and judgement. The change in tone is of such magnitude that it seems as if the former narrator disappears and God has taken his place. This shifting narrative technique serves Sidney's argument regarding the effect of passion upon communication and the inconstancy of earthly judgement. The reader experiences first hand the distortion of communication facilitated by affection.

Sir Thomas Elyot, in his chapter on justice, comments cynically on the way in which perception affects our judgement of behaviour, specifically of the kind perpetrated by Pyrocles and Musidorus:

That manner of injury which is done with fraud and deceit is at this present time so commonly practised, that if it be but a little it is called policy, and if it be much and with a visage of gravity, it is then named and accounted for wisdom.

(Elyot 168)

Elyot later explains that "of all injuries, that which is done by fraud is most horrible and detestable, not in the opinion of man only, but also in the sight and judgement

of God" (168). As we shall see, the punishment visited on Musidorus, Pyrocles, and the whole of Arcadia in the second half of the work is, in fact, meted out because fraudulent and deceitful behaviour is abominable in the eyes of God.

Pyrocles himself is only vaguely aware of the reprehensible nature of his actions, admitting, "when pity most I crave, I cruel prove" (100). When individuals are compelled by emotion and are rendered deaf to criticism, they run the risk of becoming dangerously wilful, perhaps even tyrannical. Stricken with love for Philoclea, Pyrocles confesses that his sole aim is the satisfaction of his desire (17). The narrator's web of affection initially prevents the reader from recognizing the implications of this pursuit. Only in the second half of the work, when the narrator abandons the sympathetic pose, do we become aware that passion has set the characters on a narcissistic quest, often injurious to others. Pyrocles's actions are nothing short of diabolical as he takes advantage of Gynecia, persuading her that he pities her when, in reality, he does not feel an ounce of compassion.

Of all the characters, Gynecia is the most tragic because she alone can discern the discrepancy between her inconstancy and the divine path of virtue. Yet she is incapable of extricating herself from the labyrinth of desire: "O imperfect proportion of reason, which can too much foresee, and so little prevent" (80). Though her will is enslaved by passion, "her judgement of good and evil remains clear" (Lewis 338). Our affection for Pyrocles pales in light of the duchess's all too palpable agony.

Musidorus's plan to outwit the Dametas family is comparable to Pyrocles's scheme for its comic inventiveness and underlying viciousness. Like Pyrocles,

Musidorus recognizes that everyone has a weakness, a chink in his or her rational armour; in the "particularities of everybody's mind and fortune there are particular advantages by which they are to be held" (163). To empty the household so he can kidnap Pamela, Musidorus first excites Dametas's innate greed and sends the fool off on a wild goose chase for buried treasure. Next, he stirs Dametas's wife Miso to a jealous fit, and she scampers off across the countryside. Finally, he plays on the gullibility of Dametas's daughter Mopsa, persuading her to sit muffled up in a tree top so that her wish will be granted by Apollo. In the end, Musidorus is partially responsible for the cruel punishment which befalls the idiotic family: they are "fettered up in as many chains and clogs as they could bear, and every third hour...cruelly whipped" (250). Once again Sidney draws our attention to our less-than-rational and less-than-just nature.

Throughout the work, even when the princes seem to be successful in their desires and the narrator is on their side, passion's darker side stalks the buoyant group.¹¹ Fancy's assault on reason is mirrored in actual attacks which take place with increasing frequency in Arcadia. In Book One, beasts suddenly charge out of the woods. Conveniently, there is one beast per prince and the animals refrain from attacking the duke or duchess. As if they are missiles locked on target, the animals make straight for the princesses. The link between the princes'

¹¹For a thorough discussion of the plot structure, in light of passion's negative effects, see Franco Marengo's article, "Double Plot in Sidney's Old Arcadia" in Modern Language Review 64 (1969): 248-263.

desires and the appearance of these ferocious creatures is initially tenuous, but becomes more visible as the work progresses.

The Phagonian rebellion interrupts the lovelorn complaints of Philisides and Gynecia in Book Two, again underscoring the chaotic nature of passion. In the third book, "a dozen clownish villains" (177) prevent Musidorus from raping Pamela. These beasts and rebels, who spring from nowhere at moments when passion reaches a peak, seem to be animated by the passions which have attacked the royal party. Sidney firmly establishes the connection between private passions and public events in the final book, stating that it is private passions which have generated civil war in Arcadia (305).

In order to maintain our affection for the heroes, so that readers can also learn what it means to be passionately persuaded, the narrator does not chastise the heroes' behaviour directly. In the case of Pyrocles's seduction of Philoclea, the impropriety of the act is alluded to in two ways. Firstly, following the description of the illicit encounter, the narrator breaks off and presents a set of pastoral eclogues which treat the marriage of the shepherd Lalus with his beloved Kala. The narrator's invitation to the fair ladies, asking them to turn their attention away from the lovers, is loaded with sarcasm: "I hope your ears, fair ladies, be not so full of great matters that you will disdain to hear" (211). The account of the marriage contrasts sharply with the lover's union; Sidney juxtaposes Lalus's honesty against Pyrocles's deceit. The shepherd's marriage is awarded public sanction, taking place only after parental consent has been awarded, while the marriage between Pyrocles and Philoclea involves "the secretest cunning" (230).

The second method used to criticize Pyrocles involves Dametas. If readers miss the juxtaposition between Pyrocles's and Lalus's behaviour, they cannot fail to see how far Pyrocles has fallen when a clown such as Dametas discovers and triumphs over him. The narrator explains that Pyrocles's error is revealed by the shepherd in order to make the prince's error the more apparent:

The everlasting justice (using ourselves to be the punishers of our faults, and making our own actions the beginning of our chastisement, that our shame may be the more manifest, and our repentance follow the sooner) took Dametas at this present (by whose folly the others' wisdom might receive the greater overthrow) to be the instrument of revealing the secretest cunning.

(230)

Divine justice arranges events so that Pyrocles is bested by a fool.

It is not merely the heroes who have strayed from the path of reason and virtue. While the state of Arcadia reels in chaos, there is no one whose vision remains undistorted by passion. After Basilius swallows the sleeping potion, Gynecia is completely overcome by an insane remorse. Her fancies lead her to assume responsibility for a murder she did not commit. She begs her people to kill her, claiming they would be doing "justice to the world" (245). Pyrocles can see that the duchess prosecutes herself "more like the manner of passionate than guilty folks" (340), but the judge, Euarchus, who believes everyone is as rational as he is, takes Gynecia at her word.

Even Philanax, who so wisely discerned the path of reason initially, succumbs to his fancies. Convinced that his duke has been murdered, he is so filled with "sorrow and vindictive resolution" that he is "transported with an unjust justice" (249). His desire for vengeance towers

above all else. To steel himself against the princesses' pleading on behalf of the heroes, he renews "the image of his dead master in his fancy, and [uses] that for the spurs of his revengeful choler" (265). Again, the characters use their visions to guide their actions. Philanax's affection for the ruler completely distorts his judgement. During the trial, he suppresses the princesses' letters, which may have altered the judgement against the heroes.

The fiction poses a very serious problem. In a world where everyone is prey to fancies of one kind or another and communication is hopelessly botched, who can exact justice? Several critics point to Euarchus, believing the foreign king to be the touchstone for reason and justice within the work. C.S. Lewis says that readers are expected to "revere...his inflexible gravity" (Lewis 335). Hailing Euarchus as the messiah, Philanax is certain that providence arranged Euarchus's timely arrival and that he is the "fittest instrument" (305) to rectify Arcadia's problems: "Surely, surely the heavenly powers have in so full a time bestowed him on us to unite our disunions" (307). But ought we to trust Philanax?

The narrator's description of Euarchus reinforces the reader's belief that Euarchus is the knight in shining armor capable of bringing order to Arcadia:

His inward love was so fixed that it never was dissolved into other desires but keeping his thought true to themselves, was neither beguiled with the painted gloss of pleasure nor dazzled with the false light of ambition. This made the line of his actions straight and always like itself, no worldly thing being able to shake the constancy of it.

(309)

Euarchus, whose inward love is so fixed, appears to be immune to passion. He stands out as a man impervious to the seduction of pity. True to his nature, he stoically

attends the prisoners' testimonies, unmoved by the vision of Pyrocles's beauty and Musidorus's manliness. Nor does his reason alter upon hearing their passionate speeches and appeals for pity.

When Pyrocles defends his actions, saying that he and Musidorus were inflamed with love, "a passion far more easily reprehended than refrained" (339), Euarchus dismisses this an excuse which could just as easily be used to cover a variety of "hateful mischiefs":

For as well he that steals might allege the love of money, he that murders the love of revenge, he that rebels the love of greatness, as the adulterer the love of a woman...But love may have no such privilege...therefore it if be a right love, it can never slide into any action that is not virtuous.

(352)

One recognizes the validity of Euarchus's rational argument. Yet, at the same time, one also realizes that, if we are weak vessels by nature, these slips from the path of virtue are to be expected. The discourse highlights this uncomfortable duality. In Euarchus's world, action is never controlled by passion. Thus, he can only make the distinction between rational behaviour and criminal behaviour.

Eventually, the judge condemns the duchess, his son and his nephew to death, arriving at this resolution by "leaving aside all considerations of the persons," and by weighing the matter with the "most impartial and furthest reach of reason" (355). Nor does he consider altering his decision after discovering that he has prosecuted his son and his nephew. The reader knows that Gynecia stands wrongly accused, and that something is lacking in Euarchus's inflexible judgement. Although initially he states his awareness that human beings are prone to self-deception (315), during the trial, Euarchus never

entertains the possibility that his judgement may be flawed.

When Euarchus learns the princes' true identity, as Neil Rudenstine points out, "the stage is set for a typical romance finale--a happy reunion of adults and children to be followed by the happy marriage of princes and princesses" (Rudenstine 44). But Euarchus's constancy is deathly, his inflexibility antithetical to what it means to be human. His belief in absolute justice--"never, never let sacred rightfulness fall. It is immortal and immortality ought to be preserved"--may be commendable, but if upheld, would result in absolute misery.

Sidney undercuts Euarchus's judgement in the same way he undercuts Pyrocles's seduction of Philoclea. Father, like son, is bested by a fool. Basilius wakes up, recognizes that his fault in the matters "had been the greatest" (360) and overturns Euarchus's harsh sentence. Basilius may be benevolently acting out of an awareness of his own folly, clearing Gynecia's reputation and marrying the princes off to the princesses (McCoy 131). He may also be motivated by less noble considerations. Perhaps in recognizing his error, the duke surmised that he stood to lose the most if he revealed the truth about the princes' behaviour. Readers can never be certain which one of these reasons promoted the duke to behave as he did. Sir Francis Bacon claims that one can never know what motivates another person:

noble and meritorious actions may sometimes proceed from virtue, sound reason, and magnanimity, and sometimes again from a concealed passion and secret desire of ill....

(136)

Bacon's statement reflects Sidney's attitude towards judgement in general: we can never be sure whether reason or passion governs anyone's choices, including our own.

The problem posed earlier still remains. Who can exact justice? After Euarchus's failure, we conclude that everyone is fallible, prey to passions which distort the reason. In the case of Euarchus, even a passionate belief in justice involves a delusion which obscures one's vision. Sidney presents us with a paradox: the most rational man is irrational. His reason cannot accommodate what it means to be fully human: the ability to experience emotion.

The most disturbing aspect of our condition is that, for the most part, we are blind to the power our imagination holds over us. Foucault cites blindness as the chief characteristic of madness. Folly, the playful narrator of Erasmus's Praise of Folly, capitalizes on individuals' inability to perceive their own insanity. Both Sidney and Erasmus were interested in demonstrating the tenuous separation between rationality and irrationality. These authors were intent on bringing to our attention the frequency of nonrational behaviour. Their works offer a critique of the neo-Platonic assertion that people are, above all, rational beings.

Paradox always "challenges some orthodoxy." It acts as "an oblique criticism of absolute judgement or absolute convention" (Colie 10). The paradox generated in the Old Arcadia, concerning the rational individual, invites us to question our absolute faith in reason and authority. Euarchus's behaviour shows us that even the most objective judge is still far from the ideal--far enough to sentence an innocent woman to death.

In his pastoral romance, Sidney demonstrates that rational communication is distorted by pity. No one is exempt from the infection of passion, even the most virtuous soul. We are forced to accept the corollary: no one is fit to judge another person.

Sidney's belief that no one is exempt from passion, or the corrupting influence passion has upon the reason, is subversive because it threatens the hierarchy upon which the monarchy rests. Sidney throws into question Elizabeth's absolute power to judge. In the preface, Sidney refers to his work as monstrous--monstrous because it is a combination of fancies which proceed from a mind corrupted by passion. It is also monstrous because it opposes the humanist's conception, as outlined by Pico, regarding peoples' ability to be "whatever they choose." Sidney's outlook on human nature blends humanism with Calvinism. The presence of Basilius and Euarchus in the work emphasizes that sovereigns are not exempt from earthly imperfection.

Elizabeth's judgements had a profound and, most often, adverse effect upon Sidney's life. She recalled his father from his post in 1578. She terminated the plans for the Protestant league. She threatened to marry the Catholic, Alençon. She ignored Sidney's letter warning her against the marriage. She chastised him for quarrelling with the Earl of Oxford and drove him from her court. She refused him permission to sail off with Sir Frances Drake in search of gold. The list goes on and on.

Sidney's doubts regarding peoples' capacity to judge fairly surface repeatedly in his fiction. His attempt to explore his difficulties in offering counsel to the Queen involved a consideration of the issues of justice and injustice. His exploration of justice set him on a quest for self-knowledge, which revealed the basic weakness inherent in human nature. By the end of the Old Arcadia we are convinced that we are all unfit vessels, and that no one is exempt from the effects of passion, not the characters, not the narrator, and above all, not the reader.

Richard McCoy, in his book, Rebellion in Arcadia, concludes that although Sidney successfully challenges authority's claim to reason, Sidney remains incapable of generating an alternative to the role of subservient subject for himself. I am indebted to McCoy's examination of the Old Arcadia, but I reject his claim that Sidney does not offer a solution to the problem. The world of Arcadia is not devoid of justice.

Throughout the work, Sidney intimates that providence controls human affairs. In the second eclogues the shepherds stage a debate between Passion and Reason. The skirmish reaches a stalemate and both parties are driven to submit to divine justice. Reason and Passion conclude their struggle with the statement, "Then let us both to heav'nly rules give place,/ Which Passions kill, and Reason do deface" (120). The opposing parties meet only to embrace and "yield to the power that made them complementary" (Davis 100).

Within the narrative, we recall that Dametas is guided to Philoclea's chamber by the hand of providence or "the everlasting justice" (230). Similarly, the rebels, who capture Musidorus just before he pounces on the princess, were "guided by the everlasting justice to be chastisers of Musidorus's broken vow" (266). These correctives which proceed from heaven remind us of Elyot's statement that fraud and deceit is "detestable in the sight and judgement of God" (Elyot 168).

Religious faith also surfaces when Pyrocles attempts to commit suicide in order to save Philoclea's honour. Philoclea reminds him that his life is not his to take:

That we should be masters of ourselves we
can show at all no title, nor claim; since
neither we made ourselves, nor bought ourselves,
we can stand upon no other right but his gift,
which he must limit as it pleaseth him....
A virtuous man...is never to do that which

he cannot assure himself is allowable before the everliving rightfulness, but rather is to think honours or shames (which stand in other men's true or false judgements), pains or not pains (which yet never approach our souls) to be nothing in regard of an unspotted conscience.

(258)

Philoclea's counsel stresses the inconstancy of human judgement. She maintains that our behaviour will be judged, not by mankind, but by God.

Religious faith is also emphasized in the prison scene, when Pyrocles and Musidorus have been incarcerated and are awaiting trial. Convinced that they will be awarded the death sentence, the princes, fortified by faith, await their fate :

Our owly eyes, which dimmed with passions be,
 And scare discern the dawn of coming day,
 Let them be cleared, and now begin to see
 Our life is but a step in dusty way.
 Then let us hold the bliss of peaceful mind,
 Since this we feel, great loss we cannot find.
 (323)

While they are in prison, Pyrocles and Musidorus understand that passion has dimmed their reason, and, although they are pagans, they attain a calm inspired by something akin to religious faith.

The work ends with an ironic comment regarding the inconstancy of human judgement. The narrator, referring to Gynecia's rapid fall and restoration to honour, says: "so uncertain are mortal judgements, the same person most infamous and most famous, and neither justly" (360). Thus an individual's guilt or innocence can only be ascertained by the divine judge.

As we recall, faith in the everlasting justice furnished us with the solution to Philisides's puzzling advice to the beasts: "And you poor beasts, in patience bide your hell, / Or know your strengths, and then you

shall do well" (225). An individual who knows his strengths will recognize his corrupt nature. This, in turn, enhances his awareness that the only true justice proceeds from God. Sidney's somewhat obscure gesture toward religious faith, articulated in the beast fable, is echoed in the narrative structure of the Old Arcadia.

A belief in divine justice supported Sidney during his own life, and may account for the cryptic allusions to religious faith in the Old Arcadia. Sidney's trust in a "higher power" controlling human affairs is evident in his letter to his father-in-law Sir Francis Walsingham, who was also a devout Protestant. I will quote most of the letter in order to show the strength of Sidney's faith and how this conviction enabled him to disregard earthly judgements of his own behaviour:

I had before cast my count of dang[er] want and disgrace, and before God Sir it is trew [that] in my hart the love of the caws doth so far over-ballance then all that with Gods grace thei shall never make me weery of my resolution. If her Majesty wear the fowntain I would fear considring what I daily fynd that we shold wax dry, but she is but a means whom God useth and I know not whether I am deceived but I am faithfully persuaded that if she shold withdraw her self other springes would ryse to help this action For me thinkes I see the great work indeed in hand, against the abusers of the world, wherein it is no greater fault to have confidence in mans power, then it is to hastily to despair of Gods work.

I think a wyse and constant man ought never to greev whyle he doth plai as a man mai sai his own part truly though others be out but if him self leav his hold becaws other marrin[ers] will be ydle he will hardli forgive him self his own fault. For me I can not promis of my own course no nor of the my[] becaws I know there is a hyer power that must uphold me or els I shall fall, but certainly I trust, I shall not by other mens wantes be

drawn from my self.

Therefore good Sir to whome for my particular I am more bownd then to all men besydes, be not troubled with my trouble for I have seen the worst in my judgement before hand, and wors then that can not bee. If the queen pai not her souldiours she must loos her garrisons there is no dout thereof.

But no man living shall be hable to sai the fault is in me. What releef I can do them I will. I will spare no danger if ocasion serv I am sure no creature shall be hable to lai injustice to my charge, and for furdre doutes truly I stand not upon them.

(Osborn 513)

Sidney wrote this letter March 24, 1586. In the same missive he speaks of the Queen's penchant for interpreting everything to his "disadvantage." Toward the conclusion, he says "I understand that I am called very ambitious and proud at home, but certainly if thei knew my hart thei would not altogether so judg me." Sidney seems to feel he has been judged wrongly by Elizabeth and her court all his life. His faith in divine judgement may have been his only consolation, diminishing the anguish brought about by his subjection to the wishes of an unappreciative sovereign.

In illustrating the faults of humanity, Sidney does not target royalty specifically. As I mentioned earlier, with regard to the self-reflexiveness of the work, Sidney acknowledges his own complicity in the human condition. By introducing his persona Philisides into his work, he places himself squarely among those who are dazzled by fancies. Like Hitchcock, who had himself filmed as a kind of visual signature, Philisides stands for a seal of authorship. But the presence of Sidney's persona also allows the author "to appear as a player in his own nightmare" (Spoto 465), the nightmare of repression, silencing, distorted communication, and shifting judgement.

In the Second Eclogues, Sidney's persona, Philisides, sings an echo song which clarifies that Philisides is caught up in the fancies generated by words (141). Once again, Sidney alludes to his own authorial bias--a bias which is evident from his preface. His reason is distorted by compassion for his creation, which is a form of self-love.

In his Apology, Sidney confesses that he suffers from self-love, "which is better than any guilding to make that seeme gorgeous wherein our selves are parties" (Apology 95). He states that his reason for composing the Apology is not to teach "Poets how they should doe, but onely, finding my selfe sick among the rest, to shewe some one or two spots of the common infection" (140). From this statement we realize that Sidney is not jeering at fellow sufferers. The notion of a common infection is one which critics should keep in mind. All too often Sidney is unequivocally set out as a Christian moralist, condemning earthly love. The assertion that Sidney is completely opposed to love flies in the face of the self-reflexive tendency of the work--evidence of Sidney's admission of his own culpability. The narrator's moralistic pose is a technique which the author uses to prove a point concerning the instability of judgement; it does not reflect a definitive, authorial standpoint.

I also disagree with critics who claim that Sidney desired to transform Elizabeth into a Euarchus. Annabel Patterson defends this position, saying that the "entire narrative offers both the Queen and her leading courtiers advice which could transform Basilius to Euarchus" (Patterson 19). On the contrary, I suspect that Sidney wanted Elizabeth to become more like Basilius, a ruler who seems to be capable of recognizing his complicity in the

human condition and is able to forgive others for the same fault.

Sidney structures the work so that readers are made to recognize their own susceptibility to fancies and their blindness to passion's effects. The act of reading becomes a "metaphor for reading life itself" (Dana 1977, 56). Far from condemning passion and earthly love, Sidney stresses the inherent division--the gap between the "erected wit" and "infected will"--which can not be patched together simply because we desire the problem to be remedied. Nor does Sidney demand a solution: the paradox does not "commit itself nor does the paradoxist, the paradox merely affords people the chance to postpone a philosophical or religious choice [they] might live to regret" (Colie 38).

Sidney does not encourage individuals to indulge their passions, nor does he encourage them to spend their lives in an effort to be rid themselves of emotion. To achieve the icy perfection of a Euarchus is merely to stand at one end of the spectrum, facing similar monsters at the other end, who are rendered inhuman, not because of the judge's death-like reason, but because of their bestial nature. The problems Sidney outlines are irreconcilable manifestations of the tragedy of the human condition, the cosmic joke:

With cries to skies, and curses to the ground;
 But more I plain, I feel my woes the more.
 Ah where was first that cruel cunning found
 To frame of earth a vessel of the mind.

(129)

Chapter Four: Conclusion

In this study, I have indicated ways in which Sidney's writing offers a critique of his society and sheds light on the nature of postlapsarian humanity. I have argued that difficulties within the author's life find expression in his works. Writing enabled Sidney to gain perspective on his situation, to distance himself from his role in society in order to discover a course of action that would ease the tension in his relationship with the Queen.

In the chapter on The Lady of May, I suggested that Sidney uses the court entertainment to vent his frustrations regarding Elizabeth and her treatment of her courtiers. Sidney also uses the May Day festivities to explore the options open to him as a courtier. As a court entertainment, the work is innovative. Its outcome depended on the Queen's impromptu decision.

Sidney's failure to convince Elizabeth to accept the forester in The Lady of May was only one botched effort in a series of unsuccessful campaigns to prompt Elizabeth to accept his counsel. His consistent lack of success in offering advice led him to reevaluate his rhetorical strategy, and to determine why his method of direct communication repeatedly failed him.

As I asserted in the previous chapter, in the Old Arcadia Sidney shifts from a direct to an indirect method of discourse. Although the rhetorical strategy of The Lady of May falls under the category of indirect communication, it appears that the entertainment was still too obvious a form of counsel. Sidney altered his rhetorical strategy because his compulsion to utter what he believed to be the truth was irrepressible, and perhaps because he hoped that the Queen would find fables less distasteful than facts.

However, in his attempt to understand the failures of communication, Sidney goes so far as to question the efficacy of trying to advise one's sovereign at all. In his pastoral romance, Sidney maps out the reasons why rational communication is rejected, and he attributes the failures in communication to a defect in human nature.

The Old Arcadia reinforces the idea that, as a result of the Fall, human beings are divided creatures whose faculties of reason and passion are forever at war. The passions, together with the senses (which have also been adversely affected by the Fall), lay siege to the imagination. Gaining control of the imagination, the ambassador which moves between the senses and the reason, passion and the senses destabilize the faculty of reason (Bacon 210).

This universal human weakness, the susceptibility to passion, impairs the supposedly rationally governed processes of communication, judgement, and justice. The Old Arcadia poses a problem. In a world where people's judgement shifts with changing circumstances, and justice is based on partial, rather than complete, information, can ideal justice exist? The solution, as I suggested, emerges only after we have understood the structure of the work. Gradually the reader becomes aware that events are shaped by providence. The sense that a divine hand controls human affairs is reinforced by conversations between the characters. The subtext of many of the eclogues involves an awareness of a transcendent power to which human judgement must give place. For example, Philisides's Ister Bank poem posits Christian patience and faith as an answer to the instability of human justice (OA 221-5). Similarly, in the Skirmish Between Reason and Passion (OA 119-20), the warring factions realize that

only God can deliver justice, and it is to this celestial judge that they must turn.

The themes of communication, justice, and human nature provide a framework for a reading of Sidney's later works: Astrophil and Stella, The New Arcadia, and The Apology for Poetry. Sidney's attitudes regarding the effect of passion upon communication, human nature, and Christian faith and patience, can be used as points of entry into his more mature works.

Sidney's sonnet sequence, Astrophil and Stella, was written in the period following the Old Arcadia's completion in 1580. Ringler sets a tentative date for its composition as 1582 (Ringler 440). The poems in the sequence outline a tragic love affair. The sonnets and songs are written by the protagonist, Astrophil, in a bid to win Stella's affection; essentially, he is trying to bed the woman.

In many ways the sonnet sequence can be viewed as a continuation of Sidney's enquiry into the problems related to communication--problems which Sidney deems unavoidable in the world of postlapsarian humanity.

Astrophil, like Philisides, is another of Sidney's enigmatic personae. Astrophil is identified with Sidney in several of the sonnets, while Stella is generally thought to be a representation of Penelope Devereaux, who was married to Lord Rich.¹ Again, we find Sidney bridging the gap between life and art. Critics such as C.S. Lewis and Richard Lanham who balk at entering the confusing

¹For a discussion of the relationship between Astrophil and Sidney, Stella and Penelope Devereaux, see Ringler's comments in The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962) 435.

borderland between life and fiction, and resist treating the work as autobiography, have neglected to pay sufficient attention to the implications raised by Sidney's use of personae.

I suggested in the chapter on the Old Arcadia, regarding Sidney's treatment of Philisides, that Sidney uses the device of the persona to acknowledge his complicity in the human condition. He weaves his recognition of his authorial bias into the structure of the work. Within the sonnet sequence, Astrophil, like Philisides, represents Sidney's signature. I take this gesture as a signal that Sidney was characteristically exploring issues that affected him personally. As in his early works, art provides a safe outlet to examine the tensions and frustrations his culture generated, but could not resolve.

Astrophil, like his predecessors (Therion, Pyrocles, Musidorus, and Philisides, to name a few), is a victim of a very dangerous passion. Love is a passion which even the most virtuous human beings find difficult to control. In the Old Arcadia, private passions plunge the state of Arcadia into civil war. In his sonnet sequence, Sidney documents the same dynamic on the microcosmic level; the reader is made privy to the civil war waged within Astrophil's soul. Like his dazzled counterparts in the Old Arcadia, Astrophil is trapped in the painful condition of all human beings who are gifted with a capacity to reason, but whose reason is preyed upon by the passions. Astrophil is a characteristically Sidneian figure, a victim of self-division.

In the Old Arcadia, Sidney constructed a narrative which would convince his readers that passion interferes with reason. The narrative is a trap, which initially encourages readers to respond favourably to the

characters. Then, in the second half of the work, the narrative voice turns against the readers, to force them to recognize the extent to which passion has paralyzed their judgement.

In Astrophil and Stella, Sidney remains intent on emphasizing passion's deleterious effect upon reasoned interpretations of texts. He creates a scenario which differs from that of the Old Arcadia. In the sonnet sequence, both reader and text are fictional characters. This is not as confusing as it sounds. Wildly in love, Astrophil recognizes that he has been given the opportunity to read the perfect text, one that is chock-full of virtue: his book is his beloved Stella.²

Astrophil is also aware that, ideally, in addition to appreciating Stella's physical beauty, he should be able to read this "text" for more than its superficial form, however attractive that form may be. The text offers a lesson which transcends the flesh, one that concerns goodness and virtue. However, as well versed as he is in neo-Platonic doctrines outlining love's capacity to enhance the individual's spiritual development, Astrophil's efforts at giving a more in-depth, spiritual reading are sabotaged by passion: "Desire still cries, 'give me some food'" (sonnet 71). His problem resembles the difficulties encountered by the readers of the Old Arcadia; Astrophil epitomizes the reader whose reason has been effaced by passion.

Astrophil recognizes that love plays havoc with his reason. He knows that love is a poison (sonnet 34), which

²For associations between Stella and texts, see the following sonnets and songs: 3, 11, 16, 56, 67, 71, 102; and song no. 8:44.

characters. Then, in the second half of the work, the narrative voice turns against the readers, to force them to recognize the extent to which passion has paralyzed their judgement.

In Astrophil and Stella, Sidney remains intent on emphasizing passion's deleterious effect upon reasoned interpretations of texts. He creates a scenario which differs from that of the Old Arcadia. In the sonnet sequence, both reader and text are fictional characters. This is not as confusing as it sounds. Wildly in love, Astrophil recognizes that he has been given the opportunity to read the perfect text, one that is chock-full of virtue: his book is his beloved Stella.²

Astrophil is also aware that, ideally, in addition to appreciating Stella's physical beauty, he should be able to read this "text" for more than its superficial form, however attractive that form may be. The text offers a lesson which transcends the flesh, one that concerns goodness and virtue. However, as well versed as he is in neo-Platonic doctrines outlining love's capacity to enhance the individual's spiritual development, Astrophil's efforts at giving a more in-depth, spiritual reading are sabotaged by passion: "Desire still cries, 'give me some food'" (sonnet 71). His problem resembles the difficulties encountered by the readers of the Old Arcadia; Astrophil epitomizes the reader whose reason has been effaced by passion.

Astrophil recognizes that love plays havoc with his reason. He knows that love is a poison (sonnet 34), which

²For associations between Stella and texts, see the following sonnets and songs: 3, 11, 16, 56, 67, 71, 102; and song no. 8:44.

is more than one can say for the naive heroes of the Old Arcadia. Unlike the princes in the pastoral romance, Astrophil possesses enough self-awareness to realize that not only is love poisonous, but the passion which rules him causes his imagination to fashion images that have no basis in reality (Sonnet 5). Astrophil grasps the nature of his situation, and articulates the effects of passion upon his imagination and his faculty of reason, in a way the characters of the Old Arcadia could not. Sidney has reached a level of sophistication only hinted at in the portrayals of characters in his earlier fictions.

But Astrophil is not only the reader of texts, he is also the writer of texts. As I mentioned earlier, he is the author of the poems and songs, all composed out of love for Stella. Astrophil's desire to persuade Stella to show him affection prompts him to express himself through fiction. Here again, Sidney moves over ground already familiar from previous works.

For instance, Astrophil, like his creator, also discovers the efficacy of indirect communication over the direct approach. Astrophil is committed to the belief that fiction is a far more persuasive medium for transmitting one's arguments than a direct statement of the facts. In the first sonnet, Astrophil identifies this as his motivation for writing:

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show
That she (dear She) might take some pleasure of my
Pain:
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her
know,
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain.

Later on in the work, Astrophil notes Stella's reaction to the tale of an unfortunate lover. She is reduced to tears. Hoping to elicit the same response, Astrophil announces: "I am not I, pity the tale of me" (sonnet 45). Astrophil

If God rides man's will, "it wills and goes where God wills...If Satan rides, it wills and goes where Satan wills."⁴ Sidney's conclusion to the sonnet sequence does not make it clear whether the guiding hand of providence has predestined Astrophil to be ridden by the Devil until his death. Paradoxically, his constancy in love, which makes him miserable, is a virtue which one cannot help but admire. Sidney paints a sorry picture of human beings--trapped between their angelic and bestial potential.

In the end, Astrophil remains the prisoner of his emotions, his reason no longer his own. In one of his final laments, he begs Stella to release his wit (his reason) and send it back to him so that he can apply himself to a "great cause" (Ringler 490). Astrophil claims that if people see that love has caused him to lose his reason, they will disparage love: "Oh let not fools in me thy works reprove, /And scorning say, 'See what it is to love'" (Sonnet 107). Although he has failed to read the text properly, and remains a slave to his passions, Astrophil still holds out the possibility that, for other people, love--and literature--may lead to virtue.

In revising his Old Arcadia, Sidney again took up this problem. Sidney began the revision some time around 1584. At this point in his life, like Astrophil, Sidney promotes the idea that one's reason is not so darkened that one cannot benefit from a virtuous strain of love, or a virtuous passion for texts. Accordingly, he stocks the

⁴Luther as cited in Weiner's article, "Moving and Teaching: Sidney's Defence of Poesie as a Protestant Poetic," in Essential Articles for the Study of Sir Philip Sidney, ed. Arthur Kinney (Hamdon, Connecticut: Archon, 1986) 97.

New Arcadia with examples which suggest that love is morally beneficial, and can furnish an individual with an education in the virtues of magnanimity and Christian patience--the type of education one does not learn in the heroic sphere of the battlefield, but only in the amatorious realm of the heart.⁵

Instead of commencing with a description of Arcadia, the revised work begins with a dialogue between Strephon and Claius--characters who appeared as minor figures in the Old Arcadia. These two shepherds have been transformed by their chaste love for Urania, a goddess-like figure who departed suddenly. While acknowledging his sorrow, Claius rhapsodizes about the salutary effect of love upon their spirits (NA 63). Thus Sidney immediately frames the work with an example of the advantageous effects of love.

In reshaping the text with an eye to highlighting the positive qualities of love, Sidney adds a description of two perfect lovers, Argulus and Parthenia. Their affection for each other fosters an atmosphere of perfect harmony. Sidney emphasizes their mutual dependence: they seem to gain strength from each other. In the same vein, the princes and princesses in the revised version learn from each other. Philoclea models her actions after Pyrocles's behaviour, and Pamela memorizes Musidorus's account of his heroic deeds, implying that love moves individuals to model themselves after the beloved.

In the New Arcadia, Sidney carefully expunges all traces of the princes' sinful behaviour which resulted

⁵For a discussion of magnanimity as it was understood in Sidney's time, see Elyot's Book Named the Governor, p. 194. My argument regarding the revision of the Arcadia owes a great deal to John Danby's analysis in his book, Poets on Fortune's Hill, (London: Faber, 1952).

from an excess of passion. In the laundered version, Pyrocles spends a chaste night with Philoclea, and Musidorus never once entertains the thought of raping Pamela.

In addition to emphasizing love's capacity to enhance an individual's moral education, Sidney also strengthens the argument for Christian patience. Although the inhabitants of Arcadia are pagans, faith in God enables them to withstand earthly tribulation. Sidney polarizes the work around two axes: faith and atheism.

The evil energy which sprung out of nowhere in the Old Arcadia is harnessed in the New Arcadia. Basilius's evil sister, Cecropia, is made responsible for the attack of the beasts (she let them out of her zoo hoping they would kill the royal party). She also instigates the peasant's revolt, which in the Old Arcadia arose spontaneously. In altering the text in this way, Sidney shifts emphasis from chance to that of human design: "the dangers of human contact with human evils outweigh the dangers of the natural environment" (Levine 27). Moreover, in the New Arcadia, the villain is, above all, an atheist.

In Book III of the New Arcadia, the princesses are kidnapped by Cecropia. She subjects them to various trials and tests of their faith. In the face of torture, both physical and psychological, the princesses' trust in God proves unshakable. Pamela becomes an emblem of devotion, a representation of perfect faith, as she counters her despair by kneeling in her cell and praying to God. Tradition has it that Charles I quoted Pamela's eloquent supplication when he stood on the scaffold (NA 9).

At one point Pamela has a heated debate with Cecropia on the subject of atheism. Cecropia tries to persuade Pamela to marry her son, Amphialus, without asking for her father's consent. Pamela responds that this would be a

sin, and tells Cecropia, "I am his daughter; so as God claims at my hands obedience, and makes me no judge of his [Basilius's] imperfections." When Cecropia suggests that God is simply a "bugbear" invented by the human imagination to keep weak-willed individuals in line, Pamela is outraged (NA 488). Pamela eventually demolishes Cecropia's atheistic assertions. While Christian faith in God was only suggested obliquely as a method of coping with earthly vicissitudes in the Old Arcadia, it takes center stage in the revised work.

The revision, however, proves to be less morally stable than it appears. Sidney is able to make a case for the existence of God, as well as demonstrate that love can, according to the neo-Platonic ideal, benefit individuals in their attempt to attain virtue. His arguments tend to pale in the light of his portrait of Amphialus, a man whose passion holds him prisoner. Even within Sidney's reformed version, reason is not strong enough to conquer emotion; Amphialus suffers from a very familiar plague: self-division.

Amphialus's passion for Philoclea draws the readers' attention away from the narrator's self-assured examples of the salutary powers of love. This figure of self-division suggests that, try as he might, Sidney could not banish an awareness of the divided condition of human beings from his imagination. However much Sidney wanted to solve the problem, he was still faced with the fact that the majority of human beings do not learn love's spiritual lessons. Amphialus is compelling because readers recognize their own self-division within him, whereas they have lost contact with the ideal princes.

In addition to introducing examples of the positive effects of love, modifying the heroes' behaviour, and emphasizing the theme of Christian faith, Sidney also

alters the narrative structure. In the New Arcadia, all of the narrator's asides have been excised. Gone are the wry comments from the unstable narrator, that persuasive voice which lays the trap for the reader. In the chapter on the Old Arcadia, I suggested that Sidney's narrative structure was a powerful tool which succeeded in showing the readers the extent of their own infected judgement. If the technique was successful, why would Sidney choose to alter it?

I agree with Robert Levine who suggests that, by letting the story tell itself, and delegating narrative descriptions to various characters, Sidney is demonstrating a concern for the way in which "truth depends upon point of view" (Levine 46). Instead of having a narrator manipulate the reader's emotions, Sidney allows the characters to display their own biases. Thus, the reader sees more clearly the way in which the passions affect perception and communication.

Sidney was forced to develop more sophisticated characters in order to enable the reader to distinguish one character's speech and ideology from another's. While readers lose the affectionate tour-guide of the Old Arcadia, they gain more fully developed portraits of the characters. Perhaps readers learn more from struggling through Sidney's landscape of the human psyche on their own.

One of the most challenging aspects of Sidney's works proceeds from his complex argument concerning human nature. If we accept the premises outlined in the Old Arcadia, that all human judgement is inconstant and all human communication is distorted by passion, we must accept the corollary: we are reading fictions prepared by an individual whose judgement is as infected as anyone else's. But in his theoretical treatise, the Apology For

Poetry, Sidney argues against this view, basing his theory of poetry on the strength and integrity of human reason.

According to Sidney, poets imitate nature, depicting its essence in their poems. In fashioning an imitation of nature, poets are able to leap over the corrupt world of fallen man: "the poet disdain[ing] to be tied to any such subjection lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect into another nature" (100). Arguing that the poet does not rely upon his senses to write poetry, Sidney circumvents the problem of the inherent corruption of the senses.

Sidney also claims that poets have direct access to the idea (God's design), an inspiration that is not "wholly imaginative" (101). In one fell swoop, Sidney rescues poetry from both the imperfection of human senses and frees it from the destabilizing effects of the passions, which work directly upon the imagination. Shielded from the senses and the passions, the poem is generated solely by the poet's reason, which translates the sublunary, corrupt nature into "another nature."

In the sixteenth century, nature was perceived as ordered and intelligent, "eloquent of God" (Shepherd 52). The use of judgement and right reason enables poets to discover nature's design, and to reproduce the essential pattern in words. The poets' apprehension of the design is facilitated by their "erected wit" (sound reason), as Shepherd states: "imitation in poetry is high realism which depends on unified reason in man...which constitutes him in the image of God, the reason which is the candle of the Lord" (Shepherd 55).

However, in his Old Arcadia, Sidney illustrates that peoples' reason is far from unified. Human judgement, even in the case of a wise ruler, such as Euarchus, is partial at best. Sidney's works are contradictory. In theory, he

argues for the perfection of human reason, while in practice, he portrays the failings of reason and judgement. If reason is the candle of the Lord, Sidney demonstrates in his pastoral romance that, after the Fall, the candle is doomed to flicker in gusts of passion.

If poetic visions were divinely inspired, a gift from God, then Sidney could argue that poets are free from the dimmed sight of common mortals. Yet he rejects the neo-Platonist's concept of divine fury (Apology 130). In his initial attempt to lend poetry some dignity, Sidney hints at possible links between writing poetry and divine inspiration, but he does not argue the point. He merely refers to the titles bestowed upon the poet by the ancients, explaining that the Romans called the poet "yates which is as much a diviner, foreseer, or prophet" (98). He also cites the biblical example of King David, and discusses David's "heavenly poesy, wherein almost he showeth himself a passionate lover of that unspeakable and everlasting beauty to be seen by the eyes of the mind, only cleared by faith" (99). Although Sidney alludes to the transcendent, religious aspect of poetry, for him, writing poetry is a human, rather than divinely inspired, activity.

Unless poetic vision represents God's truth, there is always the chance that passion, together with the imagination, holds the poet's reason captive. Sidney hedges on the question of the poet's mental state. Those who credit him with sufficient Christian faith can assume that his eyes are as clear as David's; if not, reader beware.

On the whole, I am not convinced by Sidney's argument as outlined in the Apology; nor am I convinced that Sidney entirely believed what he wrote. In the preface to the Apology, Sidney explains that he has come to poor poetry's

defense out of love for the discipline. Given this passionate foundation, any argument for unified reason as the generator of poetry falls to pieces. Sidney relates the story about his riding instructor, John Pietro Pugliano, whose love for the art of horsemanship accounted for his excessive praise of the discipline. Sidney equates his own passion for poetry to Pugliano's estimation of the art of horsemanship. Essentially, Sidney undermines any possibility that his work is generated by the right use of reason and judgement by confessing that his affection for poetry has similarly distorted his perception of the value of his subject matter. When discussing Sidney, one is never sure exactly how "erected" and how "infected" human wit and will actually are.

The self-reflexiveness of Sidney's work becomes even more problematic when one realizes that the instability of communication and the inconstancy of human judgement implicate the reader as well. In Sidney's fictions the act of reading parallels the process of attaining self-knowledge. Readers of The Lady of May, like the Queen, must also decide between the shepherd and the forester, and their choice leads them to reflect on their own values. Similarly, in responding to particular characters in the Old Arcadia, readers recognize their own failings--failings which manifest themselves as an inability to read the text--the text qua fiction, as well as the text of the world.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- Ariosto, Ludovico. Orlando Furioso.1. Trans. Barbara Reynolds. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975.
- Aubrey, John. Brief Lives. Ed. R. Barber. London: The Folio Society, 1975.
- Bacon, Sir Francis. Advancement of Learning. Ed. Joseph Devey. New York: Collier, 1902.
- . A Selection of His Works. Ed. Sidney Warhaft. Indianapolis: Bobs-Merrill, 1965.
- Castiglione, Baldesar. The Book of The Courtier. Trans. George Bull. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984.
- Elyot, Sir Thomas. The Book Named the Govenor. Ed. S.E. Lehmborg. London: Dent, 1966
- Erasmus. In Praise of Folly. Trans. Betty Radice. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985.
- Feuillerat. Albert. The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney. 4 Vols. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1962.
- Greville, Fulke, Lord Brooke. The Works in Verse and Prose Complete. Vol IV. Ed. Rev. Alexander B. Grosart. NY: AMS, 1966.
- Machiavelli, Niccolo. The Prince. Trans. George Bull. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981.
- Montaigne, Michel de. Essays. Trans. J.M. Cohen. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985.
- More, Sir Thomas. Utopia. Trans. Paul Turner. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984.
- Nichols, John, 1745-1826. The Progresses, and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth. New ed. 3 Vols. London: 1823.
- Pears, Stewart A., trans. The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Lanquet. London: William Pickering, 1845.
- Pico della Mirandola. "Oration on the Dignity of Man". De hominis dignitate. Trans. E. Livermore

- Forbes. In Renaissance Philosophy of Man. Ed. Cassierer et al. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1956.
- Sidney, Sir Philip. Sir Philip Sidney: The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia. Ed. M. Evans. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984.
- . Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney. Ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones and Jan Van Dorsten. Oxford: Clarendon, 1973
- . The Old Arcadia. Ed. K. Duncan-Jones. London: Oxford, 1985.
- . The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney. Ed. Ringler, W. A. Oxford: Clarendon, 1962.
- . Sir Philip Sidney: An Apology for Poetry Ed. Geoffrey Shepherd. Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1965.
- . Sir Philip Sidney: Selected Poems. Ed. K. Duncan-Jones. London: Oxford, 1973.
- Spenser. The Faerie Queene. New ed. Ed. Robert Kellogg & Oliver Steele. NY: Odyssey P, 1965.
- Vives, Juan Luis. Fable about Man. Fabula de homine. Trans. Nancy Lenkeith. In The Renaissance Philosophy of Man. Ed. Ernst Cassierer et al. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1956.

Secondary Sources

Theoretical Approaches to Criticism:

- Bakhtin, M.M. The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin. Ed. Michale Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: Texas UP, 1981.
- Barthes, Roland. S/Z: An Essay. Trans. Richard Miller. NY: Farrer, 1985.
- Bruss, Elizabeth, W. Autobiographical Acts. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976.
- Deutsch, Helen. A Psychoanalytic Study of the Myth of Dionysus and Apollo. NY: International

Universities P, 1969.

Elliot, Robert, C. The Literary Persona. Chicago:
U of Chicago P, 1982.

Forster, E.M. Aspects of the Novel. Harmondsworth:
Penguin, 1970.

Hawkes, Terence. Structuralism and Semiotics. London:
Methuen, 1977.

Hernstein Smith, Barbara. On the Margins of Discourse.
Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978.

Humphries, Jefferson. Losing the Text: Readings in
Literary Desire. Athens, Georgia: U of
Georgia P, 1986.

Jefferson, Anne and David Robey, eds. Modern Literary
Theory. 2nd ed. London: Batesford, 1986.

Langer, Suzanne, K. Feeling and Form. NY:
Scribner's, 1953.

Trilling, Lionel. Sincerity and Authenticity. London:
Oxford UP, 1972.

Wallace, Martin. Recent Theories of Narrative.
Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1986.

Webber, Joan. The Eloquent 'I': Style and Self in
Seventeenth Century Prose. Wisconsin: Madison UP,
1968.

Criticism:

Anderson, D.M. "The Trial of the Princes in the
Arcadia Book V." Review of English Studies 8
(1957): 410-421.

Astell, Anne. "Sidney's Didactic Method in the Old
Arcadia." Studies in English Literature 24.1 (1984):
39-51.

Axton, Marie. "The Tudor Masque and Elizabethan Court
Drama." English Drama: Forms and Developments.
Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1977.

Barber, C.L. Shakespeare's Festive Comedy. Princeton,
N.J.: Princeton UP, 1959.

- Berry, Edward. "Sidney's May Game for the Queen," forthcoming, Modern Philology.
- Buxton, John. Sir Philip Sidney and the English Renaissance. London: MacMillan, 1954.
- Chase, Karen. Eros and Psyche. London: Methuen, 1984.
- Colie, Rosalie. Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1966.
- Connell, Dorothy. Sir Philip Sidney: The Maker's Mind. Oxford: Clarendon, 1977.
- Dana, E. Margaret. "Heroic and Pastoral: Sidney's Arcadia as Masquerade." Comparative Literature 25 (1973): 308-319.
- . "The Providential Plot of the Old Arcadia." Studies in English Literature 17 (1977): 41-56.
- Danby, J.F. Poets on Fortune's Hill: Studies in Sidney, Shakespeare Beaumont and Fletcher. London: Faber, 1952.
- Davis, W.R. A Map of Arcadia: Sidney Romance and Its Tradition. New Haven: Yale UP, 1965.
- Delany, Paul. British Autobiography in the Seventeenth Century. London: Routledge, 1969.
- Dipple, Elizabeth. "Unjust Justice in the Old Arcadia." Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900 10 (1970): 83-101.
- Ellman, Richard. Yeats: The Man and The Masks. London: MacMillan, 1949.
- Ferguson, Margaret. Trails of Desire. New Haven: Yale UP, 1984.
- Fuentes, Carlos. Intro. Don Quixote de la Mancha. Miguel de Cervantes. Trans. Tobia Smollett. NY: Ferras, 1986.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. Renaissance Self-Fashioning. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980.

- . Sir Walter Raleigh: The Renaissance Man and His Roles. New Haven: Yale UP, 1973.
- . "Sidney's Arcadia and the Mixed Mode." Studies in Philology 70 (1973): 269-278.
- Helgerson, Richard G. The Elizabethan Prodigals. Berkeley: U of California P, 1976.
- Howell, Roger. Sir Philip Sidney. Boston: Little, 1968.
- Hunter, G.K. John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier. London: Routledge, 1962.
- Kinney, Arthur, F. Ed. Essential Articles for the Study of Sir Philip Sidney. Hamdon, Connecticut: Archon, 1986.
- Lanham, Richard. The Old Arcadia. New Haven: Yale UP, 1965.
- Larson, Charles. Fulke Greville. Boston: Twayne, 1980.
- Lawton, David. Chaucer's Narrators. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1985.
- Levao, Ronald. Renaissance Minds and Their Fictions: Cusanus, Sidney and Shakespeare. Berkeley: U of California P, 1985.
- Levine, Robert. "A Comparison of Sidney's Old and New Arcadia." Ed. James Hogg. Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, Salzburg University, 1974--(Salzburg Studies in English literature).
- Lewis, C.S. English Literature in the Sixteenth Century. Oxford: Clarendon, 1954.
- Lindenbaum, Peter. Changing Landscapes: Anti-Pastoral Sentiment in the English Renaissance. Athens, Georgia: Georgia UP, 1986.
- Lindheim, Nancy. The Structures of Sidney's Arcadia. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1982.
- McCoy, Richard C. Sir Philip Sidney: Rebellion in Arcadia. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers, 1979.

- Marenco, Franco. "Double Plot in Sidney's Old Arcadia." Modern Language Review 64 (1969): 248-263.
- Mayr, Roswitha. "The Concept of Love in Sidney and Spenser." Ed. James Hogg. Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, University of Salzburg, 1978--(Salzburg studies in English literature: Elizabethan and Renaissance Studies 70).
- Montrose, Louis Adrian. "Celebration and Insinuation: Sir Philip Sidney and the Motives of Elizabethan Courtship." Renaissance Drama 8 (1977): 3-36.
- Muir, Kenneth. Sir Philip Sidney. London: Longman, Green, 1960.
- Nichols, J.G. The Poetry of Sir Philip Sidney: An Interpretation in the Context of his Life and Times. Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1974.
- Orgel, Stephen. "Sidney's Experience in Pastoral: The Lady of May." in The Jonsonian Masque. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1967.
- Osborn, James M. Young Philip Sidney 1572-1577. New Haven: Yale UP, 1972.
- Patterson, Annabel. "'Under...Pretty Tales': Intention in Sidney's Arcadia." Studies in the Literary Imagination 15.1 (1982): 5-21.
- Raitiere, Martin, N. Faire Bitts: Sir Philip Sidney and Renaissance Political Theory. Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 1984.
- Rogers, Robert. A Psychoanalytic Study of the Double in Literature. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1970.
- Rudenstine, Neil. Sidney's Poetic Development. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1967.
- Shepherd, Geoffrey. Intro. Sir Philip Sidney: An Apology for Poetry. By Sir Philip Sidney. Ed. Geoffrey Shepherd. London: Nelson, 1965.
- Sinfield, Alan. Literature in Protestant England: 1560-1660. Beckenham, Kent: Croom Helm, 1983.
- . "Power and Ideology: An Outline Theory and Sidney's

- Arcadia." English Literary History 52.2 (1985): 259-277.
- Smith, Bruce, R. "Landscape with Figures." Renaissance Drama 8 (1977): 57-117.
- Spacks, Patricia, Meyer. Imagining a Self: Autobiography and Novel in Eighteenth Century England. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1976.
- Stillman, Robert, E. "The Perils of Fancy: Poetry and Self-Love in the Old Arcadia." Texas Studies in Language and Literature 26.1 (1984): 1-17.
- . "The Politics of Sidney's Pastoral Mystification and Mythology in the Old Arcadia." English Literary History 52.4 (1985): 795-814.
- . "Justice and the 'Good Word' in Sidney's The Lady of May." Studies in English Literature 24.1 (1984): 37-48.
- van Dorsten, Jan. "Recollections: Sidney's Ister Bank Poem." Danish Quarterly Review 15 (1985): 231-244.
- van Laan, Thomas. Role Playing in Shakespeare. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1978.
- Wallace, Malcolm W. The Life of Sir Philip Sidney. 1915; rpt. NY : Octagon Books, 1967.
- Weiner, Andrew. Sir Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Protestantism: A Study of Contexts. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1978.
- Young, Richard B. "English Petrarke: A Study of Sidney's Astrophil and Stella" in Three Studies in the Renaissance: Sidney, Jonson, Milton. New Haven: Yale UP, 1958.
- Zandvoort, R.W. Sidney's Arcadia: A Comparison Between the Two Versions, Amsterdam: N.V. Swets and Zeitlinger, 1929.

Historical Background:

- Benton, John F. "Consciousness of Self and Perceptions of Individuality," in Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century. Ed. Robert L. Benson and

- Giles Constable with Carol D. Lanham. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1982.
- . Ed and intro. Self and Society in Medieval France: The memoirs of Abbot Guibert of Noget. NY: Harper, 1970.
- Bristol, Michael, D. Carnival and Theatre: Plebian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England. NY: Methuen, 1985.
- Burckhardt, Jacob. The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy. Oxford: Phaidon P, 1981.
- Chamberlin, Frederick. The Sayings of Queen Elizabeth. London: John Lane The Bodley Head, 1923.
- Curtis, Mark H. Oxford and Cambridge in Transition 1558-1642. Oxford: Clarendon, 1959.
- Edgerton, Samuel, Jr. The Renaissance Rediscovery of Perspective. NY: Basic, 1975.
- Esler, Anthony. The Aspiring Mind of the Elizabethan Younger Generation. Durham, N.C.: Duke UP, 1966.
- Gent, Lucy. Picture and Poetry: 1560-1620. Leamington Spa, Warwickshire: James Hall, 1981.
- Haydn, Hiram. The Counter Renaissance. NY: Scribner's, 1950.
- Kearney, Hugh. Science and Change 1500-1700. NY: McGraw, 1971.
- Kelly, Faye, L. Prayer in Sixteenth Century England. Gainesville, Fla.: UP of Florida, 1966.
- Misch, Georg. A History of Autobiography in Antiquity. Vol. 1. London: Routledge, 1950.
- J. E Neale. Queen Elizabeth. London: Jonathan Cape, 1934.
- Stone, Lawrence. Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641. Oxford: Clarendon, 1965.
- Strong, Roy. The Cult of Elizabeth. London: Thames and Hudson, 1977.

- Tillyard, E. M. W. The Elizabethan World Picture.
London: Chatto and Windus, 1943.
- Waldman, Milton. Elizabeth and Leicester. Boston:
Houghton, 1945.
- Wilson, Jean. Entertainments for Elizabeth I. Totawa,
N.J.: Brewer, 1980.
- General:
- Bateson, Gregory. Steps To an Ecology of Mind. NY:
Chandler, 1972.
- Davis, Morton D. Game Theory: A Non-Technical
Introduction. NY: Basic, 1970.
- Foucault, Michel. Madness and Civilization. NY:
Random, 1965.
- Freud. Civilization and Its Discontents. Garden City,
NY: Doubleday, 1958.
- Habermas, Jurgen. Knowledge and Human Interests.
trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro. Boston: Beacon, 1971.
- Hegel, G.W.F. The Phenomenology of Mind. Intro.
George Lichtheim. NY: Harper, 1967.
- Richards, I.A. Complementarities: Uncollected Essays.
Ed. John Paul Rosso. Cambridge, Massachusetts:
Harvard UP, 1976.
- Spoto, Donald. The Dark Side of Genius: The Life of
Alfred Hitchcock. Toronto: Little, 1983.
- Wilde, Oscar. The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings
of Oscar Wilde. Ed. Richard Ellman. New York:
Random, 1969.

VITA

Surname: Goldman Given Names: Marlene Beth

Place of Birth: Toronto, Ont. Canada

Date of Birth: Jan. 29, 1963

Educational Institutions Attended, with Dates of Entering and Leaving:

YORK UNIVERSITY, ONTARIO 1982-1984

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, B.C. 1984-1987

Degrees, Diplomas, Etc., Awarded, with Dates and Names of Institutions:

B.A. 1986 University of Victoria

Honours and Awards:

York University Entrance Scholarship, 1982

York University Dean's Honour Roll, 1983

British Columbia Post Secondary Scholarship, 1984/5, 1985/6 and 1986/7.

Publications:

PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

I hereby grant the right to lend my thesis (the title of which is shown below) to users of the University of Victoria Library, and to make single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or similar institution, on its behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or a member of the University designated by me. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY, COURTIER-POET AS CRITIC:

A STUDY OF THE LADY OF MAY AND THE OLD ARCADIA

Author:



MARLENE BETH GOLDMAN

Name

JAN. 5, 1988

Date